

Chapter 6

AMERICA 'S WAR ON TERRORISM

Afghanistan



UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Preamble

“Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,...

Now, therefore, The General Assembly proclaims this Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations...”

--Excerpt from The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted and proclaimed by United Nations General Assembly resolution 217 A (III) of 10 December 1948.

U.S. Involvement in Afghanistan

The United States’ military invasion into Afghanistan began in October 2001 after the September 11th terrorist attacks in the United States were linked to Osama bin Laden’s **al-Qaeda** organization and the **Taliban** in Afghanistan. Opposition forces in **Operation**

Enduring Freedom, in addition to the United States, included the United Kingdom, France, Canada, Australia, Denmark, Germany, Norway and the Northern Alliance of Afghanistan.

Osama bin Laden was born the 17th of 20 sons to a Saudi business magnate of Yemeni origin. He once had personal assets of approximately \$300 million – some sources indicate he may be a billionaire – with which he funds an estimated 3000 Islamic militants.

Bin Laden has lived under the protection of the Taliban in Afghanistan since 1996. He issued a *fatwah*, or religious decree, against all U.S. civilians and military in 1998:

“The ruling to kill the Americans and their allies – civilians and military – is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it...”

“On June 7, 1999, bin Laden was placed on the FBI’s Ten Most Wanted List and a \$5 million award was offered for his capture.” U.S. intelligence officials believe bin Laden is responsible for scores of terrorist acts around the world as leader of the al-Qaida network, with operations in as many as 60 countries, including the United States.

The first troops on the ground in Afghanistan in October 2001 were Special Operation Forces. Conventional forces, including Coalition air attacks, followed. By the end of November 2001, Air Force support aircraft had flown more than 325 missions. In November U.S. Marines established a forward operating base to, according to Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, “prevent the Taliban forces and al-Qaeda terrorists from moving freely about the country.” The first Army units were deployed in December.

On December 22, 2001, Hamid Karzai was sworn in as the prime minister of the Afghan interim government, within three months after the initial Coalition attacks had begun.

The largest American ground action to date in the Afghan war, *Operation Anaconda*, was launched on 1 March 2002, with more than 1000 U.S. troops involved.

What is al-Qaeda?

Al-Qaeda, also *al-Qaida*, means “the base” in Arabic and is the network of extremists organized by Osama bin Laden. It has its origins in the uprising against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in the 1980s when thousands of mujahideen came to Afghanistan as warriors to defend their fellow Muslims against the Soviet forces.

The al-Qaeda network, loosely organized as cells located in some 60 countries, is now considered the world’s most infamous terrorist organization. Estimates of

its size range from several hundred to several thousand members. Al-Qaeda is responsible for countless attacks dating back to 1993 with the first bombing of the World Trade Center in February and the killing of American soldiers in Somalia in October. Al-Qaeda claimed responsibility for the bombing in Yemen of the USS *Cole* in 2000 that killed 17 sailors.

On September 11, 2001, al-Qaeda operatives used passenger planes in terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon and in a failed attempt that ended in the fields of Pennsylvania. In October the United States invaded Afghanistan to dismantle al-Qaeda.

For this information and more background on al-Qaeda, please visit <http://www.infoplease.com/spot/terror-qaeda.html>

From 1979-1989, Afghanistan had suffered great unrest caused by the Soviet invasion and occupation. After the Soviets withdrew in 1989, the country erupted in civil war. The **Taliban** seized control of Kabul, the capital city of Afghanistan, in 1996, and by the late 1990's the Taliban controlled most of the country and enforced a strict form of Islamic rule.

The Taliban is an "Islamic fundamentalist movement in Afghanistan that controlled most of the country from September 1996 to November 2001." *Taliban* means "student" and refers to the movement's origins in Islamic religious schools.

The overwhelming majority of the Afghanistan population is Muslim, and many are related to ethnic groups in Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, all countries along its borders. Partly because of its geography and partly because of migrations, upheavals, invasions and conquests, Afghanistan is a country of extreme diversity. This religious and ethnic diversity and centuries of unrest may continue to affect Afghanistan's chances for long-term peace and stability.

*For this information and more on Afghanistan and the war on terrorism, please see: <http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/2001/trade.center/index.html>
<http://www.fallenheroesmemorial.com/oef/>
<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/enduring-freedom-ops.htm>*

Tributes Submitted Online

Tribute to my Son, Capt. Charles W. Weaver IV:

After serving as a Ranger LT and FSO in Iraq and a Bronze Star recipient, now Captain Weaver, due to Army "Stop Loss" will serve an additional 15 months in Afghanistan as an Artillery Commander with the 325th artillery,

101st Airborne. He has paid his dues!! We love you for your courage and commitment!!

Charles Weaver III, North Yarmouth, Maine

Tribute to my Son, Heath A. Gifford:

He has been in the Marine Corps for 9 years and has been to Afghanistan and Iraq. He resides in Georgia with 2 sons. We are very proud of him!

Frank & Debbie Gifford, Mt .Vernon, Maine

Tribute to my Brother, Edmund McDonald:

There are no words that can express the pride and thanks that I have for you and your service to our nation. On March 28, 2007 you traded in your airborne wings for angel wings. I love you.

Christina, Portland, Maine

Tribute to my Nephew, Justin Lee Buxbaum:

I am very proud of you Justin as you are my hero. You are missed very much!! I Love you! Aunt Abby :)

Abby Buxbaum Brooks, Cumberland, Maine

Tribute to my Cousin, Joshua J. Kirk:

You served your country well...you are gone but not forgotten. This world was a better place because of you.

Amy L. Byron, Livermore

Tribute to my Son, Cameron Kessler:

I am honoring my Son Cameron Kessler serving his 1ST TOUR in Afghanistan. Task Force Geronimo Gold 3RD Battalion 509TH Parachute Infantry Regiment, 4TH Brigade, 25TH AIRBORNE INFANTRY DIVISION. He followed in my Bootsteps as I Served as a AIRBORNE RANGER 101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION.

Jonathan Kessler, Waterboro, Maine

Tribute to my son, Blair Tinkham:

To one of the best leaders I know. You are my hero.

Frances Casey, Farmingdale, Maine

Tribute to my Cousin, Richard Wardwell:

Thank you for being one of many that helps to keep us safe. Love you.

Lynn Williams, Auburn, Maine

Tribute to my Friend, Sgt. Brandon C. Ross:

Now serving at Fort Benning, GA

Ronald A. Stephan, Kennebunk, Maine

Tribute to my Dad, Aziza Comparetto:

Thank you for your service Aziza!

John Henry, Norridgewock, Maine

Tribute to my Son, PFC BUDDY W. MCLAIN:

My son my hero.

Larry McLain, Rumford, ME

Tribute to my Son, David Gagne:

So proud of you.

Sheryl Jackson, Pittston, Maine

Tribute to my Son, Thomas J. Minton, IV:

Thank you for your courage to serve this great country to protect our freedom. You are my hero!

Deborah Minton, Standish

Tribute to my Friend, SGT Christopher Lowe:

Thank you for your service and the sacrifices you made in Afghanistan.

Charles Santiago, Bangor