A distant plain
Insurgency in Afghanistan

COIN

Volume III

PLAYBOOK

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A Distant Plain Tutorial

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First-time players should start here!

Welcome to *A DISTANT PLAIN!* Because this game employs some innovative new game mechanics, we thought it would be easiest to learn if we included an interactive tutorial to teach new players how to play the game with a minimal amount of fuss. In this interactive tutorial we will use a more conversational style of writing. Occasionally we will ask the reader to read certain rules from the rulebook before continuing the tutorial.

The first thing you will need to do if you haven't already is unfold the game's mapboard. Place it on a clean surface, making sure to have ample space around the perimeter of the board so as to have room for game pieces. (Three to five inches of room should suffice nicely.)

Next, punch out all the game's cardboard pieces (we call them "counters") and sort them by type. Place them within easy reach because we're going to set up the game shortly.

Now sort the wooden pieces by color and shape. Place them in sorted piles near the mapboard. We'll put them on the mapboard shortly.

Finally, unwrap the game's playing cards. There are basically two different type of cards in the game: Event Cards (the vast majority) and Propaganda Cards (there are six of these). Put the six Propaganda Cards in one pile, and all the Event Cards in another pile. We will construct the game's deck in just a moment.

> **STOP.** *Please pause just a moment and read section 1.3 through section 1.3.6 of the rulebook. When you're finished, we'll begin setting up the game.*

All done? Great! You should now have a decent understanding of the game's map. With this knowledge in hand, let's begin setting up the game for the Main Scenario:

- Place the "Aid" counter on the "15" space of the General Records Track that runs around the perimeter of the gameboard.
- Place the Government Resources cylinder (large blue cylinder) on the "30" space, the Warlords Resources cylinder (large green cylinder) on the "15" space, and the Taliban Resources cylinders (large black cylinder) on the "10" space. There is no resource cylinder for the Coalition.
- Place the "Support + Available" and "COIN + Patronage" counters on the "17" space.
- Place the "Opposition + Bases" counter on the "8" space.
- Place the "Uncontrolled Pop" counter on the "9" space.
- Place the Pakistani flag (white star and crescent on a field of green) counter on the "Backing" box of the "Islamabad Track" display on the map. Ensure the side of the counter that says "Hard" is face down.
- Place the remaining four large cylinders (Eligibility cylinders) into the "Eligible Factions" box on the "Sequence of Play" display. The Tan cylinder belongs to the Coalition.
- Collect 5 "COIN Control" counters and place one into the "uncontrolled" boxes inside the provinces of Herat, Kandahar, Khowst, Konduz, and anywhere in the city of Kabul.
- Collect 8 "Taliban Control" counters and place one into the empty "uncontrolled" boxes inside the provinces of Helmand, Zabol, Paktika, Nuristan, Oruzgan, Ghazni, and anywhere in Waziristan and Northwest Frontier (in Pakistan).
- Collect 2 "+1 returnees" counters and place one in Kabul and one in Khowst. Place the 4 remaining returnees counters in the "Returnees" box.

At start map positions

Ok, we're off to a great start! The next thing we need to do is put the forces of the four factions onto the map.

STOP. Please pause just a moment and read section 1.4 through section 1.4.3 of the rulebook.

Now that you've read about the different forces available to the players, we can begin putting those pieces on the map. But first, we should do an inventory of the wooden pieces you sorted earlier. It's likely that you will have one or two extra pieces so let's find those and get those out of the way first. Your game should have:

- 20 tan cubes
- 6 tan discs
- 30 dark blue cubes
- 30 light blue cubes
- 3 dark blue discs
- 30 black octagonal cylinders
- 12 black discs
- 15 green octagonal cylinders
- 12 green discs

Place any extra tan, blue, black, or green wooden pieces into the box; they are extra pieces. (But don't throw these away! These extra bits may come in handy if you accidentally lose a piece.)

Ok, now that any extra bits have been removed from the mix, let's begin the setup of the forces:

- Collect a total of 8 tan cubes, which you now know as "Coalition Troops." Place 2 in Kabul and 1 each in Kandahar, Zabol, Paktika, Khowst, Oruzgan, and Ghazni.
- Place 1 tan disc—a Coalition Base, in one of the "base" spaces in Kabul.
- Place the remaining Coalition pieces, one by one, in the lowest valued spaces of the appropriate shape in the "Coalition Available Forces" box.
- Now collect 7 dark blue cubes—Government Troops: place 2 each in Kabul and Kandahar and 1 each in Herat, Khowst and Konduz.
- Collect 10 light blue cubes—Police, and place 2 in each of Herat, Kandahar, Khowst, Konduz, and Kabul.
- Place the 3 dark blue discs—Government Bases into the three numbered spaces in the "Government Available Forces" box. Also place the remaining Government troops and police in the area above the bases.
- Collect 14 black cylinders—Taliban Guerrillas. Place two into each of Helmand, Nuristan, Waziristan, and Northwest Frontier; place one into each of Herat, Kandahar, Zabol, Paktika, Oruzgan, and Ghazni.
- Place the remaining 16 Taliban Guerrillas into the "Taliban Available Forces" box.
- Collect 8 black discs—Taliban Bases. Place one into a "base" space in each of the following provinces: Helmand, Zabol, Paktika, Nuristan, Oruzgan, Ghazni, Waziristan and Northwest Frontier.
- Place the remaining 4 Taliban Bases into the 4 highest value circular spaces of the Taliban Bases track.
- Now collect 7 green cylinders—Warlord Guerrillas, and 7 green discs—Warlord Bases. Place one guerrilla and one base into each of Farah, Helmand, Kandahar, Nuristan, Konduz, Balkh, and Faryab.

- Place the remaining 8 Warlord Guerrillas into the "Warlords Available Forces" box.
- Place the remaining 5 Warlord Bases into the 5 highest value circular spaces of the Warlord Bases track.

Well done! The map is now set up. One last thing needs to be done: we need to construct the deck. Place 4 Propaganda Cards face down in a row from left to right.

Important: Deck construction instructions are found on the last two pages of the rulebook. For the purposes of this tutorial, however, we will be creating a special, stacked deck.

Now remove the following 8 Event Cards and set them aside into a single pile:

- #6 – *US-Pakistan Talks*
- #26 – *MANPADS Scare*
- #29 – *Night Letters*
- #33 – *Suicide Bombers*
- #40 – *Line Item*
- #49 – *Crop Substitution*
- #58 – *Counter-Narc*
- #66 – *Mountain Fastness*
- and one of the remaining two *Propaganda!* cards.

In the Main scenario, 12 cards are randomly removed from the deck before the beginning of the game. For this tutorial, remove the following 12 specific cards and place them in a separate pile:

- #2 – *Predators*
- #3 – *Reapers*
- #15 – *One Tribe at a Time*
- #18 – *PRTs*
- #19 – *Al-Qaeda*
- #24 – *US-Taliban Talks*
- #27 – *Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan*
- #30 – *Urban Specialists*
- #34 – *Accidental Guerrillas*
- #43 – *Pakistan Offensive*
- #70 – *Contractor Surge*
- #72 – *Poppy Crop Failure*.

Five of these removed cards have a special notation indicating they are Coalition or Taliban Capabilities. When capability cards are removed at the beginning of the scenario, that event is assumed to have been played for the corresponding faction before the start of the game. Find the Taliban Capability counters for #30 *Urban Specialists* and #34 *Accidental Guerrillas* and place those counters with their shaded side up in the "Capabilities" box of the "Taliban Available Forces" display. Next, find the Coalition Capability counters for #2 *Predators*, #3 *Reapers*, and #18 *PRTs* and place them with their unshaded side up in the "Capabilities" box of the "Coalition Available Forces" display.

Next, shuffle the remaining Event cards together. Deal 12 Event Cards on top of each of the 4 Propaganda cards so that four stacks of 13 cards is created. Shuffle each stack separately, then place each stack on top of one another, creating a single deck.

Now place the 4 remaining Event cards face-down on top of the deck. Finally, place the cards we set aside earlier face down on top of the deck. Place them in this EXACT order (from bottom to top): *Crop Substitution*, *Propaganda!*, *Mountain Fastness*, *US-Pakistan*

Talks, *MANPADS Scare*, *Suicide Bombers*, *Night Letters*, *Line Item*, and *Counter-Narc* (top-most card).

One of the things that makes *A Distant Plain* a unique game is the role that cards play in the game. Cards will be played from the deck created at game start. Players do not maintain a "hand" of cards as in other card-driven games. Instead, cards are played from the top of the deck. Ordinarily, two cards are always visible to the players: the card being resolved, and the next card to be resolved. In other words, players get to look one card into the future.

Go ahead and draw the topmost card from the deck: Card #58, *Counter-Narc*. Place it face-up on a "played cards" pile near the game board. Next, reveal the topmost card on the deck but leave it on top of the deck face-up: Card #40, *Line Item*.

First card   On deck

Counter-Narc is the card to be resolved first. Knowledge of the upcoming *Line Item* event may influence the decisions players make.

Each Event Card has four symbols across the top, one for each faction in the game. The order of these symbols dictates which faction has initiative on that card.

In order to be eligible to execute an Operation or carry out the card's Event, a Faction must have its Eligibility cylinder in the "Eligible" box on the Sequence of Play display. Eligible factions may either play or pass. At this time, all four factions are eligible.

To determine who get's to choose first, look at the order of the eligibility symbols. The faction with the leftmost symbol gets to choose what to do first and becomes the 1st Eligible Faction. In the case of *Counter-Narc*, the Warlord player is the 1st Eligible Faction.

If the 1st Eligible Faction chooses to Pass, he remains eligible to play on the next card; if he does anything other than pass, he becomes ineligible to play on the next card. The corollary of this is that a faction usually may only play on every other card.

If the 1st Eligible Faction chooses to pass, then the faction who's symbol is to the immediate right of his symbol on the card being resolved becomes the 1st Eligible Faction. In the case of *Counter-Narc*, if the Warlords pass, the Coalition would become 1st Eligible. It is possible that all factions could pass on a given card and thus remain eligible on the next card.

Here, however, the Warlord player decides to act. Some Event Cards have one event; others, like *Counter-Narc* have two versions of the

event—called dual-use events. If a player executes an Event, he must execute either one or the other, never both versions of the event.

> **Hint:** *Events in the unshaded portion of the card typically are favorable to the Coalition; events in the shaded portion are typically antagonistic to the Coalition.*

STOP. *Please pause just a moment and read section 1.6 through section 1.9 of the rulebook.*

The Warlords would like to execute the bottom event, but at this time, there are only 2 spaces that would apply, so the effects of the event are not that immediately helpful and would benefit the Government as well. Instead, the Warlords will conduct an Operation.

Operations do most of a player's "heavy lifting" in the game. Operations, however, are not free. They cost Resource Points. Furthermore, the player may only conduct ONE type of Operation; he may not mix two different Operations on a single card.

Please take one of the Faction Operations Foldouts. Look at the panel for the Warlord player. As you can see by the left column, he can do one of four things: (1) he can Rally in order to get more guerrillas and bases on the board; OR (2) he can March in order to move his forces around the country; OR (3) he can Attack in order to remove enemy pieces; OR (4) he can conduct Terror in order to neutralize a space's support or opposition of the government. The Operation the active faction carries out dictates what Special Activities may accompany it (if eligible to conduct a Special Activity).

STOP. *Please pause just a moment and read section 3.3.1 of the rulebook.*

The Warlords choose to Rally. This Action allows the Warlord player to select any Cities or Provinces. Each selected City or Province will cost 1 Resource. In each space selected, the player may typically place 1 Warlord guerrilla; however, if the space is not a Pashtun space and contains a Warlord base, the player may either place guerrillas up to population plus the number of warlord bases or flip any active guerrillas there to underground.

The Warlord player wants to start the game putting pressure on the other players by increasing the total uncontrolled population to near their victory level. While the Warlords have the fewest number of available forces of all the factions, they have the advantage that they are not required to obtain a majority in a space to achieve their goals. Since any one faction must have more of their own pieces in a space than the other factions combined (think of the COIN factions, Coalition and Government, as one faction for this calculation) the Warlords need only fill the gap between the COIN and Taliban in a disputed space to eliminate control.

Let's look at an example: Currently, the province of Oruzgan has 2 Taliban pieces (a guerrilla and a base) and 1 COIN piece (a Coalition troop). This results in Taliban control because they have a 2-1 piece advantage over the other factions *combined*. Now, if the Warlords rally here, they would place one of their guerrillas and reduce the Taliban to a 2-2 tie. Since the Taliban would no longer have more pieces than the *total* of the other factions, they no longer have control of Oruzgan. From the COIN perspective, the Warlord rally made them go from a 1-2 disadvantage to a 1-3 disadvantage. Neither COIN nor Taliban would now have a majority, so the province is uncontrolled and adding to the Warlord victory condition.

Now that we understand what the Warlords are trying to do, let's conduct their Rally operation. Gather the red and white pawns; they

will be used to mark where operations are taking place. The Warlords choose to Rally (and place red pawns) in the following provinces: Helmand, Paktika, Nuristan, Konduz, Balkh, and Oruzgan.

Warlords Rally to add Guerrilla forces.

Rally costs 1 resource point per space selected, so with 6 spaces chosen, move the Warlord resource cylinder from 15 to 9. Helmand, Paktika, Nuristan, and Oruzgan are all Pashtun provinces (see map legend), so Rally places only 1 Warlord guerrilla in those spaces. Take 4 Warlord guerrillas and place 1 in each of those 4 spaces with the embossed side down to indicate the guerrillas are underground. The other 2 spaces selected for Rally, Konduz and Balkh, are non-Pashtun and contain a Warlord base, so they may receive more than 1 guerrilla. In Konduz, there is 1 Warlord base and a population value of 2, so the Warlords may place up to 3 underground guerrillas in Konduz. The same values apply to Balkh; however, the Warlords only have 4 guerrillas remaining to split between the two spaces, so only place 2 underground guerrillas in Balkh and Konduz instead of the 3 they were allowed.

> **Hint:** *Mark spaces with red pawns when targeted for operations and white pawns when targeted for special activities (or vice versa). They serve as reminders of the chosen spaces.*

Take a look at where the Warlords just rallied, and you will see that some control markers need to be removed. Remove the Taliban control markers from Helmand, Paktika, Nuristan, and Oruzgan. The total population of those 4 provinces is 5, so move the "Uncontrolled Population" counter up 5 spaces to 14. There is no counter to track Taliban controlled population so no adjustment is needed for that. Now remove the COIN control marker from Konduz. The Warlords gain 2 more uncontrolled population, so move the counter to the 16 space. Additionally, COIN control is reduced by 2 population, so move the "COIN + Patronage" counter down 2 spaces to 15.

Now, the Warlords need to decide if they will take a special activity. Looking at the Rally box of the faction foldout, you can see that Rally can be paired with any of the 3 special activities. Since the Warlords need as many bases as they can get, they choose to Cultivate (4.5.1). Konduz is a perfect target for this because placing a 2nd base there will prevent the Government from establishing their own base in the future. Place a white pawn on Konduz to indicate it is the target of Cultivate, then take the Warlord base from the lowest-valued space still covered and place it in the open Base circle in Konduz.

This concludes the Warlord's actions for this card. Move their eligibility cylinder from "Eligible Factions" to the box labeled "1st Faction Op AND Special Activity" and remove the red and white pawns from the board.

After the 1st Eligible Faction has acted, the next eligible faction becomes known as the 2nd Eligible Faction. Looking back at *Counter-Narc*, we see that the Coalition is the 2nd Eligible Faction.
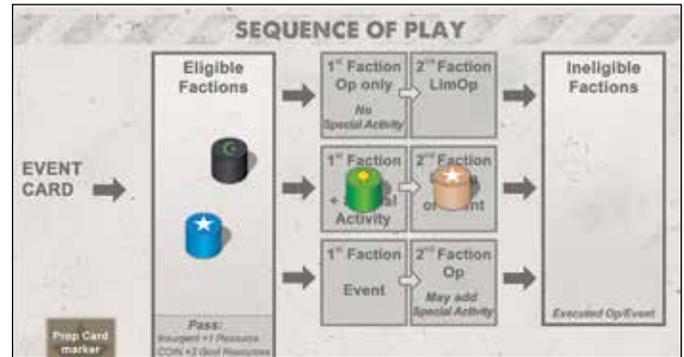
The Warlords are 1st and the Coalition are 2nd Eligible.

What the 2nd Eligible Faction may do is determined by what the 1st Eligible Faction did (see Sequence of Play display). Since the 1st Eligible Faction conducted an Operation and Special Activity, the 2nd Eligible Faction may either execute a Limited Operation—a single Operation in ONE and only ONE space; OR he may play the event, OR he may pass.

The Coalition thinks about the unshaded portion of the event. It is a momentum event (5.4), so its effect would last until the next propaganda card; also, it is the first card of the campaign, so the momentum would last for the maximum amount of time. However, the Coalition doesn't feel the Warlords are yet in a position to take full advantage of Traffic (4.5.2), and they don't want to make an enemy of the Warlord player just yet. The Coalition decides to conduct a LimOP—a limited operation. Place their eligibility cylinder in the "2nd Faction LimOp or Event" box.

> **STOP.** *Please pause just a moment and read section 3.2.1 of the rulebook.*

The Coalition player chooses Train as his operation. Since it is a limited operation, he can only choose 1 space to Train, so he picks Kabul, primarily to create support through civic action (6.4.1). The Coalition is different than other factions because they do not have their own cylinder to track resources. Instead, when a Coalition operation would require resources, they spend the Government's resources.

The Coalition player trains six Police for Kabul.

According to the description of the Train operation, the Coalition may spend 3 government resources to place up to 6 government cubes in the target space. Take 6 police from the "Government Available Forces" and add them to Kabul; reduce the government

resources from 30 to 27. Now, because Kabul has COIN control, the Coalition may purchase civic action to increase support there. Kabul is currently "neutral", so purchasing 1 level of civic action will shift it to "support." Reduce the government resources by 3 again to 24 and place a Support counter in the Kabul space.

> **Hint:** *Civic Actions may only be conducted during a Training Operation or during the Resolution of a Propaganda Card.*

Kabul normally has a population level of 3; however, the returnees counter increases the population of that space by 1. This civic action has gotten the Coalition 4 points toward its victory condition. Adjust the "Support + Avail" counter up 4 spaces to 21. Since the Coalition was only entitled a limited operation, it is not allowed to conduct a special activity, so this will conclude the Coalition's action for this card.

Since both the 1st and 2nd Eligible Factions have executed their activities on this card, we will now adjust eligibility on the Sequence of Play display: All factions that executed an Event, Operation, or Limited Operation now have their eligibility cylinder placed into the "Ineligible" box on the Sequence of Play. Factions that did not execute an Event, Operation, or Limited Operation will either remain in, or slide back to the "Eligible" box.

In this case, both the Warlords and the Coalition will slide to the "Ineligible" box. The Government and Taliban cylinders will remain in the "Eligible" box.

Draw *Line Item* off the deck onto *Counter-Narc* and reveal the next card to be played: card #29 *Night Letters*.

> **STOP.** *Please pause just a moment and read section 3.2.2 of the rulebook.*

Government is 1st Eligible on *Line Item*. The Government player feels comfortable with the amount of resources he has left, so he decides to conduct an operation instead of the event. Since the Coalition was nice enough to train some police in Kabul, the Government player decides to do a Patrol to protect his valuable Lines of Communication (LoCs). A Patrol operation costs 3 Government resources regardless of the number of pieces moved or spaces chosen as destinations, so reduce the Government's resource cylinder by 3 to 21.

Since Patrol is the only way police can be moved by an operation and they can only be moved to Kabul or LoCs, the Government will leave the police in the provinces where they are and only distribute the recently trained police from Kabul. Move 6 police out of Kabul placing 2 into the 4-value LoC, 2 into the 3-value LoC, and 1 each into the other 1-value LoCs adjacent to Kabul.

The Government is now eligible to conduct a special activity; however, he carefully reads the bottom portion of the event knowing that the Taliban are next up on this card. Based on the sequence of play, if the Government decides to do a special activity, it will give the Taliban the option of executing the shaded event, which will cut the aid of the Government AND leave the Taliban still eligible to act on the next card. If the Government declines a special activity though, he blocks the event and forces the Taliban to a LimOp or to pass. He decides to go this route, so place the Government eligibility cylinder on the 1st Faction "Op Only" space of the sequence of play.

Now the Taliban can only choose to do a limited operation or pass. At this point he looks at the next card, *Night Letters*, and sees that he would be first eligible on that card if he does not play on this one.

This would give him the ability to either take the event or do a full operation instead of a limited one. For these reasons, the Taliban player decides to pass (2.3.3); place his eligibility cylinder in the pass space and increase the Taliban resources by 1 to 11.

Even though only 1 faction has played on *Line Item*, there are no eligible factions remaining, so the play on this card ends. Cycle the eligibility cylinders as before by moving the Coalition, Taliban, and Warlords to "Eligible" and the Government to "Ineligible." Draw *Night Letters* onto *Line Item* to become the active event and reveal the next card, #33 *Suicide Bombers*.

> **STOP.** *Please pause just a moment and read section 1.5.1 of the rulebook.*

Now the Taliban has another tough decision to make. Not only are they 1st eligible on the current card, they see that they are also 1st eligible on *Suicide Bombers*; however, if they choose to act now, they will be ineligible on the next card. The Taliban player feels that he needs to get moving so he decides to Rally with this card. He sees that there are 3 factions eligible this card, so by acting they will hopefully be able to block the Coalition from being able to act on this card. For a little insurance policy, the Taliban player offers a deal to the Warlords: "The Taliban will give the Warlords 2 resources right now if The Warlords agree not to pass on this card." The Warlord player had been thinking about passing, but that would only give 1 resource instead of the 2 offered by the Taliban; also, being friendly early might make the Warlord player seem less threatening later. The Warlord player agrees to the deal; adjust the Taliban resources down 2 to 9 and the Warlord resources up 2 to 11.

Knowing that the Coalition won't be able to play on this card and take the event, the Taliban feels comfortable doing an Extort special activity with his Rally. The Islamabad Track (6.6.1) is currently at "Backing," so the Taliban can Rally for free in Pakistan spaces. First, place red pawns in Balochistan, Waziristan, and Northwest Frontier; these spaces will cost 0 resources for the Rally operation. Also place pawns in Helmand, Paktitka, Nuristan, Oruzgan, Ghazni, and Kabul. There will not be enough red pawns, feel free to supplement with the white pawns or pieces from another game. 6 non-Pakistan spaces were chosen, so reduce the Taliban resources from 9 to 3.

Since all of the spaces chosen in Afghanistan are Pashtun, the Taliban player can place guerrillas equal to population plus bases in those spaces. Place 2 Taliban guerrillas in each of Helmand, Paktika, Oruzgan, Ghazni, and 3 guerrillas in Nuristan. Kabul and Balochistan have no Taliban bases so only place 1 Taliban guerrilla in those spaces. Waziristan and Northwest Frontier both have 2 Taliban guerrillas, so the Taliban player decides to convert them into bases. In both spaces, remove the 2 guerrillas to the available forces box and place the next available Taliban base in the open "base" spots. Increase the "Opposition + Bases" marker by 2 to 10.

> **Reminder:** *There can only be 2 bases of any combination of factions in any Province or Kabul.*

Also, as part of his Rally operation, the Taliban may buy Sharia (6.4.2). at one space where he has a base, to shift that space toward opposition. He chooses to do this in the largest elibigble population, Nuristan. Place an Opposition counter on the "neutral" box in Nuristan, reduce the Taliban resources by 1 to 2, and increase the Opposition + bases by 2 to 12.

The Warlord player glares angrily at the Taliban player. He had made a deal with the Taliban to prevent the Coalition from taking the un-

shaded Taliban Capability, but the Taliban betrayed him. He reminds the Taliban player that his rallies have undone much of the work the Warlords had done to gain uncontrolled population in Afghanistan. Place Taliban Control counters in Helmand, Paktika, Nuristan, Oruzgan, and Balochistan; reduce the Uncontrolled Population by the total population value of these spaces, 5, down to 11.

The Taliban player shrugs and continues with his special activity—Extort (4.4.1). This requires an underground guerrilla and more Taliban pieces than enemy pieces, so Helmand, Zabol, Paktika, Nuristan, Oruzgan, Ghazni, and Balochistan are all eligible. In each of those spaces, flip one Taliban guerrilla to its active side (the embossed side) and increase the Taliban resources by 1 for each space with no Warlord base—5 spaces. Helmand and Nuristan each have 1 Warlord base, so for those spaces transfer 2 Warlord resources to the Taliban for each base. In the end, Warlord resources decrease by 4 to 7, and Taliban resources increase by 9 to 11. Finally, remove all the pawns from the board and move the Taliban eligibility to the 1st Faction Op + Special Activity space.

The Warlord's are next to act, now seething with rage. The Warlord player declares that he will stick to the deal he made not to pass, but takes the unshaded portion of the event out of pure spite. The Taliban player finds the counter for the *Night Letters* capability and adds it, unshaded side up, to his Capabilities box. He has lost a useful method for gaining opposition points for the rest of the game. Place the Warlord eligibility in the 2nd Faction box to the right of the Taliban.
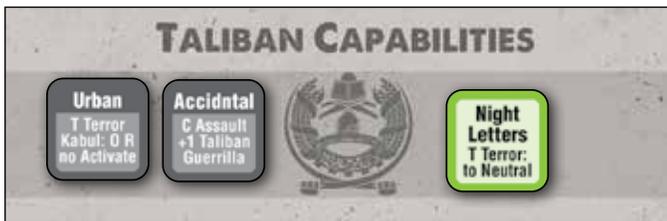
Night Letters is added to the Capability Box.

Two factions have acted on this card, so even though the Coalition was still an eligible faction, they are stuck with nothing to do. Adjust the eligibility to have the Coalition and Government eligible and the Taliban and Warlords ineligible. Move *Suicide Bombers* to the pile of played cards and flip the next card, #26 *MANPADS Scare*, face up on top of the deck.

> **STOP.** *Please pause just a moment and read section 3.2.3 of the rulebook.*

Both the Taliban and Warlords are ineligible on this card, so the Coalition is first to act on *Suicide Bombers*. The Coalition player would like to cripple the Taliban further by taking another unshaded capability, but the Taliban left himself vulnerable by activating his guerrillas. The Coalition player decides to conduct a Sweep operation to activate even more guerrillas for future assault.

Place a red pawn in Paktika; this will be the first destination space for the Coalition. The Coalition takes 1 of his 2 troops in Kabul and moves it, along with one of the government troops, to Paktika via the 1-value LOC to the southwest. Because a government cube was taken along, the Coalition has to spend 3 government resources for this destination. Reduce the government resources to 18. There are now 3 COIN cubes in Paktika, so activate the last 2 underground Taliban guerrillas and the lone Warlord guerrilla (1 guerrilla for each cube). Also, remove the Taliban Control counter and increase the Uncontrolled population by 1 to 12.

The Coalition will also sweep in Kandahar, Oruzgan, Ghazni, and Kabul, but will only sweep in place without moving any cubes. Since no government pieces are moved, this does not cost any government resources.

How the map looks after the sweep.

Even though no resources were spent to move additional government pieces in, the cubes that were already in Kandahar and Kabul still count toward the number of guerrillas able to be activated in those spaces. There are more than enough cubes in each space, so activate both the Taliban guerrilla and Warlord guerrilla in Kandahar and the Taliban guerrilla in Kabul. Last, in Oruzgan and Ghazni, there is 1 Coalition troop in each space, so activate 1 Taliban guerrilla in both spaces. (see page 9)

Since only the Government is still eligible on this card, the Coalition player is not worried about allowing the event to be taken by doing a special activity. The Coalition player decides to do an Air Strike (4.2.3) targeting Oruzgan, Ghazni and Waziristan; place white pawns in those spaces. Normally an air strike would only be able to remove 1 piece per target space; however, with the unshaded Reapers capability in effect, Coalition air strikes can remove up to 2 active guerrilla per space. Remove, to the Taliban Available forces, both active guerrillas in Oruzgan and both in Ghazni. To the delight of the Warlords, this also causes Oruzgan to become uncontrolled. Remove the Taliban control from Oruzgan and increase the Uncontrolled Population to 13.

In Waziristan, the Taliban player has left his bases exposed by having no guerrillas there. Air strikes are not able to target bases if any of that faction's guerrillas are present. The Taliban player thought his base was safe because an air strike targeting a space in Pakistan would normally cause the Islamabad track to shift one space to the right. He failed to remember the unshaded Predators capability is active for the Coalition. With this, one of the bases in Waziristan can be removed by air strike and be ignored for the Islamabad track. Remove one of these bases, placing it on the highest exposed value

on the Taliban bases track and reduce the Opposition + Bases by 1 to 11. Move the Coaltion to the 1st Faction Op + Special Activity space.

The Government now decides to do a limited operation. Place the government eligibility in the 2nd faction space to the right of the Coalition. The government player feels that he needs to establish a foothold outside of Kabul for his troops before the first propaganda phase, so he chooses to conduct a Train operation in Khowst in order to build a Government base there. Reduce the government resources by 3 to 15. One of the options for Government Train operations is to exchange 3 Government cubes (of any type) in a space for a Government base. The Government player does this in Khowst; remove the Troop and both police and replace them with 1 of the Government bases, placing it in 1 of the 2 open "Base" circles of Khowst. This will allow Government troops to redeploy to Khowst during a propaganda phase, but the base is exposed to attack right now and will need to be protected soon.

Since this is a LimOp, Khowst will be the only Train space and no special activity is allowed. This card is finished, so adjust the eligibility markers, remove pawns from the board, and cycle to the next card making *MANPADS Scare* the active card and revealing #6 *US-Pakistan Talks*.

First card   On deck

The Taliban player is 1st Eligible on *MANPADS Scare* and sees an opportunity to get back at the Coalition for the air strikes. He decides to conduct an Attack in conjunction with an Ambush special activity. Unlike most special activities which take place before, during, or after an operation, Ambush boosts the Taliban's Attack operation by ensuring its success and requiring only 1 underground guerrilla to be activated. The Taliban selects Herat, Oruzgan, and Ghazni for the 3 attacks with ambush (and places both red and white pawns there) and Paktika as an additional attack space (red pawn only). With 4 spaces selected, reduce Taliban resources by 4 to 7.

Let's resolve the Ambush spaces first. In each of Herat, Oruzgan, and Ghazni flip the Taliban guerrilla to active, and place another underground guerrilla from available forces. As a result of the successful attacks caused by ambushing, the Taliban player can remove 2 enemy pieces in each space. In Herat he chooses to remove the 2 police to Government Available Forces box since the troop cannot stay there during the next propaganda round (6.5) without a government base. In Oruzgan and Ghazni, the lone Coalition troop may be targeted because no Government pieces are in those spaces. In Oruzgan first remove the Warlord guerrilla and, in both spaces, remove the Coalition troops to the Casualties box. These troops will

not be available for the Coalition, and half of them will be out of the game permanently, until they cause a reduction in Government aid in the Resource phase (6.3.4 / 6.6) of the next propaganda round. Also, these attacks give the Taliban control of Herat and Oruzgan. Place a Taliban control counter in Oruzgan, and flip the COIN control counter in Herat to the Taliban control side. Decrease the uncontrolled population by 1 to 12 and COIN + Patronage by 1 to 14.

> **STOP.** *Please pause just a moment and read sections 3.3.3 and 4.4.3 of the rulebook.*

Now let's resolve the regular attack in Paktika. Since this is not an ambush space, the Taliban player has to activate all of his guerrillas in that space and roll a die. All Taliban guerrillas in Paktika are already active, so there is no need to activate any more. The Taliban player rolls a single die and gets a 4. This die roll is higher than the number of Taliban guerrillas in the space, so the attack is a failure. Move the Taliban to the 1st Faction Op and Special Activity space.

The Warlords are 2nd eligible and may now take a LimOp, take the event, or pass. The Warlord player has no intention of taking this event just to help out either the Coalition or the Taliban. Looking at the next event, however, the Warlord player feels very confident that the Coaltion, who will be 1st eligible, will take the event. Since the Taliban have just acted on this card, they will not be eligible for *US-Pakistan Talks* so the Warlords will be 2nd eligible on that card. Since the Coalition taking the event will allow the Warlords a full op and special activity instead of just a LimOp, the Warlords choose to pass on this card. Move the Warlords to the Pass space and increase their resources by 1 to 8. There are no more eligible factions, so cycle the eligibility cylinders making the Taliban ineligible and the other 3 eligible. Finally, move *US-Pakistan Talks* to the played cards pile and draw the next card, #66 *Mountain Fastness*, on top of the deck.

Taliban action in Herat.

Taliban action in Oruzgan and Paktika.

As expected, the Coalition player takes the unshaded portion of this event. Place the Coalition eligibility on the 1st Faction Event space. Per the event instructions, move the Islamabad Track marker from

"Backing" to "Pressure." This will seriously hinder the Taliban's ability to rally new forces since now, not only is it no longer free to rally in Pakistan, it is not even allowed there.

With the Coalition taking the event, the 2nd eligible faction, the Warlords, is permitted a full operation with a special activity. Place the Warlord eligibility cylinder in the 2nd Faction: OP and Special Activity space to the right of the Coalition. The Warlord player chooses to Rally in the following provinces: Herat, Balkh, and Faryab. Decrease the Warlord resources by 3 to 5. Currently the Warlords have only 1 available guerrilla, so they can not place guerrillas in all 3 provinces yet. Since the execution of each province happens in a sequence chosen by the active player, the Warlord player decides to rally in Balkh first, exchanging 2 guerrillas for a Warlord base. Remove 2 guerrillas from Balkh and place a Warlord base there. Now there are 3 Warlord guerrillas available for placement in the other two provinces. Place the full allotment, 2 guerrillas, in Faryab, and the last Warlord guerrilla in Herat; remove the Taliban control in Herat and increase the Uncontrolled population by 1 to 13.

> **STOP.** *Please pause just a moment and read sections 4.5.2 of the rulebook.*

Now, the Warlord Player decides to Traffic for his special activity. Traffic is possible wherever there are Warlord bases and no Coalition pieces, so the Warlord player conducts traffic in Farah, Helmand, Nuristan, Konduz, Balkh, and Faryab. The Warlords have a total of 8 bases in those spaces, so increase the Warlord resources by 8 to a total of 13. As a consequence of Traffic, increase the Taliban resources by 2, to 9, because Helmand and Nuristan are under Taliban Control.

Actions are now complete on *US-Pakistan Talks*. Cycle the eligibility to have the Government and Taliban eligible and the Coalition and Warlords ineligible. Make *Mountain Fastness* the new active card and reveal the top card of the draw pile, *Propaganda!* The Warlords are ineligible on this card, so the Taliban are first to act.

> **STOP.** *Please pause just a moment and read sections 3.3.2 of the rulebook.*

Knowing that the this will be the last card before the Propaganda round, the Taliban player sees a fantastic opportunity to gain a lot of ground toward his victory level. Since he will be able to purchase Sharia (to create opposition) during Propaganda where he has Taliban Control, he decides to create as much Taliban control as possible right now. The Taliban player decides to March.

As destinations are chosen, place a red pawn in the chosen space. First, select Ghowr as a destination. Move the active guerrilla from Helmand and both guerrillas from Oruzgan to Ghowr, adding Taliban control there. We'll make the final adjustment to the victory levels at the end of the operation. Since Ghowr is a Pashtun province, the guerrillas that moved there are allowed to march again to another province that is chosen as a destination. Select Herat and Badghis as destinations and move the 2 active guerrillas from Ghowr putting 1 into Herat and 1 into Badghis. Place Taliban control counters into both of these provinces.

Select Khowst as a destination. March both guerrillas from Ghazni and 1 guerrilla from Paktika into Khowst, again giving Taliban control. Last, select Kabul and Baghlan as destinations. Move 1 underground guerrilla into each space, both from Nuristan, placing Taliban control in Baghlan. The Taliban player is finished marching so he pays 6 resources (1 for each destination selected). Reduce Taliban resources by 6 to 3. Now the Taliban player thinks about a

special activity. If he conducts a special activity though, the Government will be able to execute the event instead of just a LimOp and hinder what the Taliban are trying to do. Because of this, the Taliban forego their special activity and force the Government to a LimOp only. In all, the Taliban gained control of 5 previously uncontrolled population, so reduce the uncontrolled population by 5 to 8. Also, control of Khowst was taken from the COIN, so reduce COIN + Patronage by 3 to 11. Move the Taliban eligibility to the top row, 1st Faction Op Only.

The Government player knows he will have the last action prior to the Propaganda round, and he decides he needs to mitigate the damage the Taliban is about to cause as much as he can. Since he can only choose 1 space to conduct an operation, he decides to convert Khowst, the highest population value, from Taliban Control to COIN control. To do this, the Government selects Khowst for a Train operation. Place the Government eligibility cylinder in the 2nd Faction LimOp space to the right of the Taliban.

There is already a government base there, so place 6 government cubes—3 troops and 3 police—into Khowst and flip the Taliban control counter to the COIN control side. Increase the COIN control + Patronage by 3 back to 14 and reduce the government resources by 3 to 12. The government is not allowed a special activity, so end the play for the card by moving the Coalition and Warlords to eligible and the Taliban and Government to ineligible. Make Propaganda the active card and reveal *Crop Substitution* from the top of the deck.

> **STOP.** *Please pause just a moment and read sections 6.0 TO 6.6 of the rulebook.*

It's now time to conduct the first Propaganda round of the game. Find the Propaganda counter and place it on the first space ("Victory?") of the Propaganda Card track on the Sequence of Play display. This step is the only time during the game that victory conditions are checked. If a player exceeds his victory threshold during the remainder of the Propaganda card or during normal play, the game will still continue until victory is checked again at the start of the next Propaganda card. Consult the player aid fold out to see the victory thresholds for each faction and compare them to the current levels. No player currently meets their required victory level, so move the propaganda marker to the next step: resources.

In the resources step, each faction will gain additional resources based on certain criteria. The government resources will increase by the sum of all unsabotaged LoCs + the Aid level. In this case, no LoCs are sabotaged so the government will get the full value of 12 + 15 Aid for an increase of 27 resources. Move the Government resource cylinder up 27 spaces to 39. The Taliban get 9 resources for the number of bases they have on the map; increase their resources by 9 to 12. Finally the Warlords don't have any guerrillas on LoCs so they will only receive 9 resources for their bases on the board; increase the Warlord resources by 9 to 22. There are 2 Coalition pieces in the casualties box, so reduce the aid by 6 to 9. Move the propaganda counter right 1 space to the support step.
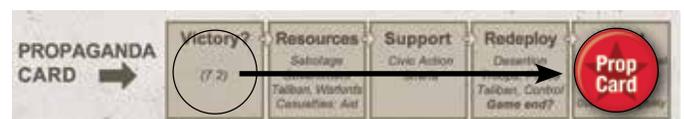
The Propaganda Track

First up in the Support step, the Coalition may spend government resources to purchase civic actions in spaces where there is COIN control and at least as many Coalition troops as government troops.

No spaces on the map meet those conditions, so now the Government may decide to purchase civic actions where there is COIN control and more government troops than Coalition troops. The only space that meets these criteria is Khowst. Buying civic action will shift a space to support, and while this is solely the victory condition for the Coalition, the government player sees that he will be first to act on the first card of the next campaign, *Crop Substitution*. Since he will be able to act before the Coalition, he can shift Khowst to support and be able to conduct a Govern (4.3.1) special activity there before the Coalition can Surge (4.2.1) a base in.

Reduce government resources by 3 to 36. Place a support counter in Khowst. Increase Support + Available by 3 to 24. Taliban can now buy Sharia where Taliban control. Buy Sharia and place Opposition counters in Herat, Helmand, Baghlan, Badghis, Ghowr, Oruzgan, and Ghazni. Reduce Taliban resources by 7 to 5. Increase Opposition + Bases by 8 to 19. Shift the propaganda counter to Redeploy.

For Government desertion, remove 1 Government troop from Kandahar, 1 Government troop and 1 police from Khowst, 1 Government troop from Konduz, and 1 police from Kabul. Coalition may and Government must redeploy troops where there are no COIN bases to COIN bases with COIN control or Kabul. The Coalition wants to avoid what happened to his troops in Oruzgan and Ghazni being sent to casualties, so he redeploys his troop from Zabol to Khowst. Next, Gather the Government troops from Herat, Kandahar, and Paktika and place all 3 in Kabul. Now police may redeploy anywhere there is COIN control. To maintain COIN control in Kandahar, move the last police from Kabul to Kandahar.

Taliban must redeploy guerrillas from spaces where there are no Taliban bases (except Kabul) to Taliban bases with Taliban control. Gather the 11 Taliban guerrillas from Herat, Kandahar, Khowst, Baghlan, Badghis, Ghowr, and Balochistan. It is not necessary to maintain their activation status, since all guerrillas will be moved underground in the next step. Place 1 of these guerrillas in Nuristan, 2 in Oruzgan, 2 in Ghazni, 3 in Waziristan, and 3 in Northwest Frontier. With redeploy finished, adjust control of provinces. Remove Taliban control of Herat, Baghlan, Badghis, Ghowr, and Balochistan; increase the uncontrolled population by 5 to 13. Even though the Taliban lost control of the provinces they marched to before the Propaganda round, the opposition they purchased with Sharia remains. Move the Propaganda counter to the Reset step.

First the Coalition player must deal with his casualties. Half of his troops in the casualty box (rounded down) are removed from the game permanently, so take 1 of those 2 Coalition troops and place it back in the box. The other troop returns to the available forces. Increase the Support + Available by 1 to 22. Next, the Islamabad track counter is not on the "Hard" side, so it follows the "Reset" arrow 1 space to Tolerance. The Taliban are now allowed to Rally in Pakistan again, but will have to pay for it like any other space. There are no terror or sabotage counters on the map, but they would be removed at this time. There is no momentum, but it would be discarded at this time. Last, shift all active guerrillas to underground, and make all factions eligible on the next card.

At this point, *Crop Substitution* becomes the first active event of the new campaign. Reveal the next card on the top of the deck which was randomly shuffled into the deck. You can continue the game from this point and see if the other players can get control of the Taliban opposition situation, or, if you like, clear the board and set up the game from the beginning.

This tutorial did not cover every possible action of each faction, but merely tried to give a feel for the flow of the game and some of the thought process behind the players' decisions. I strongly recommend you read the rules sections for the operations and special activities that were not covered in the tutorial before continuing on your own. Good luck and enjoy the game!
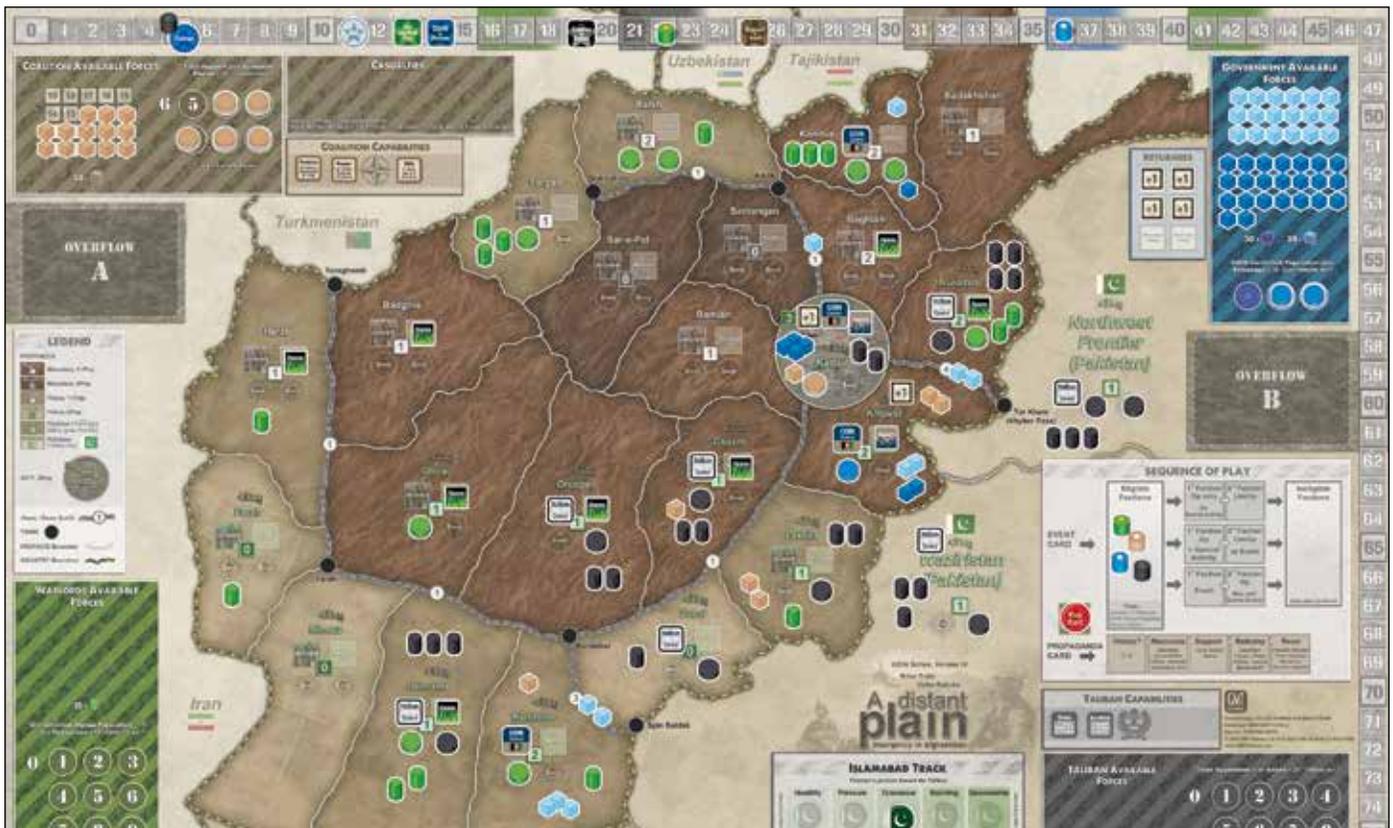
Situation at end of tutorial.

CHANGES FROM *Andean Abyss*

Andean Abyss players—start here!

This section summarizes the main changes from Andean Abyss.

Coalition

Volume III introduces the COIN Series' first foreign Counterinsurgent Faction: the Coalition. The Coalition has overall Support for the Government as part of its Victory goal, similar to the Government in *Andean Abyss*. But the Coalition does not live in Afghanistan—it also wants in the end to get (or keep) its forces out of the country unscathed. So the more pieces the Coalition has in its Available area, the higher its Victory score (7.2-.3).

Because a foreign force must expend considerable logistical effort to get its Troops and Bases into and out of the country, the Coalition may not place its pieces with an Operation, nor simply voluntarily remove them, as Factions in *Andean Abyss* can. Instead, it must use its Surge Special Activity to place or remove its pieces (4.2.1).

In addition, foreign publics are acutely sensitive to any losses in faraway Afghanistan, so the Coalition is subject to Casualties—any pieces that it loses to Insurgent Attacks. Casualties not only reduce Aid but in some portion leave the game so that they are no longer available either for a Surge back into theater nor for Victory (3.3.3, 6.3.4, 6.6).

There is some good news, however. Backed by Western treasuries, the Coalition need account for no Resources: it has an effective blank check for its own Operations; and it spends the Afghan Government's Resources for Civic Action and any Coalition Operations that borrow Government forces (see below). Surging will build Government Resources by securing more Aid (4.2.1). Or a Surge can generate Resources for the Warlords as part of a deal.

The Coalition can extract help from its COIN partner by taking Government Troops along on Sweeps and Air Lifts (3.2.3, 4.2.2). Coalition Sweeps automatically and Assaults if paid for with Government Resources benefit in effectiveness from the Government forces present (3.2.3-.4).

Coalition Training places Government cubes rather than Coalition Troops, and can even take them from elsewhere on the map if none are available (3.2.1). Training in the capital, Kabul, can seek a cleaner Afghan Government by recovering Patronage that may have been diverted from foreign Aid back to Resources useful for counterinsurgency (see below).

As for the Colombian Government in *Andean Abyss*, the Coalition may improve (or degrade) its tactics and technology during the conflict via several Capabilities Events (5.3). Many Coalition COIN actions such as Civic Action, Assault, Air Strike and Air Lift are already more powerful than their *Andean Abyss* counterparts. But in the Propaganda Round, it may buy Civic Action only where it has at least as many Troops as does the Government (6.4.1). Elsewhere, Civic Action is up to the Afghan Government, which may not care as much about popular Support as does the Coalition.

Taliban

The Taliban Insurgents have Operations, Special Activities, and Victory objectives akin to the FARC's in *Andean Abyss*. But they add two potent strategic assets unavailable to the FARC: the ethnically aligned Pashtun belt and a secure sanctuary and friend in Pakistan.

In any spaces denoted as Pashtun—much of the map including the capital Kabul—the Taliban can Rally regardless of Support for the Government, can continue Marching through on a single execution, and stay Underground when Marching in, regardless of local sentiments or enemy presence (1.3.2-.3, 3.3.1-.2).

Only the Taliban may ever occupy the three Pakistan spaces on the map (1.4.2). Taliban can build and count Bases there for Victory and can Extort there for Resources normally.

Meanwhile, the Islamabad Track (replacing *Andean Abyss's* El Presidente) provides the Taliban potent boosts or restrictions in Operations inside and beyond Pakistan spaces (6.6.1). Islamabad's posture on the Track is influenced mainly by Event play. In addition, Coalition Air Strikes inside Pakistan will enhance Islamabad's sponsorship of the Taliban Faction (4.2.3).

Taliban Sharia (the equivalent of FARC Agitation in *Andean Abyss*) can generate Opposition to the Government not only in the Propaganda Round but as part of Rally Operations where the Taliban have a Base, even if the Taliban do not Control the space! This power represents the Taliban leveraging the authority of religious law wherever enough of their clandestine political cadre survive.

The Taliban can Extort not only locals but also to take Resources from the Warlords where the Taliban Control Warlord Bases (somewhat replacing the FARC's Kidnapping from the Cartels in *Andean Abyss*). Taliban Extortion on LoCs is especially lucrative along the two supply roads into Afghanistan from Pakistan (4.4.1).

In addition, the Taliban can Infiltrate shaky Government or Warlord forces to take them over from within (4.4.2) and undermine the Government's Patronage system.

Like the Coalition, the Taliban too may improve or degrade their tactics and technology via lasting Capabilities Events (5.3).

Government

The Afghan Government has very different Victory goals than the Government in *Andean Abyss*. It seeks not popular Support but rather Control over the population by security forces. Track COIN Control—a combined majority of Government plus Coalition forces in a space—throughout play to help monitor Government Victory (1.7, 7.2-.3).

But physical Control is not enough. The Afghan Government also must build Patronage: the traditional network of individual loyalties, fueled by material favors, that gives the central Government its influence (1.8, 7.2-.3).

The Government has a number of means of strengthening Patronage, but the main one is its Govern Special Activity (4.3.2), which can divert foreign Aid into Patronage where it Controls local Populations in Support. The more Population, the more Aid, so the more Patronage! But a long-term Coalition presence—represented by any Coalition Bases in the country—acts as local watchdog and blocks such diversion.

Alternatively, the Government can Govern benignly to attract Afghan Returnees to COIN-Controlled regions that are in Support or sparsely settled (4.3.1). Returnees alter Afghanistan's demographic landscape by permanently adding +1 Population to that space—more Population for the Government to Control and Govern!

The Afghan Government does not possess its own Air Lift capacity, but instead has a less flexible Transport Special Activity (4.3.2).

Transport (as well as Patrol, 3.2.2) is highly dependent on keeping Afghanistan's limited road net free of Sabotage (3.3.4).

As the Colombian Government in *Andean Abyss*, the Afghan Government can Eradicate drug crops (remove Warlord Bases), but because it relies more on manual means than aerial spraying, it can only do so with its Troops or Police in spaces under COIN Control (4.3.3). As in *Andean Abyss*, it adds Aid and may recruit enemy Guerrillas, but it also augments Patronage as locals pay for falsifying eradication records.

As a COIN partner of the Coalition, the Government cannot directly remove Coalition forces that might get in the way (such as Coalition Bases that block Aid diversion to Patronage). Nor can the Government voluntarily remove its own Coalition-funded forces, unless Training to place cubes from elsewhere on the map when no more are available (3.2.1).

Warlords

The opium-growing Warlords Faction pursues some similar activities and victory conditions to those of *Andean Abyss's* Cartels. But, interwoven with the non-Pashtun former Northern Alliance and minor Pashtun warlord leaders, the Faction seeks Victory not on economic strength alone but must also pursue the political objective of keeping as much of Afghanistan's Population as possible Controlled by neither the central Government nor the Taliban (1.7, 7.2-.3). Track both COIN Control and Taliban Control throughout play: any Control boxes free of markers add their Population to the Warlords' "Uncontrolled Population" Victory level.

To obtain the Resources needed for Victory, the Warlords can Cultivate to add Bases (similar to the Cartels' activity) and can Traffic to generate Resources from those Bases immediately and repeatedly during a campaign, replacing the Cartels' Processing of Shipments (4.5.1-.2).

The Warlords have an important, additional source of income: their provision of local route security for the movement of Government and Coalition forces. Warlords Guerrillas on unSabotaged LoCs help protect them from Taliban Sabotage and earn the Warlords Resources during the Propaganda Round (6.2). Guerrillas on LoCs during Government Sweeps or in any spaces entered during Government Transport activities garner an additional fee in Resources (3.2.3, 4.3.2).

Particularly useful for countering Control, the Warlords can use not only money but ethnic, familial, and other ties to officials to Suborn Government forces more cheaply that a Cartels Bribe (4.5.3). Suborn can turn Taliban as well.

Warlord Rally in Pashtun spaces Guerrillas places only singly even where Warlord Bases, reflecting the Faction's anti-Pashtun and anti-Taliban standing (3.3.1). Similarly, Marching Warlord Guerrillas check for Activation when entering Pashtun not non-Pashtun spaces, with Activation made more likely by Taliban Guerrillas not COIN forces.

Non-Players

Rules Section 8.0 has many important changes and should be reviewed fully if Non-player Factions are used. Unlike in *Andean Abyss*, all 4 Factions have Non-player flowcharts, so that a solitaire player can act as either Counterinsurgent or Insurgent, 3 players can let the game system handle any 1 of the 4 Factions, and so on.

ROLE SUMMARIES
by Ahmad Siddiqi

Coalition

Situation. Your multinational forces have taken on the job nation building after the ouster of the Taliban regime. But the Taliban are bouncing back, and neither the central government that you emplaced nor the anti-Taliban warlords who helped your invasion seem to be working toward the stable Afghanistan that you hope to leave behind.

Goal. Build popular support for the government and get your troops out of Afghanistan.

Tools. Key to your goals are the ability to train Afghan forces and administrators and to surge. Training allows civic actions (that is, development projects) to boost support. It also builds the Government's army and police to help with your operations, such as sweeps (scouring the countryside) to maneuver troops and expose hidden guerrillas and assaults to take them out. Government forces also help shield your forces from casualties that you cannot afford. Surging is the only way to get your forces into and (you hope) out of Afghanistan and a main way to add foreign aid.

Deals. If you can effectively coordinate your operations with the Government (such as Sweeping and Assaulting in succession), they will be far more effective. But be aware that the Government's priorities are different from yours. The Warlords have an anti-Taliban agenda too and may work with you if you don't let the Government lean on them too hard.

Tip. The Government left alone will siphon away support to obtain patronage: keeping Coalition bases in populous territory will hinder this.

Taliban

Situation. You were ousted from power by invaders and their local collaborators following al-Qaeda's raids on the United States. But now, after witnessing the corruption and injustices of the occupation, Afghans are once again rallying to the banner of Islam and revolt. You must build on hatred of the puppet government and strengthen your presence in the country. Be wary—the Coalition, Government, and Warlords all are suspicious of you, and your ability to use your base areas in Pakistan effectively is subject to the whims of a fickle government in Islamabad.

Goal. Build popular opposition to the Government and establish your bases of political and military infrastructure in the country.

Tools. You have an important information advantage over the COIN forces. The Coalition and Government have to sweep provinces to find your underground guerrillas before they can assault you. Try to keep them from lining up their sweeps and assaults in succession. Rallying followers is integral to your goals, allowing you to build bases, recruit guerrillas, hide exposed guerrillas, and bring Sharia justice to locals in your base areas to increase their opposition to the Kabul puppets. When you have to, terrorize those who support the government as a cheap and quick way to build opposition in many places at once. Rally and march to spread across the country—easiest for you among the Pashtuns—carry out terror and establish control in such areas as you can. This will later allow you to establish Sharia to deepen opposition at the end of each campaign. Extort to tax locals for the resources to conduct your operations—the enemy's supply

roads across the Pashtun belt are particularly useful in this regard.

Deals. The Coalition invader is your main enemy. Its strategy of building government support is directly contrary to your goal of opposition, and its assaults and air strikes are a perennial threat to your bases. It is vital to protect your bases with underground guerrillas. You may find though that you are able to work out unofficial truces with the Coalition in times when it is pressed with problems. Such cooperation is even easier with the Government, which may be very willing to leave your guerrillas unmarked in order to avoid losing forces to your attacks and ambushes. The anti-Pashtun Warlords are also your enemy, but try to keep them happy. They can terrorize the people to give up their opposition if they choose to. You can withdraw from regions temporarily to ease the warlords' concern that too much of the country is centrally controlled.

Tip. Ambush isolated Coalition pieces to remove them permanently from the fight, dent foreign aid, and prevent the Coalition claiming victory when it withdraws. Sabotage the Ring Road to impair troop mobility. But remember that you can't extort sabotaged road.

Government

Situation. You took control of the country after the ouster of the Taliban, amid hopes of an end to more than two decades of war in Afghanistan. Unfortunately, those hopes were soon frustrated. The Taliban have regrouped and begun an insurgency that is gaining in strength. The Warlords who helped bring you to power have proven fickle allies at best. And your Coalition allies not only have one foot out of the door, but are too busy mouthing Western notions of good governance to realize what is essential to ruling Afghanistan: the ability to project force into the countryside and sufficient influence with local power-brokers to keep things quiet.

Goal. Establish counterinsurgent control of enough territories and build up patronage—the ability to dole out favors and gain influence with local leaders and power-brokers.

Tools. Your ability to govern is important to your success, as it allows you to attract refugees, increasing the population in areas under the control of counterinsurgent forces. Alternatively, you can govern to divert foreign aid towards patronage, at the cost of losing popular support in that territory. Build up your forces by training troops and police at Kabul and any place where either you or the Coalition have established bases. You can then sweep or transport troops into provinces to establish control, or put police or troops on patrol on LOCs to prevent sabotage. Sweeps also expose underground guerrillas, which your Coalition allies can then assault. You can also assault them yourself, but your forces alone are less effective in this regard. Eradicating poppy fields is an important way of gaining both foreign aid and patronage, although it will make the population resentful.

Deals. Cooperation with your Coalition allies is important, as they can train your forces and clear territories of insurgents, allowing you to jointly establish control. But the Coalition can also spend your resources without your approval and train officious bureaucrats to reduce your patronage, so make sure your own goals are not ignored when you work together. Deals can often be made with either insurgent faction as well. Taliban may be willing to leave your forces alone if you don't carry out civic actions to remove opposition. Similarly, Warlords may prefer the prospect of increasing your patronage by trafficking in areas under your control to the alternative that you eradicate their bases.

Tip. Careful resource management is important. Unlike the other factions, you only gain resources at the beginning of each campaign and have to make sure they last the distance. Keeping roads open not only helps your mobility, it also adds to the resources you receive from trade at the end of a campaign. Also, when your troops withdraw out of a province, redeploy police in to keep control.

Warlords

Situation. You represent a diverse array of groups—ethnic and religious minorities, drug traffickers, and local chiefs—all of whom are interested in preserving their local autonomy against any centralizer's intrusion. You fought the Taliban in the past decade when they tried to expand their control over all of Afghanistan. And you helped Coalition forces in ending Taliban rule. But now you must fight just as hard to remain independent of the new Coalition-backed government and its Pashtun President and to preserve your culture, way of life, and freedom to trade unhindered.

Goal. Build up a reserve of resources for the tough times ahead and ensure that enough of the Afghan population remains out of the control of both the Taliban and the counterinsurgent forces.

Tools. You can rally and especially cultivate to proliferate your bases (which harbor poppy fields). They enable you to traffic opium to gain resources immediately and will automatically add to your wealth at the end of each campaign. You can raise guerrilla militias particularly quickly in the multiethnic north of the country. Add to your income by placing your guerrillas on country's lines of communications. There they will receive security payments each time the Government sweeps or transports along them and will also add to your income after a campaign if the line remains free of sabotage. Once you've built up enough resources, use them to suborn (and, if necessary, attack) your enemies to remove their forces and lift provinces out of their control. Terrorize populations to dissuade them from too much support of the foreign-backed government, to from too much opposition that feeds the Taliban movement.

Deals. Your main advantage is that you're nobody's priority. Taliban and Coalition don't care directly about your goals and will often compete for your allegiance. The Government is more of a threat, since it is aiming to control the populace, but it is likely to take some time building its position across the countryside. Unfortunately, when your enemies do come after you, you're vulnerable. The Government can enrich itself by eradicating your crop, the Taliban can extort profits from your bases, and the Coalition forces can cause massive losses to your guerrillas and bases if provoked. Keep a low profile, cut deals without alienating anybody too much, and threaten retaliation when you must.

Tip. Build your bases where the Coalition is absent so that you can traffic in peace. Although you operate more effectively outside the Pashtun provinces, consider establishing some presence in Taliban-dominated Pashtun areas where you can traffic and eventually deny Taliban control.
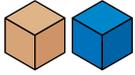
GUIDE TO COIN OPERATIONS

Strategy Notes for Counterinsurgents

by Joel Toppen, adapted from *Andean Abyss*

Here is an introduction to the forces and some key actions available to the Coalition and Government Factions.

Troops

Troops are your workhorses. They're going to do all the heavy lifting for you. Essentially, Troops are your pieces that can be moved into spaces to search (Sweep) and destroy (Assault) Insurgent Guerrillas and Bases.

Troops are brought into the game through the Train Operation. Troops can move via:

- **Sweep Operation** — into an adjacent Province or Kabul to find (Activate) Insurgent Guerrillas. The Coalition can pay Government Resources to move Government Troops along with Coalition partners on Sweeps
- **Patrol Operation** — along Lines of Communication (LoCs) to find (Activate) Insurgent Guerrillas (and perhaps kill them in one such space) and also to reinforce Kabul.
- **Government Transport Special Activity** — any group of Troops move from any 1 space to another along unSabotaged LoCs. Do not underestimate the importance of this Special Activity to deploy Government forces into the countryside!
- **Coalition Air Lift Special Activity** — any Coalition Troops plus up to 3 Government Troop move among any 3 spaces on the map. The Coalition can use Air Lift to stage quick strikes on enemy concentrations, or handily redistribute its own or the Government's forces.

Troops kill Insurgent Guerrillas via the Assault Operation, but only Active guerillas. Coalition Troops do so much more effectively—1 for 1—but can pay Resources to make Government Troops in the area equaling potent that Assault.

Guerrillas must be Activated by a Sweep (or some action they themselves undertook) before Troops can eliminate them. Local Government forces aid in Coalition Sweeps at no extra cost.

Also, through their presence, Troops can take counterinsurgent (COIN) control of a space. By themselves, Troops have a more limited ability to alter Support/Opposition status with Civic Action in a single area during a Training Operation. With Police support, they can effect Civic Action in multiple spaces during the Propaganda

Afghan National Army brigadier general.

Round. In the Redeploy Phase, Government Troops on a LoC or in a Province space without a Coalition or Government Base must deploy out of that area (even if that space is COIN Controlled). Thus their staying power outside a City is limited. Coalition Troops, in contrast, can opt to stay.

Also, Troops, by establishing friendly or blocking enemy control of a space, can inhibit the Warlord victory condition of Uncontrolled Population, the Taliban's Extort activity, and to a degree the Taliban's ability to administer Sharia to build Opposition. Lastly, when positioned on a LoC or in certain Provinces, Troops can spot (Activate) marching Guerrillas.

Government Troops can be vital to protecting Coalition Troops from taking Casualties that hurt the Coalition's victory condition.

Police

Police are very, very important Government pieces. While much, much less mobile than Troops, Police give the Counterinsurgent players crucial positional staying power.

Here's what Police do for you:

- Police cannot move with Troops on a Sweep, Transport, or Air Lift. But they can, if already positioned in the space, assist the Troops in the space being swept. Police cubes count when factoring the effect of a Sweep.
- Police inhibit the ability of Warlords to use the Cultivate Special Activity to grow Bases rapidly. Like Troops, Police on LoCs or in certain spaces can spot (Activate) marching Guerrillas (very important to protect the Roads).
- Police can be used to Patrol LoCs to activate Guerrillas there, and even conduct an Assault on a LoC as part of the action.
- In Cities, Police can participate in Assault.
- Police, like Troops, can protect a counterinsurgent Bases and Coalition Troops from Attack (cubes must be removed before a Base is removed and Government cubes before Coalition).

So far they probably don't sound terribly useful to the players. There is, however, one crucial role Police have that makes them indispensable: Police enable the COIN players to conduct Civic Actions during a Propaganda card.

Civic Action is the means by which the Coalition and Government players degrade Opposition and/or add Support – necessary to fulfill the Coalition victory conditions and for the Government to Govern and thereby build Patronage toward its own victory. At least 1 Police cube is required to conduct Civic Action in a Propaganda Phase.

Police cannot move by Transport, Air Lift, or Sweep. They can only be moved to LoCs and Kabul during a Patrol. But getting Police into Provinces is not quite as simple and requires some planning. So how do you get Police to where you need them in the countryside?

There are two methods principally:

Training — You can get Police into a space where they are needed by simply undertaking the Train Operation and Training Police in that space. For Kabul, this is not a problem as the Government can always Train to place cubes there. Training in a Province, however, requires a bit of planning.

In order to place cubes by Training in a Province, you must have a Base there. If you are the Government, a Coalition Base will also do. In order to get a Base into that Province, the Government must first have three cubes in that Province. OK, so how does it get cubes

into a Province so it can place a Base? Typically, it will undertake a Sweep Operation to move Troops into a Province. It could also use the Transport Special Activity to ship Troops there. Then, in a subsequent turn, it undertakes a Train Operation in that Province, only it doesn't place cubes; instead, it removes 3 cubes and places a Government Base.

Once you have a Base, in a future turn, you can Train and place Police into that Province. If you have COIN Control (more Government and Coalition pieces than any other Faction in that Province), you may also pay for Civic Action in order to improve Support (even without a Base).

For the Coalition (or for the Government with Coalition help), it's even easier! In a space where you already have COIN Control, use the Coalition Surge Special Activity to plop down a Coalition Base, either from available pieces or from elsewhere on the map. Now the Coalition (even on the same move) and the Government each can Train to place Police or additional Troops there.

Guards in Kabul

Photo: Carl Montgomery

Redeploy — During the Redeploy Phase of a Propaganda card, the Government player can reposition any and all of his Police to any LoCs or any space with COIN Control. This is a very powerful opportunity to move otherwise less-mobile Police around the board. You must plan very carefully here lest you be forced to waste Resources and Operational tempo later.

And so, in short, the Government player may reposition Police preemptively and for free during the Redeploy Phase. The Government player may place new Police reactively and for a considerable cost in Resources when undertaking a Train Operation during an event card play. Police enable the Government to maintain rural Control and help the Coalition build Support, necessary to fulfilling their respective victory conditions. This then, will likely free up Troops to deploy elsewhere against Insurgents. Police give the counterinsurgents staying power.

Bases

Bases are crucial to Government success in that they provide the Only means by which the Government player can maintain a constant Troop presence in the countryside. The Government has only three Bases it can establish. Don't waste them!

Where do you need Bases? You need them in Provinces. The Government does not need them in Kabul. Why? Kabul is a de facto Government Base. The Coalition will want a Base in Kabul in order to Train Government Troops there itself. Bases enable the player to Train Troops and/or Police in that space. Since the Government can already do that in a City, it does not need to give up three cubes and use one of its three Base pieces there!

The only good a Base will do the Government in a City is deny to one of the other Factions the ability to place a second Base in that City. But since the Government only has three Bases with which to work, this seems to be a wasted use of a Base.

Why do you need Bases? You need Bases in order to Train Police and Troops in a Province. In order to stay in a Province and Control it and to Govern for Patronage, both needed for victory, you will need Police there, or for Troops to stay there. In order to get Police into a Province where there are presently no Police, they must usually be Trained there. To be Trained there, you need a Base. Bases also allow Troops to remain in a Province during the Redeploy Phase of a Propaganda card. And so if the Government player is still fighting to wrest control of a Province from an Insurgent faction when Propaganda is resolved, the presence of a Base in that Province allows the Government player to keep his Troops in the field.

Coalition Bases—more numerous and quickly established—have an additional and key function on behalf of the Coalition: they block the Government's ability to siphon Aid into Patronage for Government victory. Often, the Coalition will have to consider the goal of "good governance" in positioning its Bases in country.

So there you have it! Bases are one more cog in the counterinsurgents' machinery.

FACTION INTERACTIONS

By Mike Owens, Gordon Pueschner and Ahmad Siddiqi

The interaction of Faction Operations and Special Activities in this game is different than those in other volumes, so here is a reference chart showing the ways in which specific actions directly help or hinder other Factions' victory conditions.

Note that this chart is not a comprehensive list of how factions interact. For example, the Coalition can help the Government in other ways, such as by giving Aid, which doesn't directly affect the Government's victory conditions, but does add to its resources. Simi-

larly, the Taliban can Sabotage LoCs, reducing the Government's Propaganda Round earnings without directly affecting its victory.

Situationally, there will be many instances in which you will indirectly affect another Faction's position or plans by what Operations you decide to conduct or what Event cards you play. These instances will become more evident with experience playing the game, but this Interactions chart offers a useful reminder both of things you can do and things to watch out for from other players.

Many of the negative effects can be avoided if you look out for them. For example, the Coalition can guard against Government Governing to remove Support by placing a Base in that Province or City.

AFFECTED Faction

ACTING Faction		COALITION	GOVERNMENT	WARLORDS	TALIBAN
	COALITION	HELPS: • Civic Action to place Support • Surge to remove Coalition pieces to Available — HINDERS: • N/A	HELPS: • Train, Sweep, Assault, Air Lift, or Air Strike to gain COIN control — HINDERS: • Train in Kabul to transfer Patronage to Gov't Resources • Move Coalition pieces to yield COIN Control (Patrol, Sweep, Surge, Air Lift)	HELPS: • Surge to add resources to Warlords • Sweep, Surge or Air Lift to convert spaces to Uncontrolled — HINDERS: • Train, Sweep, Assault, Surge, Air Lift, or Air Strike to gain COIN control of spaces	HELPS: • No direct method — HINDERS: • Civic Action to remove Opposition • Assault or Air Strike to remove Taliban bases
	GOVERNMENT	HELPS: • Civic Action to place Support — HINDERS: • Govern to remove Support • Eradicate removes Support	HELPS: • Train, Sweep, Assault, Air Lift, or Air Strike to gain COIN control • Govern to add pop to COIN spaces or transfer Aid to Patronage — HINDERS: • N/A	HELPS: • Train, Sweep, Assault, or Transport to change to Uncontrolled • Transport gives resources to Warlords — HINDERS: • Train, Sweep, Assault, or Transport to change to COIN or Taliban control	HELPS: • Eradication can shift Neutral to Opposition — HINDERS: • Civic Action to remove Opposition • Assault to remove bases
	WARLORDS	HELPS: • No direct method — HINDERS: • Terror to shift Support to Neutral • Attack to remove pieces from play	HELPS: • March to change to COIN control • Traffic to add Patronage — HINDERS: • Rally, March, Attack, Cultivate to change to Uncontrolled	HELPS: • Rally, March, Attack, Cultivate, or Suborn to change to Uncontrolled • Traffic to gain resources — HINDERS: • N/A	HELPS: • March to change to Taliban control — HINDERS: • Rally, March, Attack, Cultivate, or Suborn to change to Uncontrolled • Terror to shift Opposition to Neutral
	TALIBAN	HELPS: • No direct method — HINDERS: • Sharia or Terror to remove Support • Attack/Ambush to remove pieces from play	HELPS: • March or Attack to change to COIN control — HINDERS: • Rally, March, Attack, or Infiltrate to gain Taliban control • Infiltrate to transfer Patronage to Resources	HELPS: • Rally, March, Attack, or Infiltrate to change to Uncontrolled — HINDERS: • Rally, March, Attack, or Infiltrate to gain Taliban control • Extort to take Warlords resources	HELPS: • Rally to place bases • Sharia or Terror to gain Opposition — HINDERS: • N/A

Legend: How the faction on the left HELPS the faction along the top's victory condition. How the faction on the left HINDERS the faction along the top's victory condition.

1-PLAYER EXAMPLE OF PLAY

Once you have gone over the tutorial starting on page 2, we recommend trying out this step-by-step run through part of a solitaire game: it will help you learn how Non-player Factions work for 2- or 3-player games as well. Follow along, referring to the illustrations, or set up the game board and conduct the moves described. You can fish out each card as it is named, or preset the deck with the card order provided in the shaded box at right. A numbered paragraph begins each new card played.

The player decides to use no optional rules, selects the Extended scenario, and sets up the board and deck (rule 2.1). Playing *A DISTANT PLAIN* solo, the player is either the Coalition or the Taliban, trying to the beat the other Factions run by the Non-player rules (section 8). The player opts to represent the Coalition.

Preparing the Deck for This Example

If you want to set up the game to follow along with this example, prepare the deck as follows:

Stack the following cards face down, in order from top to bottom.

- Tajiks
- Partnering Policy
- Strategic Partners
- Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan
- MANPADS Scare
- ***Propaganda!***
- Suicide Bombers
- Mountain Fastness
- Teetotalers
- Find Fix Finish
- Karzai to Islamabad
- ISR
- Karzai

Divide the remaining Event cards into 5 roughly equal piles and shuffle a Propaganda card into each pile. Stack the 5 piles face down under the above cards.

1) The player flips the first card to be played and reveals the next: they are *Tajiks* and *Partnering Policy*. The Warlords are 1st Eligible on *Tajiks*, so the player consults the gray (Non-player) text on the Sequence of Play aid sheet, which indicates that a Non-player will choose the Event, unless any of a number of circumstances (8.1) applies, and that Non-player Warlords use the shaded text of Dual-Use Events (8.4.2).
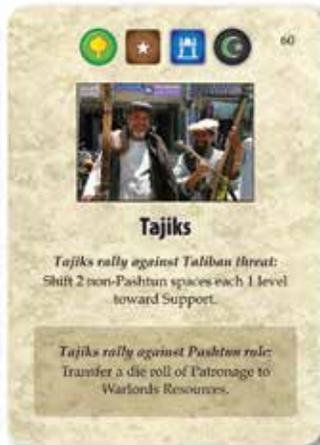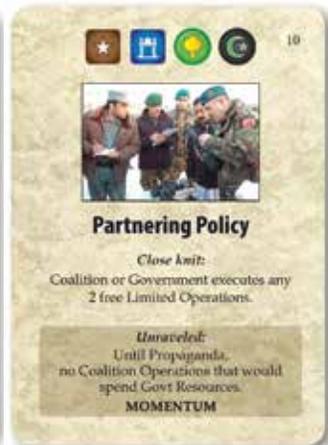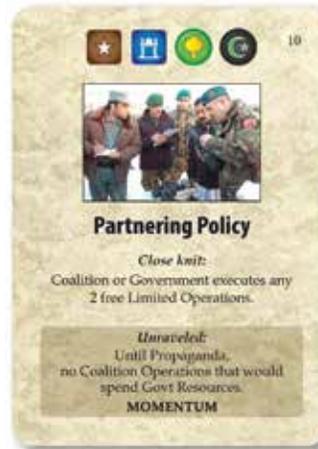

Played card   *On deck*

Going down the list in 8.1: this is neither a "Capabilities" Event, nor would it affect the Islamabad Track; the Event would have an effect (although it would not have if Patronage were at 0); and there is no special instruction for Warlords play of this Event (8.4.1). The player knows that there is no such instruction because the Warlords symbol on the *Tajiks* card has no gray halo around it—the halo would be a cue to check the Non-player Warlords sheet for such an instruction for that Event.

So Non-player Warlords begin by executing the shaded *Tajiks* Event. The player rolls a die; a roll of "3" transfers 3 Patronage (down to 2, COIN+Patronage to 10) to Warlords Resources (up to 13).

The Coalition player is 2nd Eligible and decides to use the opportunity of a Special Activity to Surge in some forces and Aid for the long war ahead. The player adds 1 Coalition Base from Available each into Herat, Kandahar, and Khowst, plus 3 Troops into Khowst. A die roll adds 2 Aid (up to 11). Support+Available drops to 14.

A Surge must be accompanied by Training (4.2.1), so the player Trains 6 Police in each of Kandahar and Khowst, for a total cost of 6 Government Resources (down to 14). While the Khowst is clear, the player then buys Civic Action to shift that Province to Support (Support+Available to 16, Government Resources to 11).

2) Now *Partnering Policy* is played, revealing *Strategic Partners* as the card coming up. Non-player Government is 1st Eligible. None of the conditions preventing it from choosing the Event apply, so it will execute the Event (8.1). Non-player Government uses unshaded text (8.4.2), which for this Event reads "Coalition or Government executes any 2 free Limited Operations". There is no halo on the blue Government symbol: there are no special Event instructions (8.4.2).

Played card   *On deck*

When a Non-player has a choice of Factions to receive Event benefits, it chooses itself if possible (8.4.4). So Government not Coalition will receive the free LimOps. When executing free Operations via Events, Non-players use their own priorities (also 8.4.4), that is, the flowchart and boxes on their Non-player sheet. The Event text allows any type of Limited Operations, so the player starts at the upper left of the Non-player Government flowchart with the decision diamond "15+ Govt pieces available or can Govern for Patronage?". Well over 15 Government pieces are available, so the condition is met. The "Yes" arrow from the diamond indicates that Government will use its first LimOp to Train.

The first Training priority is to place a Government Base in a Province with 3 Government cubes and no COIN Base. There is no such Province (a Coalition Base counts as a COIN Base). The priorities in the Train box of the Non-player Government sheet are also found in longer form in rule 8.6.2.

The next priority bullet says to place cubes in Kabul and at 1-3 COIN Base spaces. This is a LimOp, so only 1 such space will be selected. The priority is to Train first where doing so would enable Civic Action in the absence of a Coalition Base. That does not apply to either Kabul or any COIN Base spaces, because all have Coalition Bases.

The next priority within the same bullet is to Train where there are the fewest Government cubes. Among Kabul and the 3 Coalition Bases placed so far, Kandahar has 8 Government cubes, Khowst has 6, Kabul has 4, and Herat has 2. Herat with the fewest Government cubes has the highest priority, so the Government Trains there.

The priority says to place cubes, so the free Government Training places 6 cubes in Herat: 3 Police and 3 Troops from Available. (The 8.1.2 guideline is to place Police and Troops evenly, Police first.) The priority also instructs Civic Action to be bought, but, again, not at a Coalition Base.

That was only the first of 2 free Limited Operations on the Event, so the player goes back to the Government flowchart for the second LimOp. There are still over 15 Government pieces available, so the Government will Train again. This time is Kabul with 4 Government cubes the first priority candidate, and Khowst with 6 is the next in priority.

Counterinsurgent buildup in Khowst Province.

The Government would Train in Kabul, but let's proceed as if Kabul and Khowst have equal numbers of Government cubes, so that we can illustrate random space selection (8.2). The player for simplicity could just use an equal-chance die roll to decide between the two equal-priority spaces (say, 1-3 means Khowst, 4-6 Kabul). But the player decides to use the Random Spaces table this time in order to get more familiar with it and to include the nuances built into it, such as a greater chance of selecting Kabul. Throwing the 3 dice at once and rolling a tan 3, black 1, and green 1 lands on Waziristan on the Random Spaces table: not a candidate, so the player tracks

down the column to Khowst. The Government trains 3 Police and 3 Troops in Khowst, placing them from Available.

The Non-player Taliban are the only remaining Eligible Faction and so are 2nd Eligible for Operations and Special Activity. Their flowchart's first decision diamond asks whether at least 15 Taliban pieces are available or Guerrillas Active. No Taliban Guerrillas are Active, but far more than 15 Taliban pieces are in the Available box, so the Taliban follow the "Yes" arrow and will Rally.

Normal Taliban Rally restrictions apply (8.1.1), so the Non-player Taliban do not Rally in non-Pashtun spaces at Support. There currently are no such spaces anyway, however. The first Taliban Rally priority is to flip their Guerrillas to Underground in certain spaces, but there are no Active Taliban Guerrillas to flip. Next priority is to place Bases where at least 3 Taliban Guerrillas—there are no such spaces either.

Next, if no Underground Taliban Guerrilla occupies Kabul, the Taliban are to place a Guerrilla there. So the player places a pawn in Kabul as a reminder that the Taliban are Rallying there to place 1 Guerrilla.

The next priority bullet says to place Guerrillas to add Taliban Control to 1 space (that does not already have it). There are many empty Provinces where that is possible: a Random Spaces roll of 6,3,5 points to Ghowr, one such Province, where the Taliban now Rally to place a Guerrilla for Taliban Control. (The player also places a pawn there and adjusts the Uncontrolled Population marker to 15).

The same priority bullet then continues, instructing Rally in a space with exactly 1 or 2 Taliban Guerrillas. There are several such spaces, but all have Taliban Bases, and the next part of the priority is to Rally at all such Base spaces anyway. So the player just implements that (placing pawns in the 4 Taliban Base spaces). A total of 7 Taliban Guerrillas Rally among Northwest Frontier, Waziristan, Paktika, and Zabol.

The Taliban have Rallied in 6 spaces, but 2 of them cost 0 Resources because of Islamabad Backing. Taliban Resources drop from 5 to 1.

A final bullet in the Taliban Rally box says to buy Sharia for the maximum shift. The Taliban's last Resource is spent to shift Paktika to Opposition (Opposition+Bases to 5).

The Taliban now get to add a Special Activity. Their flowchart shows that it will be to Extort on the 3- and 4-Econ LoCs, if possible. They have no Guerrillas on those LoCs, so Extort there is not possible.

Per the flowchart, the Taliban instead will Infiltrate to replace a Government piece with a Taliban Guerrilla, if possible—it is. Infiltration will be on a LoC, if possible—it is not. The next priority is to remove a Base then the last Police from a space, if possible—the latter is almost possible in Kabul, but the higher priority on replacing 1 piece with a Guerrilla prevents the use of Infiltrate to remove both Police. Finally, the Infiltrate space is chosen randomly. Kabul turns out to be the only space where Infiltrate is possible. The Taliban remove 1 Police (8.1.2 specifies removal of Police then Troops evenly) from Kabul and place another Taliban Guerrilla there. Patronage drops to 1 and COIN+Patronage to 9.
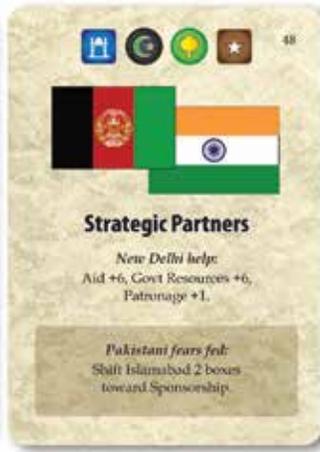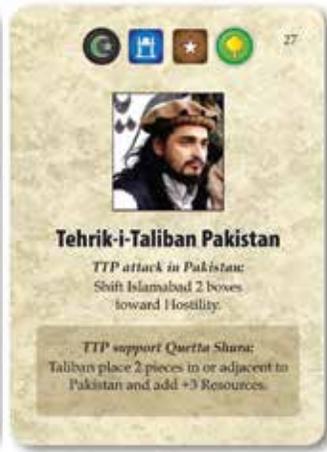
Played card   On deck

3) *Strategic Partners* is played, revealing *Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan* as the card coming up. With Government and Taliban Ineligible, the Warlords are 1st Eligible for *Strategic Partners*. The shaded Event would shift Islamabad, raising a question as to whether or not a Non-player will choose the Event (8.1). Warlords do so only in games in which the Taliban are also a Non-player: they are in this game, so Warlords will execute the Islamabad-related Event. Islamabad shifts to Hard Sponsorship, and the Coalition player is up.

The player is concerned about the infiltration of the capital and decides to Sweep. Forces in Kabul Sweep in place to expose the Guerrillas there (3.2.3), while 3 Coalition and 3 Government Troops Sweep from Khowst into Paktika to take Control (COIN+Patronage to 10), and another 4 Coalition Troops Sweep alone from Kabul and Kandahar into Zabol (leaving the Government Troops behind in order to save money). Government Resources drop by 3 to 8, and a total of 7 Taliban Guerrilla units are Activated. An Air Strike Special Activity removes a Guerrilla each from Paktika and Zabol.

The Coalition sweeps Paktika and Zabol.

4) *Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan* is played, revealing *MANPADS Scare* as the card coming up. The Taliban are Eligible, there is no special Non-player instruction on the Event, so they execute it, meaning, for the Taliban, the shaded text (8.4.2). First, they will place 2 pieces in or adjacent to Pakistan. By the 8.1.2 guidelines, they will place Bases if they can. When placing pieces by Event, 8.4.4 instructs that spaces be selected to place as many Bases then other pieces as possible.

By these priorities, the Taliban will select a space where they can place 2 Bases if possible— which it is, in several spaces in or adjacent to Pakistan spaces. A Random Spaces roll of 6,1,3 lands on Badakhshan, which has room for 2 Bases and is adjacent to Pakistan's Northwest Frontier. The Taliban receive 2 Bases and Taliban Control there (Opposition+Bases to 7, Uncontrolled Pop to 14). The rest of the Event then increases Taliban Resources from 0 to 3.

Normally, a Faction executing an Event becomes Ineligible for the next card. However, with Islamabad Sponsorship, the Non-player Taliban remain Eligible after playing Events (8.7.6). So the Taliban will be Eligible for *MANPADS Scare!*

The Government will now execute Operations and a Special Activity. With plenty of pieces still Available, they Train. Paktika meets the criteria of the first Training bullet: there are at least 3 Government cubes there, no COIN Base, and room for a Government Base. So Training there replaces the 3 Government Troops that rode along with the Coalition Sweep with a new Government Base. (Not exactly what the player had in mind!) Government Resources drop to 5.

The first space meeting the priorities in the second Training bullet is Kabul, with only 3 Government cubes above Control. Kabul receives 3 Police and 3 Government Troops, dropping Resources to 2. However—for purposes of illustration only—do not actually place these 3 Police and 3 Government Troops in Kabul for now. With too few Resources left to Train in another space, Government Operations conclude (8.1.1).

For a Special Activity, the Government flowchart points from Train to Govern. Governing requires COIN Control and either Support or 0 Population. There are 2 such COIN-Controlled spaces on the map: Khowst at Support and Zabol with 0 Pop.

Afghan refugees return to a still hotly contested Pashtun belt.

The Govern priorities are to select up to 2 spaces, so Governing will occur in both Khowst and Zabol. By the bullet priorities (and the requirements of the Govern Special Activity), the Non-player Government will either transfer Aid to Patronage or place a +1 Pop Returnees marker. Neither Govern space has Support without a Coalition Base, so +1 Pop markers are the only options. COIN+-Patronage is increased by 2, to 12, and Support+Available by 1, to 17, for the growth in Khowst's supportive populace.
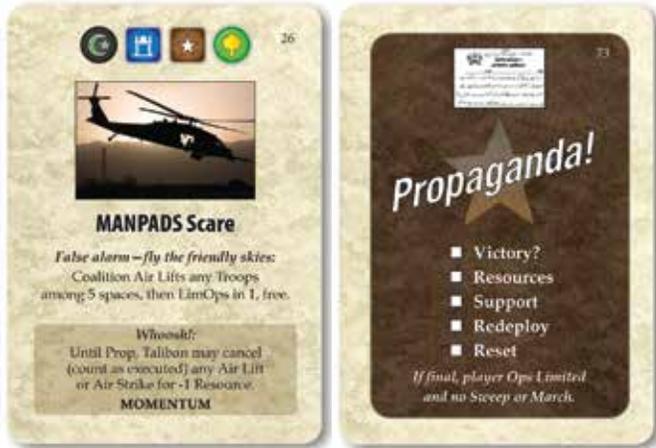
Played card   *On deck*

5) *MANPADS Scare* is played, revealing *Propaganda!* as the card coming up. Islamabad Sponsorship keeps the Taliban Eligible despite their play on the previous card, and they are 1st Eligible on *MANPADS Scare*. There is no special instruction halo, but the shaded event is considered ineffective because it is a Momentum Event (5.4) other than Mullah Omar, and the next card showing is *Propaganda!* (8.1).

So the Taliban choose Operations and Special Activity. They have some but fewer than 15 Guerrillas Active, but they do still have more than 15 pieces available, so they Rally. By the first Rally bullet, Taliban spend 2 of their 3 Resources to flip their Guerrillas in Paktika and Zabol back Underground. By the second bullet, they replace 2 of their 4 Guerrillas in Northwest Frontier and Waziristan with a Base each, Rally there costing 0 Resources because of Islamabad (6.6.1). Opposition+Bases rises to 9. By the next bullet, the Taliban spend their last Resource to place a third Guerrilla in Kabul. Now at 0 Resources, all they are able to do among the remaining Rally priorities is to place a Guerrilla to add Control to Balochistan for 0 Resources.

For the Taliban's Special Activity, Extortion on the major LoCs is still not possible, so the Taliban Infiltrate to replace the unprotected

The Taliban roar back in Paktika.

Government Base in Paktika with a Guerrilla (because no Infiltration on a LoC is possible, and removing the Base is a higher priority than removing the last Police from Kabul). Patronage falls to 0, Control of Paktika flips to the Taliban, and COIN+Patronage drops again, by 2 to 10.

With the last move before the Propaganda Round's victory check, the player must now be very careful. Neither the Warlords nor the Government are a threat, but the Taliban have a victory margin of –11 to the Coalition's margin of –13 (7.3). By the 1-player victory conditions (8.9), the game will end in a Taliban victory unless the player can keep the Coalition's margin at least as high (not more negative) than the Taliban's. That means dropping the Taliban margin or increasing the Coalition margin by at least 2 on this single card!

Either the *MANPADS Scare* Event or a LimOp is available to the Coalition. Without a Special Activity option, Surging out of Afghanistan to increase the Coalition's margin is not an option. But there are at least two ways to affect the relative victory margins: Training would allow Civic Action to increase Support for a higher Coalition margin, for example in Kabul; an Assault could remove the 2 unprotected Taliban Bases in Badakhshan to drop the Taliban's Opposition+Bases score.

The player would love some free Training in Kabul (via the Event) to add to the capital's thin defenses against the Taliban infiltrators and then execute Civic Action for +3 Support. But the hitch with that option is that Civic Action would cost Government Resources even if the Training is free (3.2.1), and Government Resources at 2 are inadequate to shift a space.

So the player instead will use the unshaded *MANPADS Scare* to trim the Taliban by Air Lifting to and eliminating the 2 Badakhshan Bases. The player also uses the Event's large-scale Air Lift to cut bait on the misadventure in Paktika, reinforce Kabul, and position forces for Civic Action in the coming Propaganda Round. Air Lifts move 3 Government Troops from Herat and 1 Coalition Troop from Khowst to Badakhshan, 1 Coalition Troop from Paktika to Kandahar, and 2 Coalition Troops from Paktika to Kabul. *NOTE: Our example here mistakenly has the Coalition Air Lift among 6 spaces rather than the 5 allowed by the Event.* A free Coalition-led Assault in Badakhshan then removes the 2 Taliban Bases there, dropping Opposition+Bases to 7 and the Taliban victory margin to –13, taking COIN Control of the space, and raising COIN+Patronage to 11.

The player sighs relief, realizing that the Coalition's early ramp up in Afghanistan nearly broke the bank of backing for the war!

6) *Propaganda!* is played, revealing *Suicide Bombers* as the card coming up.

Victory. No Non-player Factions exceed their victory goals. Their margins are Taliban -13, Government -24, and Warlords -27. The player Coalition's margin is -13, equal to the Taliban's. No Faction has a higher margin than the player, so the player does not lose (8.9). Even if a Non-player had a higher margin, the player would not lose because this is the 1st Propaganda Round.

Resources. Government Resources rise from 2 to 25 (+11 from Aid, +12 from LoCs), Taliban from 0 to 6, and Warlords from 13 to 15.

Support. The Coalition player has the first Civic Action option, in Kabul and Kandahar, so brings each to Support (Government Resources to –6 to 19, Support+Available +5 to 22).
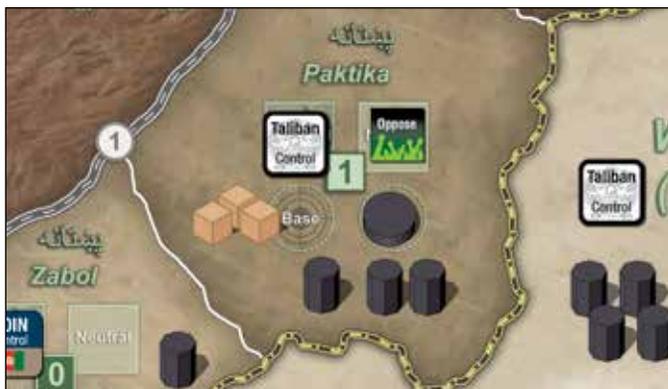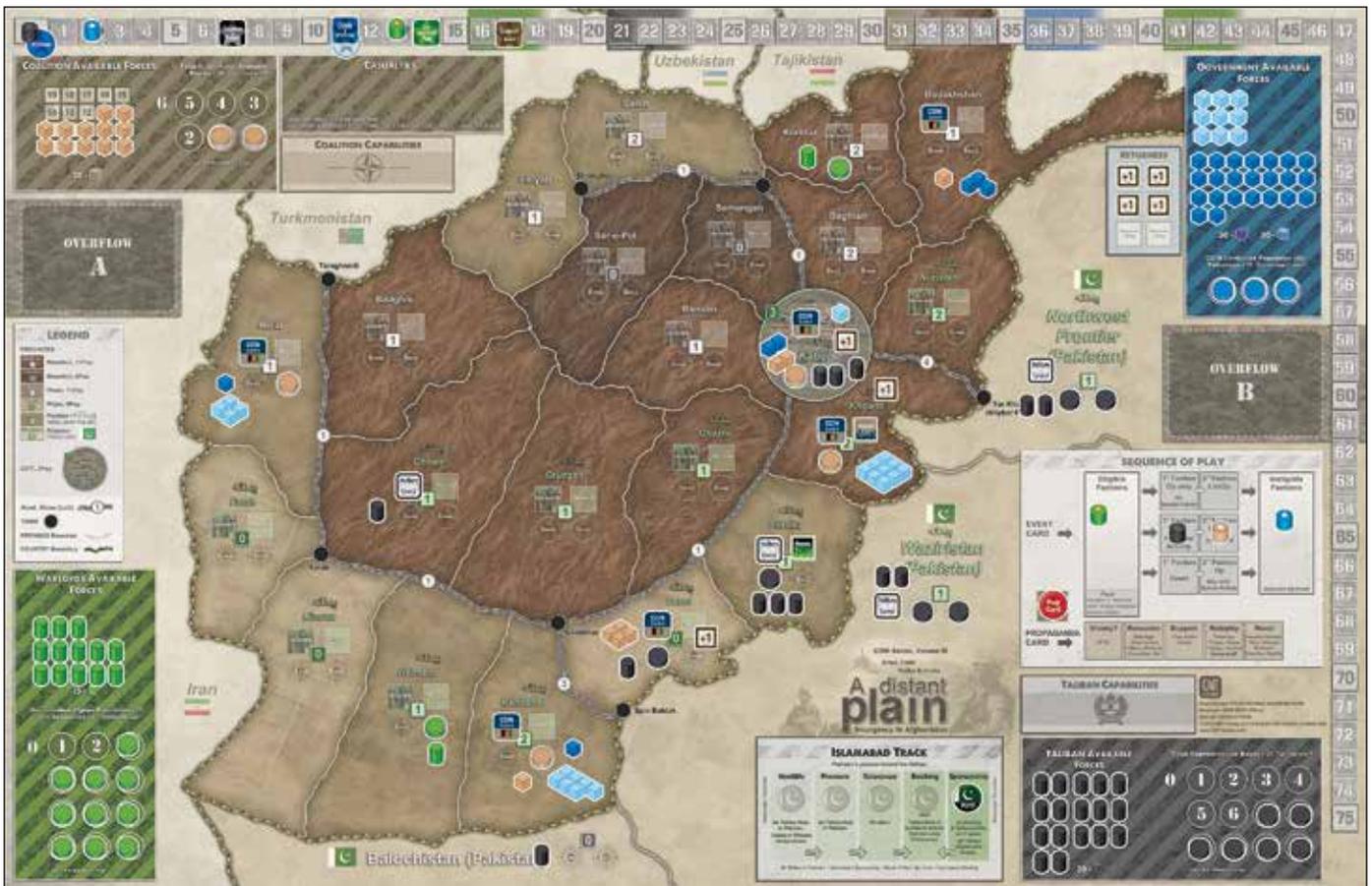
Afghanistan on the eve of the first Propaganda Round: the Taliban remain the main threat.

Then the Government has a Civic Action option in Herat. However, Herat has a Coalition Base, and the Non-player Government during the Support Phase does not buy Civic Action where there are Coalition Bases (8.6.6).

Finally, the Non-player Taliban buy all Sharia they can (8.7.7), in this case, in Ghowr (Taliban Resources to 5, Oppose+Bases to 8).

Redeploy. Non-player Government Desertion will remove cubes per 8.1.2 (3rd bullet), that is, removing Police and Troops evenly each space, Police first. Herat and Kabul each lose 1 Police, Badakhshan loses 1 Government Troop cube, and Kandahar 1 Police and 1 Government Troop.

Next, the player could Redeploy Coalition Troops out of Badakhshan and Zabol, but decides to hang tough and stay.

Then the Government Troops must Redeploy from Badakhshan, where there is no COIN Base. The Non-player Government will Redeploy Troops to ensure COIN Control of Kabul (already COIN Controlled) and then to keep its Troops spread evenly (8.6.7). There are no Government Troops at the COIN Bases in Kandahar and Khowst, so 1 Troop from Badakhshan goes to each of those Provinces.

Now the Government Redeploys Police to maintain Control (none was lost by the Government Troop Redeployment, since the Coalition stayed in Badakhshan) and to cover the supply roads with 2 Police each, with any such Redeployment keeping Police spread as evenly as possible (8.6.7). Two Police leave Kandahar for the 3-Econ LoC, and 2 leave Khowst for the 4-Econ LoC.

Finally, the Taliban must Redeploy Guerrillas to their Controlled Bases or Pashtun Pakistan: that means the lone Guerrillas in Ghowr and Balochistan. Non-player Taliban Redeploy to spread their Guerrillas as evenly as possible, with odd Guerrillas going to Afghan spaces if possible. The Zabol Base is COIN Controlled, and the Afghan Base in Paktika has more Taliban Guerrillas than each of the Pakistan Base spaces, so the Ghowr and Balochistan Guerrillas Redeploy to Northwest Frontier and Waziristan, respectively.

Ghowr is now Uncontrolled: Uncontrolled Pop to 15.

Reset. Islamabad stays at Sponsorship but is no longer Hard. The Guerrillas in Kabul flip Underground. All Factions Eligible.

Played card
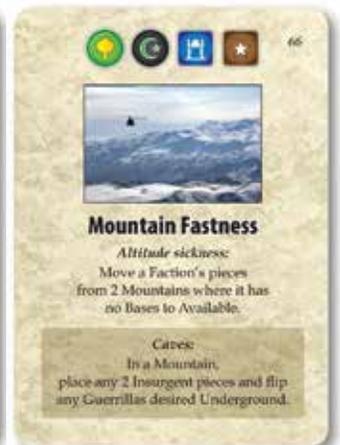
On deck

7) *Suicide Bombers* is played, revealing *Mountain Fastness* as the card coming up. The Taliban are 1st Eligible: Non-player Taliban only play Capabilities Events when a die roll is under the number of remaining Propaganda cards. Only 1 Propaganda has been played, leaving 5 to go. The player rolls a die: "2" means that the Taliban do play the Event, adding the shaded "Suicide" marker to their Capabilities box. (The player also places the *Suicide Bombers* card near the Taliban corner of the gameboard as a reminder.)

Warlords are 2nd Eligible for Ops and Special Activity. They have at least 6 pieces Available so Rally in 3 spaces, in this case placing 3 Guerrillas at their Konduz Base and 1 at Helmand, then 1 Guerrilla in Khowst. (Cultivation was already possible in either Konduz or Helmand, so the 3rd Rally space did not have to be a Cultivation candidate, 8.5.1.) Warlord Resources drop 3 to 12.

The Warlords then Cultivate in either Konduz or Helmand—each already has a Warlord Base, so is of equal priority, and Khowst has far too many Police. A random space roll adds the new Warlord Base to Konduz.

The player now adjusts the Eligibility cylinders. The Warlords slide over to Ineligible, but the Taliban do not: Islamabad Sponsorship enables Non-player Taliban to execute Events and remain Eligible (8.7.6)!

Halo: Time to check the Event instruction on the Taliban Non-player aid sheet (8.4.1).

Played card	On deck

8) *Mountain Fastness* is played, revealing *Teetotalers* as the card coming up. The Warlords are Ineligible, leaving the Taliban again 1st Eligible. Spotting the halo around the Taliban symbol on the *Mountain Fastness* card, the player consults the bottom section of the Non-player Taliban sheet and finds the following instruction:

Mountain Fastness – Place 1-2 Bases that are protected by a Taliban Guerrilla, otherwise Ops & Special Activity.

The Taliban will execute the shaded Event, as modified by this instruction. Usually, Non-players place as many of their own Bases as Event text will allow them (8.1.2 3rd bullet, 8.4.3, and 8.4.4 3rd bullet). Since the Event calls for placing "any 2 Insurgent pieces", that normally would mean placing 2 Taliban Bases somewhere. However, the Event requires that the pieces go into a single Mountain space ("a Mountain"), and the above special instruction specifies that Non-player Taliban place "1-2 Bases that are protected by a Taliban Guerrilla". There is no Mountain space with room for 2 added Bases and where a Taliban Guerrilla is already present to

protect them (indeed, none where there are any Taliban Guerrillas), so the only way to meet the instruction is for the Taliban to place 1 Base and 1 Guerrilla.

A roll on Random Spaces leads to (yes, once again) Khowst to receive the 2 Taliban pieces (Oppose+Bases to 9). (Had there been any Active Guerrillas in the space, only Taliban not Warlords would be flipped Underground by the Event, per 8.4.4 1st bullet). The Taliban executed an Event with Islamabad Sponsorship, so they will remain Eligible again.

The Government is 2nd Eligible for Ops and Special Activity: They Train to place 3 Police and 3 Troops each from Available into Kabul, Khowst, Kandahar, and Herat (Government Resources –12 to 7). Because of the Coalition Bases in each of those Training spaces, the Government conducts no Civic Action.

It then selects 2 candidates for Governing: as it happens, the only candidates (COIN Control with either Support or 0 Population) are Kabul and Kandahar. Both have Coalition Bases, so the effect is to add +1 Returnees markers to each (COIN+Patron +2 to 13; Support+Avail +2 to 24).

9) *Teetotalers* is played, revealing *Find Fix Finish* as the card coming up. The Warlords are 1st Eligible, with a special Event instruction indicated by the halo on *Teetotalers'* Warlords symbol. The relevant instruction on the Non-player Warlords sheet reads:

Contractor Surge, Mine Removal, Teetotalers – If the Coalition is a player, choose Ops & Special Activity instead.

So the Warlords will not play the Event at all, since the Coalition is a player in this game. In this case, the Warlords instead Rally to replace 2 Guerrillas with a Base in Helmand and to place 1 Guerrilla in Khowst and another in Nuristan, and then Cultivate a Base in Nuristan (Warlord Resources –3 to 9).

The Taliban are 2nd Eligible and also have an instruction for Teetotalers: it is simply, "Choose Ops & Special Activity instead."

The Taliban still have enough pieces Available to cause them to Rally. They first replace 2 Guerrillas each to add a Taliban Base each into Paktika and Kabul (uh oh!). Oppose+Bases rises to 11 and Taliban Resources drop to 3.

The Taliban will then add Guerrilla(s) to a space to add Control: a Random Spaces roll selects Farah (Taliban Resources to 2). Then they spend another Resource (down to 1) to place Guerrillas into a space where they already have 1 or 2 (a random roll adds 4 to Khowst). Finally, they spend their last Resource to add Guerrillas to one of their Base spaces outside Pakistan—1 Guerrilla into Zabol—and cost-free to each of their Pakistan Bases—3 each to NW Frontier and Waziristan. *NOTE: Our example here should have given the Taliban 2 Guerrillas in Zabol, not just 1.*

The Taliban next would Extort the high-Econ LoCs, but that is not possible. So they Infiltrate: the candidates are Kabul and Khowst; a roll selects Khowst, where 1 Police is replaced with another Taliban

Guerrilla. (This leaves the Taliban only 7 Guerrillas and 3 Bases Available; Patronage is already at 0).

The Taliban, along with the Warlords, finally are Ineligible!

Played card   *On deck*

10) *Find Fix Finish* is played, revealing *Karzai to Islamabad* as the card coming up. Coalition and Government are 1st and 2nd Eligible, respectively. The player would love to do Ops and Special Activity and have friends in the Government provide the Find Fix Finish Capability; however, Non-player Government will not opt for Capabilities Events in games with a player Coalition (8.1 2nd bullet). So if the player wants the unshaded Capability, Coalition will have to execute the Event, which it does.

Government is up for Ops and Special Activity: it has 12 Troops, 4 Police, and 3 Bases still Available—still enough to meet the 16+ pieces condition for Training. With just 7 Resources, it will Train in just 2 spaces.

There is no space qualifying for placement of a Base by the Training priority. So the Training will place cubes. There is no space where cubes could be placed and Civic Action occur except where a Coalition Base (that would require a Government Base or no Coalition Base and no Support in Kabul). So cubes get placed at COIN Base spaces in the order of those with the fewest Government cubes. Just for the purposes of our example, however, place 3 Police and 3 Troops first in Khowst, then place the last Available Police and 5 Troops at Kandahar (Government Resources to 1).

No Civic Action is possible with just 1 Resource; in any event, neither Training space would qualify.

Next, the Government is to Govern in 2 spaces with effect. But there are no spaces where Govern could have an effect: All with COIN Control and either Support or 0 Population already have either a Coalition Base (blocking Patronage) or +1 Pop markers (limit of 1 per space, so none can be added).

So the Government will instead Transport for its Special Activity (8.6.2). The player first selects the origin space: that with the most Government Troops in excess of those needed for COIN Control. That space is Kandahar, all 9 of whose Government Troops are beyond the COIN pieces needed to maintain Control there. Eight of those 9 will move (because Non-player Transport always leaves at least 1 Government Troop cube behind).

Next, the player determines the destination. The first priority is a Province with Police but no other COIN pieces (including Bases):

there is none. The second priority is to add the most COIN-Controlled Population possible, removing Taliban Control if that also is possible. It will be possible for the 8 Troops to add COIN Control to at most a 2-Pop Province, of which there are several Uncontrolled in the North. (No 2-Pop Province is Taliban Controlled.)

The Troops will have to be able to reach the Province, however, including paying the Warlords 1 Government Resource per space (LoC, City, or Province!) entered with any Guerrillas in it (4.3.2). With only 1 Government Resource left, Transport from Kandahar cannot reach Nuristan, nor could it in any event reach Konduz, which is not adjacent to the LoCs. So the candidate destinations are Balkh or Baghlan.

A roll determines that Baghlan is the destination, and 8 Troops go there from Kandahar, transferring the last Government Resource to the Warlords for route security as they pass through the Taliban-invested capital. (COIN Control at Baghlan, COIN+Patron +2 to 15, Uncontrol Pop –2 to 13, Government Resources to 0, and Warlord Resources +1 to 10.)

11) *Karzai to Islamabad* is played, revealing *ISR* as the card coming up. The Taliban are 1st Eligible and execute the shaded Event. Taliban Resources to 6. Government will remain Ineligible next card (while Taliban will again be Eligible!).

Warlords for Ops and Special Activity continue their steady buildup by Rallying to place 1 Guerrilla in Helmand, another in Khowst, and a 3rd in Bamian—where they Cultivate their 6th Base. Warlords spend Resources down to 7.

The player now marks Coalition and Taliban Eligible, Warlords and Government Ineligible.

Played card   *On deck*

12) *ISR* is played, revealing *Karzai* as the card coming up. The player sees that the Taliban—unlike the Government—will play the shaded version of the ISR Capabilities Event (or, at least, has a high probability, 2 out of 3, of doing so this early in the game, per 8.1 2nd bullet). To avoid that possibility, the player must either take the Event for the Coalition, or execute Ops only to block it. The player decides to execute the Event, placing the unshaded "ISR" marker.

The Taliban are up: they have only 10 Available pieces and no Guerrillas Active, so do not Rally. Looking at the next diamond down on the Non-player Taliban sheet, they do have 1 Underground or at least 4 Guerrillas in spaces with Support (in Kabul and Khowst), so they do not March. Following down to the final decision diamond, Support+Available is 24, so the Taliban will execute Terror.

Terror is able to shift Kabul and Khowst to Neutral, and Zabol to Opposition. A Taliban Guerrilla goes Active in and a Terror marker is added to each, Taliban Resources drop to 3, Support+Avail drops -7 to 17, and Oppose+Bases increases +1 to 12.

Next, the Taliban receive the benefit of the *Suicide Bombers* shaded Capability: they will remove 1 enemy piece from either Kabul, Khowst, or Zabol. By 8.1.2, the piece would be the Coalition player's if possible (1st bullet) and a Base before Troops if that is possible (2nd bullet). And that IS possible in Khowst, where there are no Coalition Troops protecting the Coalition Base (Government cubes do not protect Coalition pieces from *Suicide Bombers*)! The Khowst Base is placed in Casualties (per Capability Event text).

The Taliban next Extort everywhere possible: 1 Underground Taliban Guerrilla goes Active in each Farah, Paktika, Waziristan, and Northwest Frontier; Taliban Resources gain +4 to 7.

13) *Karzai* is played, revealing the card coming up. Government is 1st Eligible for the unshaded Event. If it was not for the remaining Support in Kandahar, the Event text would be Ineffective: there would be no spaces at Support, and therefore no Patronage or anything else would result from the Event. In such a case, the Non-player would execute Ops and Special Activity instead (8.1 3rd bullet). With Kandahar at Support, however, the event is "effective" (albeit not very). Government executes unshaded Karzai, Patronage gains +1 to 1, and COIN+Patron rises to 16.

The Warlords are up next, 2nd Eligible for Ops and Special Activity. Time for you to take it from here, if you have been playing out the situation with us on your gameboard: we have been through the major concepts of Non-player Factions. Execute the Non-player Warlords' operations and continue with the next card—be careful, Propaganda could be coming up any time!

If you don't have the situation set up (or if Propaganda is already the next card, in which case the player has lost), start a new game of your own. Enjoy!
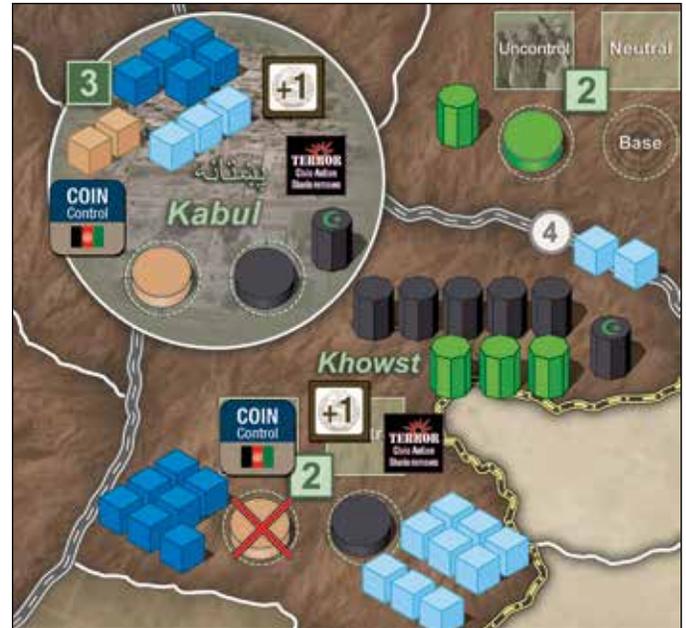
A Taliban terror wave undermines support for Kabul, and suicide bombers cause heavy casualties at a Coalition Base.

Non-Player Taliban March Example

The occasional March by the Taliban can be an intricate Non-player Operation to implement. To follow this example, first set up the map as in the final illustration of the 1Player Example of Play above. Or simply refer to the illustration below.

Suppose that the Taliban are Eligible for Operations. They do not have enough pieces Available or Guerrillas Active to Rally, nor do they have Underground or at least 4 Guerrillas on LoCs or at Support. So, per the decision diamonds on the Non-Player Taliban flowchart, the Taliban March. Follow along the bullet list in the March box of the Non-Player Taliban sheet, referring as needed to Rule 8.7.3.

First, determine initial origin spaces—those which are candidates for Taliban Guerrillas to March out of. Taliban initially may March from any or all spaces under Taliban Control. Because they will have to leave at least 1 Taliban Guerrilla in each origin space, only Taliban Control spaces with at least 2 Taliban Guerrillas are applicable. In our example, those spaces are Northwest Frontier and Waziristan (not Paktika, which has only 1 Guerrilla). You can mark these origin spaces with white pawns.

A. The first set of potential destinations adjacent to these origin space to look for are un-Sabotaged LoCs and then Kabul, until each as 1 more Taliban than others, to a maximum of 2 Taliban Guerrillas at each. The 3- and 4-Econ LoCs are adjacent to origin spaces and have no Taliban on them; Kabul is not adjacent to either origin. So the Taliban March onto the 3- and 4-Econ Roads. They March as restricted by the general rule 8.1.2, including Marching only so many Guerrillas as to stay Underground if they can. There are 2 cubes on each LoC (and LoCs are not Pashtun), so the Taliban will move 1 Underground Guerrilla onto each road from Northwest Frontier and Waziristan, respectively (0 Resources).

B. Per the next bullet priority in the box, the Taliban will March into 2 Provinces adjacent to origin spaces and with neither Opposition nor Taliban Control. Candidates include all the Afghan Provinces bordering Pakistan except Paktika (which has both Opposition and Taliban Control) plus Balochistan. So Random Spaces rolls will determine the 2 destinations. A roll of tan 6, black 6, green 6 indicates Kandahar. A second roll of 2,5,6 indicates Paktika—*not a candidate*—pointing on to Waziristan—*an origin not destination*—then Khowst. First, Guerrillas March per 8.1.2 from Waziristan into Kandahar (Pashtun, so Activation is not an issue), leaving 1 Guerrilla (Underground if possible) in Waziristan: that's 1 Active and 3 Underground Guerrillas entering Kandahar. That leaves only Northwest Frontier as an origin for the March into Khowst: again 1 Active and 3 Underground Guerrillas move, joining the fray in Khowst. The cost is again 0, because of Islamabad Sponsorship.

C. The Taliban will now March into up to 2 other Provinces that meet the above destination conditions—but they need not be adjacent to origins; they need only be reachable via Pashtun routes (3.3.2). Also, the Pashtun destinations above or along any such routes become added origins—in our example, Kandahar and Khowst. Random space rolls of 4,1,2 and 1,6,5 lead to Ghazni and Nuristan, respectively, as destinations. Both origins could reach Ghazni, but Khowst is cheaper and closer and has all the Guerrillas needed. The Taliban for this priority March only with enough Guerrillas to place Taliban Control. So 1 Underground Guerrilla Marches from Khowst to Ghazni, adding Control. Similarly, 3 Underground Taliban Guerrillas March from Khowst to Nuristan and add Taliban Control there (–2 Resources total).

This March is complete—Taliban now Infiltrate!

Non-player Taliban March into and through the Pashtun belt.

Design Notes

Brian Train:

Origins

I have been designing wargames for about 20 years. Of the 30 or so designs I have published, the majority are games that deal with "irregular warfare" situations. This is my contribution to the almost absurdly small number of "hobby" board wargames that have been published (perhaps 200-300 of perhaps 10,000 titles) on what has proven to be the dominant mode of armed conflict for the last 60 years (and some would argue has been the dominant mode of conflict since Man began to use organized violence).

This near-absence of such games in the civilian market is reversed in the large numbers of "serious" games and simulations produced by and for the professional military. One can apprehend the basic reasons for this pretty quickly: after all, playing a wargame is something a player wants to do with his limited spare time, he wants to have fun. Certainly, compared to the perceived romance of a desperate cavalry charge or the tension of refighting the Battle of the Bulge, irregular warfare is grim, unglamorous, and morally complicated – where the whole exercise of trying to model it is not condemned as being in bad taste. Yet while the military must focus on its current and possible future uses and deployments, and the nature of its possible enemies, there are examples of games crossing the line between "hobby" and "professional" both ways, and in either case it's a learning experience for the players.

Consequently, this new volume in GMT Games' COIN series is a welcome addition to the body of work for the limited subset of wargamers who are interested in current events enough to spend time exploring them in board game form. In the spring of 2012, Volko proposed to me that we co-design a game in the COIN series. Right away I jumped at the chance, and suggested Afghanistan as a topic because I had some experience with the COIN system from playtesting *Andean Abyss*, and had already designed or done development work on several campaign-level Afghanistan games. I wanted to do something on the entire war – until now, the only games to deal with conflict over the whole of Afghanistan have been by Joe Miranda *(Holy War Afghanistan, First Afghan War, Second Afghan War, Asia Crossroads)* for other time periods. I thought it was about time to try and tackle the Fifth Afghan War (or maybe it's the Sixth) at the strategic scale, in a way that highlighted the asymmetric capabilities and intentions of the forces involved. The game took its basic form very quickly; within about two months (we both have day jobs and children) we were conducting playtests of what is essentially the game you have in your hands now.

The Essentials

In designing any wargame there is a considerable amount of assuming, abstraction, and "smoothing out" required in order for the game to be learnable and playable in a reasonable amount of time. Thus the preference for "system" games, where once you learn one game in the series you can pick up the others quickly. Whether you have already played one of the other games in the COIN series or not, if it is your first time sitting down to play this game, you will be more interested in finding out how the game works. But once you have familiarized yourself with or mastered the mechanics, you can now concentrate on how to win. You must understand the victory conditions for every faction, and every decision you make should be interrogated as to how it serves YOUR win – keeping in mind that everyone else is doing the same, and it's all too possible for someone to sail to victory up the middle while the other players are tearing each other to pieces. The game has no hidden information, except what is in the heads of the other players – and this can lead to a lot of internal "he knows that I know that he will want to do this, because last turn he did that, so I will do this other thing to upset him, now how does that help me" dialogue. This, and the interplay of second-order effects from events and actions other players do and do not take, can create perverse incentives for players to cooperate in unexpected ways, or not.

The Factions. The largest difference between the *A Distant Plain* and *Andean Abyss* is that there are two counter-insurgent and two insurgent factions, although each faction has a widely different interpretation of victory.

- The Coalition player takes the part of both United States and NATO commanders, as the International Security Assistance Force extends its writ across more of Afghanistan during the play of the game. There is no differentiation between the various national contingents that make up the Coalition forces, however, it is implied that many of the smaller units, especially those from countries whose governments have prescribed more restrictive roles for their use, are either not represented in game terms or are subsumed in the Base pieces. And of course these national governments are sensitive to taking casualties; it is difficult, but not impossible for the insurgents to materially reduce the number of Coalition troops available for use. Logistically and operationally, the Coalition is assumed to have limitless Resources available for its own operations; the player is also in the unique position of being able to spend the Government player's money and move his troops for him. The Coalition's favoured end state is to have a legitimized Afghan state (shown by having spaces with sufficient Population at Support), with a minimal presence of Coalition troops.

- The Government player is roughly in the role of Prime Minister Hamid Karzai, who was appointed President at the Bonn Process conference in 2002 and has managed to retain power ever since. Throughout Afghanistan's colourful and violent history, whenever there has been a central leader he has proven to be a man adept at creating and maintaining coalitions, making deals and temporary alliances with a wide variety of ambitious competitors. These competitors in turn associate with him in expectation of both material and political gain and the opportunity to advance their own agendas and interests. The government's capacity to do this and remain in power is expressed in the Patronage game mechanic, which in turn informs his victory condition, which also derives from population under Control (and not necessarily Support). The Government also has the unique power to alter the "human terrain" of Afghanistan through the Govern Action, where he can add +1 Population to any space. (After the fall of the Taliban government in 2001, between 5 and 6 million refugees returned to Afghanistan from abroad.) Government forces of both the Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP) are numerous but expensive to use (though not shown in the game, the actual costs of maintaining these forces is several times the country's entire current Gross Domestic Product) and plagued with desertion.

- The Taliban faction represents three major players in the opposition – the Quetta Shura Taliban, Haqqani Network and Hezb-i-Islami Gulbuddin – plus an indeterminate number of smaller groups and "accidental guerrillas" (see David Kilcullen's book of the same title) who may temporarily join with them. The great majority of Taliban members are Pashtun in origin, therefore

they are allowed to move faster through Pashtun spaces and are easier to detect when they March into a non-Pashtun space. Also very significant is the Taliban sanctuary in Pakistan: while it is not impervious to attack, it forms a vital rear area for this insurgent player. Taliban victory is predicated on placing enough Population into Opposition, plus entrenching itself sufficiently in the social fabric of the country by a large network of Bases.

- The Warlords forces represent an even greater abstraction than the Taliban – not only do they represent organized crime groups and dissident Pashtun tribes, this faction also encompasses many of the non-Pashtun ethnic groups of Afghanistan: Tajiks, Hazaras, Uzbeks, Turkmen, and so on. They exist in opposition to the Taliban and the national government, both of whom pose the threat of establishing a centralizing and dominating authority. Hence, the Warlords' victory condition relies on a large uncontrolled Population and acquisition of Resources, which they can accumulate by Cultivation and Trafficking of drugs and contraband, or receiving payments from the Coalition or Government when these players Surge or Transport.

- We were often asked during testing and development why Pakistan is not included as a fifth faction. The Islamabad Track, which changes according to events during the game, is critical to the Taliban's freedom of action within Pakistan, but we felt that it was neither borne out historically nor particularly realistic to expect this country to come to the point of acting as a full ally of any other player; doing so would in the end compromise its interests. In concrete game terms, there would also be very little for a Pakistani player to do.

The Map. The map shows the entirety of Afghanistan, a country slightly smaller than Texas. Like *Andean Abyss*, the 34 actual provinces have been amalgamated into 22 Areas, with extensive border changes to allow for treating the "Ring Road" (the system of Lines of Communication stretching around from Shibirghand to Taraghandi) as a border between Areas. Each Area is rated for its predominant terrain and the population it contains (each point represents about one million Afghans). Unlike *Andean Abyss*, Areas are also marked whether the population is dominated by the Pashtun ethnic group, which comprises about 42% of the population. Ethnic divisions were not largely significant in the conflict in Colombia but are a major feature of the fighting in Afghanistan, and always have been. Players will also note that in *Andean Abyss*, spaces may reach a state of Passive or Active Support or Opposition; but here they can only go to Support or Oppose. We felt that after 30 years of continual invasion, disruption, chaos and violence, and in keeping with the traditional Afghan antipathy to centralized authority,

Eradication

the ordinary population in a space could not be aroused to reach the state of intense "pro" or "con" that Active Support of Opposition implies in *Andean Abyss*.

The Pieces. Players should keep in mind that the unit counters in the game do not represent exact discrete combat units, or even any fixed ratio of troops, but rather the "effective" portions of the manpower assumed to be present in or deployed to a particular space. For example, the Taliban in southern Afghanistan are composed mostly of part-time local guerrilla fighters who assemble for action when organized or directed to do so by the presence of better-trained or resourced, or more highly motivated, full-time fighters. Likewise, players can assume the presence of numbers of ANA or ANP troops in the game who may be physically present in spaces on the map but are not represented by Troop or Police cubes – they are there, but mostly inert or passive in their roles, or simply unable to conduct operations due to being understrength, unequipped, corrupt or unmotivated. The Government cubes that do appear represent the more mobile, deployable and more highly trained units.

Treatment of Time. Similarly, each turn in the game does not represent a fixed period of time. It's an old saw that 90% of time spent in a war is waiting around for the other 10% to happen. Depending on the Event Cards that are drawn and players' positions at the moment, there will be turns that are extremely "busy" and others where little happens. In this frame of reference, the successive Propaganda rounds (which will occur every 2 – 25 Event Cards) correspond to the conclusion of one or more "fighting seasons" where a break in the tempo must occur and the players take time for some larger scale redeployments in and out of the fight, deal with larger scale events such as accumulated desertion, and so on.

History as Game, Game as History

This game was released in the summer of 2013, in advance of NATO's final withdrawal from combat operations. This is important to remember if you are reading these notes in 2020 and scoffing at how we got it wrong, or marveling at how we got it right.

I think the hardest games of all to design are the ones about conflicts that are still going on, because you do not have the benefit of hindsight on the ultimate effectiveness or impact of what actually happened. I also think these games are also the most important ones to design, in relation to AJP Taylor's famous quote that "History is what happened, in the context of what could have happened at the time." We need games on contemporary conflicts, not necessarily to derive some kind of clairvoyance about the ending, but to organize our understanding of the conflict, as we continuously try to organize our understanding of the world around us.

We do not claim any predictive value or even a particular political agenda for this game. It does not present any "Magic Bullet", perfect plan or pet theory for a never-fail solution to this war, or indeed to any insurgency. Our aim was to give players an indication of both just how complicated the situation is, and of many of the factors that contribute to its complexity. We feel we have done our research to derive the essential asymmetries between the four factions at the game's level of abstraction, and populated the game's "world" with a set of actual (and a few hypothetical) events that do or do not arise during play as players move through the Event Deck. This also gives the game a very unscripted quality, within bounds, and almost infinite replayability. The game's scenarios also portray the conflict at three different points in its historical development, should players wish to "take over" at certain junctures.

Volko Ruhnke:

What a joy to design a game with Brian Train! I had long known of his several insurgency game systems (several systems!) and, as mentioned in the design notes for *Andean Abyss*, the system featured in his game *Algeria* was a key basis for my approach in COIN. In the spring of 2012, before *Andean Abyss* was printed, I proposed to him that if he would do a COIN Series volume with me, I would agree to any topic he wanted. He said that the "holy grail" of insurgency game design would be modern Afghanistan at the national level, and so off we went!

Challenges

So it was clear from the beginning that Brian was after a design challenge. The challenge for me would be adapt my little system to a quite different topic than either Colombia or Cuba.

Coalition. The immediate difference in Afghanistan is the prominence of foreign counterinsurgents in the conflict. The Coalition was not in the country to stay, and how it came and went had to play a major role in its own and other faction's strategies. Unlike some games on foreign expeditionary forces, the Coalition's force levels are anything but scripted. The Coalition player as near complete control over the size of foreign forces—their "footprint" in country—reinforcement or withdrawal. I am very happy how well, as of early 2013, this open "surge" mechanic plays out in many games to resemble the real-life "Surge" of 2009-2013.

Taliban. Brian has already mentioned the calculus in not representing Pakistan as a faction. That meant providing a separate "Islamabad Track" mechanic to get at the effects of the Taliban's sanctuary: neither the Colombian nor Cuban conflicts saw so prominent a role for insurgent safe haven across a national border, so this was another new design aspect for me. Ethnic terrain—the impact of the Pashtun belt on both Taliban and Warlord actions—was another.

But the surprise Taliban element for me was the late addition of a Taliban Sharia option during Training operations, thanks to the recommendations of tester Ahmad Siddiqi (a doctoral student of the Afghan conflict). This new flexibility in the main rebel faction adds even more impetus for COIN forces to eliminate insurgent bases and represents the contribution of Islamic law to the Taliban's apparent effectiveness in providing governance, dispute resolution especially, at the local level—even while challenged by COIN forces in their area.

Government. Another surprise for me was that the Afghan Government faction, rather than the Coalition or Taliban, proved the toughest to get right. Happily, we had Brian's clear view of what Karzai and the central Government wants and how that differs from the goals and strategy of the Coalition. The Government needs to be the biggest boy on the block after Coalition pulls out, and wants to govern in its traditional way, making the most of foreign Aid coming in now to strengthen the leadership's internal influence later. The COIN System already had military Population Control as a victory condition (from *Cuba Libre* co-designer Jeff Grossman for that game's Directorio faction), and this plus the addition of the "Patronage" mechanic matched Brian's vision of Kabul's goals. To me, a very interesting, ambiguous relationship results between the two COIN players: the degree to which these two cooperate or compete (much as for the Colombian Government and AUC factions in *Andean Abyss*) often does the most to shape the narrative of a given multiplayer game of *A Distant Plain*.

Patronage and Control objectives led us to the "Govern" Special Activity. Insurgency and counterinsurgency ultimately are about influencing governance, and now we have an activity that specifically gives a faction the choice between governing in the interests of millions (thereby encouraging resettlement) or of the leadership clique (building a patronage network, including at the people's expense). It is always interesting for me to watch how frequently a Government player chooses immediate patronage over a gain in population control via returnees (and thereby a longer-term potential for patronage as a bonus).

Warlords. Brian from the beginning had identified organized crime as an Afghan faction that must be represented. I wanted to include the former Northern Alliance, anti-Taliban (and mostly anti-Pashtun) regional strongmen as well. So we designed a tricky amalgam faction called the Warlords. The Series already casts players in amalgam roles—the "FARC" in *Andean Abyss* really represents (most of the time) the ELN and smaller Colombian leftist insurgent groups; the "Cartels" faction represents in one player the numerous small organizations that have no central decision-making going on at all. This game's Warlords amalgam forwards the premise that Afghan warlords and opium industry are interwoven. So we end up with dual commercial and political goals—make money and keep the country decentralized—goals that comport with the interests of criminals and strongmen alike, even when they may sometimes be separate individuals in the real world.

Building the Bots

Perhaps for me the most challenging design work in the COIN Series has been the mechanics for non-player factions—algorithms that are simple enough to execute manually without excessive pain, but sophisticated enough to provide recognizable profiles of unique factions and a challenging game.
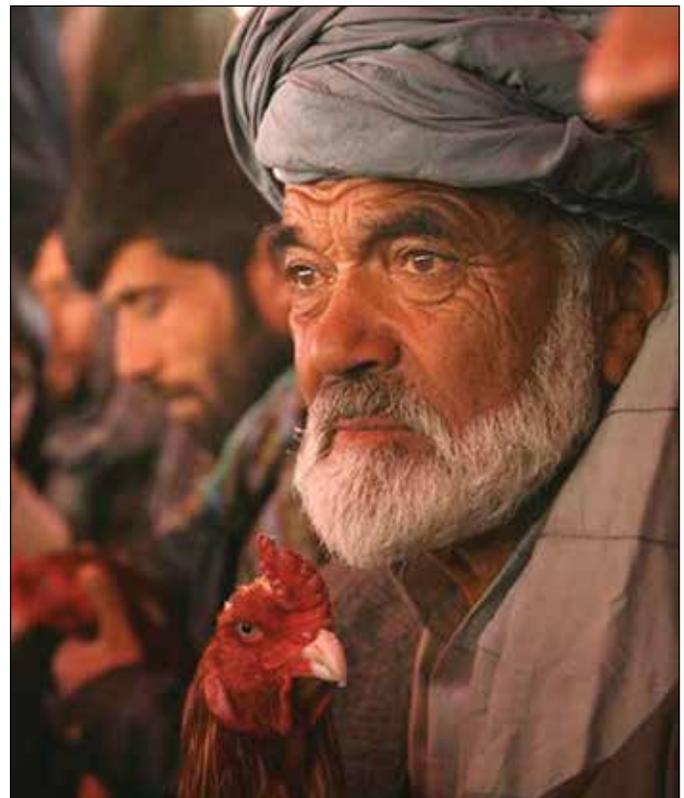
Kabuli

Photo: Nasim Fekrat

COIN Series games to date each feature four factions. But personal gaming tradition has focused on 2-player games. I knew that I had to represent insurgency as a multilateral affair, but I did not want to limit the games only to groups that could muster four players. And if the game could substitute for one or more players, then even solitaire play of an essentially multiplayer experience was in reach.

My game *LABYRINTH: The War on Terror* had been my initial attempt a substituting a player role with an algorithm. Using the card-driven game's random deck of event cards to determine, along with board position, what actions a non-player would take turned out to be a handy way to generate narrative—without having to ask a player to "look up paragraph #119" and so on. The COIN Series deck and sequence of play offered a similar possibility. The dedication of players' time to repeated solitaire play of *Andean Abyss* since its publication—I have heard of interest sustained over 40 and 50 repeat plays—reassures me that this approach has succeeded. An unanticipated side benefit has been to allow individual players, such as at conventions, to drop in and out without disrupting a face-to-face game.

In response to demand, in Volume II *Cuba Libre* and in this volume, I took on the added challenge of non-player representation of not just the insurgent but also the counterinsurgent factions' bots, and thereby having all four factions flowcharted. The COIN bots fell into place more quickly than I had expected, but to enable at least two solitaire roles to work in each game—one counterinsurgent and one insurgent—prevented the previously degree of "cheating" the player to increase the challenge, because the resulting environment needed to be challenging to either role. A particular solitaire success that I hope for in *A Distant Plain* is to produce varying Coalition surge patterns across multiple playings, for a dramatic variety of solitaire Taliban experiences. Please try it and see!

Any such success in solitaire design would be beyond reach without the sweat and tears of dedicated testers. The COIN Series is no exception in this regard. For *A Distant Plain*, Örjan Ariander and Jordan Kehrer stand out amidst the tremendous talent of our playtest teams in their ability to diagnose weaknesses in the bots and develop solutions to strengthen them.

Game and Reality

I will close with a few thoughts about designing on a still fresh—and, for many, raw—historical topic. My conviction is that even a rough simulation can add to the exchange of ideas on a controversial topic, and so such simulation in the form of an engaging game is worth attempting. The corollary is that how game designers choose to try to represent their perceptions of a controversial reality matters and is fair game for critique.

First, as Brian notes, we don't pretend with this board game and all its simplifications to be predicting anything about the way ahead in Afghanistan. Nevertheless, we do hope that playing the game will at least help those interested to explore and will help illuminate some of the relationships and peculiarities of the complex conflict that continues to play out there.

Second, in attempting to provide such exploration via a game, Brian and I have sought to withhold value judgments. We are not seeking here to convince anyone about rightness or wrongness of particular policies connected to the subject. We have aimed instead for respectful representation of the parties, as we imagine they perhaps might even see themselves, even while we as citizens of nations that have been participants in the conflict inevitably have loyalties.

Nevertheless, as for all human observation, our effort must fall short of complete objectivity. For myself, I live and work within a Coalition country; I have views that inevitably will creep into any design work that I do. Some testers felt that the Coalition comes off too "clean" in *A Distant Plain*, and there may be something to that. Other testers felt otherwise, so I clutch at the straw that we have hit the median.

An opposing criticism would be that the structure of the victory conditions of the four factions unfairly depicts Coalition strategy as doomed to a merely ephemeral "victory" that the forces inside the country must inevitably reverse once Coalition forces depart, and that the portrayal of the Coalition effort as fighting for an Afghan Government that clearly has competing goals is an unfair dismissal of the wisdom of what Coalition policy makers were trying to do in Afghanistan. In the end, perfect balance in all educated players' eyes will elude any design on this topic. I will have to take my lumps.

I would like to thank the deep and diligent work done by the testers, by our tireless series developer Mike Bertucelli, and by the fabulous art and production teams at GMT Games.

Finally, Brian and I would like to dedicate this design to the wounded warriors: We need you at home, just as much.

> Volko F. Ruhnke
> Vienna, Virginia
> March, 2013

EVENT TEXT AND BACKGROUND

This section reproduces the full text of each event card, along with historical background and commentary, many referenced to the source author's name as it appears in the Selected Sources list. (Where a source has several authors, the first author's name is cited.)

1. ISR CTGW
COALITION CAPABILITIES

Overhead intel: Each Coalition Sweep Op, Coalition may Activate another 3 Guerrillas in any 1 space.

Competition for targeting assets: Air Strike may not accompany Sweep.

The Coalition had technological superiority over the insurgents, especially in the air. Reconnaissance and surveillance was carried out by assets ranging from a 4-pound airplane tossed in the air by a soldier to satellites; but those assets were not universally available, nor universally effective.

2. Predators CTGW
COALITION CAPABILI-TIES

Sanctuary denied: In 1 space per Air Strike, 1 target piece may be Under-ground and ignored for Islamabad.

Collateral damage: Each Air Strike space adds +1 Taliban Resource.

The Predator Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) was used by the Coalition in Afghanistan from the very beginning of hostilities in 2001. It could spend up to 24 hours in the air, flying at altitudes of up to 26,000 feet. Some models were unarmed and carried only TV cameras, radar and a laser designator; others also carried Hellfire guided missiles. In either case they were controlled by pilots sitting over 7,000 miles away, watching on screens in trailers at Air Force bases across the United States. (Singer, p. 32-35)
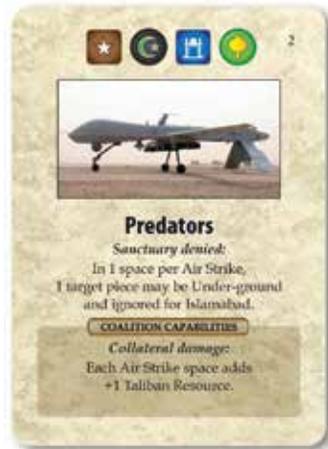
3. Reapers CTGW
COALITION CAPABILITIES

Drone war: Air Strikes may remove up to 2 Active Guerrillas (or 1 Base last) per space.

Controversy: Air Strikes affect only 1 space.

After the Predator came the Reaper UAV, first fielded in Afghanistan in 2009. It was bigger, faster, and more heavily armed than the Predator. Still faster, stealthier, and more heavily armed models were being developed. (Singer, p. 116)

4. #2 Is Dead CTWG

Leadership loss: Remove a Taliban piece from Pakistan. Subtract a die roll from Taliban Resources.

Martyr: Place a Taliban piece in Pakistan. Add a die roll to Taliban Resources

For every #1 insurgent leader, there is a #2 – and several of these were eliminated in Afghanistan or Pakistan by drone strikes (because there is always a #3 to take #2's place). Sometimes these drone strikes missed their mark but were still taken as malicious acts, further intensifying feeling against the Coalition. (Singer, p.399)

5. Aerostats CTWG
COALITION CAPABILITIES

Eye in the Sky: Taliban March costs +1 extra Resource per Space, including LoCs.

Bomb kites and weather: Taliban March flips 1 Active Guerrilla Underground per card.

Lightweight cameras and radars could be carried aloft by tethered balloons, to carry out constant surveillance of roads, passes, defiles or unobservable ground near a Coalition base or fighting position. (JIEDDO website)

6. US-Pakistan Talks CTWG

Feathers smoothed: Shift Islamabad 2 boxes toward Hostility.

Frenemies: Shift Islamabad 2 boxes toward Sponsorship.

There were many meetings between American and Pakistani government officials for them to bring pressure on the Taliban's sanctuary in the Federally Administrated Tribal Areas (FATA) that form part of Pakistan's border with Afghanistan. The Government of Pakistan, struggling simultaneously with religious extremism, unstable politics, a weak economy, poverty, unemployment, regional separatism, domestic terrorism, constant tension with India, and a desire to exert influence on Afghanistan, was unable to muster more than token crackdowns on Taliban fighters and occasional cooperation with Coalition forces at border crossing points. (Giustozzi p. 21-28; US DIA "(New) Great Game")

7. Find Fix Finish CGTW
COALITION CAPABILITIES

Net-centric warfare: 1 piece removed each Coalition Assault space may be Underground.

Ignorance of human terrain: Assault to remove any Bases must include any Govt cube.

The concept of "network-centric warfare" seemed to be borne out in the early stages of the war in Afghanistan, when small groups or even individual Special Forces operators could access volumes of data in near real time, allowing them to move quickly and cause maximum disruption to the enemy. However, the best satellite photos in the world will not replace the need for the ability to talk to and learn from the "human terrain" through which troops are moving. (Singer, p.187-191)

8. SEAL Team 6 CGTW

Taliban ally loses leader: Remove a Taliban piece from Pakistan. Taliban Resources -6.

Sovereignty violated: Shift Islamabad 2 boxes toward Sponsorship

On May 2, 2011, members of the United States Naval Special Warfare Development Group raided Osama bin Laden's compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan and killed him. His elimination was the fulfillment of a major
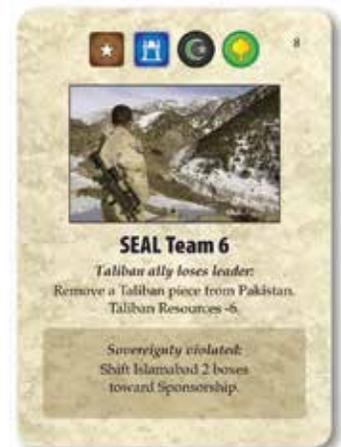
objective of the "Global War on Terror", and a blow to al-Qaeda's organizational effectiveness. Items seized in the raid yielded significant intelligence on the status of the organization. The Pakistani Government, which had not been informed of the raid, protested the American incursion.

9. Special Forces CGTW

Raids: Coalition removes 2 Insurgent pieces from within 1 space of its Troops.

Incursion suspected: If Coalition adjacent to Pashtun Pakistan, shift Islamabad 2 boxes toward Sponsorship.

The Durand Line which forms the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan is indistinct in many places, and it happened that Coalition Special Operations Forces troops "accidentally on purpose" wandered across it to observe insurgent camps and hit them with UAV or other air strikes. The Pakistani Government was understandably sensitive about these events.

10. Partnering Policy CGWT

Close knit: Coalition or Government executes any 2 free Limited Operations.

Unraveled: Until Propaganda, no Coalition Operations that would spend Govt Resources.
MOMENTUM

Coalition trainers and advisors worked as mentors to the Afghan National Army (ANA) and Police (ANP) from their re-creation in 2002. As progressively larger numbers of recruits joined, and larger units formed and deployed, Afghan units would operate in partnership with attached "enabler training teams" and jointly with complete Coalition units. In 2009, with the arrival of General Stanley McChrystal as Commander of the International Security Assistance Force, these temporary arrangements gave way to a policy of "embedded partnering", wherein Afghan and Coalition units were to live at and operate from the same bases, and match their command and operational procedures and organizations as completely as possible. By 2012, over 90% of ANA units were partnered with NATO units (Brookings Afghanistan Index). However, there remained large gaps in cultural understanding, language, levels of logistical support and technical competence, and basic trust that make this desirable goal difficult to reach. (Donahue, p. 96; US DoD Report on Progress, p. 36-39)

11. Strategic Release CGWT

Executing Faction remains Eligible. Until Propaganda, each Assault rolls a die for each space.

1-4 *Detainees turned:* Replace each piece removed with a Govt cube.

5-6 *Recidivism:* Removed Guerrillas move to owner's Base if possible.
MOMENTUM

For some time, the United States operated the Strategic Release Program, under which a limited number of influential insurgent commanders are paroled from detention, in exchange for information or a commitment to pursue reconciliation with the Government, and on the condition that they would not take up arms again. (Sieff)

12. Village Stability Operations CGWT
COALITION CAPABILITIES

Local police: Coalition after Training adds 1 Police free from anywhere to any 1 space with Coalition Troops.

Police recruits unsteady: Each Coalition Training places no more than 1 Police per space.

The concept of Village Stability Operations was to tie together building local defense forces, strengthening or reviving local governance, and exploiting opportunities for economic development at the village level, under the leadership of Coalition special operations forces or specially trained conventional troops. Programs along these lines began in 2005, but the concept was applied on a much wider scale beginning in 2010, together with the creation of a new security force, the Afghan Local Police, who had been trained largely by US Special Forces troops. (Hulslander, passim; US DoD Report on Progress, p. 64-66)

13. Anti-Corruption Drive CWTG

"We mean it this time": Until Prop, Govern transfers no Patronage.
MOMENTUM

Game the system: Government selects Troop or Police targets for a free Suborn in 1 space and adds +3 Patronage.

Widespread corruption, especially bribery, was a major issue in Afghanistan and a formidable obstacle to the Government's gaining any legitimacy or trust from its citizens. President Karzai issued several decrees directing crackdowns on corruption in the judicial, law enforcement, and local government sectors. While some progress was made in the later years of the Coalition's time in Afghanistan, the country remained one of the most corrupt in the world. (UNODC Report on Afghan Corruption, passim; US DoD Report on Progress, p. 78-80)

14. Economic Project CWTG

Erode networks: In each space with cubes, replace an Insurgent Faction's Base with its Guerrilla.

Civil-military friction misdirects aid: An Insurgent gains +3 Resources per space with both a COIN Base and its piece.

Billions of dollars were spent in Afghanistan in the attempt to re-activate the country's moribund civilian economy. But such large amounts of money went astray as often as they benefitted or stabilized communities, due to such factors as poor police and administrative leadership, corruption, theft, abuse of civilians, or the inability of security forces to protect Non-Government Organizations. (Moyar, p. 208)

15. One Tribe at a Time CWTG

Engagement: In a COIN-Control Province, remove all Guerrillas and buy any Civic Action desired.

Entrepreneur warlord: In an Uncontrolled Province, replace up to 3 Govt or Taliban pieces with any Warlord pieces.

In 2009, a United States Special Forces member wrote a paper with the title "One Tribe at a Time", emphasizing the basic role that tribes play in Afghan society, and proposing the development of Tribal Engagement Teams who would live and fight with the tribes in countering the Taliban. His ideas were not officially adopted, but there were attempts to engage tribal leaders, and many militias that
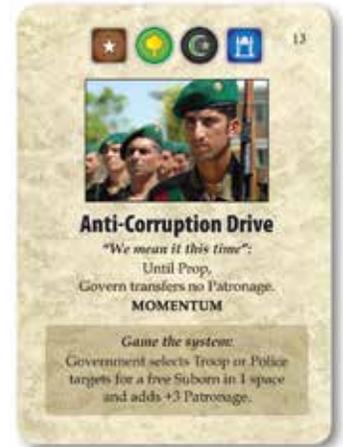
were stood up were actually tribal in nature. (Gant passim; Giustozzi p. 190) Not every analyst agreed with these ideas, some stressing the damage done to tribal power structures over the previous 30 years of violence or concluding that people would continue to act in accordance with whatever opportunities and events that might arise outside tribal structures. (Meinshausen; Johnson; Giustozzi p. 16)

16. Amnesty CWGT

Cash in now: Each Support or COIN-Control space, pay –1 Govt Resource to remove a Guerrilla.

OK to be me: Replace any 2 Insurgent pieces with the other Insurgent's pieces of the same type.

There were infrequent amnesty initiatives to get Taliban members or individual warlords to reintegrate into Afghan society and participate in local politics. They generally were neither effective nor very popular with the civilian population, many of whom saw them as government collusion with the enemy (Afsar; Giustozzi p. 208; US DoD Report on Progress p. 81-82)
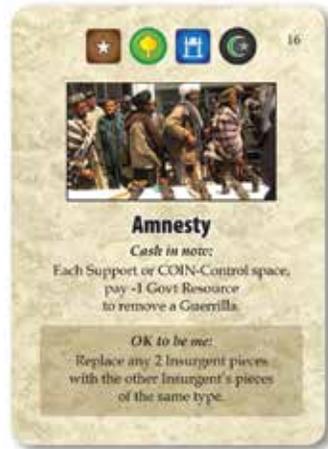
17. NATO CWGT

ISAF bolstered: Move all Troop Casualties or, if none, removed Coalition Troops to Available.

Command strictures: Until Prop, Coalition Ops, Air Lift, Surge only where already Coalition.
MOMENTUM

Dozens of countries from within and without the North Atlantic Treaty Organization sent contingents of troops to Afghanistan, but only a few of them permitted their troops to engage the Taliban directly in offensive military operations. (Collins, p. 64; Moyar, p. 205)
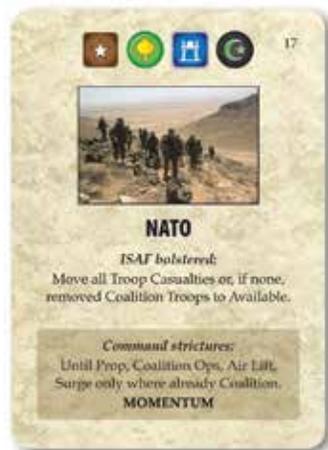
18. PRTs CWGT
COALITION CAPABILITIES

Development detachments: Coalition Training Operation may buy Civic Actions in 1 or 2 spaces.

Defensive posture: Coalition Assault may target only 1 space per card.

Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) were created by the United States Army as small joint civil-military organizations with the triple aim of creating local security, fostering better cooperation between different agencies working in the same area, and promoting reconstruction. By 2011, there were 27 PRTs operating in the majority of Afghanistan's provinces, about half of them commanded by United States officers. The PRTs were a generally positive development in that they delivered several billion dollars of economic aid and initiated thousands of projects. But there were tensions between the civilian, military, and non-governmental organizations that worked within the concept. (Collins, p. 66-67; Moyar, p. 200)

19. Al-Qaeda TCGW

Jus ad bellum: Govt Resources +9. Aid +9. Coalition executes a free Surge

Helpmate: Taliban free Terror or Attack in each Afghan space with Underground Taliban. No Guerrillas Activate

In the days of the Taliban Government (1996-2001), al-Qaeda established facilities in Afghanistan for its members and leaders to train, meet, and plan operations. In return, the Taliban received large amounts of money, donated to al-Qaeda from individuals and organizations in the Arab world, and al-Qaeda members trained Taliban fighters. From 1998, the United States and Saudi Arabia pressured the Taliban to hand over Usama Bin Ladin to face criminal proceedings for Al-Qaeda's attacks on US targets, and it was their refusal to do so after 9/11 that led to the launch of "Operation Enduring Freedom". (Afsar; Collins p. 41-52) With the Coalition in Afghanistan, al-Qaeda turned a part of its anti-US effort to insurgency there.

20. Errant Air Strike TCGW

Focus on ground war: Coalition executes a free Surge ignoring Control and without removing to Available.

Wedding hit: Set a Province with Coalition and Taliban to Opposition. Place a Terror there

In any given year of the conflict, the Taliban were responsible for the great majority of civilian casualties. (Brookings Afghanistan Index, passim) However, when Coalition manned aircraft or UAVs struck the wrong target or caused significant civilian casualties in Close Air Support operations, the event received wide publicity in both the Western and Arab-language media.

21. Operation Iraqi Freedom TCGW

Flypaper: Taliban must remove a Base, a die roll of Guerrillas, and a die roll of Resources.

Quagmire: Coalition removes 2 of its pieces from Available to Casualties and is Ineligible through next card.

It was a common criticism that the invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the lengthy insurgency that followed it proved a fatal diversion from the US-led effort in Afghanistan. This was neither completely true nor false: the modest commitment of US forces to Afghanistan in 2002-04 was not yet opposed by a strong Taliban insurgency, and the official focus was on rebuilding Afghan government and society and reconstituting its security forces. By 2005-06, the escalating demands of the Iraqi insurgency did prevent effective reinforcement of Afghanistan, just at the time the Taliban insurgency was gaining traction, but by 2009-10 the winding-down of the force commitment in Iraq permitted a significant "surge" of troops, aid, and resources. (Collins, 77-80)

22. Border Incident TCWG

Taliban insertion foiled: Remove any 3 Taliban Guerrillas in or adjacent to Pakistan.

Pakistan furious: Shift Islamabad 2 boxes toward Sponsorship. Executing Faction remains Eligible

Both Pakistan and Afghanistan maintained considerable forces in a system of garrisons and outposts to maintain control over the border between the two countries, and Coalition forces often operated very near the border to try and interdict insurgent movements. Exchanges of fire occurred and sometimes escalated into diplomatic incidents.

23. Roadside IEDs TCWG
TALIBAN CAPABILITIES

JIEDDO counter-IED tactics: Taliban Attacks can remove no more than 1 Coalition piece per space.

Casualties mount: Each Taliban Attack removes a 3rd piece and Sabotages an adjacent empty LoC

The Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization (JIEDDO) was created in 2006 by the US Department of Defense in order to tackle the problem the Taliban's and other insurgents' use of IEDs, the leading cause of death or injury among Coalition troops in Afghanistan. JIEDDO adopted a mix of simple and complex methods: an example of the former was paving roads (which not only made roadside IEDs harder to conceal, but also improved the local economy and hence relations with the populace). (Kilcullen, Accidental Guerrilla, p. 99-102)
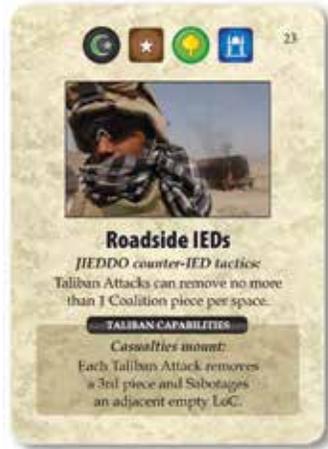
24. US-Taliban Talks TCWG
Selective fire: Until Propaganda, Taliban Operations may not remove Coalition pieces (mark).
MOMENTUM

No sudden moves: Until Propaganda, no Coalition Assault (mark).
MOMENTUM

Direct, official contact between representatives of the United States and the Taliban began in late 2010. Earnest and productive negotiations held out the possibility of reducing the pace of operations in Afghanistan. Meetings took place in Germany and Qatar, but progress was slow. (US DoD Report on Progress, p. 82)

25. Koran Burning TGCW
Compensation: Remove any Terror markers desired from spaces with Coalition.

Riots: Shift Kabul and a Province with Coalition pieces each 1 level toward Opposition.

In February 2010, a number of Korans and other religious texts were accidentally burned by United States servicemen in an incinerator at Bagram Air Field north of Kabul. The ensuing riots in Afghan cities resulted in over 30 deaths. Videos of acts by Coalition personnel such as urinating on or desecrating corpses of Taliban fighters provoked similar responses.

26. MANPADS Scare TGCW
False alarm—fly the friendly skies: Coalition Air Lifts any Troops among 5 spaces, then LimOps in 1, free.

Whoosh!: Until Prop, Taliban may cancel (count as executed) any Air Lift or Air Strike for –1 Resource.
MOMENTUM

The Taliban had no anti-aircraft weapons except light automatic guns or rocket-propelled grenades, which could be effective against low-flying helicopters. However, if they had obtained shipments of Man-Portable Air Defense Systems (MANPADS), it might have proven as significant a development as when the mujaheddin began to use US-supplied Stinger missiles against Soviet aircraft in the late 1980s.

27. Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan TGCW
TTP attack in Pakistan: Shift Islamabad 2 boxes toward Hostility.

TTP support Quetta Shura: Taliban place 2 pieces in or adjacent to Pakistan and add +3 Resources.

The Tehrik-i-Taliban (TTP) or "Pakistan Taliban" was a religious extremist movement within Pakistan that was mainly active in the Northwest Frontier Province dominated by the Pashtun nationality. The TTP and Quetta Shura Taliban, the main Afghan Taliban organization, had similar beliefs and objectives and occasionally cooperated; the TTP also was responsible for a large number of incidents in major Pakistani cities, provoking a violent response from the Army. (Kilcullen Accidental Guerrilla, p. 237-238)

28. Karzai to Islamabad TGWC
"I'm listening": Shift Islamabad 2 boxes toward Hostility.

"I hear you knocking but you can't come in": Taliban Resources +6. Government Ineligible through next card.

The main diplomatic issue between Afghanistan and Pakistan has been the Durand Line, an artificial creation of the British Empire that divides the Pashtun nationality in two, and the associated issues it raises of territorial integrity, tribal revolt, and the use by Afghan insurgents of Pakistani territory as a sanctuary. Pakistan would prefer a stable and functioning Afghan Government, as a counterweight to the influence of India, but the frequent border skirmishes put both governments in a difficult position. (US DIA "(New) Great Game")

29. Night Letters TGWC
TALIBAN CAPABILITIES

Threats resented: Taliban Terror shifts to Neutral not Opposition.

Intimidation: Training places no more than 4 cubes per space

During the Soviet-Afghan War, the mujaheddin would often leave "night letters" – literally a letter left at someone's door at night to warn collaborators or to intimidate the population. In 2005 the Taliban revived this tactic with considerable success. (Collins, p. 73)

30. Urban Specialists TGWC
TALIBAN CAPABILITIES

Ineffective: Taliban Terror in Kabul requires Activation of 2 Underground Guerrillas.

Effective: Taliban Terror in Kabul costs 0 Resources and does not Activate the Guerrilla.

Insurgents need to go where the people are, and a lot of them are in the main urban center of Kabul. The Taliban have been ingenious in using technically skilled fighters to collect intelligence, plan

assassinations, and conduct spectacular high-visibility attacks on government buildings. (Moreau; Giustozzi p. 70)

31. Car Bombs TWCG
TALIBAN CAPABILITIES

Better VCP drills: Ambush Activates all Taliban in the space.

VBIEDs: 1 Taliban Ambush space may use an Active Guerrilla. Place no Guerrilla in that space.

The JIEDDO (see card 23) has three lines of operation: "Attack the Network" (to discover IEDs before they are planted by fostering good intelligence-gathering relations with the local population), "Defeat the Device" (through detection and neutralization of IEDs by technical means, and protecting vehicles and personnel against their effects), and "Train the Force" (to detect, identify and react to IEDs). (JIEDDO website) Vehicle check points (VCPs) were a principle means of keeping Taliban car bombs (vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices, or VBIEDs) away from critical targets.
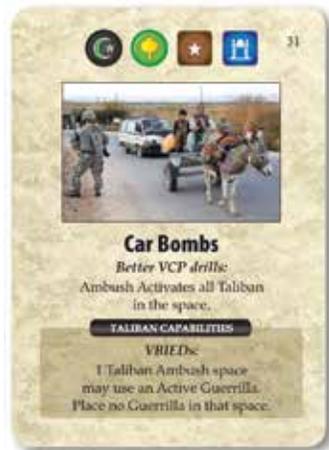
32. Haqqani TWCG
Frictions with Quetta: Taliban remove a Base and 3 Guerrillas from Northwest Frontier.

Taliban right hand: Taliban place a Base and 3 Guerrillas in or adjacent to Northwest Frontier.

The Haqqani Network was an important insurgent organization based in Waziristan. It was allied with al-Qaeda, the Quetta Shura Taliban, and the Hezb-e-Islami front (an Afghan Islamist organization, see card 35), though coordination between these main organizations was irregular. (Kilcullen, Accidental Guerrilla, p. 48)

33. Suicide Bombers TWCG
TALIBAN CAPABILITIES

Extremists expended: Taliban each Terror must remove a Taliban Guerrilla from 1 selected space.

Willing martyrs: Taliban Terror removes 1 enemy piece (Faction's Base last) from 1 of the Terror spaces, Coalition to Casualties.

Beginning in 2006, the number of suicide bombings in Afghanistan increased rapidly, even as the technical failure rate for bombing attempts dropped. The tactic was effective in damaging targets but of dimishing political effect because of the large numbers of civilian casualties that occurred in each bombing. Also it relied on foreign fighters brought into the theater: the majority of individual bombers were not Afghans. (Giustozzi, 108-109, 148-149)

34. Accidental Guerrillas TWGC
TALIBAN CAPABILITIES

Easy come, easy go: Remove Taliban Guerrillas that Redeploy.

Drawn in: After Coalition completes an Assault operation, Taliban may place a Guerrilla into any 1 of the Assault spaces.

David Kilcullen's 2009 book *The Accidental Guerrilla* explores in depth the problems posed by Western interventions to counter insurgencies in the developing world. In Afghanistan, the mistrust of foreigners, disruption of traditional networks and power relation-

ships, and regional or global ideological or religious movements all combined to create a complex resistance to what the Coalition was trying to accomplish, as young Afghan males joined in the violence local to their community, on the side resisting foreign invasion.

35. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar TWGC
Islamist infighting: Remove up to 3 Taliban pieces from 1 space.

Hezb-e-Islami front: Place a Taliban Base and Guerrilla in a Neutral or Opposition Pashtun Province.

Gulbuddin Hekmatyar is the leader of Hezb-e-Islami or "Party of Islam", an important insurgent organization based in the Northwest Frontier Province and allied with the Quetta Shura Taliban. (Collins, p. 72) Coordination between them was loose, however. (Kilcullen, Accidental Guerrilla, p. 48)

36. Mullah Omar TWGC
Taliban leader killed: Flip all Taliban Guerrillas to Active.

Islamist unifier: Next Support phase, Sharia also allowed if Uncontrolled and any Taliban. MOMENTUM

Mullah Mohammad Omar is the leader of the Quetta Shura Taliban, the main insurgent organization in southern Afghanistan. He does not direct daily operations but is an important spiritual leader and coordinator among allied insurgent organizations, such as the Haqqani Network and Hezb-e-Islami. Resilient as the Taliban may be, his death or capture would have proven a shock to the group. (Dressler, p. 1-2; Collins, p. 72)
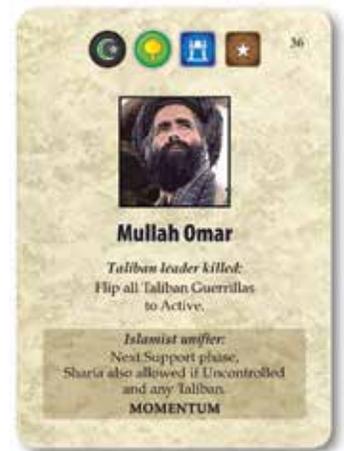
37. Afghan Commandos GCTW
Surprise strike: Govt moves any 1-4 Govt Troops to a space. They then free Sweep and free Assault there.

Flashy forces dissipate scarce resources: Govt Resources -6. Aid -6. Executing Faction remains Eligible.

The Afghan National Army Order of Battle includes a commando battalion in each of its six corps, plus a separate Special Operations Command of three commando brigades and a Special Forces brigade, trained along US lines. The first commando battalions became operational in 2007 but, like other Afghan Army units, suffered from personnel turbulence and needed training, transport, and logistical support from Coalition units and bases. (Radin; US DoD Report on Progress p. 24, 32)

38. Night Raids GCTW
Effective tactics: Remove all Insurgent Bases from any 2 spaces with Coalition Troops.

Kabul defends privacy: Government free Governs in an Afghan Support space, ignoring Control and Coalition.

"Night raids" were a tactic used mostly by US Special Forces members to kill or capture individuals on the "Joint Prioritized Effects List" of important insurgent commanders and organizers. Because these operations involved sudden night-time forced entries into civilian houses, there were instances of civilian collateral casualties and mistaken identity, as well as anger over violation of the sanc-

tity of an Afghan's home (a major cultural transgression). In April 2012, the Afghan Government obtained agreement that future night raids would be led by Afghan units, or at least conducted with the Government's knowledge and approval.

39. Trilateral Summit GCTW

US spurs Pak-Afghan ties: Shift Islamabad 1 box toward Hostility.

Double game: Shift Islamabad 2 boxes toward Sponsorship. Aid +3. Patronage +3.

The United States would have much preferred to see stable and productive relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan, its two main recipients of military and economic aid in the region. But Washington's actual ability to make this so varied. (US DoD Report on Progress, p. 82)

40. Line Item GCWT

Congress appropriates: Add the lesser of Aid or +15 to Government Resources.

Cuts: Cut Aid to half its level (round down). Executing Faction remains Eligible

To quote Ronald E. Neumann, then United States Ambassador to Afghanistan, in 2005: "Iraq and hurricane relief won, and we lost." (Collins, p. 78)

41. NATO Politics GCWT

Alliance commitment: Coalition returns up to 3 pieces that were removed from play to Available.

Publics dubious of war aims: Remove any 1 Coalition Troops cube from play.

In the early stages of the war, the governments of various NATO countries found it relatively easy politically to send contingents of troops and aid workers to help in reconstruction. As casualties mounted, these governments found it more difficult to explain to citizens what these troops were accomplishing, and why their troops were in harm's way while other national contingents refused to commit to the struggle. In February 2010, the Dutch Government collapsed over the issue of keeping a contingent of troops in Afghanistan.

42. NGOs GCWT

Stabilization: For every 10 Aid (round down) shift a COIN Control space 1 level toward Support.

Poor auditing: Transfer 1 in 5 Aid (round down) to Patronage

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) were critical conduits of non-military aid and support to Afghanistan. Not surprisingly, therefore, their workers and projects were targets for the Taliban, acting to drive them out of communities. NGOs also had an uncomfortable relationship with the military, and their best efforts could fall prey to the pervasive government corruption. (Giustozzi, 105-107)
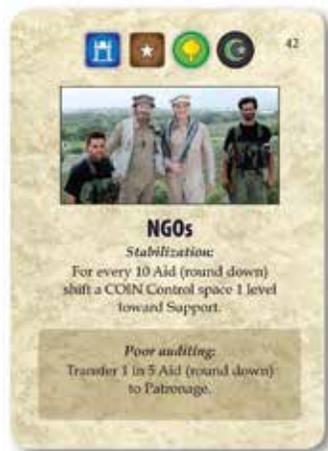
43. Pakistani Offensive GTCW

Militant hunt: Shift Islamabad 2 boxes toward Hostility. Remove 2 Taliban pieces from Pakistan.

All show: Shift Islamabad 1 box toward Sponsorship. Executing Faction remains Eligible.

Coalition forces operating near the border with Pakistan were not able to achieve consistent interoperability with the Pakistani Army. However, the Government of Pakistan was acutely aware of the threat posed by so many different insurgent organizations operating from its territory, from Baluchi separatists and the Quetta Shura Taliban to the Pakistani Taliban. It launched a number of offensives into the north-west, sometimes taking heavy casualties. (Donahue, p. 98; Kilcullen, Accidental Guerrilla p. 238-244)

44. Pakistani Politics GTCW

Shift Islamabad 1 box toward Tolerance. Then, if at Pressure, remove 1 Taliban Base from Pakistan. If at Backing, +6 Taliban Resources. Executing Faction remains Eligible.

The 2007 Red Mosque Incident (in which religious students occupied a mosque in Islamabad that was then stormed by Pakistani security forces, with considerable casualties) and suspected involvement of the Pakistani Taliban in the assassination that year of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto were examples of the turbulent relationship between extremist organizations and Pakistan's politics. (Afsar)
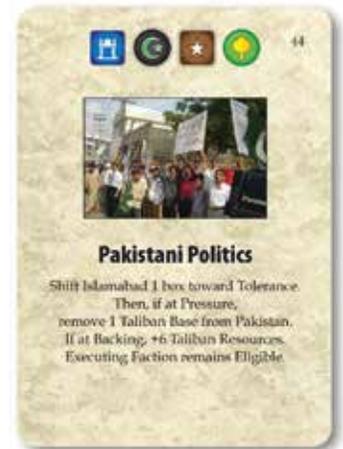
45. Tribal Elders GTCW

A voice in local shuras: Until end of next Propaganda, the Faction executing this event (mark) may follow any shift it causes in Support/Neutral/Opposition by setting the space to any level. MOMENTUM

The traditional power and decision-making structure of tribal and village elders had been largely dismantled in many areas of Afghanistan by the previous 30 years of violence and social upheaval. Reestablishing this way of doing things would have greatly assisted whichever faction might harness its power. (Johnson)

46. ID Cards GTWC
TALIBAN CAPABILITIES

Your papers, please: Marching Taliban always Activate when entering non-Pashtun Provinces.

Kandahar Kinko's Kopies Kards: Flip all Taliban that March into a Pashtun space Underground.

Control of population movement is an important part of many counterinsurgency strategies, and issuing identification cards and local censuses are good ways to accomplish this. But cards can be forged or stolen. (FM 3-24 Counterinsurgency, 5-33, 5-73)

47. Loya Jirga GTWC

Political alliances shore up national government: Set 2 Neutral non-Pashtun spaces to Support.

Pashtuns fear erosion of dominance: Set 3 Neutral Pashtun Prov-

inces to Opposition.

A Loya Jirga or "grand council" is a traditional Pashtun method of political consultation or discussion of large or especially urgent issues. There have been several Loya Jirga held at the national level under the Karzai Government, to discuss such issues as the new Afghan constitution (2003) or to consider peace negotiations with the Taliban (2009, 2010). The outcomes of these conferences could lead to important political realignments within the Afghan Government. (Collins, p. 64-65)

48. Strategic Partners GTWC

New Delhi help: Aid +6, Govt Resources +6, Patronage +1.

Pakistani fears fed: Shift Islamabad 2 boxes toward Sponsorship

India was the largest regional donor to Afghanistan during the period and had an interest in the creation and maintenance of a stable regime there, both as a counterweight to Pakistan's influence and to contain the spread of extremism and terrorism. (US DIA "(New) Great Game")

49. Crop Substitution GWCT

Slash and burn: Govt free Eradicates in any 1 Province with Govt cubes. Remove all Warlord pieces there.

Diversify: Govt removes 1 Warlord Base. Warlords then free Cultivate in up to 3 eligible spaces (as if Rallied there).

Eradication of opium crops proved to be effective only on a very temporary basis, and usually worsened the situation of the small farmers who did most of the work of raising poppies. Afghanistan was also the world's leader in production of hashish, although the amount of land used for cultivation and the amounts of money involved was much smaller. (CMFC Counter-Narcotics in Afghanistan, p. 14-15, 25-26)
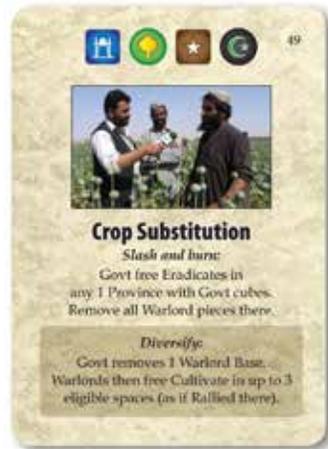
50. Development Aid GWCT

Funds to projects: Coalition and Govt conduct Civic Action as if Support Phase, but spending Aid instead of Resources.

Local diversion opportunity: +3 Patronage. Warlords add a die roll in Resources.

Billions of dollars flowed into Afghanistan from foreign donors to improve the country's infrastructure and economic function. Thousands of large and small projects were completed, to address all sectors of need in Afghan society, but progress was hampered by pervasive corruption, lack of security to protect completed projects, diversion of funds, and a thriving illegal economy based on narcotics that was far more profitable than any legitimate business. (Collins p. 66-71; Giustozzi 198-200)

51. Karzai GWCT

President taps cousins: +1 Patronage per space at Support.

President deals to keep office: Transfer 2 die rolls of Patronage to Warlord Resources.

Hamid Karzai, a Pashtun, was appointed President at the Bonn Accords in 2002. He thereafter was elected twice, though the legitimacy of the elections was disputed. The office of President exerted considerable power under Afghanistan's new Constitution, but this document also required Karzai to give up power in 2014. Like most men who had reached the height of national leadership of Afghanistan, he survived by making deals and brokering relationships among a complex web of family, ethnic, and religious organizations in a continuous and delicate balancing act. (Collins, p. 92-93; Moyar, p. 201-204)

52. Power Shuffle
GWTC

Kabul respected: Replace up to 5 Warlord Guerrillas with Police.

Kabul spurned: Replace up to 5 Police with Warlord Guerrillas.

See card 51. A major early achievement of Karzai's presidency was the disarmament and reintegration of many warlord militia forces in 2003-2004. (Collins, p. 64-65)
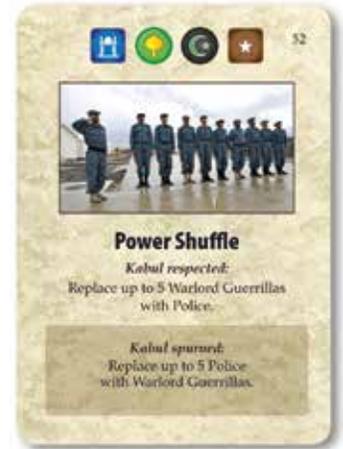
53. Prison Break GWTC

Guards bought: An Insurgent transfers 3 Resources to Patronage and places a piece where there is a Govt piece.

Guards inept: Replace a Government piece with a Guerrilla.

Coalition analysts agreed that the corrections system in Afghanistan is in need of significant improvement. There was a continued need for better constructed prisons, more and better screened guards, and a restoration of civilian faith that the prison system will be humane, secure, and impartial. This faith was shaken by several mass prison breaks that took place both with and without the connivance of the guards, as well as early releases of criminals who had political influence. (US DoD Report on Progress, p. 74-76)

54. Profit Sharing GWTC

Funneled to war effort: Warlords transfer 2 die rolls' Resources to Government

…or not: Warlords execute a free round of Traffic everywhere possible but add no Patronage.

Profits from illegal and semi-legal activities by warlords did not always benefit the Taliban; occasionally such activities would deliver resources to the central government in exchange for other considerations such as influential offices or a promise of non-interference.

55. Breaktime WCTG

War-weary fighters vote with their feet: Coalition removes up to a die roll of Guerrillas.

Troops help with harvest: Remove up to a die roll of Government cubes, no more than 1 per space.

The tempo of fighting in Afghanistan is dominated by several climatic and agricultural factors: the cold winter, the harvest season for legitimate crops, and the timing of the poppy harvest. Both Taliban fighters and ANA/ANP troops will take breaks to rest, retrain, and bring in the sheaves.

56. Fratricide WCTG

I thought we were buddies: Remove a Warlord Guerrilla and Base from a space with Taliban.

Friendly uniforms fire on mentors: At 2 spaces with Govt Troops—1 Coalition Troop or, if none, 1 Coalition Base to Casualties.

Incidents in which Afghan troops or policemen wounded or killed members of Coalition forces working with them as embedded trainers or advisors increased after 2010. (Brookings Afghanistan Index, passim) While the absolute number of people killed in these incidents was small, and most of the incidents were not the result of Taliban infiltration of the Afghan security forces, each one eroded trust between Coalition and Government forces. (US DoD Report on Progress, p. 68-69). Meanwhile, it was not unknown for Taliban forces in an area to break local truces if they perceived it to be to their advantage.

57. Sandstorms WC**T**G

Airborne grit: Until Propaganda, no Air Lift or Transport, Taliban March only 1 adjacent space, and Sweep Activates only 1 Guerrilla per 3 cubes (round down). Executing Faction remains Eligible.
MOMENTUM

There's a reason that Coalition troops call Afghanistan "The Sandbox".

58. Counter-Narc WC**G**T

Interdicted: Until Propaganda, halve (round down) Resources to Warlords from each Traffic.
MOMENTUM

Kabul buys crop: Transfer 1 Govt Resource to Warlords per COIN Control space with Warlords. +1 Patronage.

Increased presence of security forces, especially Coalition troops, tended to reduce the amount of opium produced in major growing areas such as Helmand Province. However, troop presence was only a temporary solution, and the process of interdicting and arresting the people responsible for trading opium was susceptible to corruption (US DoD Report on Progress, p. 94-95; CMFC Counter-Narcotics in Afghanistan, p. 26-27, 48-49). In strict dollar terms, it might have been cheaper for the Afghan Government, with support from Coalition nation governments, to simply buy opium from farmers and either destroy it or process it into morphine and other drugs for legitimate medical use, as done in India. The latter measure might even have been profitable. However, these expedients would not address the deeper issue of the narcotics trade, addiction among the civilian population, corruption, and the great distortions that opium production as a cash crop produced in Afghanistan's largely agricultural economy.

59. Local Truce WC**G**T

Govt transfers 6 Resources to Warlords. No Warlords Attack, Terror, or Suborn until after Propaganda. Executing Faction remains Eligible.
MOMENTUM

Temporary truces were a feature of this and many other insurgencies throughout history. A small amount of pecuniary persuasion can buy a lot of elbow room. (Giustozzi 210-213)

Local Truce

Govt transfers 6 Resources to Warlords.
No Warlords Attack, Terror, or Suborn
until after Propaganda.
Executing Faction remains Eligible.
MOMENTUM
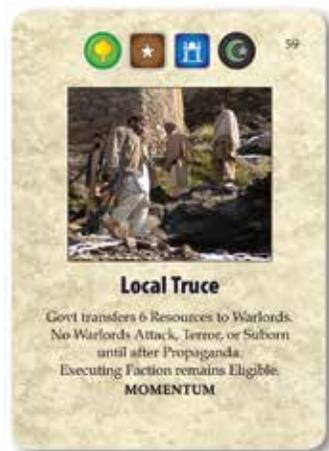
60. Tajiks WC**G****T**

Tajiks rally against Taliban threat: Shift 2 non-Pashtun spaces each 1 level toward Support.

Tajiks rally against Pashtun rule: Transfer a die roll of Patronage to Warlords Resources.

Tajiks are the second largest ethnic group in Afghanistan, after Pashtuns. They comprise about 30% of the population and are concentrated in the northern and northeastern regions of the country. Tajik fighters dominated the Northern Alliance that resisted the Taliban during the Emirate period (1996-2001), and as such were important figures in the reformation of the Afghan Government. However, Tajik dominance in certain critical areas, such as the ANA officer corps, was later scaled back to a more nationally representative percentage. (Collins, p. 8; Moyar, p. 196; Brookings Afghanistan Index)

61. Desertions & Defections **WT**C**G**

Remove up to 3 Guerrillas anywhere or replace them with the other Faction's Guerrillas. Executing Faction pays 1 Resource per Guerrilla (unless Coalition or at 0).

The Taliban combined an unsophisticated and decentralized overall command system with a surprising degree of small-unit cohesion, based on personal loyalty to tactical commanders, who were responsible for units of 5-50 men. However, the Taliban recruited from varied sources, and each recruit had his own reasons for joining and staying with his unit. If these reasons were not fulfilled, he would leave. The same also was true of the many and varied organizations that made up the forces of what were known as Warlords. (Giustozzi, p. 91-93)

62. Local Understanding WT**C****G**

In 1 space, Taliban free Attack COIN pieces; Activate and count Warlord Guerrillas as Taliban.

Warlords and Taliban each add +3 Resources per Warlord Base under Taliban Control.

In a variant of the "accidental guerrilla" phenomenon, the Taliban often were able to hire "pick-up teams" of young males, paid daily in cash, to join in operations against the Coalition or the Government. The Taliban also had considerable financial resources to offer to former militia or mujahideen commanders to join the insurgency. (Giustozzi, p. 72)

63. Teetotalers **WT**C**G**

Strictly Koran: Remove 1 Warlord Base from each Taliban Control space, –1 Taliban Resource each.

Lighten up, man: Each space with Warlord pieces, Warlords may pay –1 Resource per Taliban Guerrilla to remove any of them.

During the period of the Taliban Government, opium production was discouraged, and indeed was almost completely shut down in 2001. (CMFC, Counter-Narcotics in Afghanistan, p. 13) After the "re-launch" of the Taliban insurgency in 2003-04, opium production reached higher and higher levels. While the Taliban found participating in the process profitable (about 10% of the entire value of the opiates trade ended up in Taliban hands, estimates of the value varying between 70 and 400 million dollars a year: CMFC, Counter-Narcotics in Afghanistan, p. 44-45), they might again have decided that narcotics were a social ill with too high a social price (for example, there are an estimated 1.5 million opium addicts in Afghanistan, about 5% of the population).

64. Hazara WTGC

Ethnic cleansing: In each of 2 nonPashtun Mountain spaces— If Taliban present, set to Opposition. Then, if Warlord pieces exceed Govt, remove 2 Govt or Taliban pieces. If Govt exceeds Warlords, remove 2 Warlord pieces.

The Hazara are Shia Muslims and compose about 9% of the population. (The great majority of Afghans are Sunni.) Historically they have been threatened and discriminated against by the other ethnic groups, particularly the Pashtuns, and have received few benefits from associating with the Government. (Afghanistan Smart Book) Across the border, in Quetta, Hazaras responded to extremist attacks with plans to organize for self defense, and persecuted Hazaras in central Afghanistan might have done the same.

65. Islamabad Blocks Resupply WTGC

COIN effort, Taliban taxes both hurt: Sabotage both Roads adjacent to Pakistan. -7 Taliban Resources. Coalition and Govt Ineligible through next card. Executing Faction, if Insurgent, remains Eligible.

In retaliation for incidents where Pakistani soldiers manning border posts were killed in accidental exchanges of fire with Coalition troops, the Pakistani Government twice shut down the two main routes for Coalition supplies to reach landlocked Afghanistan from Pakistani seaports: once in 2010 for a week, and once in 2011-12 for almost nine months. The Coalition was forced to fly supplies in or use the Northern Delivery System of minor roads entering from the "Three 'Stans". This expedient was extremely expensive, but it did sidestep the network of Taliban "taxation" and raids on supply convoys along the southern routes.
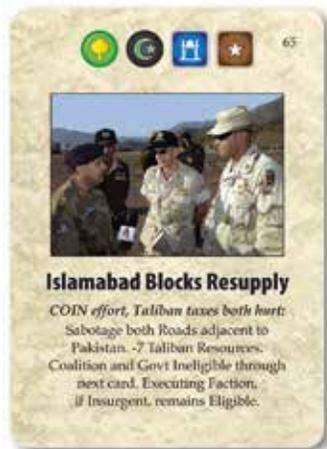
66. Mountain Fastness WTGC

Altitude sickness: Move a Faction's pieces from 2 Mountains where it has no Bases to Available.

Caves: In a Mountain, place any 2 Insurgent pieces and flip any Guerrillas desired Underground.

Afghanistan is a high country, about half of it covered by mountains. In the east, the peaks of the Hindu Kush range rise to over 7,000 meters. Kabul itself is 1,800 meters above sea level. (Collins, p. 5) This simple fact of geography helped determine how, when, and where fighting took place: the insurgents could always withdraw to the mountains but could not remain there for long.

67. Change in Tactics WGCT

Remove any 1 Capabilities marker that is in effect (shaded or unshaded). That Capability no longer applies.

Measures and countermeasures are an enduring aspect of insurgency, and so not all tactical or technical innovations maintain their battlefield impact for long.

68. Dostum WGCT

Uzbek warlord returns from exile: 2 Support and 2 Opposition nonPashtun spaces to Neutral. Replace 3 Govt or 3 Warlord pieces in non-Pashtun spaces with any pieces of the other.

Abdul Rashid Dostum, an Uzbek, had been a military commander in Afghanistan's wars since the 1970s, fighting first against the mujahideen and then the Taliban. For a short time he was the Deputy Minister of Defense in Hamid Karzai's Government, but clashed with him and went into exile in Turkey. In 2009, he returned to Afghanistan and established a near-independent, Uzbek-dominated zone in northern Afghanistan.

69. Mine Removal WGCT

ANA specialists: Replace any 4 Sabotage with any 1 Government cube each.

Fields cleared: Set a 1-3Pop Province with COIN Control to Support and place a Warlord Base there.

Thirty years of unrelenting warfare have left millions of mines and pieces of unexploded ordnance in Afghanistan's soil. Clearing routes and areas to make them safe for civilian use again would be viewed positively.
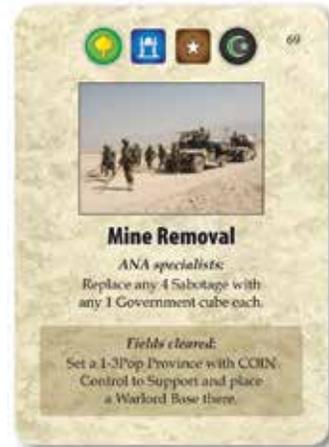
70. Contractor Surge WGTC

Everyone gets a slice: Shift up to 3 spaces with Coalition and Govt pieces 1 level toward Support. Add +1 Patronage, +1 Taliban Resource, and +1 Warlord Resource per shift.

Wide use of private contractors, especially private security companies employing local nationals, has been a hallmark of both the Iraq and Afghanistan counterinsurgencies. A case could be made that, while the behavior of these companies might be effective in solving immediate problems, it might in the long term work against the counterinsurgents' interests. For example, it was found that millions of dollars, paid to private trucking and security companies to run supply convoys to Coalition bases, ended up in the hands of the Taliban as a result of side deals by the warlords who ran the companies. (Schwartz, p. 11-18; US HoR Warlord Inc., passim)

71. Coup! WGTC

New Pashtun or ex-Northern Alliance leader: Shift either 3 Pashtun or 3 non-Pashtun Provinces each 1 level toward Support. Govt Forces Desert; Govt Troops Redeploy; then adjust Control.

No coup d'etat occurred to change Afghanistan's Government during the period, though coups did depose Afghan governments in 1973 and 1978. A move by an ambitious subordinate at the proper time could be a potent game-changer.

72. Poppy Crop Failure WGTC

Output plummets: Remove 1 Taliban or 2 Warlord Bases.

Prices soar: Remove 1 Warlord piece. Then Insurgents each add +1 Resource per their Guerrilla at Warlord Bases.

While the amounts of money involved in the opium trade are spectacular (over $2 billion annually), prices are highly volatile and crops can easily fail. (CMFC Counter-Narcotics in Afghanistan, p. 8-13) Sometimes a major failure would hurt small farmers but enabled big dealers who had built up stocks to raise their profits as prices responded to the limited overall supply.

SELECTED SOURCES

Dozens of books and literally thousands of articles and reports have been written on the most recent war in Afghanistan. What follows is a selection from some of the books, reports, articles and websites consulted in research for this game.

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PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

The following pronunciations of map names is drawn in part from the Associated Press Pronunciation Guide, "Afghan 101" website, http://afghan101.ou.edu, with some alternative spellings provided in case players are consulting other maps or books.

Afghanistan – af-GAN'-ih-stahn *(NOTE: The people are called Afghans, the unit of currency is the Afghani; to refer to a person as an "Afghani" would be an insult.)*

Badakhshan – bah-dak-SHAN'

Badghis – bahg-DEES'

Baghlan (Baglan) – bag-LAHN'

Balkh – BALK

Balochistan – buh-LOACH-is-tan or bah-LOOK-ih-stahn

Bamian – bahm-EE'-yan

Nimruz – nim-ROOZ'

Farah – far-AH

Faryab – far-EE'-ab

Ghazni – gah-ZNEE'

Ghowr (Ghor, Ghur) – GOR

Herat – hey-RAHT

Helmand (Hillmand) – hel-MAHND

Kabul – KA-bull or KAH'-bool or kah-BOOL'

Kandahar (Qandahar) – KAHN-dah-HAHR

Khowst (Khost) – HOHST

Konduz (Kunduz) – kuhn-DOOS'

Kyrgyzstan – KEHR'-gih-stahn

Islamabad – is-LA-ma-bad or ihs-LAH'-muh-bahd

Jalalabad – ju-LAH'-lah-bahd

Nuristan (Nurestan, Nooristan) – nor-IH'-stahn

Oruzgan (Uruzgan, Urozgan) – aw-ruz-GAHN'

Paktika – pahk-TEEK'-ah

Pashtun (Pashtoon) – pahsh-TOON'

Quetta – kuh-WEH'-tuh

Samangan – suh-MAN'-gan

Sar-e-Pol (Sari Pul) – sah-REE'-pole

Tajikistan – tah-JIHK'-ih-stahn, tah-JEEK'-ih-stahn , or tah-JEEK'-ih-stahn

Taliban (Taleban) – TAL'-ih-bahn

Uzbekistan – ooz-BEK'-ih-stahn

Waziristan – wuh-ZEER-is-tan or wah-ZIHR'-ih-stahn

Zabol (Zabul) – zah-BOOL'

Towns:

Tor Kham – tor-KAHM' (Khyber Pass) – KY'-bur

Spin Boldak – spin-bol-DAK'

Kandahar – KAHN-dah-HAHR

Farah – far-AH

Toraghondi – tor-ah-gon-DEE'

Shibirghan – sheh-BAR'-gan

Aibak – EYE-bak

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