[Template:For](/wiki/Template:For" \o "Template:For) [Template:Distinguish](/wiki/Template:Distinguish) [Template:Pp-semi-indef](/wiki/Template:Pp-semi-indef) [Template:Pp-move-indef](/wiki/Template:Pp-move-indef) [Template:Infobox War Faction](/wiki/Template:Infobox_War_Faction) [Template:Campaignbox Afghanistan](/wiki/Template:Campaignbox_Afghanistan) [Template:Deobandi](/wiki/Template:Deobandi) The **Taliban** ([Template:Lang-ps](/wiki/Template:Lang-ps) [*Template:Transl*](/wiki/Template:Transl) "students"), alternatively spelled **Taleban**, is an [Islamic fundamentalist](/wiki/Islamic_fundamentalism) political movement in [Afghanistan](/wiki/Afghanistan) currently waging war (an [insurgency](/wiki/Insurgency), or [jihad](/wiki/Jihad#Warfare_(Jihad_bil_Saif))) within that country.[[1]](#cite_note-1)[[2]](#cite_note-2)From 1996 to 2001, it held power in Afghanistan and enforced a strict interpretation of [Sharia](/wiki/Sharia), or Islamic law, of which the international community and leading Muslims have been highly critical.<ref name=Abrams>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref> Until his death in 2013, Mullah [Mohammed Omar](/wiki/Mohammed_Omar) was the supreme commander and spiritual leader of the Taliban. [Mullah Akhtar Mansour](/wiki/Akhtar_Mansour) was elected as his replacement in 2015,<ref name=Mansoor-elected>

* [Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)
* [Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)
* [Mullah Omar: Taliban choose deputy Mansour as successor](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-33721074), BBC News, July 30, 2015</ref> and following Mansour's killing in a May 2016 U.S. drone strike, Mawlawi [Haibatullah Akhundzada](/wiki/Haibatullah_Akhundzada) became the group's leader.[[3]](#cite_note-3)

The Taliban emerged in 1994 as one of the prominent factions in the [Afghan Civil War](/wiki/Afghan_Civil_War_(1992–96)),[[4]](#cite_note-4) and largely consisted of students recently trained in [madrassas in Pakistan](/wiki/Madrassas_in_Pakistan).[[5]](#cite_note-5)[[6]](#cite_note-6) Under the leadership of [Mohammed Omar](/wiki/Mohammed_Omar), the movement spread throughout most of Afghanistan, sequestering power from the [Mujahideen](/wiki/Mujahideen) warlords, whose corruption and despotism Afghans had tired of. The [Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan](/wiki/Islamic_Emirate_of_Afghanistan) was established in 1996 and the Afghan capital transferred to [Kandahar](/wiki/Kandahar). It held control of most of the country until being overthrown by the American-led [invasion of Afghanistan](/wiki/War_in_Afghanistan_(2001–14)) in December 2001 following the [September 11 attacks](/wiki/September_11_attacks). At its peak, formal [diplomatic recognition](/wiki/Diplomatic_recognition) of the Taliban's government was acknowledged by only three nations: [Pakistan](/wiki/Pakistan), [Saudi Arabia](/wiki/Saudi_Arabia), and the [United Arab Emirates](/wiki/United_Arab_Emirates). The group later regrouped as [an insurgency](/wiki/Taliban_insurgency) movement to fight the American-backed [Karzai administration](/wiki/Presidency_of_Hamid_Karzai) and the [NATO](/wiki/NATO)-led [International Security Assistance Force](/wiki/International_Security_Assistance_Force) (ISAF).

The Taliban have been condemned internationally for the harsh enforcement of their interpretation of Islamic [Sharia](/wiki/Sharia) law, which has resulted in the brutal treatment of many Afghans, especially [women](/wiki/Taliban_treatment_of_women).<ref name=Skain>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref>[[7]](#cite_note-7) During their rule from 1996 to 2001, the Taliban and their allies committed massacres against Afghan civilians, denied UN food supplies to 160,000 starving civilians and conducted a policy of [scorched earth](/wiki/Scorched_earth), burning vast areas of fertile land and destroying tens of thousands of homes.<ref name=Rashid2>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref>[[8]](#cite_note-8)[[9]](#cite_note-9)[[10]](#cite_note-10)[[11]](#cite_note-11)[[12][12]](#cite_note-12) In its post-9/11 insurgency, the group has been accused of using [terrorism](/wiki/Terrorism) as a specific tactic to further their ideological and political goals. According to the [United Nations](/wiki/United_Nations), the Taliban and their allies were responsible for 76% of Afghan [civilian casualties](/wiki/Civilian_casualties_in_the_war_in_Afghanistan_(2001–present)) in 2010, 80% in 2011, and 80% in 2012.[[13]](#cite_note-13)<ref name=Skaine>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref><ref name=Shanty1>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref>[[14]](#cite_note-14)[[15]](#cite_note-15)[[16]](#cite_note-16) The Taliban's ideology has been described as [anti-modern](/wiki/Development_criticism), combining an "innovative form" of [*sharia*](/wiki/Sharia) Islamic law based on [Deobandi](/wiki/Deobandi) [fundamentalism](/wiki/Fundamentalism)[[17]](#cite_note-17) and the [militant Islamism](/wiki/Militant_Islamism) and [Salafi jihadism](/wiki/Salafi_jihadism) of Osama bin Laden,[[17]](#cite_note-17) with [Pashtun](/wiki/Pashtuns) social and cultural norms known as [Pashtunwali](/wiki/Pashtunwali),[[18]](#cite_note-18)[[19]](#cite_note-19)[[20]](#cite_note-20)[Template:Page needed](/wiki/Template:Page_needed)<ref name=Shaffer>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref> as most Taliban are [Pashtun](/wiki/Pashtuns) tribesmen.

The Pakistani [Inter-Services Intelligence](/wiki/Inter-Services_Intelligence) and military are widely alleged by the international community to have provided support to the Taliban during their founding and time in power, and of continuing to support the Taliban during the insurgency. [Pakistan](/wiki/Pakistan) states that it dropped all support for the group after the [September 11 attacks](/wiki/September_11_attacks). [Al-Qaeda](/wiki/Al-Qaeda) also supported the Taliban with fighters from Arab countries and Central Asia. Saudi Arabia provided financial support. Hundreds of thousands of people were forced to flee to [United Front](/wiki/Northern_Alliance)-controlled territory, Pakistan, and [Iran](/wiki/Iran).<ref name=Giraldo>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref><ref name=Nojumi>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref>[[21]](#cite_note-21)[[22]](#cite_note-22)<ref name=Barnes>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref>[[23]](#cite_note-23)[[24]](#cite_note-24)[[25]](#cite_note-25)[[26]](#cite_note-26)<ref name=Nojum>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref>

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## Etymology[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

The word *Taliban* is [Pashto](/wiki/Pashto), [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) [*Template:Transl*](/wiki/Template:Transl), meaning "students", the plural of [*ṭālib*](/wiki/Talibe). This is a [loanword](/wiki/Loanword) from [Arabic](/wiki/Arabic) [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) [*Template:Transl*](/wiki/Template:Transl), using the [Persian](/wiki/Persian_language) plural ending *-ān* [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang). In Arabic [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) [*Template:Transl*](/wiki/Template:Transl) means not "students" but "two students", as it is a "dual form", the Arabic plural being [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) [*Template:Transl*](/wiki/Template:Transl)—occasionally causing some confusion to Arabic speakers. Since becoming a loanword in English, *Taliban*, besides a plural noun referring to the group, has also been used as a singular noun referring to an individual. For example, [John Walker Lindh](/wiki/John_Walker_Lindh) has been referred to as "an American Taliban", rather than "an American Talib". In the English language newspapers of Pakistan, the word *Talibans* is often used when referring to more than one Taliban. The spelling *Taliban* has come to be predominant over *Taleban* in English.[[27]](#cite_note-27)[[28]](#cite_note-28)

## History[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

### Background[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|President](/wiki/File:Reagan_sitting_with_people_from_the_Afghanistan-Pakistan_region_in_February_1983.jpg) [Ronald Reagan](/wiki/Ronald_Reagan) meeting with [Afghan Mujahideen](/wiki/Afghan_Mujahideen) leaders in the Oval Office in 1983 When [Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq](/wiki/Muhammad_Zia-ul-Haq) became [President of Pakistan](/wiki/List_of_Presidents_of_Pakistan) he feared that the Soviets were planning to invade [Balochistan](/wiki/Balochistan,_Pakistan), Pakistan so he sent [Akhtar Abdur Rahman](/wiki/Akhtar_Abdur_Rahman) to Saudi Arabia to garner support for the Afghan resistance against Soviet occupation forces. In the meantime, the United States and Saudi Arabia joined the struggle against the [Soviet Union](/wiki/Soviet_Union) by providing all the funds.[[29]](#cite_note-29) Zia-ul-Haq aligned himself with Pakistan's [Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam](/wiki/Jamiat_Ulema-e-Islam) and later picked General Akhtar Abdur Rahman to lead the insurgency against the Soviet Union inside Afghanistan. About 90,000 Afghans, including [Mohammed Omar](/wiki/Mohammed_Omar), were trained by Pakistan's ISI during the 1980s.[[29]](#cite_note-29) After the fall of the Soviet-backed regime of [Mohammad Najibullah](/wiki/Mohammad_Najibullah) in 1992, several Afghan political parties agreed on a peace and power-sharing agreement, the [Peshawar Accord](/wiki/Peshawar_Accord). The accord created the [Islamic State of Afghanistan](/wiki/Islamic_State_of_Afghanistan) and appointed an interim government for a transitional period. According to [Human Rights Watch](/wiki/Human_Rights_Watch):

[Template:Quote](/wiki/Template:Quote)

Gulbuddin Hekmatyar received operational, financial and military support from Pakistan.[[30]](#cite_note-30) Afghanistan expert [Amin Saikal](/wiki/Amin_Saikal) concludes in *Modern Afghanistan: A History of Struggle and Survival*:

[Template:Quote](/wiki/Template:Quote)

In addition, [Saudi Arabia](/wiki/Saudi_Arabia) and [Iran](/wiki/Iran) – as competitors for regional [hegemony](/wiki/Hegemony) – supported Afghan militias' hostility towards each other. According to Human Rights Watch, Iran assisted the [Shia](/wiki/Shia) [Hazara](/wiki/Hazaras) [Hizb-e Wahdat](/wiki/Hizb-e_Wahdat) forces of [Abdul Ali Mazari](/wiki/Abdul_Ali_Mazari), as Iran attempted to maximize Wahdat's military power and influence. Saudi Arabia supported the [Wahhabite](/wiki/Wahhabite) [Abdul Rasul Sayyaf](/wiki/Abdul_Rasul_Sayyaf) and his [Ittihad-i Islami](/wiki/Ittihad-i_Islami) faction.[[31]](#cite_note-31)[[32]](#cite_note-32)[[33]](#cite_note-33) Conflict between the two militias soon escalated. A publication by [George Washington University](/wiki/George_Washington_University) describes:

[Template:Quote](/wiki/Template:Quote)

[thumb|The Taliban emerged in the southern Afghan city of](/wiki/File:Aerial_view_of_a_section_of_Kandahar_in_2013.jpg) [Kandahar](/wiki/Kandahar) around September 1994.

Due to the sudden initiation of the civil war, working government departments, police units or a system of justice and accountability for the newly created Islamic State of Afghanistan did not have time to form. Horrific crimes were committed by criminals and individuals inside different factions. Rare ceasefires, usually negotiated by representatives of the Islamic State's newly appointed Defense Minister [Ahmad Shah Massoud](/wiki/Ahmad_Shah_Massoud), President [Sibghatullah Mojaddedi](/wiki/Sibghatullah_Mojaddedi) and later President [Burhanuddin Rabbani](/wiki/Burhanuddin_Rabbani) (the interim government), or officials from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), commonly collapsed within days.[[31]](#cite_note-31) The countryside in northern Afghanistan, parts of which was under the control of Defense Minister Massoud remained calm and some reconstruction took place. The city of Herat under the rule of Islamic State ally [Ismail Khan](/wiki/Ismail_Khan) also witnessed relative calm.

Meanwhile, southern Afghanistan was neither under the control of foreign-backed militias nor the government in Kabul, but was ruled by local leaders such as [Gul Agha Sherzai](/wiki/Gul_Agha_Sherzai) and their militias.

### Beginnings[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]

In 1991, the Taliban (a movement originating from [Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam](/wiki/Jamiat_Ulema-e-Islam)-run religious schools for Afghan refugees in Pakistan) also developed in Afghanistan as a politico-religious force. The most often-repeated story and the Taliban's own story of how Mullah Omar first mobilized his followers is that in the spring of 1994, neighbors in [Singesar](/wiki/Singesar) told him that the local governor had abducted two teenage girls, shaved their heads, and taken them to a camp where they were raped. 30 Taliban (with only 16 rifles) freed the girls, and hanged the governor from the barrel of a tank. Later that year, two militia commanders killed civilians while fighting for the right to [sodomize](/wiki/Sodomize) a young boy. The Taliban freed him. [Mullah Omar](/wiki/Mohammed_Omar) started his movement with fewer than 50 armed [madrassah](/wiki/Madrasa) students in his hometown of [Kandahar](/wiki/Kandahar).[[34]](#cite_note-34)[[35]](#cite_note-35) In the beginning the Taliban numbered in the hundreds, were badly equipped and low on munitions. Within months however 15,000 students arrived from the madrassas in Pakistan. The Taliban's first major military activity was in 1994, when they marched northward from [Maiwand](/wiki/Maywand_District) and captured Kandahar City and the surrounding provinces, losing only a few dozen men. When they took control of Kandahar in 1994, they forced the surrender of dozens of local Pashtun leaders who had presided over a situation of complete lawlessness and atrocities. The Taliban also took over a border crossing at Spin Baldak and an ammunition dump from [Gulbuddin Hekmatyar](/wiki/Gulbuddin_Hekmatyar). In the course of 1994, the Taliban took control of 12 of 34 [provinces](/wiki/Provinces_of_Afghanistan) not under central government control. Militias controlling the different areas often surrendered without a fight. Omar's original commanders were "a mixture of former small-unit military commanders and madrassa teachers." <ref name=Felbab-Brow>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref>[[36]](#cite_note-36)[[37]](#cite_note-37)[[38]](#cite_note-38)[[39]](#cite_note-39) At the same time most of the militia factions (Hekmatyar's Hezb-i Islami, Dostum's Junbish-i Milli and Hezb-i Wahdat) fighting in the battle for control of Kabul were defeated militarily by forces of the Islamic State's [Defense Minister](/wiki/Defense_Minister) [Ahmad Shah Massoud](/wiki/Ahmad_Shah_Massoud). Bombardment of the capital came to a halt and the Islamic State initiated measures to restore law and order to the capital. Massoud furthermore tried to initiate a nationwide political process with the goal of national [consolidation](/wiki/Democratic_consolidation) and democratic elections. Ahmad Shah Massoud, known as the "Lion of Panjshir", had been named "the Afghan who won the Cold War" by the [*Wall Street Journal*](/wiki/Wall_Street_Journal) and had defeated the [Soviet Red Army](/wiki/Soviet_Red_Army) nine times in north-eastern Afghanistan. Hoping for the Taliban to be allies in bringing stability to Afghanistan, Massoud invited the Taliban to join the consolidation process and to contribute to stability. Unarmed, Massoud went to talk to Taliban leaders in [Maidan Shar](/wiki/Maidan_Shar) to convince them to join the initiated political process, so that democratic elections could be held to decide on a future government for Afghanistan.[[25]](#cite_note-25)[[40]](#cite_note-40)[[41]](#cite_note-41)[[42]](#cite_note-42)[[43]](#cite_note-43)[[44]](#cite_note-44) The Taliban declined to join such a political process. When Massoud returned unharmed to Kabul, the Taliban leader who had received him as his guest was killed by other senior Taliban for failing to execute Massoud while the possibility had presented itself.

[thumb|Map showing political control in Afghanistan in the fall of 1996, following the capture of Kabul by the Taliban.](/wiki/File:Afghanistan_politisch_1996.png)

In a bid to establish their rule over Afghanistan, the Taliban started shelling the capital in early 1995. [Amnesty International](/wiki/Amnesty_International), referring to the Taliban offensive, wrote in a 1995 report: [Template:Quote](/wiki/Template:Quote)

The Taliban, however, suffered a devastating defeat against government forces of the Islamic State under the command of Ahmad Shah Massoud. The Taliban's early victories in 1994 were followed by a series of defeats that resulted in heavy losses which led analysts to believe that the Taliban movement as such might have run its course. Pakistan, however, started to provide stronger military support to the Taliban. On September 26, 1996, as the Taliban with military support by Pakistan and financial support by Saudi Arabia prepared for another major offensive, Massoud ordered a full retreat from Kabul to continue anti-Taliban resistance in the Hindu Kush mountains instead of engaging in street battles in Kabul. The Taliban entered Kabul on September 27, 1996, and established the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. Many analysts like [Amin Saikal](/wiki/Amin_Saikal) describe the Taliban as developing into a [proxy](/wiki/Proxy_war) force for Pakistan's regional interests.[[32]](#cite_note-32)[[37]](#cite_note-37)[[41]](#cite_note-41)[[45]](#cite_note-45)[[46]](#cite_note-46)[[47]](#cite_note-47)

### Taliban Emirate against United Front[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

#### Role of the Pakistani military[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]

The Taliban were largely founded by Pakistan's [Inter-Services Intelligence](/wiki/Inter-Services_Intelligence) (ISI) during 1994. The I.S.I. used the Taliban to establish a regime in Afghanistan which would be favorable to Pakistan, as they were trying to gain [strategic depth](/wiki/Strategic_depth). Since the creation of the Taliban, the ISI and the Pakistani military have given financial, logistical and military support.[[48]](#cite_note-48)<ref name=Shaffer2>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref>[[49]](#cite_note-49)[[50]](#cite_note-50)<ref name=Jones>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref><ref name=Randal>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref><ref name=Peiman>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref><ref name=Hilali>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref><ref name=Rumer>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref><ref name=Pape>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref><ref name=Harf>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref><ref name=Hinnells>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref><ref name=Boase>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref><ref name=Armajani-48>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref><ref name=Bayo>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref><ref name=Goodson>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref>

According to Pakistani Afghanistan expert [Ahmed Rashid](/wiki/Ahmed_Rashid), "between 1994 and 1999, an estimated 80,000 to 100,000 Pakistanis trained and fought in Afghanistan" on the side of the Taliban. [Peter Tomsen](/wiki/Peter_Tomsen) stated that up until 9/11 Pakistani military and ISI officers along with thousands of regular Pakistani armed forces personnel had been involved in the fighting in Afghanistan.<ref name=Maley>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref><ref name=Tomsen-322>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref>

During 2001, according to several international sources, 28,000-30,000 Pakistani nationals, 14,000-15,000 Afghan Taliban and 2,000-3,000 [Al-Qaeda](/wiki/Al-Qaeda) militants were fighting against anti-Taliban forces in Afghanistan as a roughly 45,000 strong military force. Pakistani President [Pervez Musharraf](/wiki/Pervez_Musharraf) – then as Chief of Army Staff – was responsible for sending thousands of Pakistanis to fight alongside the Taliban and Bin Laden against the forces of Ahmad Shah Massoud. Of the estimated 28,000 Pakistani nationals fighting in Afghanistan, 8,000 were militants recruited in [madrassas](/wiki/Madrassa) filling regular Taliban ranks. The document further states that the parents of those Pakistani nationals "know nothing regarding their child's military involvement with the Taliban until their bodies are brought back to Pakistan." A 1998 document by the [U.S. State Department](/wiki/U.S._State_Department) confirms that "20–40 percent of [regular] Taliban soldiers are Pakistani." According to the U.S. State Department report and reports by Human Rights Watch, the other Pakistani nationals fighting in Afghanistan were regular Pakistani soldiers, especially from the [Frontier Corps](/wiki/Frontier_Corps) but also from the army providing direct combat support.[[24]](#cite_note-24)[[25]](#cite_note-25)[[45]](#cite_note-45)[[51]](#cite_note-51)[[52]](#cite_note-52)[[53]](#cite_note-53)[[54]](#cite_note-54) Human Rights Watch wrote in 2000: [Template:Quote](/wiki/Template:Quote)

On August 1, 1997 the Taliban launched an attack on Sheberghan, the main military base of Abdul Rashid Dostum. Dostum has said the reason the attack was successful was due to 1500 Pakistani commandos taking part and that the Pakistani air force also gave support.<ref name=Clements2>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref>

In 1998, Iran accused Pakistan of sending its air force to bomb [Mazar-i-Sharif](/wiki/Mazar-i-Sharif) in support of Taliban forces and directly accused Pakistani troops for "war crimes at [Bamiyan](/wiki/Bamiyan)". The same year, Russia said Pakistan was responsible for the "military expansion" of the Taliban in northern Afghanistan by sending large numbers of Pakistani troops, some of whom had subsequently been taken as prisoners by the anti-Taliban United Front.[[55]](#cite_note-55)[[56]](#cite_note-56) During 2000, the UN Security Council imposed an arms embargo against military support to the Taliban, with UN officials explicitly singling out Pakistan. The UN secretary-general implicitly criticized Pakistan for its military support and the Security Council stated it was "deeply distress[ed] over reports of involvement in the fighting, on the Taliban side, of thousands of non-Afghan nationals." In July 2001, several countries, including the United States, accused Pakistan of being "in violation of U.N. sanctions because of its military aid to the Taliban." The Taliban also obtained financial resources from Pakistan. In 1997 alone, after the [capture of Kabul](/wiki/Battle_of_Kabul_(1992–96)) by the Taliban, Pakistan gave $30 million in aid and a further $10 million for government wages.[[57]](#cite_note-57)[[58]](#cite_note-58)<ref name=Byman>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref>

During 2000, [British Intelligence](/wiki/Secret_Intelligence_Service) reported that the ISI was taking an active role in several [Al-Qaeda](/wiki/Al-Qaeda) training camps. The ISI helped with the construction of training camps for both the Taliban and Al-Qaeda. From 1996 to 2001 the [Al-Qaeda](/wiki/Al-Qaeda) of [Osama bin Laden](/wiki/Osama_bin_Laden) and [Ayman al-Zawahiri](/wiki/Ayman_al-Zawahiri) became a state within the Taliban state. Bin Laden sent Arab and Central Asian Al-Qaeda militants to join the fight against the United Front, among them his [Brigade 055](/wiki/055_Brigade).<ref name=Atkins>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref><ref name=Litwak>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref><ref name=McGrath>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref>[[59]](#cite_note-59)<ref name=autogenerated3>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>

After the 9/11 attacks, Pakistan claimed to have ended its support to the Taliban. But with the fall of Kabul to anti-Taliban forces in November 2001, ISI forces worked with and helped Taliban militias who were in full retreat. In November 2001, Taliban, Al-Qaeda combatants and ISI operatives were safely evacuated from Kunduz on [Pakistan Army](/wiki/Pakistan_Army) cargo aircraft to [Pakistan Air Force](/wiki/Pakistan_Air_Force) bases in [Chitral](/wiki/Chitral) and [Gilgit](/wiki/Gilgit) in Pakistan's [Northern Areas](/wiki/Northern_Areas) in what has been dubbed the ["Airlift of Evil."](/wiki/Kunduz_airlift) Former Pakistani president Pervez Musharraf wrote in his memoirs that [Richard Armitage](/wiki/Richard_Armitage_(politician)), the former US deputy secretary of state, said Pakistan would be "bombed back to the stone-age" if it continued to support the Taliban, although Armitage has since denied using the "stone age" phrase.<ref name=Lansford-37>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref><ref name=Lall>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref>[[60]](#cite_note-60)[[61]](#cite_note-61)<ref name=Morgan>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref><ref name=Musharraf>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref><ref name=Gartenstein-Ross>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref><ref name=Hansen>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref><ref name=Riedel-65>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref>

The role of the Pakistani military has been described by international observers as well as by the anti-Taliban leader Ahmad Shah Massoud as a "creeping invasion". Yet the "creeping invasion" proved unable to defeat the severely outnumbered anti-Taliban forces.[[62]](#cite_note-62) Pakistan has been accused of continuing to support the Taliban since 9/11, an allegation Pakistan denies.[[23]](#cite_note-23)

#### Anti-Taliban resistance under Massoud[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=7)]

[thumb|The](/wiki/File:Afghanistan_politisch_2000.png) [Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan](/wiki/Islamic_Emirate_of_Afghanistan) and the [Northern Alliance](/wiki/Northern_Alliance) in the spring of 2000, when the Taliban was at the height of its power.

[Ahmad Shah Massoud](/wiki/Ahmad_Shah_Massoud) and [Abdul Rashid Dostum](/wiki/Abdul_Rashid_Dostum), former enemies, created the United Front ([Northern Alliance](/wiki/Northern_Alliance)) against the Taliban that were preparing offensives against the remaining areas under the control of Massoud and those under the control of Dostum. The United Front included beside the dominantly [Tajik](/wiki/Tajiks) forces of Massoud and the [Uzbek](/wiki/Uzbeks) forces of Dostum, [Hazara](/wiki/Hazaras) troops led by [Haji Mohammad Mohaqiq](/wiki/Haji_Mohammad_Mohaqiq) and [Pashtun](/wiki/Pashtuns) forces under the leadership of commanders such as [Abdul Haq](/wiki/Abdul_Haq_(Afghan_leader)) and [Haji Abdul Qadir](/wiki/Haji_Abdul_Qadir). Notable politicians and diplomats of the United Front included [Abdul Rahim Ghafoorzai](/wiki/Abdul_Rahim_Ghafoorzai), [Abdullah Abdullah](/wiki/Abdullah_Abdullah) and [Massoud Khalili](/wiki/Massoud_Khalili). From the Taliban conquest of Kabul in September 1996 until November 2001 the United Front controlled roughly 30% of Afghanistan's population in provinces such as [Badakhshan](/wiki/Badakhshan_Province), [Kapisa](/wiki/Kapisa_Province), [Takhar](/wiki/Takhar_Province) and parts of [Parwan](/wiki/Parwan_Province), [Kunar](/wiki/Kunar_Province), [Nuristan](/wiki/Nuristan_Province), [Laghman](/wiki/Laghman_Province), [Samangan](/wiki/Samangan_Province), [Kunduz](/wiki/Kunduz_Province), [Ghōr](/wiki/Ghor_Province) and [Bamyan](/wiki/Bamyan_Province).

After longstanding battles, especially for the northern city of [Mazar-i-Sharif](/wiki/Mazar-i-Sharif), Abdul Rashid Dostum and his Junbish forces were defeated by the Taliban and their allies in 1998. Dostum subsequently went into exile. Ahmad Shah Massoud remained the only major anti-Taliban leader inside Afghanistan who was able to defend vast parts of his territory against the Taliban.

In the areas under his control Massoud set up democratic institutions and signed the [Women's Rights](/wiki/Women's_Rights) Declaration. In the area of Massoud, women and girls did not have to wear the Afghan burqa. They were allowed to work and to go to school. In at least two known instances, Massoud personally intervened against cases of forced marriage. [Template:Quote](/wiki/Template:Quote) [Template:Quote](/wiki/Template:Quote)

Afghan traditions would need a generation or more to overcome and could only be challenged by education, he said. Humayun Tandar, who took part as an Afghan diplomat in the 2001 [International Conference on Afghanistan](/wiki/International_Conference_on_Afghanistan,_Bonn_(2001)) in Bonn, said that "strictures of language, ethnicity, region were [also] stifling for Massoud. That is why ... he wanted to create a unity which could surpass the situation in which we found ourselves and still find ourselves to this day." This applied also to strictures of religion. Jean-José Puig describes how Massoud often led prayers before a meal or at times asked his fellow Muslims to lead the prayer but also did not hesitate to ask a Christian friend Jean-José Puig or the Jewish [Princeton University](/wiki/Princeton_University) Professor Michael Barry: "Jean-José, we believe in the same God. Please, tell us the prayer before lunch or dinner in your own language."[[25]](#cite_note-25) Human Rights Watch cites no human rights crimes for the forces under direct control of Massoud for the period from October 1996 until the assassination of Massoud in September 2001. 400,000 to one million Afghans fled from the Taliban to the area of Massoud.[[54]](#cite_note-54)[[63]](#cite_note-63)[[64]](#cite_note-64) [National Geographic](/wiki/National_Geographic_Society) concluded in its documentary *"Inside the Taliban"*: [Template:Quote](/wiki/Template:Quote)

The Taliban repeatedly offered Massoud a position of power to make him stop his resistance. Massoud declined. He explained in one interview: [Template:Quote](/wiki/Template:Quote)

The United Front in its [Proposals for Peace](http://web.archive.org/web/20120310123118/http://www.peace-initiatives.com/frame.htm) demanded the Taliban to join a political process leading towards nationwide democratic elections. In early 2001 Massoud employed a new strategy of local military pressure and global political appeals. Resentment was increasingly gathering against Taliban rule from the bottom of Afghan society, including the Pashtun areas. Massoud publicized their cause of "popular consensus, general elections and democracy" worldwide. At the same time he was very wary not to revive the failed Kabul government of the early 1990s. Already in 1999 he started the training of police forces which he trained specifically in order to keep order and protect the civilian population in case the United Front would be successful.[[25]](#cite_note-25)[[65]](#cite_note-65)[[66]](#cite_note-66) Massoud stated: [Template:Quote](/wiki/Template:Quote)

From 1999 onwards a renewed process was set into motion by the Tajik Ahmad Shah Massoud and the Pashtun Abdul Haq to unite all the ethnicities of Afghanistan. While Massoud united the Tajiks, Hazara and Uzbeks as well as some Pashtun commanders under his United Front command, the famed Pashtun commander [Abdul Haq](/wiki/Abdul_Haq_(Afghan_leader)) received increasing numbers of defecting Pashtun Taliban as "Taliban popularity trended downward". Both agreed to work together with the exiled Afghan king [Zahir Shah](/wiki/Zahir_Shah). International officials who met with representatives of the new alliance, which Pulitzer Prize winner [Steve Coll](/wiki/Steve_Coll) referred to as the "grand Pashtun-Tajik alliance", said, "It's crazy that you have this today ... Pashtuns, Tajiks, Uzbeks, Hazara ... They were all ready to buy in to the process ... to work under the king's banner for an ethnically balanced Afghanistan." Senior diplomat and Afghanistan expert [Peter Tomsen](/wiki/Peter_Tomsen) wrote: "The ‘Lion of Kabul’ [Abdul Haq] and the ‘Lion of Panjshir’ [Ahmad Shah Massoud] ... Haq, Massoud, and Karzai, Afghanistan’s three leading moderates, could transcend the Pashtun—non-Pashtun, north-south divide." The most senior Hazara and Uzbek leader were also part of the process. In late 2000, Massoud officially brought together this new alliance in a meeting in Northern Afghanistan to discuss, among other things, "a Loya Jirga, or a traditional council of elders, to settle political turmoil in Afghanistan". That part of the Pashtun-Tajik-Hazara-Uzbek peace plan did eventually materialize. An account of the meeting by author and journalist [Sebastian Junger](/wiki/Sebastian_Junger) says: "In 2000, when I was there ... I happened to be there in a very interesting time. ... Massoud brought together Afghan leaders from all ethnic groups. They flew from London, Paris, the USA, all parts of Afghanistan, Pakistan, India. He brought them all into the northern area where he was. He held a council of ... prominent Afghans from all over the world, brought there to discuss the Afghan government after the Taliban. ... we met all these men and interviewed them briefly. One was Hamid Karzai; I did not have any idea who he would end up being ..." [[66]](#cite_note-66)<ref name=Tomsen-565>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref>[[67]](#cite_note-67)[[68]](#cite_note-68)[[69]](#cite_note-69) In early 2001, Ahmad Shah Massoud with ethnic leaders from all of Afghanistan addressed the [European Parliament](/wiki/European_Parliament) in [Brussels](/wiki/Brussels) asking the [international community](/wiki/International_community) to provide [humanitarian](/wiki/Humanitarian) help to the people of Afghanistan. He stated that the Taliban and [Al-Qaeda](/wiki/Al-Qaeda) had introduced "a very wrong perception of [Islam](/wiki/Islam)" and that without the support of Pakistan and Bin Laden the Taliban would not be able to sustain their military campaign for up to a year. On this visit to Europe he also warned that his intelligence had gathered information about a large-scale attack on U.S. soil being imminent. The president of the European Parliament, [Nicole Fontaine](/wiki/Nicole_Fontaine), called him the "pole of liberty in Afghanistan".[[70]](#cite_note-70)[[71]](#cite_note-71)[[72]](#cite_note-72)[[73]](#cite_note-73) On September 9, 2001, Massoud, then aged 48, was the target of a [suicide attack](/wiki/Suicide_attack) by two Arabs posing as journalists at Khwaja Bahauddin, in the [Takhar Province](/wiki/Takhar_Province) of Afghanistan. Massoud, who had survived countless assassination attempts over a period of 26 years, died in a helicopter taking him to a hospital. The first attempt on Massoud's life had been carried out by Hekmatyar and two Pakistani ISI agents in 1975, when Massoud was only 22 years old. In early 2001, Al-Qaeda would-be assassins were captured by Massoud's forces while trying to enter his territory.[[33]](#cite_note-33)[[66]](#cite_note-66)[[74]](#cite_note-74)[[75]](#cite_note-75) The funeral, though in a rather rural area, was attended by hundreds of thousands of mourning people.

The assassination of Massoud is believed to have a connection to the [September 11 attacks](/wiki/September_11_attacks) on U.S. soil, which killed nearly 3000 people, and which appeared to be the terrorist attack that Massoud had warned against in his speech to the European Parliament several months earlier. [John P. O'Neill](/wiki/John_P._O'Neill) was a counter-terrorism expert and the Assistant Director of the [FBI](/wiki/FBI) until late 2001. He retired from the FBI and was offered the position of director of security at the [World Trade Center](/wiki/World_Trade_Center_(1973–2001)) (WTC). He took the job at the WTC two weeks before 9/11. On September 10, 2001, O'Neill told two of his friends, "We're due. And we're due for something big.... Some things have happened in Afghanistan. [referring to the assassination of Massoud] I don't like the way things are lining up in Afghanistan.... I sense a shift, and I think things are going to happen ... soon." O'Neill died on September 11, 2001, when the [South Tower](/wiki/Two_World_Trade_Center) collapsed.[[76]](#cite_note-76)[[77]](#cite_note-77) After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, Massoud's United Front troops and United Front troops of Abdul Rashid Dostum (who returned from exile) ousted the Taliban from power in Kabul with American air support in [Operation Enduring Freedom](/wiki/War_in_Afghanistan_(2001–14)). From October to December 2001, the United Front gained control of much of the country and played a crucial role in establishing the post-Taliban interim government under Hamid Karzai.

### U.S.-led NATO invasion of Afghanistan, Taliban overthrow and insurgency[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=8)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumbnail|Taliban border guard in 2001](/wiki/File:Taliban-Torkham-2001.jpg)

#### Prelude[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=9)]

After the September 11 attacks on the U.S. and the [PENTTBOM](/wiki/PENTTBOM) investigation, the United States made the following demands of the Taliban,[[78]](#cite_note-78)[Template:Quote](/wiki/Template:Quote)

The U.S. petitioned the international community to back a military campaign to overthrow the Taliban. The U.N. issued two resolutions on terrorism after the September 11 attacks. The resolutions called on all states to "[increase] cooperation and full implementation of the relevant international conventions relating to terrorism" and specified consensus recommendations for all countries. The Security Council did not authorize military intervention in Afghanistan of any kind, and nowhere in the U.N resolutions did it say military operations in Afghanistan were justified or conformed to international law. Despite this, NATO approved a campaign against Afghanistan as self-defense against armed attack.[[79]](#cite_note-79)[[80]](#cite_note-80) The Taliban ambassador to Pakistan, Abdul Salem Zaeef, responded to the ultimatum by demanding "convincing evidence" that Bin Laden was involved in the attacks, stating "our position is that if America has evidence and proof, they should produce it." Additionally, the Taliban insisted that any trial of Bin Laden be held in an Afghan court. Zaeef also claimed that "4,000 Jews working in the Trade Center had prior knowledge of the suicide missions, and 'were absent on that day.'" This response was generally dismissed as a delaying tactic, rather than a sincere attempt to cooperate with the ultimatum.[[81][81]](#cite_note-81)[[82]](#cite_note-82)[[83][83]](#cite_note-83)[[84]](#cite_note-84)[[85]](#cite_note-85)[[86]](#cite_note-86) On September 22, the [United Arab Emirates](/wiki/United_Arab_Emirates), and later [Saudi Arabia](/wiki/Saudi_Arabia), withdrew recognition of the Taliban as Afghanistan's legal government, leaving neighbouring Pakistan as the only remaining country with diplomatic ties. On October 4, the Taliban agreed to turn bin Laden over to Pakistan for trial in an international [tribunal](/wiki/Tribunal) that operated according to Islamic [*Sharia*](/wiki/Sharia) law, but Pakistan blocked the offer as it was not possible to guarantee his safety. On October 7, the Taliban ambassador to Pakistan offered to detain bin Laden and try him under Islamic law if the U.S. made a formal request and presented the Taliban with evidence. A Bush administration official, speaking on condition of anonymity, rejected the Taliban offer, and stated that the U.S. would not negotiate their demands.[[87]](#cite_note-87)[[88]](#cite_note-88)[[89]](#cite_note-89)

#### Coalition attack[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=10)]

[thumb|The Taliban were removed from power in October 2001 by a unified effort of](/wiki/File:SF_Sgt_Mario_Vigil_with_SF_and_NA_forces_west_of_Konduz_in_November_2001.jpg) [United Islamic Front](/wiki/United_Islamic_Front) (Northern Alliance) ground forces, small [U.S. Special Operations teams](/wiki/United_States_special_operations_forces) and [U.S. air support](/wiki/USAF). On October 7, less than one month after the September 11 attacks, the U.S., aided by the United Kingdom, Canada, and other countries including several from the NATO alliance, initiated [military action](/wiki/War_in_Afghanistan_(2001–present)), bombing Taliban and Al-Qaeda-related camps.[[90]](#cite_note-90)[[91]](#cite_note-91) The stated intent of military operations was to remove the Taliban from power, and prevent the use of Afghanistan as a [terrorist](/wiki/Terrorist) base of operations.[[92]](#cite_note-92) The CIA's elite [Special Activities Division](/wiki/Special_Activities_Division) (SAD) units were the first U.S. forces to enter Afghanistan (noting that many different countries intelligence agencies were on the ground or operating within theatre before SAD, and that SAD are not technically military forces, but civilian paramilitaries). They joined with the Afghan United Front ([Northern Alliance](/wiki/Northern_Alliance)) to prepare for the subsequent arrival of U.S. Special Operations forces. The United Front (Northern Alliance) and SAD and [Special Forces](/wiki/Special_Forces_(United_States_Army)) combined to overthrow the Taliban with minimal coalition casualties, and without the use of international conventional ground forces. [*The Washington Post*](/wiki/The_Washington_Post) stated in an editorial by John Lehman in 2006:

[Template:Quote](/wiki/Template:Quote)

On October 14, the Taliban offered to discuss handing over Osama bin Laden to a neutral country in return for a bombing halt, but only if the Taliban were given evidence of bin Laden's involvement.[[93]](#cite_note-93) The U.S. rejected this offer, and continued military operations. [Mazar-i-Sharif](/wiki/Mazar-i-Sharif) fell to United Front troops of [Ustad Atta Mohammad Noor](/wiki/Ustad_Atta_Mohammad_Noor) and Abdul Rashid Dostum on November 9, triggering a cascade of provinces falling with minimal resistance.

In November 2001, before the [capture of Kunduz](/wiki/Siege_of_Kunduz) by United Front troops under the command of [Mohammad Daud Daud](/wiki/Mohammad_Daud_Daud), thousands of top commanders and regular fighters of the Taliban and Al-Qaeda, Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence agents and military personnel, and other volunteers and sympathizers in the [Kunduz airlift](/wiki/Kunduz_airlift), dubbed the [Airlift of Evil](/wiki/Airlift_of_Evil) by US military forces around Kunduz and subsequently used as a term in media reports, were evacuated and airlifted out of [Kunduz](/wiki/Kunduz) by Pakistan Army cargo aircraft to Pakistan Air Force air bases in [Chitral](/wiki/Chitral) and [Gilgit](/wiki/Gilgit) in Pakistan's [Northern Areas](/wiki/Northern_Areas).[[61]](#cite_note-61)<ref name=cnn>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref>[[94]](#cite_note-94)<ref name=express>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>[[95]](#cite_note-95)<ref name=descent>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref>

On the night of November 12, the Taliban retreated south from Kabul. On November 15, they released eight Western [aid workers](/wiki/Aid_worker) after [three months in captivity](/wiki/Attacks_on_humanitarian_workers). By November 13, the Taliban had withdrawn from both Kabul and [Jalalabad](/wiki/Jalalabad). Finally, in early December, the Taliban gave up [Kandahar](/wiki/Kandahar), their last stronghold, dispersing without surrendering.

#### Resurgence[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=11)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|Development of a then-small Taliban insurgency up until 2006, the year which saw an escalation in Taliban attacks](/wiki/File:Neotaliban_insurgency_2002-2006_en.png) Before the summer 2006 offensive began, indications existed that soldiers in Afghanistan had lost influence and power to other groups, including potentially the Taliban. [Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed) A notable sign was [rioting](/wiki/Riot) in May after a street accident in the city of Kabul.[[96]](#cite_note-96)[[97]](#cite_note-97) The continued support from tribal and other groups in Pakistan, the drug trade, and the small number of NATO forces, combined with the long history of resistance and isolation, indicated that Taliban forces and leaders were surviving. [Suicide attacks](/wiki/Suicide_attack) and other terrorist methods not used in 2001 became more common. Observers suggested that [poppy](/wiki/Poppy) eradication, which destroys the livelihoods of rural Afghans, and civilian deaths caused by airstrikes encouraged the resurgence. These observers maintained that policy should focus on "hearts and minds" and on [economic reconstruction](/wiki/Economic_reconstruction), which could profit from switching from interdicting to diverting poppy production—to make medicine.[[98]](#cite_note-98)[[99]](#cite_note-99) In September 2006, Pakistan recognized the [Islamic Emirate of Waziristan](/wiki/Islamic_Emirate_of_Waziristan), an association of [Waziristani](/wiki/Waziristan) chieftains with close ties to the Taliban, as the de facto security force for Waziristan. This recognition was part of the agreement to end the [Waziristan War](/wiki/War_in_North-West_Pakistan), which had exacted a heavy toll on the [Pakistan Army](/wiki/Pakistan_Army) since early 2004. Some commentators viewed [Islamabad's](/wiki/Islamabad) shift from war to diplomacy as implicit recognition of the growing power of the resurgent Taliban relative to American influence, with the U.S. distracted by the threat of looming crises in [Iraq](/wiki/Iraq), [Lebanon](/wiki/Lebanon), and [Iran](/wiki/Iran).[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

Other commentators viewed Islamabad's shift from war to diplomacy as an effort to appease growing discontent.[[100]](#cite_note-100) Because of the Taliban's leadership structure, Mullah Dadullah's [assassination](/wiki/Targeted_killing) in May 2007 did not have a significant effect, other than to damage incipient relations with Pakistan.[[101]](#cite_note-101) By 2009, a strong [resistance](/wiki/Resistance_movement) was created, known as Operation Al Faath, the Arabic word for "victory" taken from the Koran,[[102]](#cite_note-102)[[103]](#cite_note-103)[[104]](#cite_note-104) in the form of a guerrilla war. The Pashtun [tribal group](/wiki/Tribe), with over 40 million members (including Afghans and Pakistanis) had a [long history](/wiki/Pashtun_people#Pashtuns_in_the_modern_era) of resistance to occupation forces, so the Taliban may have comprised only a part of the insurgency. Most post-invasion Taliban fighters were new recruits, mostly drawn from local madrasas.

In December 2009, [Asia Times Online](/wiki/Asia_Times_Online) reported that the Taliban had offered to give the US "legal guarantees" that it would not allow Afghanistan to be used for attacks on other countries, and that the US had given no response.[[105]](#cite_note-105)

#### Targeted killings[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=12)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) The United States has conducted [targeted killings](/wiki/Targeted_killings) against Taliban leaders, mainly using [Special Forces](/wiki/Special_Forces), and sometimes [unmanned aerial vehicles](/wiki/Unmanned_aerial_vehicle). British forces also used similar tactics, mostly in [Helmand Province](/wiki/Helmand_Province), Afghanistan. During [Operation Herrick](/wiki/Operation_Herrick), British special forces [assassinated](/wiki/Assassinated) at least fifty high and local Taliban commanders in targeted killings in Helmand Province, which received both positive and negative coverage in the British media.[[106]](#cite_note-106) The Taliban also used targeted killings. In 2011 alone, they killed notable anti-Taliban leaders, such as former Afghan President [Burhanuddin Rabbani](/wiki/Burhanuddin_Rabbani), the police chief in northern Afghanistan, the commander of the elite anti-Taliban 303 Pamir Corps, [Mohammad Daud Daud](/wiki/Mohammad_Daud_Daud), and the police chief of Kunduz, Abdul Rahman Saidkhaili. All of them belonged to the Massoud faction of the United Front. According to Guantanamo Bay charge sheets, the [United States Department of Defense](/wiki/United_States_Department_of_Defense) believes the Taliban may maintain a 40-man undercover unit called "Jihad Kandahar", which is used for [undercover operations](/wiki/Undercover_operation), including targeted killings.[[107]](#cite_note-107)

### Goals[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=13)]

The military goals of the Taliban during the period 1995 to 2001 was to return the order of [Abdur Rahman](/wiki/Abdur_Rahman_Khan) (*the Iron* [*Emir*](/wiki/Emir)) by the re-establishment of a state with [Pashtun](/wiki/Pashtuns) dominance within the northern areas.[[108]](#cite_note-108)

## Human rights abuses[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=14)]

### Massacre campaigns[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=15)]

According to a 55-page report by the [United Nations](/wiki/United_Nations), the Taliban, while trying to consolidate control over northern and western Afghanistan, committed systematic [massacres](/wiki/Massacre) against civilians. UN officials stated that there had been "15 massacres" between 1996 and 2001. They also said, that "[t]hese have been highly systematic and they all lead back to the [Taliban] Ministry of Defense or to [Mullah Omar](/wiki/Mohammed_Omar) himself." "These are the same type of war crimes as were committed in Bosnia and should be prosecuted in international courts", one UN official was quoted as saying. The documents also reveal the role of Arab and Pakistani support troops in these killings. Bin Laden's so-called [055 Brigade](/wiki/055_Brigade) was responsible for mass-killings of Afghan civilians. The report by the [United Nations](/wiki/United_Nations) quotes "eyewitnesses in many villages describing Arab fighters carrying long knives used for slitting throats and skinning people". The Taliban's former ambassador to Pakistan, Mullah Abdul Salam Zaeef, in late 2011 stated that cruel behaviour under and by the Taliban had been "necessary".[[8]](#cite_note-8)[[9]](#cite_note-9)[[24]](#cite_note-24)[[109]](#cite_note-109) In 1998, the United Nations accused the Taliban of denying emergency food by the UN's World Food Programme to 160,000 hungry and starving people "for political and military reasons".[[110]](#cite_note-110) The UN said the Taliban were starving people for their military agenda and using humanitarian assistance as a weapon of war.

On August 8, 1998 the Taliban launched an attack on [Mazar-i Sharif](/wiki/Mazar-i_Sharif). Of 1500 defenders only 100 survived the engagement. Once in control the Taliban began to kill people indiscriminately. At first shooting people in the street, they soon began to target Hazaras. Women were raped, and thousands of people were locked in containers and left to suffocate. This [ethnic cleansing](/wiki/Ethnic_cleansing) left an estimated 5,000 to 6,000 dead. At this time [ten Iranian diplomats](/wiki/1998_Iranian_diplomats_assassination_in_Afghanistan) and a journalist were killed. Iran assumed the Taliban had murdered them, and mobilized its army, deploying men along the border with Afghanistan. By the middle of September there were 250,000 Iranian personnel stationed on the border. Pakistan mediated and the bodies were returned to Tehran towards the end of the month. The killings of the Diplomats had been carried out by [Sipah-e-Sahaba](/wiki/Sipah-e-Sahaba_Pakistan) a Pakistani Sunni group with close ties to the ISI. They burned orchards, crops and destroyed irrigation systems, and forced more than 100,000 people from their homes with hundreds of men, women and children still unaccounted for.<ref name=Armajani-207>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref><ref name=Riedel-66-7>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref><ref name=Clements3>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref><ref name=Gutman>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref><ref name=Tripathi>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref>

In a major effort to retake the Shomali plains from the United Front, the Taliban indiscriminately killed civilians, while uprooting and expelling the population. Among others, Kamal Hossein, a special reporter for the UN, reported on these and other [war crimes](/wiki/War_crimes). In [Istalif](/wiki/Istalif), which was home to more than 45,000 people, the Taliban gave 24 hours' notice to the population to leave, then completely razed the town leaving the people destitute.[[12]](#cite_note-12)<ref name=Coburn>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref>

In 1999 the town of [Bamian](/wiki/Bamian) was taken, hundreds of men, women and children were executed. Houses were razed and some were used for forced labor. There was a further massacre at the town of [Yakaolang](/wiki/Yakaolang) in January 2001. An estimated 300 people were murdered, along with two delegations of Hazara elders who had tried to intercede.<ref name=Maley2-240>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref><ref name=Clements4>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref>

By 1999, the Taliban had forced hundreds of thousands of people from the Shomali Plains and other regions conducting a policy of scorched earth burning homes, farm land and gardens.[[12]](#cite_note-12)

### Human trafficking[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=16)]

Several Taliban and al-Qaeda commanders ran a network of human trafficking, abducting women and selling them into sex slavery in Afghanistan and Pakistan.[[111]](#cite_note-111) [*Time*](/wiki/Time_(magazine)) magazine writes: "The Taliban often argued that the restrictions they placed on women were actually a way of revering and protecting the opposite sex. The behavior of the Taliban during the six years they expanded their rule in Afghanistan made a mockery of that claim."[[111]](#cite_note-111) The targets for human trafficking were especially women from the Tajik, Uzbek, Hazara and other ethnic groups in Afghanistan. Some women preferred to commit suicide over slavery, killing themselves. During one Taliban and al-Qaeda offensive in 1999 in the Shomali Plains alone, more than 600 women were kidnapped.[[111]](#cite_note-111) Arab and Pakistani al-Qaeda militants with local Taliban forces, forced them into trucks and buses.[[111]](#cite_note-111) *Time* magazine writes: "The trail of the missing Shomali women leads to Jalalabad, not far from the Pakistan border. There, according to eyewitnesses, the women were penned up inside Sar Shahi camp in the desert. The more desirable among them were selected and taken away. Some were trucked to Peshawar with the apparent complicity of Pakistani border guards. Others were taken to Khost, where bin Laden had several training camps." Officials from relief agencies say, the trail of many of the vanished women leads to Pakistan where they were sold to brothels or into private households to be kept as slaves.[[111]](#cite_note-111) However, not all Taliban commanders engaged in human trafficking. Many Taliban were opposed to the human trafficking operations conducted by al-Qaeda and other Taliban commanders. Nuruludah, a Taliban commander, is quoted as saying that in the Shomali Plains, he and 10 of his men freed some women who were being abducted by Pakistani members of al-Qaeda. In Jalalabad, local Taliban commanders freed women that were being held by Arab members of al-Qaeda in a camp.[[111]](#cite_note-111)

### Oppression of women[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=17)]

[right|thumb|Taliban](/wiki/File:Taliban_beating_woman_in_public_RAWA.jpg) [religious police](/wiki/Mutaween#Other_groups) beating a woman in [Kabul](/wiki/Kabul) on August 26, 2001.[[112]](#cite_note-112) [Template:Quote](/wiki/Template:Quote) The Taliban were condemned internationally for their [brutal repression of women](/wiki/Taliban_treatment_of_women). In 2001 [Laura Bush](/wiki/Laura_Bush) in a radio address condemned the Taliban's brutality to women. In areas they controlled the Taliban issued edicts which forbade women from being educated, girls were forced to leave schools and colleges. Those who wished to leave their home to go shopping had to be accompanied by a male relative, and were required to wear the [*burqa*](/wiki/Burqa), a traditional dress covering the entire body except for a small screen to see out of. Those who appeared to disobey were publicly beaten. Sohaila, a young woman who was convicted of walking with a man who was not a relative, was charged with adultery. She was publicly flogged in [Ghazi Stadium](/wiki/Ghazi_Stadium) and received 100 lashes. The [religious police](/wiki/Ministry_for_the_Propagation_of_Virtue_and_the_Prevention_of_Vice_(Afghanistan)) routinely carried out inhumane abuse on women. Employment for women was restricted to the medical sector, because male medical personnel were not allowed to treat women and girls. One result of the banning of employment of women by the Taliban was the closing down in places like Kabul of primary schools not only for girls but for boys, because almost all the teachers there were women. Taliban restrictions became more severe after they took control of the capital. In February 1998, religious police forced all women off the streets of Kabul, and issued new regulations ordering people to blacken their windows, so that women would not be visible from the outside.[[49]](#cite_note-49)[[113]](#cite_note-113)<ref name=Wertheime>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref><ref name=Cooke>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref><ref name=Moghadam>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref><ref name=Massoumi>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref>[[114]](#cite_note-114)[[115]](#cite_note-115)[[116]](#cite_note-116)

### Terrorism against civilians[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=18)]

According to the [United Nations](/wiki/United_Nations), the Taliban were responsible for 76% of civilian casualties in Afghanistan in 2009, 75% in 2010 and 80% in 2011.[[14]](#cite_note-14)<ref name=Kegley>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref>

According to [Human Rights Watch](/wiki/Human_Rights_Watch), the Taliban's bombings and other attacks which have led to civilian casualties "sharply escalated in 2006" when "at least 669 Afghan civilians were killed in at least 350 armed attacks, most of which appear to have been intentionally launched at non-combatants." By 2008, the Taliban had increased its use of suicide bombers and targeted unarmed civilian [aid workers](/wiki/Aid_worker), such as [Gayle Williams](/wiki/Gayle_Williams).<ref name=hrw-cbceia>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>[[117]](#cite_note-117)[[118]](#cite_note-118) The United Nations reported that the number of civilians killed by both the Taliban and pro-government forces in the war rose nearly 50% between 2007 and 2009. The high number of civilians killed by the Taliban is blamed in part on their increasing use of [improvised explosive devices](/wiki/Improvised_explosive_device) (IEDs), "for instance, 16 IEDs have been planted in girls' schools" by the Taliban.[[119]](#cite_note-119) In 2009, Colonel [Richard Kemp](/wiki/Richard_Kemp), formerly Commander of British forces in Afghanistan and the intelligence coordinator for the British government, drew parallels between the tactics and strategy of [Hamas](/wiki/Hamas) in [Gaza](/wiki/Gaza_Strip) to those of the Taliban. Kemp wrote: [Template:Quote](/wiki/Template:Quote)

The Taliban has often targeted health officials that work to immunise children against [polio](/wiki/Polio) due to fears of the vaccine, including the fear that it is used to gather intelligence about their organisation. Polio vaccines were banned in the [North Waziristan](/wiki/North_Waziristan) region of Pakistan in June 2012 and in December 2012, Taliban assassins killed four female UN polio-workers in Pakistan because they were thought to be spies. The Afghan government was forced to suspend vaccination efforts to eliminate polio from the [Nuristan](/wiki/Nuristan) province in March 2013 because of a large Taliban influence in the province. Taliban leaders changed their stance on polio vaccination in early May 2013, saying the vaccine is the only way to prevent polio and that they would work with immunisation volunteers so long as polio workers are "unbiased" and "harmonised with the regional conditions, Islamic values and local cultural traditions." [[120][120]](#cite_note-120)[[121]](#cite_note-121)[[122]](#cite_note-122)[[123]](#cite_note-123)[[124]](#cite_note-124)

## Ideology[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=19)]

### Overview[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=20)]

[Template:Islamism sidebar](/wiki/Template:Islamism_sidebar) [Template:Wikiquote](/wiki/Template:Wikiquote)

The Taliban's extremely strict and [anti-modern](/wiki/Development_criticism) ideology has been described as an "innovative form of [*sharia*](/wiki/Sharia) combining Pashtun tribal codes,"[[125]](#cite_note-125) or [Pashtunwali](/wiki/Pashtunwali), with radical Deobandi interpretations of Islam favored by JUI and its splinter groups. Also contributing to the mix was the [militant Islamism](/wiki/Militant_Islamism) and [extremist](/wiki/Islamic_extremism) [jihadism](/wiki/Jihadism) of Osama bin Laden.[[126]](#cite_note-126) Their ideology was a departure from the [Islamism](/wiki/Islamism) of the anti-Soviet mujahideen rulers they replaced who tended to be mystical [Sufis](/wiki/Sufism), traditionalists, or radical Islamicists inspired by the [Muslim Brotherhood](/wiki/Muslim_Brotherhood) (Ikhwan).[[127]](#cite_note-127) Under the Taliban regime, [Sharia law](/wiki/Sharia_law) was interpreted to forbid a wide variety of previously lawful activities in Afghanistan. These prohibitions have included pork, many types of consumer technology, alcohol, most forms of art such as [paintings](/wiki/Paintings) or [photography](/wiki/Photography), and female [sport](/wiki/Sport).[[128]](#cite_note-128) Men were forbidden to shave their beards, and required to wear a head covering.[[129]](#cite_note-129) Many of these activities were hitherto lawful in Afghanistan. Critics complained that most Afghans followed a different, less strict, and less intrusive interpretation of Islam. The Taliban did not eschew all traditional popular practices. For example, they did not destroy the graves of Sufi [pirs](/wiki/Pir_(Sufism)) (holy men), and emphasized dreams as a means of revelation.[[130]](#cite_note-130) They also frequently used the pre-Islamic Pashtun tribal code, [Pashtunwali](/wiki/Pashtunwali) in deciding certain social matters, which often contradicted the Qu'ran. Such is the case with the Pashtun practice of dividing inheritances equally among sons, even though the Qur'an clearly states that women are to receive one-half a man's share.[[131]](#cite_note-131)[[132]](#cite_note-132) The Taliban have been described as both anti-nationalist and Pushtun nationalist. According to journalist [Ahmed Rashid](/wiki/Ahmed_Rashid), at least in the first years of their rule, they adopted Deobandi and [Islamist](/wiki/Islamist) anti-nationalist beliefs, and opposed "tribal and feudal structures," eliminating traditional tribal or feudal leaders from leadership roles.[[133]](#cite_note-133) According to Ali A. Jalali and Lester Grau, the Taliban "received extensive support from Pashtuns across the country who thought that the movement might restore their national dominance. Even Pashtun intellectuals in the West, who differed with the Taliban on many issues, expressed support for the movement on purely ethnic grounds."[[134]](#cite_note-134) Like *Wahhabi* and other Deobandis, the Taliban do not consider [Shi](/wiki/Shia_Islam)[Template:Okinai](/wiki/Template:Okina) to be Muslims. The Shia in Afghanistan consist mostly of the [Hazara](/wiki/Hazara_people) ethnic group which totaled almost 10% of Afghanistan's population.[[135]](#cite_note-135) The Taliban were averse to debating doctrine with other Muslims. "The Taliban did not allow even Muslim reporters to question [their] edicts or to discuss interpretations of the [Qur'an](/wiki/Qur'an)."[[136]](#cite_note-136) The Taliban strictly enforced its ideology in major cities like [Herat](/wiki/Herat), [Kabul](/wiki/Kabul), and [Kandahar](/wiki/Kandahar). In rural areas the Taliban had little direct control, and promoted village [jirgas](/wiki/Jirga), so it did not enforce its ideology as stringently in rural areas.[[137]](#cite_note-137)

### Bamyan Buddhas[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=21)]

[thumb|right|Taller Buddha in 1963 and in 2008 after destruction](/wiki/File:Taller_Buddha_of_Bamiyan_before_and_after_destruction.jpg) In 1999, Mullah Omar issued a decree protecting the [Buddha statues at Bamyan](/wiki/Buddhas_of_Bamyan), two 6th-century monumental statues of standing [buddhas](/wiki/Buddha) carved into the side of a cliff in the [Bamyan](/wiki/Bamyan,_Afghanistan) valley in the [Hazarajat](/wiki/Hazarajat) region of central Afghanistan. But in March 2001, the statues were destroyed by the Taliban of Mullah Omar, following a decree stating: "all the statues around Afghanistan must be destroyed."[[138]](#cite_note-138) Yahya Massoud, brother of the anti-Taliban and resistance leader [Ahmad Shah Massoud](/wiki/Ahmad_Shah_Massoud), recalls the following incident after the destruction of the Buddha statues at Bamyan: [Template:Quote](/wiki/Template:Quote)

### Consistency[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=22)]

The Taliban ideology was not static. Before its capture of Kabul, members of the Taliban talked about stepping aside once a government of "good Muslims" took power and law and order were restored. The decision making process of the Taliban in Kandahar was modeled on the Pashtun tribal council ([*jirga*](/wiki/Jirga)), together with what was believed to be the early Islamic model. Discussion was followed by a building of a consensus by the believers.[[139]](#cite_note-139) However, as the Taliban's power grew, decisions were made by Mullah Omar without consulting the *jirga* and without Omar's visiting other parts of the country. He visited the capital, Kabul, only twice while in power. Taliban spokesman Mullah Wakil explained:

Decisions are based on the advice of the Amir-ul Momineen. For us consultation is not necessary. We believe that this is in line with the Sharia. We abide by the Amir's view even if he alone takes this view. There will not be a head of state. Instead there will be an Amir al-Mu'minin. Mullah Omar will be the highest authority and the government will not be able to implement any decision to which he does not agree. General elections are incompatible with Sharia and therefore we reject them.[[140]](#cite_note-140)

Another evolution of Taliban ideology was Mullah Omar 1999 decree calling for the protection of the [Buddha statues at Bamyan](/wiki/Buddhas_of_Bamyan) and the March 2001 destruction of them.[[141]](#cite_note-141)

### Explanation of ideology[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=23)]

The author Ahmed Rashid suggests that the devastation and hardship of the Soviet invasion and the following period influenced Taliban ideology.[[142]](#cite_note-142) It is said that the Taliban did not include scholars learned in Islamic law and history. The refugee students, brought up in a totally male society, not only had no education in mathematics, science, history or geography, but also had no traditional skills of farming, [herding](/wiki/Herding), or [handicraft](/wiki/Handicraft)-making, nor even knowledge of their tribal and clan [lineages](/wiki/Kinship).[[142]](#cite_note-142) In such an environment, war meant employment, peace meant unemployment. Dominating women simply affirmed manhood. For their leadership, rigid fundamentalism was a matter not only of principle, but also of political survival. Taliban leaders "repeatedly told" Rashid that "if they gave women greater freedom or a chance to go to school, they would lose the support of their rank and file."[[143]](#cite_note-143)[thumb|November 1999](/wiki/File:Taliban_execute_Zarmeena_in_Kabul_in1999_RAWA.jpg) [public execution](/wiki/Public_execution) in Kabul of a mother of five who was found guilty of killing her husband with an axe while he slept.[[144]](#cite_note-144)[[145]](#cite_note-145)[[146]](#cite_note-146)

### Criticisms[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=24)]

The Taliban have been criticized for their strictness toward those who disobeyed their imposed rules, and [Mullah Omar's](/wiki/Mohammed_Omar) taking of the title of [Amir al-Mu'minin](/wiki/Amir_al-Mu'minin). Many Muslims complained that most Taliban rules had no basis in the [Qur'an](/wiki/Qur'an) or [sharia](/wiki/Sharia).

[Mullah Omar](/wiki/Mohammed_Omar) was criticised for calling himself [Amir al-Mu'minin](/wiki/Amir_al-Mu'minin) on the grounds that he lacked scholarly learning, tribal pedigree, or connections to the [Prophet's](/wiki/Prophet_Mohammed) family. Sanction for the title traditionally required the support of all of the country's [ulema](/wiki/Ulema), whereas only some 1,200 Pashtun Taliban-supporting Mullahs had declared Omar the Amir. According to Ahmed Rashid, "no Afghan had adopted the title since 1834, when King [Dost Mohammed Khan](/wiki/Dost_Mohammed_Khan) assumed the title before he declared jihad against the [Sikh](/wiki/Sikh) kingdom in [Peshawar](/wiki/Peshawar). But Dost Mohammed was fighting foreigners, while Omar had declared jihad against other Afghans."[[147]](#cite_note-147) Another criticism was that the Taliban called their 20% tax on truckloads of opium "[zakat](/wiki/Zakat)", which is traditionally limited to 2.5% of the zakat-payers' disposable income (or wealth).[[147]](#cite_note-147) Taliban have been compared to the 7th century [Kharijites](/wiki/Kharijites) for developing extreme doctrines that set them apart from both mainstream Sunni and Shiʿa Muslims. The Kharijites were particularly noted for adopting a radical approach to [Takfir](/wiki/Takfir), whereby they declared other Muslims to be unbelievers and therefore deemed them worthy of death.[[148]](#cite_note-148)[[149]](#cite_note-149) In particular the Taliban have been accused of takfir towards Shia. After the August 1998 slaughter of 8000 mostly Shia Hazaras non-combatants at Mazar-i-Sharif, Mullah Niazi, the Taliban commander of the attack and the new governor of Mazar, declared from Mazar's central mosque:

"Last year you rebelled against us and killed us. From all your homes you shot at us. Now we are here to deal with you. The Hazaras are not Muslims and now have to kill Hazaras. You either accept to be Muslims or leave Afghanistan. Wherever you go we will catch you. If you go up we will pull you down by your feet; if you hide below, we will pull you up by your hair."[[135]](#cite_note-135)

## Governance[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=25)]

### Overview[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=26)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also)

The Taliban initially enjoyed goodwill from Afghans weary of the warlords' corruption, brutality, and incessant fighting.[[150]](#cite_note-150)However, this popularity was not universal, particularly among non-Pashtuns.

In 2001, the Taliban, [*de jure*](/wiki/De_jure), controlled 85% of Afghanistan. [*De facto*](/wiki/De_facto) the areas under its direct control were mainly Afghanistan's major cities and highways. Tribal [khans](/wiki/Khan_(title)) and warlords had *de facto* direct control over various small towns, villages, and rural areas.[[151]](#cite_note-151)[upright|thumb|left|Taliban police patrolling the streets of](/wiki/File:Taliban-herat-2001_retouched.jpg) [Herat](/wiki/Herat) in a pickup truck

Rashid described the Taliban government as "a secret society run by [Kandaharis](/wiki/Kandahar) ... mysterious, secretive, and dictatorial."[[152]](#cite_note-152) They did not hold elections, as their spokesman explained:

[Template:Quote](/wiki/Template:Quote)

They modeled their decision-making process on the Pashtun tribal council ([*jirga*](/wiki/Jirga)), together with what they believed to be the early Islamic model. Discussion was followed by a building of a consensus by the "believers".[[139]](#cite_note-139) Before capturing Kabul, there was talk of stepping aside once a government of "good Muslims" took power, and law and order were restored.

As the Taliban's power grew, decisions were made by Mullah Omar without consulting the *jirga* and without consulting other parts of the country. He visited the capital, Kabul, only twice while in power. Instead of an election, their leader's legitimacy came from an oath of allegiance ("[Bay'ah](/wiki/Bay'ah)"), in imitation of the Prophet and the first four [Caliphs](/wiki/Caliph). On April 4, 1996, Mullah Omar had "the Cloak of the Prophet Mohammed" taken from its shrine for the first time in 60 years. Wrapping himself in the relic, he appeared on the roof of a building in the center of Kandahar while hundreds of Pashtun [mullahs](/wiki/Mullah) below shouted "[Amir al-Mu'minin](/wiki/Amir_al-Mu'minin)!" (Commander of the Faithful), in a pledge of support. Taliban spokesman Mullah Wakil explained:

[Template:Quote](/wiki/Template:Quote)

The Taliban were very reluctant to share power, and since their ranks were overwhelmingly Pashtun they ruled as overlords over the 60% of Afghans from other ethnic groups. In local government, such as Kabul city council[[152]](#cite_note-152) or Herat,[[153]](#cite_note-153) Taliban loyalists, not locals, dominated, even when the [Pashto](/wiki/Pashto_language)-speaking Taliban could not communicate with the roughly half of the population who spoke [Dari](/wiki/Dari_language) or other non-Pashtun tongues.[[153]](#cite_note-153) Critics complained that this "lack of local representation in urban administration made the Taliban appear as an occupying force."[[154]](#cite_note-154)

### Organization[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=27)]

Consistent with the governance of early Muslims was the absence of state institutions or "a methodology for command and control" that is standard today even among non-Westernized states. The Taliban did not issue press releases, policy statements, or hold regular press conferences. The outside world and most Afghans did not even know what their leaders looked like, since photography was banned.[[155]](#cite_note-155) The "regular army" resembled a lashkar or traditional tribal [militia](/wiki/Militia) force with only 25,000 men (of whom 11,000 were non-Afghans).

[Cabinet](/wiki/Cabinet_(government)) ministers and deputies were mullahs with a "[madrasah](/wiki/Madrasah) education." Several of them, such as the Minister of Health and Governor of the State bank, were primarily military commanders who left their administrative posts to fight when needed. Military reverses that trapped them behind lines or led to their deaths increased the chaos in the national administration.[[156]](#cite_note-156) At the national level, "all senior [Tajik](/wiki/Tājik_people), [Uzbek](/wiki/Uzbeks) and [Hazara](/wiki/Hazara_people) bureaucrats" were replaced "with Pashtuns, whether qualified or not." Consequently, the ministries "by and large ceased to function."[[154]](#cite_note-154) The Ministry of Finance had neither a budget nor "qualified economist or banker." Mullah Omar collected and dispersed cash without bookkeeping.

### Conscription[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=28)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) According to the testimony of [Guantanamo captives](/wiki/Guantanamo_captive) before their [Combatant Status Review Tribunals](/wiki/Combatant_Status_Review_Tribunal), the Taliban, in addition to conscripting men to serve as soldiers, also conscripted men to staff its [civil service](/wiki/Civil_service).[[157]](#cite_note-157)

## Economy[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=29)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also)

The Kabul money markets responded positively during the first weeks of the Taliban occupation. But the [Afghani](/wiki/Afghan_afghani) soon fell in value. They imposed a 50% tax on any company operating in the country, and those who failed to pay were attacked. They also imposed a 6% import tax on anything brought into the country, and by 1998 had control of the major airports and border crossings which allowed them to establish a monopoly on all trade. By 2001 the per capita income of the 25 million population was under $200, and the country was close to total economic collapse. As of 2007 the economy had begun to recover, with estimated foreign reserves of three billion dollars and a 13% increase in economic growth.[[114]](#cite_note-114)<ref name=Lansford-147>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref><ref name=Marsden>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref><ref name=Pugh1>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref><ref name=Castillo>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref><ref name=Skaine2>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref> [thumb|right|Opium in Taliban safehouse in](/wiki/File:ANA_soldier_shows_opium_captured_in_an_alleged_Taliban_safe_house_in_Helmand.jpg) [Helmand](/wiki/Helmand) Under the Transit treaty between Afghanistan and Pakistan a massive network for smuggling developed. It had an estimated turnover of 2.5 billion dollars with the Taliban receiving between $100 and $130 million per year. These operations along with the trade from the [Golden Crescent](/wiki/Golden_Crescent) financed the war in Afghanistan and also had the side effect of destroying start up industries in Pakistan. [Ahmed Rashid](/wiki/Ahmed_Rashid) also explained that the Afghan Transit Trade agreed on by Pakistan was "the largest official source of revenue for the Taliban." <ref name=Nojum1>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref><ref name=Nojum2>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref><ref name=Chouvy1>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref>

Between 1996 and 1999 Mullah Omar reversed his opinions on the drug trade, apparently as it only harmed [kafirs](/wiki/Kafirs). The Taliban controlled 96% of Afghanistan's poppy fields and made opium its largest source of taxation. Taxes on opium exports became one of the mainstays of Taliban income and their war economy. According to Rashid, "drug money funded the weapons, ammunition and fuel for the war." In the [*New York Times*](/wiki/New_York_Times), the Finance Minister of the United Front, Wahidullah Sabawoon, declared the Taliban had no annual budget but that they "appeared to spend US$300 million a year, nearly all of it on war." He added that the Taliban had come to increasingly rely on three sources of money: "poppy, the Pakistanis and bin Laden."[[158]](#cite_note-158) In an economic sense it seems however he had little choice, as the war of attrition continued with the Northern Alliance the income from continued opium production was all that prevented the country from starvation. By 2000 Afghanistan accounted for an estimated 75% of the world's supply and in 2000 grew an estimated 3276 tonnes of opium from poppy cultivation on 82,171 hectares. At this juncture Omar passed a decree banning the cultivation of opium, and production dropped to an estimated 74 metric tonnes from poppy cultivation on 1,685 hectares. Many observers say the ban - which came in a bid for international recognition at the United Nations - was only issued in order to raise opium prices and increase profit from the sale of large existing stockpiles. The year 1999 had yielded a record crop and had been followed by a lower but still large 2000 harvest. The trafficking of accumulated stocks by the Taliban continued in 2000 and 2001. In 2002, the UN mentioned the "existence of significant stocks of opiates accumulated during previous years of bumper harvests." In September 2001 – before the 11 September attacks against the United States – the Taliban allegedly authorized Afghan peasants to sow opium again.[[158]](#cite_note-158)<ref name=Shaffer3>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref><ref name=Thourni>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref><ref name=Lyman>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref>

There was also an environmental toll to the country, heavy deforestation from the illegal trade in timber with hundreds of acres of pine and cedar forests in [Kunar Province](/wiki/Kunar_Province) and [Paktya](/wiki/Loya_Paktia) being cleared. Throughout the country millions of acres were denuded to supply timber to the Pakistani markets, with no attempt made at reforestation, which has led to significant environmental damage. By 2001, when the [Afghan Interim Administration](/wiki/Afghan_Interim_Administration) took power the country's infrastructure was in ruins, Telecommunications had failed, the road network was destroyed and Ministry of Finance buildings were in such a state of disrepair some were on the verge of collapse. On July 6, 1999 former president [Bill Clinton](/wiki/Bill_Clinton) signed into effect executive order 13129. This order implemented a complete ban on any trade between America and the Taliban regime and on August 10 they froze £5000,000 in Ariana assets. On December 19, 2000 UN resolution 1333 was passed. It called for all assets to be frozen and for all states to close any offices belonging to the Taliban. This included the offices of [Ariana Afghan Airlines](/wiki/Ariana_Afghan_Airlines). In 1999 the UN had passed resolution 1267 which had banned all international flights by Ariana apart from preapproved humanitarian missions.<ref name=Griffin>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref><ref name=Wehr>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref><ref name=Rashid>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref><ref name=Clements>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref><ref name=Bennett>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref><ref name=Farah>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref><ref name=Askari>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref><ref name=Pillar>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref>

## International relations[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=30)]

During its time in power, the Taliban regime, or "Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan", gained [diplomatic recognition](/wiki/Diplomatic_recognition) from only three states: the [United Arab Emirates](/wiki/United_Arab_Emirates), [Pakistan](/wiki/Pakistan), and [Saudi Arabia](/wiki/Saudi_Arabia), all of which provided substantial aid. The other nations including the [United Nations](/wiki/United_Nations) recognized the government of the [Islamic State of Afghanistan](/wiki/Islamic_State_of_Afghanistan) (parts of whom were part of the United Front (Northern Alliance) as the legitimate government of Afghanistan.

### Pakistan[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=31)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) The "vast majority" of the Taliban's rank and file and most of the leadership, though not Mullah Omar, were Koranic students who had studied at madrasas set up for [Afghan refugees](/wiki/Afghan_refugees), usually by JUI. [Maulana Fazal-ur-Rehman](/wiki/Maulana_Fazal-ur-Rehman), JUI's leader, was a political ally of [Benazir Bhutto](/wiki/Benazir_Bhutto). After Bhutto became prime minister, Rehman "had access to the government, the army and the ISI," whom he influenced to help the Taliban.[[159]](#cite_note-159) Pakistan's [ISI](/wiki/Inter-Services_Intelligence) supported the previously unknown Kandahari student movement, the Taliban, as the group conquered Afghanistan in the 1990s.[[160]](#cite_note-160)[[161]](#cite_note-161)[[162]](#cite_note-162) Human Rights Watch writes, "Pakistani aircraft assisted with troop rotations of Taliban forces during combat operations in late 2000 and ... senior members of Pakistan's intelligence agency and army were involved in planning military operations."<ref name=hrw-coi-2001>[Template:Cite report](/wiki/Template:Cite_report)</ref> Pakistan provided military equipment, recruiting assistance, training, and tactical advice.[[163]](#cite_note-163) Officially Pakistan denied supporting the Taliban militarily.

Author [Ahmed Rashid](/wiki/Ahmed_Rashid) claims that the Taliban had "unprecedented access" among Pakistan's lobbies and interest groups. He also writes that they at times were able to "play off one lobby against another and extend their influence in Pakistan even further".[[164]](#cite_note-164) By 1998–99, Taliban-style groups in Pakistan's Pashtun belt, and to an extent in [Pakistan-administered Kashmir](/wiki/Pakistan-administered_Kashmir), "were banning TV and videos ... and forcing people, particularly women, to adapt to the Taliban dress code and way of life."[[165]](#cite_note-165) After the attacks of September 11, 2001, and the U.S. operation in Afghanistan the Afghan Taliban leadership is claimed to have fled to Pakistan where they regrouped and created several shuras to coordinate their insurgency in Afghanistan. On February 8, 2009, U.S. commander of operations in Afghanistan General [Stanley McChrystal](/wiki/Stanley_McChrystal) and other officials said that the Taliban leadership was in [Quetta](/wiki/Quetta), Pakistan, though the Pakistani government, an official U.S. ally, denied this.[[166]](#cite_note-166) A range of officials inside and outside Pakistan have stepped up suggestions of links between the ISI and terrorist groups in recent years. In fall 2006, a leaked report by a British Defense Ministry think tank charged, "Indirectly Pakistan (through the ISI) has been supporting terrorism and extremism--whether in London on 7/7 [the July 2005 attacks on London's transit system], or in Afghanistan, or Iraq." In June 2008, Afghan officials accused Pakistan's intelligence service of plotting a failed assassination attempt on President Hamid Karzai; shortly thereafter, they implied the ISI's involvement in a July 2008 Taliban attack on the Indian embassy. Indian officials also blamed the ISI for the bombing of the Indian embassy. Numerous U.S. officials have also accused the ISI of supporting terrorist groups including the Afghan Taliban. U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates said "to a certain extent, they play both sides." Gates and others suggest the ISI maintains links with groups like the Afghan Taliban as a "strategic hedge" to help Islamabad gain influence in Kabul once U.S. troops exit the region. U.S. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen in 2011 called the [Haqqani network](/wiki/Haqqani_network) (the Afghan Taliban's most destructive element) a "veritable arm of Pakistan's ISI". He further stated, "Extremist organizations serving as proxies of the government of Pakistan are attacking Afghan troops and civilians as well as US soldiers." [[167]](#cite_note-167)[[168]](#cite_note-168) From 2010, a report by a leading British institution also claimed that Pakistan's intelligence service still today has a strong link with the Taliban in Afghanistan. Published by the [London School of Economics](/wiki/London_School_of_Economics), the report said that Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence agency (ISI) has an "official policy" of support for the Taliban. It said the ISI provides funding and training for the Taliban, and that the agency has representatives on the so-called [Quetta Shura](/wiki/Quetta_Shura), the Taliban's leadership council. It is alleged that the [Quetta Shura](/wiki/Quetta_Shura) is exiled in [Quetta](/wiki/Quetta). The report, based on interviews with Taliban commanders in Afghanistan, was written by Matt Waldman, a fellow at [Harvard University](/wiki/Harvard_University).[[166]](#cite_note-166)<ref name=Pape2>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref>[[169]](#cite_note-169) "Pakistan appears to be playing a double-game of astonishing magnitude," the report said. The report also linked high-level members of the Pakistani government with the Taliban. It said [Asif Ali Zardari](/wiki/Asif_Ali_Zardari), the Pakistani president, met with senior Taliban prisoners in 2010 and promised to release them. Zardari reportedly told the detainees they were only arrested because of American pressure. "The Pakistan government's apparent duplicity – and awareness of it among the American public and political establishment – could have enormous geopolitical implications," Waldman said. "Without a change in Pakistani behaviour it will be difficult if not impossible for international forces and the Afghan government to make progress against the insurgency." Afghan officials have long been suspicious of the ISI's role. [Amrullah Saleh](/wiki/Amrullah_Saleh), the former director of Afghanistan's intelligence service, told Reuters that the ISI was "part of a landscape of destruction in this country".[[170]](#cite_note-170) Pakistan on the other hand has strongly denied all links with Taliban or any terrorist groups with the argument that Pakistan is the biggest victim of the "War on terror" with a loss of 35,000 lives including policemen, soldiers and mostly civilians. Pakistan's military officials called such allegations highly biased and factually inaccurate. The military spokesperson said that not a single bullet or financial support had been given to Taliban. Pakistan's foreign minister further clarified that if Pakistan had recruited some people for intelligence purposes, it did not mean that Pakistan supported them. United States along with the accusations of supporting Taliban has also called Pakistan as an indispensable ally. Pakistan has also reportedly warned United States that it may lose a key ally due to such accusations.<ref name=Pakdenies>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref>[[171]](#cite_note-171)[[172]](#cite_note-172)[[173]](#cite_note-173)[[174]](#cite_note-174)[[175]](#cite_note-175) On June 15, 2014 Pakistan army launches operation ‘Zarb-e-Azb’ in North Waziristan to remove and root-out Taliban from Pakistan. In this operation 327 hardcore terrorists had been killed while 45 hideouts and 2 bomb making factories of terrorists were destroyed in North Waziristan Agency as the operation continues.[[176]](#cite_note-176)[[177]](#cite_note-177)[[178]](#cite_note-178)

### Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (Pakistani Taliban)[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=32)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

Before the creation of the Tehrik-i-Taliban (Pakistan), some of their leaders and fighters were part of the 8,000 Pakistani militants fighting in the [War in Afghanistan (1996-2001)](/wiki/Civil_war_in_Afghanistan_(1996-2001)) and the [War in Afghanistan (2001-present)](/wiki/War_in_Afghanistan_(2001-present)) against the United Islamic Front and [NATO](/wiki/NATO) forces.[[24]](#cite_note-24) Most of them hail from the Pakistani side of the Af-Pak border regions. After the fall of the Afghan Taliban in late 2001 most Pakistani militants including members of today's TTP fled home to Pakistan.

After the creation of the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan in 2007, headed by [Baitullah Mehsud](/wiki/Baitullah_Mehsud), its members have officially defined goals to establish their rule over Pakistan's [Federally Administered Tribal Areas](/wiki/Federally_Administered_Tribal_Areas). They engage the Pakistani army in heavy combat operations. Some intelligence analysts believe that the TTP's attacks on the Pakistani government, police and army strained the TTP's relations with the Afghan Taliban.<ref name=Tighe-Katz>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)[Template:Dead link](/wiki/Template:Dead_link)</ref><ref name=scott/><ref name=sanctionsunc/>

The Afghan Taliban and the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan differ greatly in their history, leadership and goals although they share a common interpretation of Islam and are both predominantly Pashtun.<ref name=scott>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref> The Afghan Taliban have no affiliation with the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan and routinely deny any connection to the TTP. [*The New York Times*](/wiki/The_New_York_Times) quoted a spokesman for the Afghan Taliban stating that: [Template:Quote](/wiki/Template:Quote)

It is alleged that Afghan Taliban relied on support by the Pakistani army in the past and are still supported by them today in their campaign to control Afghanistan. Regular Pakistani army troops fought alongside the Afghan Taliban in the [War in Afghanistan (1996–2001)](/wiki/Civil_war_in_Afghanistan_(1996–2001)). Major leaders of the Afghan Taliban including Mullah Omar, [Jalaluddin Haqqani](/wiki/Jalaluddin_Haqqani) and [Siraj Haqqani](/wiki/Siraj_Haqqani) are believed to enjoy safe haven in Pakistan. In 2006 [Jalaluddin Haqqani](/wiki/Jalaluddin_Haqqani) was allegedly called a 'Pakistani asset' by a senior official of Inter-Services Intelligence. Pakistan denies any links with Haqqani or other terrorist groups. Haqqani himself has denied any links with Pakistan as well.[[25]](#cite_note-25)[[26]](#cite_note-26)[[45]](#cite_note-45)<ref name=autogenerated4>[U.S. attack on Taliban kills 23 in Pakistan](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/09/world/asia/09iht-09pstan.15996896.html), [The New York Times](/wiki/The_New_York_Times), 2008-09-09</ref>[[179]](#cite_note-179)[[180]](#cite_note-180)[[181]](#cite_note-181)[[182]](#cite_note-182) Afghan Taliban leader [Mullah Omar](/wiki/Mohammed_Omar) asked the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan in late 2008 and early 2009 to stop attacks inside Pakistan, to change their focus as an organization and to fight the [Afghan National Army](/wiki/Afghan_National_Army) and [ISAF](/wiki/ISAF) forces in [Afghanistan](/wiki/Afghanistan) instead. In late December 2008 and early January 2009 he sent a delegation, led by former [Guantanamo Bay detainee](/wiki/Guantanamo_Bay_detention_camp) [Mullah Abdullah Zakir](/wiki/Abdullah_Ghulam_Rasoul), to persuade leading members of the TTP to put aside differences with Pakistan.<ref name=gall2009327/>

Some regional experts state the common name "Taliban" may be more misleading than illuminating.<ref name=scott/> Gilles Dorronsoro, a scholar of [South Asia](/wiki/South_Asia) currently at the [Carnegie Endowment for International Peace](/wiki/Carnegie_Endowment_for_International_Peace) in Washington says: [Template:Quote](/wiki/Template:Quote) As the Pakistani Army began offensives against the Pakistani Taliban, many unfamiliar with the region thought incorrectly that the assault was against the Afghan Taliban of Mullah Omar which was not the case.<ref name=scott/>

The Pakistani Taliban were put under sanctions by [U.N. Security Council](/wiki/United_Nations_Security_Council) for terrorists attacks in Pakistan and the [2010 Times Square car bombing attempt](/wiki/2010_Times_Square_car_bombing_attempt).<ref name=sanctionsunc>[UNSC slaps sanctions on Pakistani Taliban](http://www.rediff.com/news/report/unsc-slaps-sanctions-on-pakistani-taliban/20110730.htm), July 30, 2011, rediff.com</ref>

### Malakand Taliban[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=33)]

Malakand Taliban is a militant outfit led by Sufi Muhammad and his son in law Molvi Fazalullah. Sufi Muhammad is in Pakistani government custody, however, Molvi Fazalullah is believed to be in Afghanistan. In the last week of May 2011, eight security personnel and civilians fell victim to four hundred armed Taliban who attacked Shaltalo check post in Dir, a frontier District of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, located few kilometers away from Afghan border. Although, they have been linked with Waziristan-based Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), the connection between these two groups was of symbolic nature.[[183]](#cite_note-183)

### al-Qaeda[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=34)]

[thumb|Pakistani journalist](/wiki/File:Hamid_Mir_interviewing_Osama_bin_Laden.jpg) [Hamid Mir](/wiki/Hamid_Mir) interviewing [al-Qaeda](/wiki/Al-Qaeda) leader [Osama bin Laden](/wiki/Osama_bin_Laden) in Afghanistan, November 2001. In 1996, bin Laden moved to Afghanistan from [Sudan](/wiki/Sudan). He came without invitation, and sometimes irritated Mullah Omar with his declaration of war and fatwas against citizens of third-party countries, but relations between the two groups improved over time, to the point that Mullah Omar rebuffed his group's patron Saudi Arabia, insulting Saudi minister [Prince Turki](/wiki/Turki_bin_Faisal_Al_Saud) while reneging on an earlier promise to turn bin Laden over to the Saudis.[[184]](#cite_note-184)[[185]](#cite_note-185) Bin Laden was able to forge an [alliance](/wiki/Military_alliance) between the Taliban and [al-Qaeda](/wiki/Al-Qaeda). The al-Qaeda-trained [055 Brigade](/wiki/055_Brigade) integrated with the Taliban army between 1997 and 2001. Several hundred Arab Afghan fighters sent by bin Laden assisted the Taliban in the [Mazar-e-Sharif](/wiki/Mazar-e-Sharif) slaughter.[[186]](#cite_note-186) The so-called Brigade 055 was also responsible for massacres against civilians in other parts of Afghanistan.[[24]](#cite_note-24) From 1996 to 2001, the organization of Osama Bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri had become a virtual state within the Taliban state.

Taliban-al-Qaeda connections were also strengthened by the reported marriage of one of bin Laden's sons to Omar's daughter. While in Afghanistan, bin Laden may have helped finance the Taliban.[[187]](#cite_note-187)[[188]](#cite_note-188) After the [1998 U.S. embassy bombings](/wiki/1998_United_States_embassy_bombings) in Africa, [bin Laden](/wiki/FBI_Most_Wanted_Terrorists#Osama_bin_Laden) and several al-Qaeda members were indicted in U.S. criminal court. The Taliban rejected [extradition](/wiki/Extradition) requests by the U.S., variously claiming that bin Laden had "gone missing", or that Washington "cannot provide any evidence or any proof" that bin Laden is involved in terrorist activities and that "without any evidence, bin Laden is a man without sin... he is a free man." [[189]](#cite_note-189)[[190]](#cite_note-190)[[191]](#cite_note-191)[[192]](#cite_note-192) [thumb|Current military situation, as of 27 February 2016.](/wiki/File:Taliban_insurgency_in_Afghanistan_(2015–present).svg) [Template:Legend](/wiki/Template:Legend) [Template:Legend](/wiki/Template:Legend)

Evidence against bin Laden included courtroom testimony and [satellite phone](/wiki/Satellite_phone) records. Bin Laden in turn, praised the Taliban as the "only Islamic government" in existence, and lauded Mullah Omar for his destruction of idols such as the [Buddhas of Bamyan](/wiki/Buddhas_of_Bamyan).[[193]](#cite_note-193)[[194]](#cite_note-194)[[195]](#cite_note-195) At the end of 2008, the Taliban was in talks to sever all ties with al-Qaeda.[[196]](#cite_note-196) In 2011, Alex Strick van Linschoten and Felix Kuehn at New York University's Center on International Cooperation claimed that the two groups did not get along at times before the September 11 attacks, and they have continued to fight since on account of their differences.[[197]](#cite_note-197) In July 2012, an anonymous senior-ranking Taliban commander stated that "Our people consider al-Qaeda to be a plague that was sent down to us by the heavens. Some even concluded that al-Qaeda are actually the spies of America. Originally, the Taliban were naive and ignorant of politics and welcomed al-Qaeda into their homes. But al-Qaeda abused our hospitality." He went on to further claim that about 70% of the Taliban are angry with al-Qaeda, revealing the icy relationship between the two groups.[[198]](#cite_note-198)[[199]](#cite_note-199)

### Iran[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=35)]

Iran has historically been an enemy of the Taliban. In early August 1998, after attacking the city of [Mazar](/wiki/Mazar-i-Sharif), Taliban forces killed several thousand civilians and 10 Iranian diplomats and intelligence officers in the Iranian consulate. Alleged radio intercepts indicate Mullah Omar personally approved the killings.[[200]](#cite_note-200) In the following crisis between Iran and the Taliban, the Iranian government amassed up to 200,000 regular troops on the Afghan-Iranian border.[[201]](#cite_note-201) War was eventually averted.

Many [U.S. senior military officials](/wiki/United_States_armed_forces) such as [Robert Gates](/wiki/Robert_Gates),[[202]](#cite_note-202) [Stanley McChrystal](/wiki/Stanley_A._McChrystal),[[203]](#cite_note-203) [David Petraeus](/wiki/David_Petraeus)[[204]](#cite_note-204) and others believe that Iran's [Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps](/wiki/Army_of_the_Guardians_of_the_Islamic_Revolution) nowadays is involved in helping the Taliban to a certain extent. Reports in which [NATO](/wiki/NATO) states accused Iran of supplying and training some Taliban insurgents started coming forward since 2004/2005.[Template:Quote](/wiki/Template:Quote)

### United States[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=36)]

The United States never recognized the Taliban government in Afghanistan. However, Ahmed Rashid states that the U.S. indirectly supported the Taliban through its ally in [Pakistan](/wiki/Pakistan) between 1994 and 1996 because Washington viewed the Taliban as anti-[Iranian](/wiki/Iran–United_States_relations), anti-[Shia](/wiki/Shia_Islam) and pro-Western. Washington furthermore hoped that the Taliban would support development planned by the U.S.-based oil company [*Unocal*](/wiki/Unocal). For example, it made no comment when the Taliban captured Herat in 1995, and expelled thousands of girls from schools. In late 1997, American Secretary of State [Madeleine Albright](/wiki/Madeleine_Albright) began to distance the U.S. from the Taliban, and the American-based oil company [Unocal](/wiki/Unocal) withdrew from negotiations on pipeline construction from Central Asia.[[205]](#cite_note-205)[[206]](#cite_note-206)[[207]](#cite_note-207)[[208]](#cite_note-208) One day before the August 1998 capture of Mazar, bin Laden affiliates [bombed two U.S. embassies](/wiki/1998_United_States_embassy_bombings) in Africa, killing 224 and wounding 4,500, mostly Africans. The U.S. responded by launching cruise missiles on suspected terrorist camps in Afghanistan, killing over 20 though failing to kill bin Laden or even many Al-Qaeda. Mullah Omar condemned the missile attack and American President [Bill Clinton](/wiki/Bill_Clinton). Saudi Arabia expelled the Taliban envoy in protest over the refusal to turn over bin Laden, and after Mullah Omar allegedly insulted the Saudi royal family.In mid-October the U.N. [Security Council](/wiki/Security_Council) voted unanimously to ban commercial aircraft flights to and from Afghanistan, and freeze its bank accounts worldwide.[[209]](#cite_note-209)[[210]](#cite_note-210)[[211]](#cite_note-211) [thumb|upright|US soldiers burn a suspected Taliban safehouse.](/wiki/File:GIs_burn_a_house_described_as_a_Taliban_safehouse.jpg) Adjusting its [counterinsurgency](/wiki/Counterinsurgency) strategy, in October 2009, the U.S announced plans to pay Taliban fighters to switch sides.[[212]](#cite_note-212) On November 26, 2009, in an interview with [CNN's](/wiki/CNN) [Christiane Amanpour](/wiki/Christiane_Amanpour), President [Hamid Karzai](/wiki/Hamid_Karzai) said there is an "urgent need" for negotiations with the Taliban, and made it clear that the Obama administration had opposed such talks. There was no formal American response.[[213]](#cite_note-213)[[214]](#cite_note-214) In December 2009, Asian Times Online reported that the Taliban had offered to give the U.S. "legal guarantees" that they would not allow Afghanistan to be used for attacks on other countries, and that there had been no formal American response.[[105]](#cite_note-105) On December 6, U.S. officials indicated that they have not ruled out talks with the Taliban. Several days later it was reported that Gates saw potential for reconciliation with the Taliban, but not with Al-Qaeda. Furthermore, he said that reconciliation would politically end the insurgency and the war. But he said reconciliation must be on the Afghan government's terms, and that the Taliban must be subject to the sovereignty of the government.[[215]](#cite_note-215)[[216]](#cite_note-216) In 2010, General McChrystal said his troop surge could lead to a negotiated peace with the Taliban.[[217]](#cite_note-217)

### United Kingdom[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=37)]

After the 9/11 attacks, the United Kingdom froze the Taliban's assets in the U.K., nearly $200 million by early October 2001. The U.K. also supported the U.S. decision to remove the Taliban, both politically and militarily.[[218]](#cite_note-218)[[219]](#cite_note-219) The UN agreed that NATO would act on its behalf, focusing on counter-terrorist operations in Afghanistan after the Taliban had been "defeated". The United Kingdom took operational responsibility for [Helmand Province](/wiki/Helmand_Province), a major poppy-growing province in southern Afghanistan, deploying troops there in the summer of 2006, and encountered resistance by re-formed Taliban forces allegedly entering Afghanistan from Pakistan. The Taliban turned towards the use of [improvised explosive devices](/wiki/Improvised_explosive_devices).[[220]](#cite_note-220) During 2008 the United Kingdom announced plans to pay Taliban fighters to switch sides or lay down arms; the proceeding year the U.K. government supported negotiations with the Taliban.[[221]](#cite_note-221)[[222]](#cite_note-222)

### India[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=38)]

India is one of the Taliban's most outspoken critics. India did not recognize the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and instead maintained close strategic and military ties with the [Northern Alliance](/wiki/Northern_Alliance) so as to contain the rise of Taliban during the 1990s. India was one of the closest allies of former Afghan president [Mohammad Najibullah](/wiki/Mohammad_Najibullah) and strongly condemned his public execution by the Taliban. Pakistan and Kashmir-based militant groups thought to have ties with the Taliban have historically been involved in the [Kashmir insurgency](/wiki/Kashmir_insurgency) targeted against Indian security forces.[[223]](#cite_note-223)[[224]](#cite_note-224)[[225]](#cite_note-225)[[226]](#cite_note-226) In December 1999, [Indian Airlines Flight 814](/wiki/Indian_Airlines_Flight_814) en route from [Kathmandu](/wiki/Kathmandu) to [Delhi](/wiki/Delhi) was hijacked and taken to [Kandahar](/wiki/Kandahar). The Taliban moved its militias near the hijacked aircraft, supposedly to prevent [Indian special forces](/wiki/Special_Forces_of_India) from storming the aircraft, and stalled the negotiations between India and the hijackers for days. [*The New York Times*](/wiki/The_New_York_Times) later reported that there were credible links between the hijackers and the Taliban. As a part of the deal to free the plane, India released three militants. The Taliban gave a safe passage to the hijackers and the released militants.[[227]](#cite_note-227)[[228]](#cite_note-228) Following the hijacking, India drastically increased its efforts to help Massoud, providing an arms depot in [Dushanbe](/wiki/Dushanbe), [Tajikistan](/wiki/Tajikistan). India also provided a wide range of high-altitude warfare equipment, helicopter technicians, medical services, and tactical advice. According to one report, Indian military support to anti-Taliban forces totaled US$70 million, including five [Mil Mi-17](/wiki/Mil_Mi-17) helicopters, and US$8 million worth of high-altitude equipment in 2001. India extensively supported the new administration in Afghanistan, leading several reconstruction projects and by 2001 had emerged as the country's largest regional donor.[[229]](#cite_note-229)[[230]](#cite_note-230)[[231]](#cite_note-231)[[232]](#cite_note-232)[[233]](#cite_note-233)[[234]](#cite_note-234) In the wake of recent [terrorist attacks in India](/wiki/Terrorism_in_India), there have been growing concerns about fundamentalist organisations such as the Taliban seeking to expand their activities into India. During the [2011 ICC Cricket World Cup](/wiki/2011_ICC_Cricket_World_Cup) which was co-hosted in India, Pakistani Interior Minister [Rehman Malik](/wiki/Rehman_Malik) and Interpol chief [Ronald Noble](/wiki/Ronald_Noble) revealed that a terrorist bid to disrupt the tournament had been foiled; following a conference with Noble, Malik said that the Taliban had begun to base their activities in India with reports from neighboring countries exposing their activities in the country and a Sri Lankan terrorist planning to target cricketers was arrested in Colombo. In 2009, the [*Times of India*](/wiki/Times_of_India) called for India to reassess its Taliban threat.[[235]](#cite_note-235)[[236]](#cite_note-236)[[237]](#cite_note-237)[[238]](#cite_note-238)

### United Nations and NGOs[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=39)]

A major issue during the Taliban's reign was its relations with the [United Nations](/wiki/United_Nations) (UN) and [non-governmental organizations](/wiki/Non-governmental_organization) (NGOs). Twenty years of continuous warfare had devastated Afghanistan's [infrastructure](/wiki/Infrastructure) and economy. There was no running water, little electricity, few telephones, functioning roads or regular energy supplies. Basic necessities like water, food, housing and others were in desperately short supply. In addition, the [clan](/wiki/Clan) and family structure that provided Afghans with a social/economic safety net was also badly damaged. Afghanistan's infant mortality was the highest in the world. A full quarter of all children died before they reached their fifth birthday, a rate several times higher than most other developing countries.[[136]](#cite_note-136)[[239]](#cite_note-239)[[240]](#cite_note-240) International charitable and/or development organisations ([NGOs](/wiki/NGO)) were extremely important to the supply of food, employment, reconstruction, and other services. With one million plus deaths during the years of war, the number of families headed by widows had reached 98,000 by 1998. Thus Taliban restrictions on women were sometime a matter not only of [human rights](/wiki/Human_rights), but of life and death. In Kabul, where vast portions of the city had been devastated from rocket attacks, more than half of its 1.2 million people benefited in some way from NGO activities, even for water to drink. The [civil war](/wiki/Civil_war_in_Afghanistan_(1996–2001)) and its never-ending refugee stream continued throughout the Taliban's reign. The Mazar, Herat, and Shomali valley offensives displaced more than three-quarters of a million civilians, using "[scorched earth](/wiki/Scorched_earth)" tactics to prevent them from supplying the enemy with aid.[[241]](#cite_note-241)[[242]](#cite_note-242)[[243]](#cite_note-243) Despite the aid, the Taliban's attitude toward the UN and NGOs was often one of suspicion, in place of gratitude or even tolerance. The UN operates on the basis of [international law](/wiki/International_law), not [Sharia](/wiki/Sharia), and the UN did not recognize the Taliban as the legitimate government of Afghanistan. Additionally, most foreign donors and aid workers, were non-Muslims. As the Taliban's Attorney General Maulvi Jalil-ullah Maulvizada put it:

[Template:Quote](/wiki/Template:Quote)

Taliban decision-makers, particularly Mullah Omar, seldom if ever talked directly to non-Muslim foreigners, so aid providers had to deal with intermediaries whose approvals and agreements were often reversed.[[154]](#cite_note-154) Around September 1997 the heads of three UN agencies in Kandahar were expelled from the country after protesting when a female [attorney](/wiki/Lawyer) for the [UN High Commissioner for Refugees](/wiki/United_Nations_High_Commissioner_for_Refugees) was forced to talk from behind a curtain so her face would not be visible.[[244]](#cite_note-244) When the UN increased the number of Muslim women staff to satisfy Taliban demands, the Taliban then required all female Muslim UN staff traveling to Afghanistan to be chaperoned by a [mahram](/wiki/Mahram) or a blood relative.<ref name=taliban71>[Template:Harvnb](/wiki/Template:Harvnb).</ref> In July 1998, the Taliban closed "all NGO offices" by force after those organizations refused to move to a bombed-out former [Polytechnic](/wiki/Institute_of_technology) College as ordered.[[245]](#cite_note-245) One month later the UN offices were also shut down.[[246]](#cite_note-246) As food prices rose and conditions deteriorated, Planning Minister Qari Din Mohammed explained the Taliban's indifference to the loss of humanitarian aid:

[Template:Quote](/wiki/Template:Quote)

In 2009, a top U.N official called for talks with Taliban leaders. In 2010, the U.N lifted sanctions on the Taliban, and requested that Taliban leaders and others be removed from terrorism watch lists. In 2010 the U.S. and Europe announced support for President Karzai's latest attempt to negotiate peace with the Taliban.[[247]](#cite_note-247)[[248]](#cite_note-248)[[249]](#cite_note-249)[[250]](#cite_note-250)

## See also[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=40)]

[Template:Portal](/wiki/Template:Portal) [Template:Div col](/wiki/Template:Div_col)

* [Colonel Imam](/wiki/Colonel_Imam)
* [History of Afghanistan (1992–present)](/wiki/History_of_Afghanistan_(1992–present))
* [Opium production in Afghanistan](/wiki/Opium_production_in_Afghanistan)
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* [List of Taliban Leaders](/wiki/List_of_Taliban_Leaders)

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## External links[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=44)]

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