Negative Brief: Child Soldiers

By “Coach Vance” Trefethen

***Resolved: Resolved: The United States federal government should considerably decrease its military commitments***

Not sure what this plan does but possibly it eliminates US military aid to countries that use underage kids as soldiers. NEG strategy is to simply run Disadvantages on the problems of cutting aid to countries that would be affected by the AFF plan. We list 3 here: Afghanistan, Somalia, and Syria (rebel groups).

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Negative: Child Soldiers

AFGHANISTAN DISADS

Big Link to Afghanistan – AFF Must cut all aid to Afghanistan because they use child solders

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Relief Web 2017. (humanitarian information source published by the United Nations) 10 countries where child soldiers are still recruited in armed conflicts https://reliefweb.int/report/central-african-republic/10-countries-where-child-soldiers-are-still-recruited-armed

Here's a look at 10 of the countries where child soldiers are still be recruited and used in conflicts.  
AFGHANISTAN  
The Afghan National Police, the Afghan Local Police and three armed groups including Taliban forces, were listed as perpetrators by the UN in 2015.

AFGHAN DA 1. Resurgent Taliban

Link: Afghanistan needs our help to fight the Taliban

Dr. Paul D. Miller 2014 (Associate Director of the Clements Center for National Security at the University of Texas at Austin. He is also an adjunct political scientist at the RAND Corporation. He previously served as director for Afghanistan and Pakistan on the National Security Staff in the White House; as an intelligence analyst for the Central Intelligence Agency; and in Afghanistan with the US Army.) 30 November 2014 “America, Don’t Give Up on Afghanistan” https://newrepublic.com/article/120425/us-troops-should-stay-afghanistan-war-winnable

Few observers would argue that the Afghans are prepared to go it alone. The Department of Defense [judged](http://www.defense.gov/pubs/April_1230_Report_Final.pdf) in April that Afghan security forces’ “logistics and sustainment capabilities remained underdeveloped.” Despite being in the lead for most operations, Afghan forces continue to rely on international military forces for air support, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, among other needs.

Link: Afghanistan does not have the adequate resources to fight the Taliban alone

Dr. Paul D. Miller 2014 (Associate Director of the Clements Center for National Security at the University of Texas at Austin. He is also an adjunct political scientist at the RAND Corporation. He previously served as director for Afghanistan and Pakistan on the National Security Staff in the White House; as an intelligence analyst for the Central Intelligence Agency; and in Afghanistan with the US Army.) 30 November 2014 “America, Don’t Give Up on Afghanistan” https://newrepublic.com/article/120425/us-troops-should-stay-afghanistan-war-winnable

The U.S. should reverse course and keep troops in Afghanistan, consistent with the [2012 Strategic Partnership Agreement](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/2012.06.01u.s.-afghanistanspasignedtext.pdf), for the next decade or longer. Afghan security forces are unlikely to have the logistics, air support, intelligence, and transportation capabilities they need to sustain their fight against the Taliban, defend their borders, or deny safe haven to Al Qaeda within the next two years. Al Qaeda, the Taliban, and their many affiliates and allies in the region have not been defeated and, as illustrated by recent developments in Iraq, are likely to grow stronger in the power vacuum left in the wake of a U.S. withdrawal.

Link: Afghanistan can’t fight the Taliban without us

Dr. Paul D. Miller 2014 (Associate Director of the Clements Center for National Security at the University of Texas at Austin. He is also an adjunct political scientist at the RAND Corporation. He previously served as director for Afghanistan and Pakistan on the National Security Staff in the White House; as an intelligence analyst for the Central Intelligence Agency; and in Afghanistan with the US Army.) 30 November 2014 “America, Don’t Give Up on Afghanistan” https://newrepublic.com/article/120425/us-troops-should-stay-afghanistan-war-winnable

If U.S. forces withdraw completely, as under the current plan, Afghan forces may turn out to be as unprepared as their Iraqi counterparts to face a renewed insurgent offensive alone. While they are unlikely to collapse immediately, as some pessimistic observers have predicted, they may withdraw from some districts and provinces in the south and east to minimize casualties and focus on securing major cities and roadways. Such redeployments would be efficient and make military sense, but they would also amount to a tacit cease-fire with local Taliban forces and enable the Taliban (and, thus, Al Qaeda) to control some Afghan territory—as the Islamic State has done in Iraq and Syria. The Taliban would then gain further strength and momentum through their control of the drug trade, as the Islamic State benefits from the oil industry. Their operational freedom would be further strengthened by the end of the alleged U.S. drone program in Afghanistan and Pakistan—which requires at least some personnel on the ground for airfield security, logistics, and maintenance. Militants’ control of territory would lend them an air of legitimacy and strength with locals and even win some degree of support—whether through loyalty or fear—again, just as in Iraq and Syria. Finally, if political wrangling in the capital convinces Afghans that their government cannot meet their needs or protect them, as Sunnis seem to have concluded about Baghdad, they are likely to be more receptive to local solutions, even if they come with the Taliban’s imprimatur.

Link: Our absence would be a victory for the Taliban

Dr. Daniel L. Byman 2017. (senior fellow in the Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings Institution, where his research focuses on counterterrorism and Middle East security; senior associate dean for undergraduate affairs at Georgetown University’s Walsh School of Foreign Service and a professor in its Security Studies Program; former staff member with the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks on the United States and the Joint 9/11 Inquiry Staff of the House and Senate Intelligence Committees; PhD from Massachusetts Institute of Technology) 5 September 2017 “The case for continued U.S. involvement in Afghanistan: Part 1” https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2017/09/05/the-case-for-continued-u-s-involvement-in-afghanistan/

An open U.S. defeat would also be a morale boost for our enemies. This is the land where the jihadists beat one superpower, the Soviet Union, and giving them a second victory would be a psychological jolt. This would help their recruiting, fundraising and morale in general. Similarly, U.S. friends would be dispirited, seeing the United States as abandoning the region despite many U.S. and allied sacrifices.

Link & Impact: Our leaving would create new opportunities for jihadi terrorists

Heather Horn 2009. (former senior associate editor at The Atlantic. Bret Stephens – Pulitzer Prize–winning foreign-affairs columnist and deputy editorial-page editor of the Wall Street Journal) 22 September 2009 “Top 5 Reasons to Stay in Afghanistan” https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2009/09/top-5-reasons-to-stay-in-afghanistan/348051/ (brackets in original)

The Wall Street Journal's [Bret Stephens](http://online.wsj.com/public/article/SB10001424052970203440104574398442481337048.html), argued that the Soviet abandonment of Afghanistan, followed by the collapse of the U.S.S.R., made for a dangerous precedent in "Islamist mythology ... Put simply, it was the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan that laid much of the imaginative groundwork for 9/11. So imagine the sorts of notions that would take root in the minds of jihadists—and the possibilities that would open up to them—if the U.S. was to withdraw from Afghanistan in its own turn."

Impact: Threat to US National Security

Nicholas Grossman 2018. (professor of political science at the University of Illinois, where he teaches classes on terrorism and insurgency; national security policy; and 21st century technology and warfare, primarily robotic systems. He is also editor-at-large of Arc Digital. He has a PhD in international relations from the University of Maryland.) 7 February 2018 “The U.S. Needs to Rethink What Winning in Afghanistan Looks Like” https://www.nationalreview.com/2018/02/afghanistan-united-states-military-presence-maintain-troops-vietnam-war-different/

As with the Vietcong, the Taliban and other Afghan insurgents do not directly threaten American security. But the similarities end there. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the Taliban willingly hosted al-Qaeda, which proved itself a threat to American security. If the Taliban retakes power, it could allow transnational jihadists to set up shop.

Impact: We either fight in Afghanistan, or they bring the fight here

Tara Copp 2018. (Pentagon Bureau Chief for Military Times; MA in the Security Studies Program from Georgetown University.) 30 May 2018 “Why should the US stay in Afghanistan? Here’s what the top commander there said.” https://www.militarytimes.com/flashpoints/2018/05/30/why-should-the-us-stay-in-afghanistan-the-commander-of-coalition-forces-offers-his-views-as-he-departs/ (brackets added)

In a teleconference from Kabul with Pentagon reporters Tuesday, Military Times asked [Army Gen. John] Nicholson why, after 17 years, the U.S. should continue to send its sons and daughters to Afghanistan? Why should the U.S. military stay? “Thanks for the question,” Nicholson said. “It’s really important, and it’s been a long war.” “There is a threat from this region to our homeland. So our choice is fairly simple: We either keep the pressure on them here, or they bring the fight to our doorstep,” he said.

AFGHAN DA 2. Increased Terrorism

Link: Afghanistan can’t fight without the US

Peter Bergen 2015. (CNN National Security Analyst. He is also a print and television journalist, documentary producer, professor, think tank executive and the author of five books; editorial board of Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, the leading scholarly journal in the field, and has testified before congressional committees about Afghanistan, Pakistan, al Qaeda, drones, ISIS and other national security issues.) 5 January 2015 “Why U.S. needs to stay in Afghanistan” https://www.cnn.com/2015/01/05/opinion/bergen-keep-troops-in-afghanistan/index.html

One only has to look at the debacle that has unfolded in Iraq after the withdrawal of US troops at the end of 2011 to have a sneak preview of what could take place in an Afghanistan without some kind of residual American presence. Without U.S. forces in the country, there is a strong possibility Afghanistan could host a reinvigorated Taliban allied to a reinvigorated al Qaeda.

Link: US presence controls the Taliban to a certain extent

Dr. Nicholas Grossman 2018. (professor of political science at the University of Illinois, where he teaches classes on terrorism and insurgency. PhD in international relations from the University of Maryland.) 7 February 2018 “The U.S. Needs to Rethink What Winning in Afghanistan Looks Like” https://www.nationalreview.com/2018/02/afghanistan-united-states-military-presence-maintain-troops-vietnam-war-different/

By contrast, current troop levels enable Special Operations forces to hunt down insurgent leaders and transnational terrorists, while trainers and embeds help the Afghan National Security Forces provide security. That, plus drone strikes and surveillance, is probably enough to prevent the Taliban from controlling much territory or the elected Afghan government from collapsing.

Example of Iraq: When we left, the Iraqi military was not ready

Helle C. Dale 2017. (Senior Fellow for Public Diplomacy at the Heritage Foundation.; master’s degree in English and American studies from the University of Copenhagen in Denmark and pursued graduate work in American studies at Tufts University, Boston. She is a media fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University; a member of the Council on Foreign Relations; and serves on the board of visitors of the Institute on Political Journalism at Georgetown Univ.) 8 June 2017 “Why the US Must Stay the Course in Afghanistan” https://www.heritage.org/middle-east/commentary/why-the-us-must-stay-the-course-afghanistan

Additionally, we have the painful, recent example of what happened in Iraq when President Barack Obama pulled U.S. troops out in 2011 to fulfill his campaign promise. The Iraqi military on its own was in no way ready to contain the advance of ISIS out of Syria, the “JV team” as Obama dismissively called the terrorist group. Today, the world is dealing with the consequences of the horribly misguided U.S. troop withdrawal from Iraq (which Obama even had to partially reverse as the consequences became clear). Let us remain steadfast in Afghanistan. It is in the interest of all that the United States remain committed to denying the Taliban, al-Qaeda, and ISIS another safe haven in that country.

Example of Iraq: Without US help, ISIS was unstoppable

Dr. Nicholas Grossman 2018. (professor of political science at the University of Illinois, where he teaches classes on terrorism and insurgency. PhD in international relations from the University of Maryland.) 7 February 2018 “The U.S. Needs to Rethink What Winning in Afghanistan Looks Like” https://www.nationalreview.com/2018/02/afghanistan-united-states-military-presence-maintain-troops-vietnam-war-different/

Iraq shows why this is important. Obama believed the Iraq War was a mistake and came into office in 2009 vowing to end it. By the end of 2011, all U.S. troops had left the country. Negotiations to leave a rapid reaction force of 5,000–10,000 fell through owing to Iraq’s insistence that Iraqi courts, rather than the U.S. military, have jurisdiction over American personnel accused of crimes. There was probably a way to work around the issue, but Obama didn’t press it. In June 2014, ISIS swept across northern Iraq, and the Iraqis proved unable to stop them. A few months later, ISIS threatened Baghdad, and Obama reintroduced American forces. A three-year U.S.-backed campaign helped Iraq retake its territory, but an American residual force in Iraq could have responded early to ISIS’s 2014 offense, perhaps preventing Islamic State forces from gaining control of Mosul, where they captured cash and weaponry that fueled their expansion.

Brink: US troop presence in Afghanistan is the only approach that will work against terrorism

Dr. Frederick W. Kagan, Dr. Kimberly Kagan, Jeffrey Dressler and Carl Forsberg 2011. (F. Kagan – director of the Critical Threats Project at the American Enterprise Institute; PhD in Russian/Soviet military history; former professor of military history at the U.S. Military Academy. K. Kagan – president of the Institute for the Study of War; PhD in history; served on Afghanistan commander Gen. Stanley McChrystal's strategic assessment team. Dressler and Forsberg are research analysts at the Institute for the Study of War.) “Defining Success in Afghanistan” http://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/DefiningSuccessinAfghanistanElectronicVersion.pdf

The current American and Coalition strategy is making progress and should be continued. Since President Obama, NATO allies, and the Afghans have agreed that troops will be present in Afghanistan through 2014, the policy does not require substantial modifications at this point. [END QUOTE] This paper is thus primarily a report on the current situation in Afghanistan and a consideration of some of the prospects and challenges ahead. [THEY GO ON LATER TO SAY QUOTE:] Our principal recommendation is that the U.S. and its allies should continue to resource and sustain the strategy now being executed, which is the only approach that can secure their vital national security interests in Afghanistan.

Brink: Troop presence is the only way to deny safe haven to terrorists in Afghanistan

Dr. Frederick W. Kagan, Dr. Kimberly Kagan, Jeffrey Dressler and Carl Forsberg 2011. (F. Kagan – director of the Critical Threats Project at the American Enterprise Institute; PhD in Russian/Soviet military history; former professor of military history at the U.S. Military Academy. K. Kagan – president of the Institute for the Study of War; PhD in history; served on Afghanistan commander Gen. Stanley McChrystal's strategic assessment team. Dressler and Forsberg are research analysts at the Institute for the Study of War.) “Defining Success in Afghanistan” http://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/DefiningSuccessinAfghanistanElectronicVersion.pdf

It is not possible to deny safe haven to terrorists in Afghanistan without also pursuing a counterinsurgency strategy. The neutralization and ultimate defeat of the insurgency is a necessary prerequisite for preventing the return of al Qaeda and other transnational terrorist groups that thrive in the political vacuum that the insurgency creates. As long as local networks willing to support extremists exist and can operate freely in Afghanistan, terrorists will be able to use those networks however intense our direct-action operations might be. The current counterinsurgency strategy is the only approach that can disrupt and ultimately eliminate those local networks, thereby preventing the terrorists from returning to Afghanistan and ensuring that America achieves its vital national security objectives.

Impact to example of Iraq: Leaving Afghanistan would be worse

Dr. Nicholas Grossman 2018. (professor of political science at the University of Illinois, where he teaches classes on terrorism and insurgency. PhD in international relations from the University of Maryland.) 7 February 2018 “The U.S. Needs to Rethink What Winning in Afghanistan Looks Like” https://www.nationalreview.com/2018/02/afghanistan-united-states-military-presence-maintain-troops-vietnam-war-different/

Unlike Iraq in 2011, Afghanistan is currently run by a unity government, led by the two top finishers from the 2014 election. And if the U.S. leaves, what follows could easily be worse than post-withdrawal Iraq.

Impact: Without the US, the Taliban is unrestrained

Peter Bergen 2015. (CNN National Security Analyst. He is also a print and television journalist, documentary producer, professor, think tank executive and the author of five books; editorial board of Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, the leading scholarly journal in the field, and has testified before congressional committees about Afghanistan, Pakistan, al Qaeda, drones, ISIS and other national security issues.) 5 January 2015 “Why U.S. needs to stay in Afghanistan” https://www.cnn.com/2015/01/05/opinion/bergen-keep-troops-in-afghanistan/index.html

Without U.S. forces in the country, there is a strong possibility Afghanistan could host a reinvigorated Taliban allied to a reinvigorated al Qaeda. Needless to say, this would be a disaster for Afghanistan. But it would also be quite damaging to U.S. interests to have some kind of resurgent al Qaeda in the country where the group trained the hijackers for the 9/11 attacks.

AFGHAN DA 3. Human Rights Threatened

Link: Humanitarian reason for remaining in Afghanistan

Dr. Daniel L. Byman 2017. (senior fellow in the Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings Institution, where his research focuses on counterterrorism and Middle East security; senior associate dean for undergraduate affairs at Georgetown University’s Walsh School of Foreign Service and a professor in its Security Studies Program; former staff member with the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks on the United States and the Joint 9/11 Inquiry Staff of the House and Senate Intelligence Committees; PhD from Massachusetts Institute of Technology) 5 September 2017 “The case for continued U.S. involvement in Afghanistan: Part 1” https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2017/09/05/the-case-for-continued-u-s-involvement-in-afghanistan/

Beyond counterterrorism interests, there is a humanitarian case for remaining in Afghanistan. The Taliban oppose women’s rights, religious tolerance, education for girls and general liberal democratic values. Preventing such a group from gaining power helps Afghans. Although the United States cannot and should not intervene everywhere to promote human rights, Afghanistan represents a possible exception given the long-standing U.S. involvement coupled with the security reasons and serious humanitarian concerns.

Link: US presence has dramatically improved many aspects of life for millions of Afghans: schools, women’s rights, and reduced infant mortality

Jamie Fly 2012. (M.A. in German and European Studies from Georgetown University; former Director for Counterproliferation Strategy at the National Security Council in the GWBush administration) 1 April 2012 “Reclaiming the Moral Case for Afghanistan” http://www.commentarymagazine.com/article/reclaiming-the-moral-case-for-afghanistan/

It is understandable that many Americans look at Afghanistan after a decade of war and fail to see past the violence and lawlessness that still rages. But there is another story to this war. Over the last decade, Afghanistan has experienced improvements in almost every area of life. By 2010, according to the U.S. State Department, 35 percent of the 6.2 million students enrolled in Afghan schools were girls, up from zero percent among the fewer than 900,000 students enrolled during Taliban rule. U.S.-funded efforts have assisted the building of schools, the incorporation of women into Afghanistan’s police forces, and the training of female teachers, politicians, lawyers, and judges. There are now 69 female members of the Afghan parliament. Afghanistan has also experienced a sharp decrease in infant and child mortality rates and significant increases in life expectancy for both men and women. These achievements undermine the criticism that our efforts in Afghanistan must fail because we are attempting to change deeply held societal norms and the inherent nature of Islam as practiced in Afghanistan’s tribal society.

Impact: One of the worst humanitarian catastrophes, including mass killings of ethnic groups & women

Dr. Paul D. Miller 2014 (Associate Director of the Clements Center for National Security at the University of Texas at Austin. He is also an adjunct political scientist at the RAND Corporation. He previously served as director for Afghanistan and Pakistan on the National Security Staff in the White House; as an intelligence analyst for the Central Intelligence Agency; and in Afghanistan with the US Army.) 30 November 2014 “America, Don’t Give Up on Afghanistan” https://newrepublic.com/article/120425/us-troops-should-stay-afghanistan-war-winnable

A resurgent Taliban and renewed safe haven for Al Qaeda would be threats to U.S. national security. But they are also likely to instigate one of the worst humanitarian catastrophes of the decade. The stories coming out of Iraq in 2014, including mass summary executions and beheadings, have been ghastly. A similar fate does not have to befall Afghanistan—but it could, if the U.S. withdraws prematurely. If the Taliban continue their resurgence in the wake of the international withdrawal, they are likely to engage in reprisal killings against Afghans who allied with the Karzai government or international forces—including whole tribes who worked en masse with U.S. forces over the years. The ethnic Hazara, whom the Taliban targeted for ethnic cleansing in the 1990s, will face the same fate as the Iraqi Yazidis. The Hazara will be joined by women, Tajiks, Christians, Shia, and the Popalzai and Barakzai tribes.

Impact: Brutal repression for Afghan women under the Taliban

Jamie Fly 2012. (M.A. in German and European Studies from Georgetown University; former Director for Counterproliferation Strategy at the National Security Council in the GWBush administration) 1 April 2012 “Reclaiming the Moral Case for Afghanistan” http://www.commentarymagazine.com/article/reclaiming-the-moral-case-for-afghanistan/

The Taliban enforced a strict morality code for both men and women, but women and girls bore the brunt of the most brutal repression. Women were prohibited from working outside the home except in certain fields and, in many cases, from leaving their homes unless accompanied by a close male relative. As the group Physicians for Human Rights noted the same year that Leno gave her briefing, “No other regime in the world has methodically and violently forced half of its population into virtual house arrest.” In addition to enforcement of laws requiring women to wear a burka completely covering their bodies, schools for girls were closed and basic health care was often denied. It is not surprising that such a moral wasteland came to serve as the staging ground for Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda as they planned the attacks of 9/11. Bin Laden’s ideology and that of his Taliban hosts sprang from the same vile swamp.

Impact: Horrific oppression of women by the Taliban

Jamie Fly 2012. (M.A. in German and European Studies from Georgetown University; former Director for Counterproliferation Strategy at the National Security Council in the GWBush administration) 1 April 2012 “Reclaiming the Moral Case for Afghanistan” http://www.commentarymagazine.com/article/reclaiming-the-moral-case-for-afghanistan/

In August 2010, after years of both military gains and setbacks, *Time* ran a cover story about an 18-year-old Afghan woman named Aisha. Her nose and ears had been cut off by a Taliban commander for having fled abusive in-laws. Provocatively titled “What Happens If We Leave Afghanistan,” the article and attendant images provoked a discussion about whether the United States was about to abandon the women and girls of Afghanistan to renewed oppression under the Taliban.

AFGHAN DA 4. Lost American Honor

Link: We should stay in Afghanistan to uphold our honor

Dr. Paul D. Miller 2014 (Associate Director of the Clements Center for National Security at the University of Texas at Austin. He is also an adjunct political scientist at the RAND Corporation. He previously served as director for Afghanistan and Pakistan on the National Security Staff in the White House; as an intelligence analyst for the Central Intelligence Agency; and in Afghanistan with the US Army.) 30 November 2014 “America, Don’t Give Up on Afghanistan” https://newrepublic.com/article/120425/us-troops-should-stay-afghanistan-war-winnable

The United States’ initial intervention in Afghanistan was triggered by justifiable fear in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of 2001. A range of other legitimate self-interests have become implicated in the war since then. The United States has ample reason, whether motivated by fear, interest, or humanitarian concern to remain engaged in South Asia. But Americans should be neither surprised nor embarrassed to note another reason: upholding America’s honor.

Link & Brink: American honor rests on staying in Afghanistan

Dr. Paul D. Miller 2014 (Associate Director of the Clements Center for National Security at the University of Texas at Austin. He is also an adjunct political scientist at the RAND Corporation. He previously served as director for Afghanistan and Pakistan on the National Security Staff in the White House; as an intelligence analyst for the Central Intelligence Agency; and in Afghanistan with the US Army.) 30 November 2014 “America, Don’t Give Up on Afghanistan” https://newrepublic.com/article/120425/us-troops-should-stay-afghanistan-war-winnable

Today most scholars and policymakers use the language of America’s “credibility,” or its “resolve.” They warn that another defeat will hurt America’s ability to exercise world leadership. Scholars write that the U.S. failures might impose “reputational costs” and damage allies’ perceptions of American reliability. These are unnecessarily complicated ways of saying that America’s honor is on the line. The United States dishonored itself by allowing Saigon to fall, allowing millions of Vietnamese allies to die, flee, or fall under dictatorship.

**[END QUOTE. HE GOES ON LATER IN THE SAME ARTICLE TO SAY QUOTE:]**

American honor is deeply implicated in Afghanistan. The war has lasted longer than the one in Iraq, America persevered in it with far more united commitment, and the United States has been even more explicit in its repeated assurances to the Afghan people. Bush [said](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/transcripts/bushtext_041702.html) in April 2002, “We know that true peace will only be achieved when we give the Afghan people the means to achieve their own aspirations.” In the [2005 Strategic Partnership Agreement](http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/sca/rls/pr/2005/46628.htm), the United States pledged to support “democratic good governance” and a “thriving private sector,” and to continue to “organize, train, equip, and sustain Afghan security forces.” [END QUOTE] In 2009 Obama [said](http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-a-new-strategy-afghanistan-and-pakistan), “We are in Afghanistan to confront a common enemy that threatens the United States, our friends and our allies, and the people of Afghanistan,” and pledged that “we will seek lasting partnerships with Afghanistan and Pakistan that promise a new day for their people.” [THEN HE SAYS LATER IN THE CONTEXT QUOTE:] The 2012 Strategic Partnership Agreement pledged American help “so that Afghanistan can independently secure and defend itself against internal and external threats, and help ensure that terrorists never again encroach on Afghan soil and threaten Afghanistan, the region, and the world.” If these bipartisan, consistent, and repeated words of promise to the Afghans mean nothing, it is unclear why anyone should give credence to American promises in the future.

Link & Brink: We have promised to help them

Dr. Paul D. Miller 2014 (Associate Director of the Clements Center for National Security at the University of Texas at Austin. He is also an adjunct political scientist at the RAND Corporation. He previously served as director for Afghanistan and Pakistan on the National Security Staff in the White House; as an intelligence analyst for the Central Intelligence Agency; and in Afghanistan with the US Army.) 30 November 2014 “America, Don’t Give Up on Afghanistan” https://newrepublic.com/article/120425/us-troops-should-stay-afghanistan-war-winnable

The United States has repeatedly and publicly promised to stand by the Afghans and help them secure their country—in the Strategic Partnership Agreements, the 2012 designation of Afghanistan as a Major Non-NATO Ally, and the BSA—promises the United States never made to the Libyans. The Afghans are betting their future on American promises. In addition, many Afghans have risked their lives to fight America’s enemies. Countless Afghans soldiers, policemen, and intelligence agents have fought on the frontlines, and far more of them have been killed than U.S. troops. Their service to America creates an obligation to help protect them.

Impact: Damage to US credibility would make it hard for other countries to take us seriously

Dr. Paul D. Miller 2014 (Associate Director of the Clements Center for National Security at the University of Texas at Austin. He is also an adjunct political scientist at the RAND Corporation. He previously served as director for Afghanistan and Pakistan on the National Security Staff in the White House; as an intelligence analyst for the Central Intelligence Agency; and in Afghanistan with the US Army.) 30 November 2014 “America, Don’t Give Up on Afghanistan” https://newrepublic.com/article/120425/us-troops-should-stay-afghanistan-war-winnable

If the United States continues to suffer damage to its credibility like that in Iraq and Syria (and Ukraine), eventually allies, rival, and enemies would not be irrational to look at America’s behavior and conclude that it is foolish, even dangerous, to take America very seriously. The liberal world order will then only be held together by American arms and money—which will be neither attractive to its allies nor popular at home. Opponents will take steps to construct a different kind of world.

Link: Withdrawal from Afghanistan without victory could collapse Western security structures

Boris Gromov & Dmitry Rogozin in 2010. (Gromov – governor of the Moscow region, commanded the 40th Soviet Army in Afghanistan. Rogozin – Russia’s ambassador to NATO) “Russian Advice on Afghanistan” 11 Jan 2010 http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/12/opinion/12iht-edrogozin.html

That is precisely why the ISAF operation in Afghanistan is the moment of truth for NATO. If the alliance does not accomplish its task, the mutual commitments of its 28 member-states would be undermined and the alliance would lose its moral foundation and raison d’être. We know all too well what happens to unions that become meaningless. The war in Afghanistan was one of the major factors in the collapse of the Soviet Union. Officials in Brussels and Washington who are thinking of a rapid exit strategy for the ISAF mission are engaged in elaborating on a suicide plan. Withdrawal without victory might cause a political collapse of Western security structures.

Impact: Apocalyptic consequences if we lose US hegemony and security structures

Brook Manville 2018 (principal of Brook Manville LLC, consulting on strategy and organization) 14 Oct 2018 “Why A Crumbling World Order Urgently Needs U.S. Leadership” FORBES [https://www.forbes.com/sites/brookmanville/2018/10/14/why-a-crumbling-world-order-urgently-needs-u-s-leadership/#2bb8912f2e61](about:blank#2bb8912f2e61) (brackets added)

The botanical metaphor in [Brookings Institution Senior Fellow Robert] Kagan’s book title began our recent conversation. “We’ve been living in a tranquil garden of largely peaceful practices and liberal expectations across much of the world, ignoring the dark forces of jungle multiplying under the rocks. If we don’t defend civilization’s cultivation—especially American’s guarantee of peace and economic integration across the world—the toxic creatures and weeds will roar back.” Thus [China’s determined military rise](about:blank), [Russia’s continuing aggressions](about:blank), [fiery authoritarians on the march in so many once democratic countries](about:blank). [**END QUOTE]** As [Brookings Institution Senior Fellow Robert] Kagan continued, “[Trump has been damaging the system](about:blank)—he too seems to have forgotten what good it has delivered—but actually America’s desire for maintaining the global order has been diminishing for years. After [the dissolution of the Soviet empire in the 1990s](about:blank), people talked about [‘the end of history”](about:blank)—that America didn’t have to worry anymore about war or aggression. History doesn’t end, it simply paused. [**He goes on later in the same context to say QUOTE:]** The ugliest aspects of human nature are surging again.”  
**Vanishing Leadership, Vanishing Peace**  
Kagan’s apocalyptic message, repeated [in other recent writings](about:blank), is lucid and terrifying, all the more devastating for its relentless use of history. It’s a footnoted plea that “we’ve seen this movie before.” He reminds us that Americans have frequently turned away from defending world order, with regrettably familiar outcomes: to be dragged in later at greater cost (e.g. [helping to stop Hitler earlier might have prevented World War II](about:blank)); or, simply hoping that “the problem would go away,” to watch it get ten times worse (e.g. [Obama’s policy in Syria](about:blank)). Kagan acknowledges that America has sometimes misstepped (e.g. Viet Nam, Iraq), but he still argues that overall our foreign engagement has produced more peace and prosperity than not. “History shows,” he summarized, “that world order has never been achieved without some constructive force to keep the peace. The relative harmony and fair play we’ve created in the modern world will vanish if the U.S. forsakes international leadership.”

AFGHAN DA 5. Less aid makes Afghanistan government more corrupt

Link: SQ US assistance is reducing corruption, but requires more time

Col. Gregory Douquet and Dr. Michael O’Hanlon 2010. (Douquet – student at the Joint Forces Staff College in Virginia and was a member of ISAF's Strategic Analysis Group in Kabul, Afghanistan. O’Hanlon – worked as a national security analyst at the Congressional Budget Office; member of General David Petraeus’ External Advisory Board at the Central Intelligence Agency. PhD from Princeton Univ.) 13 Oct 2010 “A Realistic Anticorruption Strategy for Afghanistan” http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/realistic-anticorruption-4219

With U.S. partnering assistance, Afghanistan’s government has improved. We are now seeing points of light in the anticorruption effort, such as President Karzai’s new specialized anticorruption agency—the High Office of Oversight—which is mandated to oversee and coordinate corruption prevention efforts and assist ministries in developing and implementing anticorruption plans and strategies. The President’s anticorruption efforts are in their infancy and will require time and continued support.

Link & Brink: Not time to leave yet - the longer we stay the more we can do to reduce corruption

Dr. Christopher Paul 2012 (PhD sociology; social scientist at the Rand Corporation, a research group) “History Favors More Time” 3 Apr 2012 http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2012/04/03/should-the-us-leave-afghanistan-now/history-shows-that-more-time-is-needed

The Afghans will have better prospects for defeating their insurgency with continued improvement, of course, and the United States can contribute to that improvement while American forces remain. While a premature departure invites failure, remaining does not guarantee success. Stalemate is a very real possibility. That said, the longer United States forces remain, the better Afghan security forces become, and the more opportunities the Afghan government will have to increase competence, stem corruption and improve governance.

Impact: Corruption fuels the insurgency

Dr. Frederick W. Kagan, Dr. Kimberly Kagan, Jeffrey Dressler and Carl Forsberg 2011. (F. Kagan – director of the Critical Threats Project at the American Enterprise Institute; PhD in Russian/Soviet military history; former professor of military history at the U.S. Military Academy. K. Kagan – president of the Institute for the Study of War; PhD in history; served on Afghanistan commander Gen. Stanley McChrystal's strategic assessment team. Dressler and Forsberg are research analysts at the Institute for the Study of War.) “Defining Success in Afghanistan” http://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/DefiningSuccessinAfghanistanElectronicVersion.pdf

Corruption and abuse-of-power must be addressed by the United States because they fuel the insurgency. Our challenge is not eliminate corruption in Afghanistan but to help the Afghan political leadership behave sufficiently in accord with Pashtun norms that groups that now feel marginalized and preyed-upon see an advantage in at least tolerating the new order.

AFGHAN DA 6. Drone Capabilities Reduced

Link & Brink: We need to be in Afghanistan to use their base for drone attacks in Pakistan

Dr. Daniel L. Byman 2017. (senior fellow in the Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings Institution, where his research focuses on counterterrorism and Middle East security; senior associate dean for undergraduate affairs at Georgetown University’s Walsh School of Foreign Service and a professor in its Security Studies Program; former staff member with the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks on the United States and the Joint 9/11 Inquiry Staff of the House and Senate Intelligence Committees; PhD from Massachusetts Institute of Technology) 5 September 2017 “The case for continued U.S. involvement in Afghanistan: Part 1” https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2017/09/05/the-case-for-continued-u-s-involvement-in-afghanistan/

Setting aside the issue of Taliban or ISKP control, the United States also [uses](https://www.wired.com/2011/12/cia-pakistan-afghanistan-drones/)Afghanistan as a base for drone attacks in Pakistan. Drones are the tip of the U.S. spear against al-Qaida remnants remaining in the region. A number of U.S. enemies operate from tribal parts of Pakistan that are within drone and commando range from Afghanistan. Thus, a continued fight against al-Qaida remnants in Pakistan depends in part on access to Afghanistan. In addition, much of the drone program depends on human assets for reporting—it cannot be done entirely “over the horizon,” with no allies on the ground.

Backup Brink: Withdrawing from Afghanistan means the end of the drone program

Dr. Paul D. Miller 2014 (Associate Director of the Clements Center for National Security at the University of Texas at Austin; adjunct political scientist at the RAND Corporation; formerly served as director for Afghanistan and Pakistan on the National Security Staff in the White House; as an intelligence analyst for the Central Intelligence Agency; and in Afghanistan with the US Army.) 30 November 2014 “America, Don’t Give Up on Afghanistan” https://newrepublic.com/article/120425/us-troops-should-stay-afghanistan-war-winnable

Iraq could hardly be a clearer cautionary tale: if the U.S. withdraws from Afghanistan before Afghan security forces are fully prepared to lead the fight against the Taliban and deny safe haven to Al Qaeda, militants are almost certain to regain some degree of safe haven there, much as the Islamic State (IS) has gained ground since the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq in 2011—especially since the withdrawal of U.S. troops almost certainly would mean the end of the alleged drone program in South Asia.

Link: Drones target and kill terror group leaders

Daniel Byman 2013 (Senior Fellow, Foreign Policy, Center for Middle East Policy) 17 June 2013 "Why Drones Work: The Case for Washington's Weapon of Choice" https://www.brookings.edu/articles/why-drones-work-the-case-for-washingtons-weapon-of-choice/

The drones have done their job remarkably well: by killing key leaders and denying terrorists sanctuaries in Pakistan, Yemen, and, to a lesser degree, Somalia, drones have devastated al Qaeda and associated anti-American militant groups.

Link: Terrorist groups are particularly vulnerable to decapitation strikes

Dr. Bryan C. Price 2012 (PhD political science; Lieutenant Colonel in the US Army; Director of the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point and an Assistant Professor in the Department of Social Sciences at the United States Military Academy) " Targeting Top Terrorists: How Leadership Decapitation Contributes to Counterterrorism" Spring 2012 https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/targeting-top-terrorists-how-leadership-decapitation-contributes-counterterrorism

Terrorist groups are especially susceptible to leadership decapitation because their organizational characteristics (they are violent, clandestine, and values based) amplify the difficulties of leadership succession. Additionally, in contrast to the conventional wisdom regarding the durability of terrorist groups, politically relevant terrorist groups (defined as those with at least four attacks including one attack resulting in a fatality) endure significantly longer than previously believed.

Link & Impact: Targeting leadership of militant groups reduces violence and attacks

Patrick B. Johnston 2012 (Research fellow, International Security Program, Harvard Kennedy School of Government, Belfer Center for Science & International Affairs) "The Effectiveness of Leadership Decapitation in Combating Insurgencies" June 2012 <https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/effectiveness-leadership-decapitation-combating-insurgencies>

An analysis of leadership targeting in ninety counterinsurgencies since the 1970s suggests that removing militant leaders is neither ineffective nor counterproductive. Quite the opposite: on average, leadership decapitation (1) increases the chances of a rapid end to insurgencies; (2) enhances the probability of a government victory; (3) reduces the intensity of violent conflict; and (4) decreases the number of insurgent attacks. Killing or capturing high-value targets is far from a magic bullet, but states do it because it weakens insurgencies—in short, because it works.

SOMALIA DISADVANTAGES

Big Link to Somalia – AFF must end aid to Somalia because Somali government has 218 child soldiers

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Relief Web 2017. (humanitarian information source published by the United Nations) 10 countries where child soldiers are still recruited in armed conflicts https://reliefweb.int/report/central-african-republic/10-countries-where-child-soldiers-are-still-recruited-armed

In April 2016, the UN reported that 903 children had been recruited - 555 by Al-Shabaab. Around 150 children were reportedly abducted for recruitment purposes from madrasas by Al-Shabaab in the Bay region. Of those cases, 26 (all boys) were verified by the UN. The Somali National Army also recruited a high number of children (218), who were used for various tasks, such as manning checkpoints.

SOMALIA DA 1. Terror and starvation

a. Link: RAND study find US involvement is key to degrading Al Shabaab

Seth G. Jones, Andrew Liepman, Nathan Chandler, 2016. (**Jones** is director of the International Security and Defense Policy Center at the RAND Corporation, as well as an adjunct professor at the School for Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University; former representative for the commander, U.S. Special Operations Command, to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations. **Andrew Liepman**, a senior policy analyst at the RAND Corporation and a 30-year veteran of the CIA; formerly the Principal Deputy Director of the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC). **Nathan Chandler** is a project associate at the RAND Corporation, where his recent work focused on counterinsurgency, counterterrorism, and counternarcotics theory and conduct) 2016 “Counterterrorism and Counterinsurgency in Somalia” <https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1539.html>

This study finds that a tailored engagement strategy — which involved deploying a small number of U.S. special operations forces to conduct targeted strikes, provide intelligence, and build the capacity of local partner forces to conduct ground operations — was key in degrading al Shabaab. Still, progress in Somalia is reversible in the absence of continued and consistent pressure and political, economic, and social reforms.

b. Impact: Terrorism. Al-Shabaab continues to terrorize

Seth G. Jones, Andrew Liepman, Nathan Chandler, 2016. (**Jones** is director of the International Security and Defense Policy Center at the RAND Corporation, as well as an adjunct professor at the School for Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University; former representative for the commander, U.S. Special Operations Command, to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations. **Andrew Liepman**, a senior policy analyst at the RAND Corporation and a 30-year veteran of the CIA; formerly the Principal Deputy Director of the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC). **Nathan Chandler** is a project associate at the RAND Corporation, where his recent work focused on counterinsurgency, counterterrorism, and counternarcotics theory and conduct) 2016 “Counterterrorism and Counterinsurgency in Somalia” <https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1539.html>

Despite progress in pushing al Shabaab out of areas it once controlled, the organization is still dangerous and lethal. It conducted an increasingly violent terrorist campaign, shifting from an insurgent group that controlled territory to a terrorist group that commits indiscriminate attacks on civilians and combatants alike. These attacks— including al Shabaab’s targeting of civilians, AMISOM forces, and Somali government officials—underscores that the campaign against it is far from over. Al Shabaab leaders have indicated their desire to increase control of territory, which would allow them to collect more taxes, profiting from port activity; recruit more supporters; and oversee an Islamic emirate. Still, the group retains an ability to conduct attacks and disrupt normal life in Somalia and neighboring countries such as Kenya.

c. Impact: Starvation. Al-Shabaab starves millions

Jason Burke, 2017. (Africa correspondent of the Guardian, based in Johannesburg, and reporting from across the continent. In 20 years as a foreign correspondent, he has covered stories throughout the Middle East, Europe and South Asia.) 27 Jul 2017 “Al-Shabaab militants ban starving Somalis from accessing aid” <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jul/27/al-shabaab-militants-ban-starving-somalis-from-accessing-aid>

Islamist militants in Somalia have imposed a ban on humanitarian assistance in areas they control, forcing hundreds of thousands of people to choose between death from starvation and disease or brutal punishment. **[END QUOTE]** In some towns, hungry and weak people have been ordered by extremist leaders to remain where they are to act as human shields against US airstrikes. Somalia is suffering its worst drought in 40 years, with the effects of climatic catastrophe compounded by war and poor governance. Interviews with villagers in the swaths of land controlled by al-Qaida-affiliate al-Shabaab, in the centre and south of the east African state, reveal a population on the brink of catastrophe, with children and older people already dying in significant numbers. [**HE GOES ON TO SAY QUOTE**:] Al-Shabaab has told people they will be punished – possibly executed as spies – if they have any contact with humanitarian agencies. [**END QUOTE**] Strict British and US counter-terrorism laws are also discouraging humanitarian organisations from delivering vital emergency assistance, aid agencies have said. Although aid officials say a huge international effort and donations by Somalia’s vast diaspora have so far averted a repeat of the 2011 famine, when 250,000 people died, conditions in much of the country have continued to deteriorate in recent months. [**HE GOES ON TO CONCLUDE QUOTE**:] An additional 500,000 people now need humanitarian assistance, bringing the total to 6.7 million. Almost half of these people face starvation if they do not receive help.

d. Impact: Terrorism deaths. Example: Al-Shabaab killed 500 people just in one bombing in Oct 2018

CBS News 2018. June 9, 2018 “4 U.S. soldiers wounded in Somalia are now in Kenya, military says” <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/somalia-attack-4-u-s-soldiers-wounded-now-in-kenya-2018-06-09/>

The al Qaida-linked al-Shabaab extremist group, which is based in Somalia and controls parts of the country's rural south and central regions, claimed responsibility. The group was blamed for the truck bombing in Mogadishu in October that killed more than 500 people and raised concerns about al-Shabaab's ability to build ever-larger explosives.

SOMALIA DA 2. Destabilization / Collapse of Somalia

Link & Brink: African Union troops protect Somalia from Al Shabab but are on the brink of failure and need US support to maintain

Sam Kiley, 2018. (Senior International Correspondent at CNN. Prior to CNN, he was the Foreign Affairs Editor of Sky News. He is a journalist of over twenty years experience.) February 12, 2018 “Funding al-Shabaab: How aid money ends up in terror group's hands” <https://www.cnn.com/2018/02/12/africa/somalia-al-shabaab-foreign-aid-intl/index.html> (brackets in original)

Ugandan soldiers prepare for a day of patrol. 22,000 AU troops have been fighting al-Shabaab for years, but are now set to withdraw by 2020. For now, the country's primary fighting force is a 22,000-strong African Union (AU) contingent that has been protecting the country's fledgling government in Mogadishu, and working to wrest control of south back from al-Shabaab. But it's withdrawing slowly and is expected to be out of the country in two year's time. The African Union military leadership admits that it can't push al-Shabaab off the major roads that provide it with so much income. "Instead of reducing [AU forces], it should have been increased," said Lt. Colonel Chris Ogwal. "We are now overstretched, we are just conducting minor offensive operations." That remains al-Shabaab's financial artery. Ogwal said that any reduction in AU forces would inevitably leave a vacuum that al-Shabaab would fill. This leaves a growing number of American troops -- more than 500, including Special Operation Forces -- shouldering the ever-increasing security burden in Somalia.

Link & Impact: Last time we disengaged from Somalia (1990’s), the bad guys took over and things got a lot worse

Lt. Col. Nicholas Nyesiga 2017 (officer in the Army of Uganda) US Naval Postgraduate School, “Combating transnational terrorism in the East African region: The role of the African Union Mission in Somalia” June 2017 https://calhoun.nps.edu/bitstream/handle/10945/55509/17Jun\_Nyesiga\_Nicholas.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

The disengagement of international community allowed the warlords to entrench themselves in Somali society and also opened the way for foreign jihadists to radicalize the population. This factor is partly responsible for the escalation of the conflict and expansion of Al Shabaab influence. Islamic militant organizations capitalized on the U.S. withdrawal as a propaganda tool to superficially indicate the strength of Islamic forces against a perceived western Christian crusade and their narrative coincided with the earlier Russian forces’ retreat from Afghanistan in 1989. The narrative, though deceitful, motivated many young jihadists to join the Al Shabaab cause.

Impact: Terrorism. Without military presence al-Shabaab terrorists may resurge

RAND corporation, 2016. (The RAND Corporation is a research organization that develops solutions to public policy challenges to help make communities throughout the world safer and more secure, healthier and more prosperous.) September 13, 2016 “Al Shabaab Weakened but Not Defeated in Somalia” <https://www.rand.org/news/press/2016/09/13.html>

Efforts to weaken the al Qa'ida-linked terrorist group al Shabaab in Somalia have had some success over the past five years, but the U.S. campaign there is now in jeopardy, according to a new RAND Corporation study. Al Shabaab may resurge if urgent steps are not taken to address the political, economic and governance challenges at the heart of the conflict, researchers say. The report finds that a key to degrading al Shabaab was a tailored engagement strategy that involved deploying a small number of U.S. special operations forces to conduct targeted strikes, provide intelligence and build the capacity of local partner forces to conduct ground operations.

SOMALIA DA 3. Increased risk of attacks on the US homeland

Link: US presence in East Africa prevents bad guys from attacking the US & Europe

CBS News, 2018. (CBS News Radio) June 9, 2018 “4 U.S. soldiers wounded in Somalia are now in Kenya, military says” <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/somalia-attack-4-u-s-soldiers-wounded-now-in-kenya-2018-06-09/>

"Our strategy in East Africa is to build partner capacity to ensure that violent extremist organizations, who wish harm in the region, wish harm on the European continent, and ultimately wish to harm the United States, are contained," General Thomas Waldhauser, Commander, U.S. Africa Command, said in a statement Saturday. "Simply put, we're working to prevent atrocious acts before they come to fruition."

Link: Last time we abandoned military efforts in Somalia, it led to take-over by terrorists

NPR, 2013. (National Public Radio is a privately and publicly funded non-profit membership media organization based in Washington) Oct 5, 2013 “What A Downed Black Hawk In Somalia Taught America” <https://www.npr.org/2013/10/05/229561805/what-a-downed-black-hawk-in-somalia-taught-america> (brackets added)

"So we, by withdrawing from Somalia, left a lawless region ripe for al-Qaida and gave at least a whole generation of Somalis over to these Islamist fundamentalists to be educated and groomed," Bowden says. When the U.S. announced its withdrawal, it also gave Osama bin Laden a narrative to latch onto. "His message was, 'Well, we can defeat this great power because they're not used to hardship and tragedy, so if we can inflict that they'll retreat,' " [journalist Mark] Bowden says. That message was aimed at those who might have previously been deterred by the United States' power.

Brink: Al-Shabaab wants to attack the US

Faith Karimi, Ashley Fantz and Catherine E. Shoichet, 2015. (**Faith** works with CNN teams to report, write and edit stories for CNN.com. **Ashley** has been a producer and reporter for CNN since 2006. **Catherine Shoichet** covers immigration for CNN Digital.) February 21, 2015 “Al-Shabaab threatens malls, including some in U.S.; FBI downplays threat” <https://www.cnn.com/2015/02/21/us/al-shabaab-calls-for-mall-attacks/index.html>

But after a video from terror group Al-Shabaab calling for attacks on shopping malls in Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States, how worried should shoppers be? [END QUOTE] Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson told CNN Sunday that there's "no credible or specific evidence" suggesting a U.S. mall attack is in the works. But he warned Americans to watch out. "If anyone is planning to go to the Mall of America today," he said, "they've got to be particularly careful." [THEY GO ON TO SAY QUOTE:] The Minnesota mall is among those mentioned in the video the Somalia-based terror group apparently posted on Saturday. The video talks about Al-Shabaab's September 2013 attack at an upscale mall in Nairobi, Kenya, calling for similar attacks in the three Western countries. More than 60 people were killed in the Kenyan mall siege, which lasted four days.

Brink: Al-Shabab threatens the US and has radicals in the US Somali immigrant community

Conor Gaffey, 2017. (staff writer for Newsweek covering Africa, with a focus on Nigeria, security and conflict.) 4/19/17 “Why Is Trump Sending More U.S. Troops to Somalia?” <https://www.newsweek.com/us-troops-somalia-donald-trump-al-shabab-586004>

Besides the 1998 embassy bombings, Al-Shabab has not launched any successful attacks on U.S. interests in the region. But the group has called for attacks in the West—and even used Trump in a 2016 propaganda video—and tens of American citizens have joined or attempted to join the group, many coming from Minneapolis, which has one of the largest concentrations of Somali immigrants in the United States. The deployment of extra U.S. troops to Somalia follows a presidential directive in March that loosened the conditions for airstrikes against Al-Shabab in Somalia, a sign that the Trump administration may wish to expedite its military efforts against the group.

Impact: Al shabaab is a big terrorist threat to the US

Christopher Harnisch, 2010. (analyst and Gulf of Aden team leader for the Critical Threats Project at American Enterprise Institute ; the project conducts intelligence analysis on unclassified information to produce continuous assessments of threats to the U.S. and our allies.) February 12, 2010 “The Terror Threat from Somalia” <https://www.criticalthreats.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/CTP_Terror_Threat_From_Somalia_Shabaab_Internationalization-1.pdf>

Today, al Shabaab poses a real and imminent threat to the United States, its interests, and its allies, perhaps equal to the threat posed by any militant Islamist group in the world. It has many of the same elements that have made al Qaeda so dangerous, including strong leadership, technical expertise, and militants from around the world willing to die for a cause, while also governing large swaths of the country in a manner reminiscent of the Afghan Taliban. Al Shabaab thus resembles a hybrid of al Qaeda and the Taliban, in which the militant elements are able to train and prepare for attacks as a result of the space provided to them by the group’s administrative organization. The group certainly hopes to maintain and expand its control in Somalia, but it has also developed an international outlook and has made clear its desire to strike beyond Somalia’s borders. Al Shabaab has threatened American interests, and it appears to have the capacity to carry out such threats.

SYRIA DISADVANTAGES

Big link to Syria: Warring factions in Syria are using child soldiers, so AFF must end all aid

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Relief Web 2017. (humanitarian information source published by the United Nations) 10 countries where child soldiers are still recruited in armed conflicts https://reliefweb.int/report/central-african-republic/10-countries-where-child-soldiers-are-still-recruited-armed

SYRIA Since 2014, warring sides have recruited children as young as seven. More than half of children recruited in cases verified by UNICEF in 2015 were under 15. Children have been filmed executing prisoners in grisly propaganda videos by the Islamic State group. Last year the UN said: “A total of 362 cases of recruitment and use of children were verified and attributed to ISIL (274), the Free Syrian Army and affiliated groups (62), Liwa’ al-Tawhid (11), popular committees (5), Kurdish People’s Protection Units (4), Ahrar al-Sham (3), the Nusrah Front (2) and the Army of Islam (1).

SYRIA DA 1. Increased Russian influence in the Middle East

Link: Not spending money on Syria leads to increased Russian influence in the Middle East

NEW YORK TIMES 2018. (journalists [Gardiner Harris](https://www.nytimes.com/by/gardiner-harris) and [Ben Hubbard](https://www.nytimes.com/by/ben-hubbard)) 17 Aug 2018 “U.S. Will Not Spend $230 Million Allocated to Repair Devastated Syrian Cities” https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/17/us/politics/syria-stabilization-foreign-aid.html

In the case of the Syria money, the administration has decided to spend it on other yet-to-be-determined priorities, not return it to the Treasury, officials said. The languishing billions are a reflection of President Trump’s belief that the rest of the world needs to be weaned off its reliance on aid from the United States. The decision on the Syria money will disappoint European and Persian Gulf allies, and the dominant position of Russia and Iran in Syria will be strengthened by a reduced American commitment.

Brink: US influence on the brink. Russia wants to get influence in the Middle East and US mis-steps make it easy

Daniel Byman 2018 (Foreign Policy Editor for Lawfare. He is a research director and senior fellow at the Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution, where he focuses on counterterrorism and Middle East security. He is also a professor at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service.) 11 Apr 2018 LAWFARE, “Pushing Back Russia in the Middle East: A Thought Experiment,” <https://www.lawfareblog.com/pushing-back-russia-middle-east-thought-experiment>

Ideologically, Russia also fits in well with the Middle East. Putin, an autocrat himself, is comfortable with dictators and resents what he perceives as U.S. democracy promotion—a position that dictators in the Middle East also share. As Steven Cook notes, “Now it’s payback time for almost three decades of Moscow’s humiliation. And what better place to start than the Middle East, where the United States is already widely resented even among its allies.”

Link: Russian influence and prestige worldwide grow as they succeed in the Middle East

Public Radio International 2017. “Russia’s influence in the Middle East is growing” 14 Dec 2017 https://www.pri.org/stories/2017-12-14/russia-s-influence-middle-east-growing

Russia now has a naval base in the Mediterranean in Tartus, a warm-weather port in Syria. It also has an airbase nearby. Now there’s talk of the Russian air force securing basing rights in Egypt. It already has access to an Iranian base. But this Russian effort in the Middle East is not so much about hard power, says Tharoor. “For Putin,” he explains, “it’s all about domestic optics more than anything else. He has staked his political legitimacy on being this world-historic figure who’s returning Russia to prominence on the world stage.”

Link: Blocking Russia in the Middle East is key to maintaining US leadership as a great power

Steven A. Cook 2018 (senior fellow for Middle East and Africa studies at the Council on Foreign Relations ) 16 March 2018 FOREIGN POLICY “Russia Is in the Middle East to Stay” https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/03/16/the-middle-east-needs-a-steady-boyfriend/

If the United States is, as Secretary of Defense James Mattis averred in January, in a new era of great power competition, it is time the United States treated the situation as seriously as it is. Putin must be disabused of the notion that the Middle East is the most propitious place to begin weakening the West and the United States. Americans once before contained and rolled back Moscow’s influence in the region; there is no reason to believe that they cannot do it again — but only if they have the wisdom to recognize what is important in the world right now and the collective stomach to meet the challenge.

Impact: World peace & prosperity at risk without US influence. US hegemony is key to global peace & prosperity

Capt. M. V. Prato 2009 (United States Marine Corps,Command and Staff College, Marine Corps Combat Development Command,Marine Corps University) “The Need for American Hegemony” http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a508040.pdf

The world witnessed a vast shift in the polarity of geopolitics after the Cold War. The United States became the world’s greatest hegemon with an unequalled ability to globally project cultural, political, economic, and military power in a manner not seen since the days of the Roman Empire. [**END QUOTE**] Coined the “unipolar moment” by syndicated columnist Charles Krauthammer, the disparity of power between the U.S. and all other nations allows the U.S. to influence the world for the mutual benefit of all responsible states. Unfortunately, the United States is increasingly forced to act unilaterally as a result of both foreign and domestic resentment to U.S. dominance and the rise of liberal internationalism. **[HE GOES ON LATER TO CONCLUDE QUOTE**:] The United States must exercise benevolent global hegemony, unilaterally if necessary, to ensure its security and maintain global peace and prosperity.

SYRIA DA 2. Extremism and terrorism

Link: Dropping aid means higher likelihood of Islamic State or other extremists to return to Syria

NEW YORK TIMES 2018. (journalists [Gardiner Harris](https://www.nytimes.com/by/gardiner-harris) and [Ben Hubbard](https://www.nytimes.com/by/ben-hubbard)) 17 Aug 2018 “U.S. Will Not Spend $230 Million Allocated to Repair Devastated Syrian Cities” https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/17/us/politics/syria-stabilization-foreign-aid.html

The decision on the Syria money will disappoint European and Persian Gulf allies, and the dominant position of Russia and Iran in Syria will be strengthened by a reduced American commitment. Pentagon officials have quietly expressed exasperation over the decision, fearing that any failure to stabilize Syria will leave fertile ground for the Islamic State or other extremists to return.

Link: Full U.S. withdrawal could pave the way for ISIS’s resurgence

Ishaan Tharoor 2019 (Columnist covering foreign affairs, geopolitics and history for The Washington Post. He previously was a senior editor and correspondent at Time magazine) 8 Oct 2019 “Trump sells out the Kurds in his own unique way” <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2019/10/08/trump-sells-out-kurds-his-own-unique-way/>

A definitive U.S. withdrawal from northern Syria — or whatever it is that Trump championed in tweets Monday morning calling for an end to America’s “endless wars” — could have serious ramifications. If Turkey pursues a significant ground invasion, it would overrun SDF defenses, fracture their fighting forces, compel a possible exodus of Syrian Kurdish refugees toward Iraq (a country that’s hardly stable itself), and, as many security analysts fear, create enough of a security vacuum to pave the way for the Islamic State’s resurgence.

Link: A U.S. retreat from Syria would create a security vacuum for terrorists to fill

Jennifer Cafarella 2018 (National Security Fellow at the Institute for the Study of War and former Research Director and Director of Intelligence Planning. She is an established expert on Syria, the Middle East, and jihadism) “Don’t Get Out of Syria” 11 July 2018 <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/syria/2018-07-11/dont-get-out-syria>

A U.S. retreat from eastern Syria, where it currently has some [2,000 troops](https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2018/04/04/u-s-troops-syria-and-what-they-doing-there/486763002/), would create a vacuum that various belligerents would compete to fill. Assad and his backers, Turkey, and jihadist groups such as al Qaeda and ISIS all hope to gain control of the areas that the U.S.-SDF alliance seized from ISIS. A U.S. withdrawal will only accelerate this conflict.

Impact: ISIS attacks against the West

Tom Vanden Brook 2019 (Tom Vanden Brook is the Pentagon correspondent for USA TODAY) “Pentagon: President Trump's order to withdraw troops from Syria allows ISIS to rebuild” 19 Nov 2019 <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2019/11/19/isis-terror-group-rebuilds-after-trump-pulls-us-troops-out-syria/4237528002/>

Glenn Fine, the inspector general, warned that "ISIS will likely have the 'time and space' to target the West and provide support to its global branches and networks, and in the longer term, ISIS will probably seek to regain control of some Syrian population centers and expand its global footprint."

Impact: ISIS terrorism against the United States

Bruce Hoffman and Jacob Ware 2020 (Hoffman is Shelby Cullom and Kathryn W. Davis senior fellow for counterterrorism and homeland security at the Council on Foreign Relations.  Ware is a research associate in the Counterterrorism and Studies Program at the Council on Foreign Relations) “Top Conflicts to Watch in 2020: A Mass-Casualty Terrorist Attack on the United States or a Treaty Ally” 16 Jan 2020 <https://www.cfr.org/blog/top-conflicts-watch-2020-mass-casualty-terrorist-attack-united-states-or-treaty-ally>

Despite the killing of the self-proclaimed Islamic State’s founder and leader last October, the United States still faces a determined and resilient adversary, eager to retaliate for the deaths of several high-level commanders and the dismantling of its caliphate. Violence could take the form of a command-driven attack, where the Islamic State’s leadership directly orders an attack against a specific target, or an inspired attack whereby there is no command-and-control relationship between the terrorist group and the perpetrator. In the latter case, the perpetrator is simply inspired to commit a violent act on his or her own. Al-Qaeda, meanwhile, is actively attempting to fill the vacuum in Syria created by the Islamic State’s defeat, as it also patiently awaits the outcome of U.S. peace talks with the Taliban and America’s eventual withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Impact: Death, destruction, displacement and economic loss

Elena Ianchovichina and Dr. Maros Ivanic 2015. (Elena Ianchovichina is Lead Economist in the Chief Economist Office of the World Bank’s Middle East and North Africa region.  Ivanic – PhD; economist with the Agriculture and Rural Development team of the Development Economics Research Group at the World Bank “The Economic Impact of the Syrian War and the Spread of ISIS” “The Economic Impact of the Syrian War and the Spread of ISIS” https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/22586

The Syrian war and the subsequent emergence and spread of the Islamic State (ISIS) have transformed the Levant in ways one could not have imagined prior to 2011. As the numbers of dead and of refugees and internally displaced kept climbing, and as families were torn apart and neighborhoods were turned into war zones, economies slumped and regional economic ties broke down.