

LESSON H-UV-L4

War on Terror - Afghanistan: The Fall of the Taliban and After

Unit V: Post 9/11: Challenges and Consequences

Grade Levels: 9–12

Time: 90–160 minutes



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Objectives

- Examine the Taliban regime and the reason for the U.S. going to war against Afghanistan as part of the War on Terror.
- Identify the restrictions and their impact on women who lived under the Taliban’s ‘gender apartheid’ laws from 1996–2001.
- Analyze the progress Afghanistan has made in forging a democracy since the fall of the Taliban.
- Evaluate the challenges a resurgent Taliban represent to the U.S. and the democratic Afghan government.

Key Terms

- al Qaeda
- burqa
- democratization
- gender apartheid
- Hamid Karzai
- Hazaras
- I.E.D.
- Mujahideen
- Osama bin Laden
- Pashtuns
- Shar’ia
- Taliban
- Tajiks
- Uzbeks

Lesson Materials

- *Frontline*: “Who are the Taliban?” by Dave Johns (found at <http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/afghanistan604/who.html>)
- Commercial film *Charlie Wilson’s War* (2007)
- Reading #1: The War on Terror: The Fall of the Taliban (attached to this lesson)
- Reading #2: Buried Alive: Afghan Women Under the Taliban (found at <http://home.mtholyoke.edu/~mvcarmac/women2.html>)
- Reading #3: Five Years After the Fall of the Taliban: Afghanistan and the War on Terrorism by Beth Cole and Jorge Aquilar (found at <http://www.usip.org/publications/five-years-after-fall-taliban-afghanistan-and-war-terrorism>)
- Reading #4: BBC Q&A: Democracy in Afghanistan with review questions (found at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/3238271.stm)
- Reading #5: Challenges faced by the Afghan elections: Could they follow current polarizations and ethnic divisions? (found at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/8317927.stm)
- Web site for the *Frontline* program “The War Briefing” (found at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/warbriefing/>)
- Student Worksheet: Web Quest for “The War Briefing” (one copy for each student; see below)
- *Frontline* program “Afghanistan: The Other War” (found at <http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/afghanistan604/>)

- *Frontline* program “Return of the Taliban” (found at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/taliban/>)
- Student Worksheet: Web Quest for U.S. Institute of Peace: Passing the Baton Conference (one copy for each student; see below)
- (Optional) *Frontline* film: Pakistan Children of the Taliban (<http://video.pbs.org/video/1134781691>)

Lesson Background

1. The Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979, seizing control of cities, military bases, and communication and trade routes. The Afghan Mujahideen, a group of loosely allied opposition groups, fought the Soviets from 1979-1989. The mujahideen were significantly assisted by the C.I.A. during the Carter and Reagan administrations.

When the Soviet Union pulled troops out of Afghanistan in 1989, civil war began as the Mujahideen factions began fighting each other for control of Kabul, the capital city. After several years of devastating infighting, a new armed movement emerged, known as Taliban, or “students of Islam” and took control. The Taliban implemented one of the strictest interpretations of Shar’ia law ever seen in the Muslim world including the complete ban of education for girls and employment for women. The new regime was and widely criticized internationally for its treatment of women.

Women were forced to wear the burqa in public, because, according to a Taliban spokesman, “the face of a woman is a source of corruption” for men not related to them. A burqa (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Burqa_Afghanistan_01.jpg) is an outer garment that cloaks the entire body and head, with a mesh panel covering the eyes. Women were not permitted to work; prior to the Taliban women made up 25% of the Afghan government’s work force. While female health care workers were exempted, they endured a segregated bus system and extreme harassment. The education of girls was banned after the age of eight, and until then, they were permitted only to study the Qur’an. Women seeking an education were forced to attend underground schools where they and their teachers risked execution if caught. They were not allowed to be treated by male doctors unless accompanied by a male chaperone, which led to illnesses remaining untreated. For violating these prohibitions, they faced public flogging and execution. The Taliban allowed and in some cases encouraged marriage for girls under the age of 16. Amnesty International reported that 80 percent of Afghan marriages were without the girl’s consent.

From May 1996, Osama bin Laden, founder of the terrorist group al Qaeda and responsible for the 9/11 attacks on the U.S., was living in Afghanistan with other members, operating terrorist training camps in a loose alliance with the Taliban. Following the 1998 U.S. embassy bombings in Africa, President Clinton order the military air strikes at these camps with limited effect on their overall operations.

2. *Frontline*: “Who are the Taliban?” by Dave Johns.
3. View the film, *Charlie Wilson’s War*, for an understanding of the covert C.I.A. aid to the Mujahideen, who were fighting the Soviet Union after their invasion of Afghanistan.

Lesson Plan

Note to Teacher: You may select portions of this multi-day lesson plan for classroom use at your discretion. The entire lesson need not be utilized.

- Jigsaw Group Activity: Divide the class into five groups, assigning each one a reading. Each student will be the “expert” on this article when they regroup later.
 - Reading #1: The War on Terror: The Fall of the Taliban
 - Reading #2: Buried Alive: Afghan Women Under the Taliban
 - Reading #3: Five Years After the Fall of the Taliban: Afghanistan and the War on Terrorism
 - Reading #4: BBC Q&A: Democracy in Afghanistan
 - Reading #5: Challenges faced by the Afghan elections: Could they follow current polarizations and ethnic divisions?

Note to Teacher: Reading #2: Buried Alive: Afghan Women Under the Taliban, is a lengthy article. You may choose to divide it, assigning students Part I and Part II, or may edit the article. It is appropriate for honors or AP students. Reading #4 is shorter and more succinct; it is appropriate for use with lower reading level students.

- After reading, have the students identify the main points, issues, problems, and possible solutions dealt with in the articles.
- Regroup the students creating five new groups. All five readings should be represented in each new group. Instruct the students to share what they have learned with each other.
- To examine the current challenges facing the U.S. and democratic Afghanistan today, have the students will use the web site for the *Frontline* program “The War Briefing.” Have the students use the following links to research the situation based on interviews with the experts. The Student Worksheet: Web Quest for “The War Briefing” is provided.
 - Introduction: October 28, 2008 - Afghanistan
 - The War Briefing – What the next President will face
 - The Karzai Question
 - The New Pakistani Taliban
 - A Strategy for the Tribal Areas
 - Any lessons we can grab from Iraq?
- (Optional) Watch the full program “The War Briefing” online at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/warbriefing/view/> and take notes.
- If possible, have students watch both of the *Frontline* programs “Afghanistan: The Other War” and “Return of the Taliban” in school or at home. If not, show one; both are excellent. Ask the students to take notes.
- Distribute the Student Worksheet: Web Quest for U.S. Institute of Peace: Passing the Baton Conference. Have the students use the USIP Passing the Baton Conference web site (<http://www.usip.org/programs/initiatives/passing-baton>) and video links to complete the activity in class or at home. Have the students select one of the following topics and view the video of the session:
 - “The Way Forward in Afghanistan” (found at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UnSyHr29zb8>)
 - “Proliferation, Catastrophic Terrorism, and a New Security Paradigm” (found at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kMn46g4sntY>)

After the students listen to the session dealing with Afghanistan and/or terrorism ask them to summarize the problems and possible solutions identified by the speakers. Then have them brainstorm any other solutions.

- Have the students write a summary of the problems and solutions and then share the summary with the class. The summary may be oral or written, as you prefer. Then ask: “How similar were the issues you each identified? How similar were the solutions?”
- Have students research current newspaper articles (printed or online) about the topics under discussion.

Evidence of Understanding

Formative Assessment

- Evaluate students’ examination and understanding of the problems and possible solutions related to Afghanistan and terrorism.
- Evaluate students’ responses to the worksheet questions regarding the challenges future administrations will face.

Summative Assessment

Evaluate students’ answers in the worksheets regarding how they view the opinions of the experts and the crucial issues addressed in the video presentations.

Additional Activities and Resources

Show the students the film *Charlie Wilson’s War* (2007, Rated R, 1 hour 37 minutes). Synopsis: “Good-Time Charlie” Wilson, a flawed and fun-loving Congressman from East Texas, deftly operates the levers of power to funnel money and weapons to the Mujahideen of Afghanistan following the Soviet invasion of their country in late 1979. Charlie finds assistance in the oddest of places—a renegade C.I.A. agent whose outsider status and womanizing ways endears him to Wilson; a Houston socialite who leads Wilson to the cause; the willing Pakistani dictator fascinated by the socialite; the Israelis who modify and manufacture Soviet weapons to maintain the wink-and-nudge illusion of American neutrality. (Note to Teacher: There is a brief hot tub scene early in the film; the film may actually be started after this scene with little loss of content.)

Note to Teacher: Consider having students get permission to watch the film. The film includes some strong language, a hot tub scene, and some drug use.

Taking Action and Giving Service

Ask students to research organizations and websites that address women’s issues in the middle east. For example:

- Beyond the 11th is an organization founded by two 9/11 widows: <http://www.beyondthe11th.org/index.php>. Go to the tab “What You Can Do” and select an activity students can do as a group or individually.
- The film *Beyond Belief* is their story: <http://www.beyondthe11th.org/documentary.overview.php>

Reading #1

The War on Terror: The Fall of the Taliban

by Jill McCracken

The November 2000 election of George W. Bush as the 43rd President of the United States of America returned to government many officials from his father’s administration (‘Bush 41’). Given the continued lack of cooperation from Saddam Hussein, in hindsight, many regretted not insisting on regime change, that is, the removal of Saddam Hussein from power in 1991.

The new Bush Administration was barely nine months in office when the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon took place. Al Qaeda (Islamic for “the Base”), a terrorist organization led by Osama bin Laden, took responsibility for the attacks. Shocked and angry, President Bush, with the support of Congress, declared a ‘War on Terror’.

It was quickly revealed that the government of Afghanistan, known as the Taliban, were providing safe-harbor for al Qaeda. The U.S. delivered an ultimatum to the Taliban government:

1. Deliver to the US all of the leaders of Al Qaeda;
2. Release all imprisoned foreign nationals;
3. Close immediately every terrorist training camp;
4. Hand over every terrorist and their supporters to appropriate authorities; and
5. Give the United States full access to terrorist training camps for inspection.

In his September 20, 2001 speech to the nation, President Bush said, “These demands are not open to negotiation or discussion. The Taliban must act and act immediately. They will hand over the terrorists or they will share in their fate . . . Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists.”

On September 21, 2001, the Taliban responded that if the United States could bring evidence that bin Laden was guilty, they would hand him over, stating there was no evidence in their possession linking him to the September 11th attacks.

By late September, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia withdrew recognition of the Taliban as the legal government of Afghanistan, leaving Pakistan as the lone remaining country with diplomatic ties to Afghanistan.

The U.S. policy would come to be known as the Bush Doctrine and can be summarized as follows:

1. The right to secure itself from countries that harbor or give aid to terrorist groups;
2. Preventive war, which held that the United States could depose foreign regimes that represented a potential or perceived threat to the security of the United States;
3. Spreading democracy around the world as a strategy for combating terrorism; and
4. A willingness to use the U.S. military unilaterally to achieve these goals.

Some of these policies would be codified in a National Security Council text entitled the National Security Strategy of the United States published on September 20, 2002.

On October 7, 2001, before the onset of military operations, the Taliban ambassador to Pakistan offered to “detain bin Laden and try him under Islamic law” if the United States made a formal request and presented the Taliban with evidence. This counter offer was immediately rejected by the U.S. as insufficient.

By now, a relatively small number of U.S Special Forces soldiers arrived in Afghanistan, meeting with the rebel Afghan members of the Northern Alliance. The Northern Alliance was a military-political umbrella organization created by those who opposed the Taliban. They would ultimately join with U.S. forces in wresting control of Afghanistan from the Taliban and al Qaeda.

One of the earliest major battles in Afghanistan occurred at Mazari Sharif. On the night of November 12, 2001, Taliban forces fled from the city of Kabul, leaving under cover of darkness. By the time Northern Alliance forces arrived, only bomb craters, burned foliage, and the burnt out shells of Taliban gun emplacements and positions were there to greet them. A brief firefight resulted in the neutralization of the defenders as Kabul fell into the hands of U.S./NATO forces and the Northern Alliance. The battle of Kandahar and Tora-Bora would be followed by Operation Anaconda. Together with the support of U.S. air power, they would topple the Taliban from power in Afghanistan. Military forces from Australia, Canada, Germany, and Norway participated in multiple military engagements during this time.

The results were the liberation of over 13,000,000 Afghan citizens from oppressive Taliban rule and the prevention of al-Qaeda operations in that area. In support, the UN Security Council approved resolution 1378 which condemned “the Taliban for allowing Afghanistan to be used as a base for the export of terrorism by the Al-Qaeda network and other terrorist groups and for providing safe haven to Osama bin Laden, Al-Qaeda and others associated with them, and in this context supporting the efforts of the Afghan people to replace the Taliban regime.” It reaffirmed earlier resolutions 1368 and 1373, which called for international cooperation to root out terrorism.

The first task was the creating of a new, democratic government in Afghanistan. A land of tribal war lords, Hamid Karzai emerged as an influential man, who would accept the position as Interim President of Afghanistan.

However, by 2008, it was clear that the Taliban was not completely defeated. A resurgent Taliban, having regrouped in Pakistan, was again engaging U.S., Afghan and international forces in Afghanistan. In the first months of the Obama Administration, additional U.S. forces would deploy to Afghanistan to deal with increasing aggression by the Taliban. Pakistan would prove to be a fragile state, with the Taliban engaging their forces 20 miles from the capital city, Islamabad.

Reading #2

Buried Alive: Afghan Women Under the Taliban

by Jan Goodwin

found at <http://home.mtholyoke.edu/~mvcarmac/women2.html>

Reading #3

Five Years After the Fall of the Taliban: Afghanistan and the War on Terrorism

by Beth Ellen Cole and Jorge Aquilar

found at <http://www.usip.org/publications/five-years-after-fall-taliban-afghanistan-and-war-terrorism>

November 2006

Reading #4

BBC Q&A: Democracy in Afghanistan found at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/3238271.stm

Reading #5

Challenges faced by the Afghan elections: Could they follow current polarizations and ethnic divisions?

found at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/8317927.stm

Student Worksheet: War on Terror - Afghanistan: The Fall of the Taliban and After

Unit V: Post 9/11: Challenges and Consequences

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Name _____ Date _____

Period/Class _____

Web Quest for “The War Briefing”

Directions: Use this *Frontline* web site to complete the following activities:

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/warbriefing/>

1. The PBS television program *Frontline* has amassed a collection of sites that explore the challenges in the War on Terror in Afghanistan. Read the Introduction: October 28, 2008 found at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/warbriefing/etc/synopsis.html>.
2. Select two of the following links on the situation in Afghanistan. Use the links to research the situation based on interviews with the experts. Complete the questions that go with each section.
 - A. The War Briefing – What the next President will face? Select two of the following experts. Circle the two names you have chosen. What do they think the next President will face?
 - Robert D. Kaplan
 - Steve Coll
 - David Kilcullen
 - Henry Crumpton
 - Vali Nasr
 - Lt. Col. John Nagl (Ret.)
 - Michele Flournoy
 - Richard Armitage
 - Michael Scheuer
 - Adm. William Fallon (Ret.)

Summary #1:

Summary #2:

- B. The Karzai Question. Select and circle one of the following experts. What is his view on President Karzai and his policies?
 - Steve Coll
 - Robert D. Kaplan
 - Vali Nasr
 - Adm. William Fallon (Ret.)

Summary:

C. The New Pakistani Taliban. Select and circle one of the following experts. What is his perspective of the challenges the new Pakistani Taliban are presenting? In your opinion, what is the most challenging problem? Explain.

- Steve Coll
- Henry Crumpton
- Dexter Filkins
- Husain HaqqaniH-91

Summary:

D. A Strategy for the Tribal Areas. Select and circle two of the following experts. What are his thoughts on the strategy for the Tribal Areas? Do you agree? Disagree? Explain.

- Dexter Filkins
- Richard Armitage
- Henry Crumpton
- Adm. William Fallon (Ret.)
- Robert D. Kaplan
- Husain Haqqani
- Steve Coll

Summary #1:

Summary #2:

E. Any lessons we can grab from Iraq? Select and circle two of the following experts. Do they believe we can apply anything we have learned from Iraq in Afghanistan? Explain.

- Dexter Filkins
- Richard Armitage
- Henry Crumpton
- Adm. William Fallon (Ret.)
- Robert D. Kaplan
- Husain Haqqani
- Steve Coll

Summary #1:

Summary #2:

3. (Optional) Watch the full program “The War Briefing” online at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/warbriefing/view/> and take notes.

Student Worksheet: War on Terror - Afghanistan: The Fall of the Taliban and After

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Name _____ Date _____

Period/Class _____

Web Quest for U.S. Institute of Peace: Passing the Baton Conference

Directions: Use the USIP Passing the Baton Conference web site to complete the following activity.

1. Go to the USIP Passing the Baton Conference website:
<http://www.usip.org/programs/initiatives/passing-baton>
2. Visit the video page on the website
(http://www.youtube.com/view_play_list?p=8B1BA548FD6BB050) and select one of the following topics addressed at the Passing the Baton conference and view the video.
 - “Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan: Identifying Priorities, Linkages, and Trade-offs” (found at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QMw-PzFN9Yk>)
 - “The Way Forward in Afghanistan” (found at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UnSyHr29zb8>)
 - “Proliferation, Catastrophic Terrorism, and a New Security Paradigm” (found at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kMn46g4sntY>)
3. Listen to the session dealing with Afghanistan and/or terrorism. Summarize the problems and possible solutions identified by the speakers in the space below.
 - “The Way Forward in Afghanistan” (found at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UnSyHr29zb8>)
 - “Proliferation, Catastrophic Terrorism, and a New Security Paradigm” (found at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kMn46g4sntY>)