



# Landpower Essay

No. 14-3  
November 2014



An Institute of Land Warfare Publication

## Afghanistan and Korea: Lessons from History

by

Douglas Cho, Ph.D

### Introduction

Not long ago President Barack Obama announced his plan to leave a limited number of U.S. troops—fewer than 10,000—in Afghanistan after 2015. As we conclude both Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), it is time to ponder the enormous costs associated with these two wars and examine what has been achieved.

I recently served for one year in Afghanistan as an International Security Assistance Force for Afghanistan (ISAF) advisor to the Afghan Ministry of Defense. During this period I attempted to introduce the lessons from South Korea for application to Afghanistan because I felt there were a number of major similarities between the South Korea of the 1950s and 1960s (the country where I was born, raised and had a naval career of 27 years) and the Afghanistan of today.

America invaded Afghanistan in October 2001 in the aftermath of the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on the U.S. homeland (9/11). The stated goals of our military invasion of Afghanistan, in the words of then-President George W. Bush, were the destruction of terrorist infrastructure and training camps within Afghanistan, the capture of al Qaeda leaders and the cessation of terrorist activities in Afghanistan. Other nations took part in the war on terrorism and thus ISAF was formed. ISAF participant nations established a number of Provincial Reconstruction Teams as well as combat units in provinces to engage in combat operations against the Taliban and to help the Afghans rebuild their nation's infrastructure. The U.S. forces were integrated into the ISAF command structure.

In May 2011 a U.S. Navy Sea Air Land (SEAL) team succeeded in killing Osama bin Laden. It is generally agreed that the operating bases of al Qaeda have been routed from Afghanistan, although their remnants are thought to operate out of Pakistan and they are spreading their operations to other third-world countries. Consequently, many believe that the three objectives of OEF as defined by President Bush in 2001 have been achieved. Although President Obama has mandated the U.S. pullout from Afghanistan in the near future, America has been spending billions of dollars and will continue to do so in the name of nation building and for sustaining the Afghan National Security Forces. In other words, after achieving our initial military objectives, U.S. troops, advisors and State Department personnel, including sizable Central Intelligence Agency and U.S. Agency for International Development teams, are still engaged in Afghanistan in the context of the secondary goals of helping the Afghans rebuild their nation and sustain their domestic security against the threat of the Taliban.

*The Landpower Essay series is published by AUSA's Institute of Land Warfare. The series is designed to provide an outlet for original essays on topics that will stimulate professional discussion and further public understanding of the landpower aspects of national security. This paper represents the opinions of the author and should not be taken to represent the views of the Department of the Army, the Department of Defense, the United States government, the Institute of Land Warfare, or the Association of the United States Army or its members. For more information about AUSA and the Institute of Land Warfare, visit our website at [www.ausa.org](http://www.ausa.org).*

Simply put, U.S. forces are still there based on the assumption that al Qaeda and the Taliban are closely linked and that U.S. support for the Afghan civil war effort against the Taliban contributes directly to the elimination of al Qaeda and other international terrorist groups from Afghanistan.<sup>1</sup>

### Cost of War and Nation Building

Over the past 13 years the total number of ISAF casualties has been more than 3,400 deaths (of which some 2,100 are U.S. casualties) and more than 17,000 wounded U.S. Soldiers alone.<sup>2</sup> Also, some 20,000 Afghan civilians have died as a result of the ISAF military actions over this period.<sup>3</sup>

The cost of OEF over the period of 2001–2012 was estimated as \$557.1 billion by Amy Belasco of the Congressional Research Service.<sup>4</sup> However, Professor Neta Crawford of Brown University estimates the costs to date and future costs of all war on terror operations as close to \$4 trillion. Components of her estimate are shown in the table below:

**Total War on Terror Costs to Date and Estimated Future Federal Budget Costs<sup>5</sup>**  
(Current Year Dollars, in billions)

<b>Fiscal Year (FY) 2001–2013 Costs</b>	
Total Department of Defense (DoD) (Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Noble Eagle)	\$1,406.9
Estimated additions to the Pentagon base budget	\$743.1
Department of State and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) (Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan)	\$103.5
Total medical and disability for veterans	\$134.7
Additions to Homeland Security	\$455.2
Interest on DoD war appropriations	\$259.4
<b>Subtotal, FY 2001–2013 Costs</b>	<b>\$3,102.8</b>
<b>Estimates on Future Spending</b>	
DoD and State/USAID, FY 2014 (Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Operation Noble Eagle)	\$65.0
Increase to DoD base budget, FY 2014	\$65.0
Future Veterans Administration costs, FY 2014–2053 (medical and disability)	\$754.4
<b>Subtotal, Estimates on Future Spending</b>	<b>\$884.4</b>
<b>Total War on Terror Costs to Date and Estimated Future Federal Budget Costs</b>	<b>\$3,987.2</b>

Of this total, Professor Crawford estimates the Iraq share of the costs as \$2,186.1 billion, leaving the balance of \$1,701.1 billion, most of which can be attributed to the Afghanistan war and rehabilitation efforts. While we have been waging this war, America has experienced one of its worst recession periods and is now barely pulling itself out.

A recent quarterly report by the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction totals the U.S. economic aid to Afghanistan from 2002 to 2014 as \$103 billion; this figure is apart from the cost-of-war estimate.<sup>6</sup> We note that, although the nation-building cost of over \$100 billion is a huge number, it hardly compares to the cost of OEF military operations.

Waging a war is very costly, indeed. Of course, hindsight is 20-20, but how did our government estimate the cost of the wars that we were about to start? On 31 December 2002 the Office of Management and Budget estimated the cost of war with Iraq would be \$50–60 billion.<sup>7</sup> Apparently they were far too optimistic

about the cost of war. Now that we are about to conclude OEF, the American public asks the very natural question: What has the United States gained from the OEF efforts at this high cost? We drove al Qaeda out of Afghanistan,<sup>8</sup> killed Osama bin Laden and have attempted to help Afghans gain enough strength to take charge of their national security against the Taliban. But most analysts would agree that the Taliban will surge into Afghanistan once the coalition withdraws.<sup>9</sup>

So the relevant questions at this juncture are the following: First, should the United States and its allies modify military objectives and ways of fighting future wars in consideration of the cost associated? Second, what could we have done differently to achieve success at a reasonable cost? Were there not relevant lessons from prior U.S. war experiences that we could have applied to Afghanistan?

When the U.S. special operations forces invaded Afghanistan in October 2001 in pursuit of al Qaeda, there were some 300,000 armed men in Afghanistan, about 100,000 of them comprising the Kabul Central Corps and nine regional corps of the Afghanistan Military Forces that were on the Ministry of Defense payroll.<sup>10</sup> These forces were viewed by ISAF as warlord armies that would pose a significant threat to stable democratization of Afghanistan. Therefore, ISAF launched the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration program to disband them. No efforts were made to transform them into a national army; the Afghan National Army (ANA) was created a year later, in December 2002.<sup>11</sup> However, there was no urgency or priority placed on rapidly building the ANA as a fighting force. To ISAF's thinking, driving the Taliban out of Afghanistan was the job of Coalition forces, not of the ANA. Reorganizing and training the ANA into a fighting force took a long time, so that while the Taliban regrouped and rehabilitated their strength to renew their attack tempo in 2008, ANA units were allowed to take part in combat operations only in assisting roles. It cost the United States and its allies billions of dollars to retrain the Afghan young men into a fighting force when there had already been highly capable warlord armies that we could have utilized to fight the Taliban.

Today, in 2014, most combat operations are performed by the ANA, but it has taken 13 years to come to this point. Does the ANA do a good job of fighting the Taliban? That is debatable, but what is certain is that they have not won a decisive score in that effort because Taliban attacks are frequent in populated cities, provincial centers and major highways, and consequently, the Afghan people feel insecure because of their threats and extortions.<sup>12</sup>

### **Counterinsurgency Operations in Korea**

South Korea during the 1950s and 1960s was one of the poorest countries in the world—as is Afghanistan today. Its people, economy, social conditions and security situation in those years were vastly different from today, when it enjoys the affluence of the world's 12th largest economy (still growing strong). We need to go back some six decades to dig out the lessons for consideration for Afghanistan today. Fortunately I lived through those years and studied how its military, industry, economy and society grew rapidly during the early formative decades. In my mind there are many similarities between Afghanistan today and Korea in the 1950s. That is the basis of the lessons' relevance for Afghanistan.

First, look at the differences: Afghanistan is a large country about the size of Texas, five times that of South Korea. The population of Afghanistan is about 31 million; the South Korean population in 1955 was 21 million. The Afghan people are composed of a number of tribes including Pashtun, Tajik and Hazara as the major tribes, whereas the Korean people consider themselves as one people. The Afghan people are nearly all Muslims; the South Koreans' religions are divided among Buddhists, Catholics, Protestants and nonbelievers. Afghanistan is a land-locked country; South Korea is surrounded by the sea on three sides. Afghanistan borders numerous countries including Pakistan, Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and China; South Korea borders only its northern nemesis on land while being surrounded across the seas by powerful neighbors such as Japan, China and Russia.

However, the two countries are similar in many respects. First, the security situations faced by the two countries are very similar; Afghanistan has been fighting the civil war against the Taliban just as South Korea faced the serious internal threat of communism. Before the outbreak of the Korean War there were some

600,000 active communist/socialist sympathizers in the South<sup>13</sup> and some 50,000 North Korean guerillas in the mountainous regions during and after the war period of 1950–53.<sup>14</sup> Second, both peoples have undergone numerous periods of foreign aggressions and occupation. Both countries have experienced an influx of foreign cultures over thousands of years. And both peoples' main livelihoods were in agriculture (although Koreans were never known to be poppy growers). Third, the compositions of the militaries of the two countries are similar in that the ANA was composed of former Mujahidin and Russia-trained military men and the South Korean military was composed of both independence fighters and Koreans who had served in the Japanese and Chinese militaries. Each country has been rated as the world's poorest in its respective period—Afghanistan today and South Korea in the 1950s. Peoples of both Afghanistan and Korea have engaged in awful discriminatory practices against women. Both peoples were beset with a high degree of pessimism about themselves and their future. Neither people had known democracy for long; rampant corruption was an everyday affair in all walks of life. Only survival was the key motive of both peoples. In other words, South Korea and its people were very different in the 1950s and 1960s from what they are today. The residual effect of 35 years of Japanese rule was a dismal picture of the character and social state of Korea; life was very tough for the common people. With these many similarities, the lessons of how the formerly poorest country in the world has jumped to be one of the leading economies of the world in five decades, and how counterinsurgency (COIN) warfare was fought so successfully in this country full of communist guerillas and their sympathizers, should have strong relevance for Afghanistan.

When the U.S. military occupation command took over the governance of South Korea after the cessation of World War II in August 1945, it encouraged young men with military experiences—as members of the Japanese military, the Manchurian army or the independence fighters—to join the new Republic of Korea (ROK) military. Although these factions had been enemies in the past, they came together under the unified goal of creating a new military for their new country, whose government was to be established in 1948. They quickly took over the former Japanese military bases and established the new armed forces rapidly at very little cost to the United States. Other governance infrastructure left behind by the Japanese, including the police and civil servants, were called in to continue what they had been doing so that this new democratic country was launched with reasonable success by Syngman Rhee's government with the help of the United States.<sup>15</sup>

Communist North Korea invaded the South in June 1950 with the support of Soviet Russia and Communist China. The United States immediately dispatched troops to Korea to fight the communist aggression. The U.S. Army, while conducting regular warfare, also conducted the COIN operations in their area of operation for one year (from June 1950 to June 1951) due to the weakness of the ROK army and the need to secure rear areas of operation as the battle lines moved swiftly. However, General James Van Fleet, who had COIN experience in Greece prior to his Korea post as commander of the U.S. Eighth Army, ordered the COIN operations in Korea to be conducted by the ROK police and army under the guidance of U.S. advisors.<sup>16</sup> General Van Fleet and his successor, General Matthew Ridgway, provided effective guidelines for the COIN operations based on lessons learned from Greece. They forbade reliance on vehicle movements of troops and use of heavy artillery to attack the guerillas but directed the ROK COIN units to make the best use of a clandestine approach of “surround and destroy” operations, with soldiers hiking the hills from all directions toward suspected guerilla bases. Ridgway transferred the COIN operational responsibility to the ROK forces and gave the U.S. troops only the role of advising the ROK COIN units.

This was a wise decision because most of the ROK army officers had had prior COIN experience when they served in the Chinese or Japanese armies. The tactics they had learned enabled them to devise uniquely Korean ways of isolating the communist guerillas, segregating the villages within the operational area into safe “collective villages” and destroying all infrastructure within the area to deny its use by the guerillas. At the same time, the ROK army was winning the hearts of the local populace by treating them well with material assistance and avoiding unnecessary civilian casualties. By the end of 1951 the guerillas had been effectively decimated and remained more as fugitives than as organized units. By 1955, only two years

after the armistice had been signed in 1953, the COIN operation in South Korea was considered complete. Some 100,000 guerillas were either killed or captured and absorbed into the civilian populace through a transformational process.<sup>17</sup> We need to remember that the extensive COIN operations were conducted in the rear areas at the same time that the regular army was engaged in fighting the North Korean and Communist Chinese troops along the front, which fluctuated somewhere north of Seoul between 1951 and 1953.

By the way, the whole cost of the Korean conflict in 2011 dollars was estimated at \$341 billion.<sup>18</sup> Compare this number to the total OEF cost plus the Afghan nation-building cost of \$1.7 trillion.

### **Counterinsurgency Operations in Afghanistan**

How were COIN operations performed in Afghanistan? The first and foremost difference from the way such operations were conducted in Korea is that U.S. and ISAF troops did most COIN operations from 2001 to 2010. The ANA was given only a subordinate role until 2010 and then gradually placed in active COIN combat roles under the close supervision of ISAF advisors. The main reason for this policy of excluding the ANA from active combat roles was their presumed “inexperience” and “incompetence.”<sup>19</sup> Here we need to be reminded that the Afghan Mujahidin forces fought and drove out the Russians from their homeland. They were tough and seasoned fighters who were well-led and organized under the leadership of the warlords.

I am not praising the warlords, but their armies were effective fighting units until the ISAF forcibly disbanded them and organized a new army, the ANA; trained them directly; paid them extremely high wages (over \$330 per month per common soldier when the present-day ROK soldier is paid barely over \$10 per month);<sup>20</sup> and treated them as if they were not competent to fight the Taliban.<sup>21</sup> During my tenure in Afghanistan I noticed prevalent passivity and lack of confidence in all ranks of the ANA, including the generals. They share the pessimism of the general populace in regard to their country’s post-2014 security situation. Not one was shouting, “Let’s clean them out! We can do it!” In spite of the ISAF rhetoric about the ANA’s combat readiness, the number of Taliban insurgent activities has not been reduced. Formerly tough, competent fighters have been turned into a passive, demoralized and weak band of soldiers and officers after 13 years in passive, subordinate roles.

### **What We Should Have Done and Should Not Have Done**

First, the United States and its allies should have pulled their combat troops out of Afghanistan after driving the al Qaeda elements out of the country, leaving the task of keeping them out and the responsibility of fighting the Taliban to the Afghans. We should not have disbanded the warlord armies under the idealistic banners of cleaning up and rebuilding the country. We should not have launched the nation-building task of Afghanistan on our own. Instead we should have provided a modest level of financial assistance to the Afghan government based on the programmatic requirements developed on their own tightly managed accountability system. We had no part in the civil conflict between the Afghan government forces and the Taliban; it was their internal conflict. Once we decided to drive out the Taliban, we should have aided and coached the Afghan military to fight them by providing arms, intelligence and materials instead of committing our own Soldiers to the task, which was essentially an Afghan responsibility. People tend to identify the Taliban as affiliated with al Qaeda. But al Qaeda terrorists are Arabs, whereas Taliban groups are Afghans of a different sect of Islam. They are not the same—the Taliban is very clear on this point.<sup>22</sup>

On the other hand, we allowed Afghan President Hamid Karzai to appoint key lieutenants of the notoriously brutal warlord Abdul Sayyaf<sup>23</sup> to important government positions, including cabinet ministerial posts.<sup>24</sup> We have enriched the former warlords with millions of dollars and made them “super rich.” Instead of letting the Afghans train their soldiers, we launched an extensive “train the trainers” program, assuming that the Afghans do not know how to train their soldiers and run their own army. We did a similar thing in Iraq; we destroyed the formerly efficient Iraqi army and later had to rebuild it from scratch at a horrendous cost that was borne by U.S. taxpayers. What caused the military decision makers to sweep away such existing structures and organizations and build everything anew at huge taxpayer expense?



In contrast, the U.S. military occupation government, governing South Korea for three years prior to formation of the first democratically elected South Korean government, did not destroy the governmental, judicial, educational, social and police organizations left behind by the Japanese colonial occupiers. Instead, the U.S. military utilized them in governing this poor country, which lacked any trained cadre of professionals other than those trained and employed by the Japanese occupiers (although the general populace held grudges against them for their subservience to their Japanese masters). And the U.S. generals facilitated the formation of an army and navy by the Koreans who had served under the Japanese military or in Chiang Kai-shek's Chinese Army. Thus, the cost of rebuilding the nation's infrastructure was kept at minimum. This was also accomplished by letting the ROK police and army units take charge of their COIN operations, through which the South Koreans made headway in cleaning up the country's communist guerillas at both high efficiency and low cost—in terms of both U.S. casualties and dollars—prior to the outbreak of the Korean War. This indigenous COIN effort, which was viewed as vital for the survival and growth of the democratic nation in the South and conducted with the effective support of the U.S. military, continued through the war years toward a relatively fast and successful ending soon after the war ended in a truce in 1953.

### **Concluding Remarks**

The whole OEF/OIF war experience has left a bad taste for many Americans as we are on the verge of pulling most (if not all) of our remaining troops out of Afghanistan in the near future. We went into Afghanistan and Iraq in an agitated state of anger and fear in the aftermath of 9/11. We made hasty decisions without serious consideration of the long-term socio-economic impact of the wars. We poured our troops and trillions of dollars into these countries without discretion and the thoughtful application of lessons from past history and are now pulling out of them with a wounded honor. We have also spent hundreds of billions on Afghan nation building and turned that country into a pool of corruption through poor aid strategy and ineffective management that has lacked sufficient consideration of the most effective ways of helping the people and the society to help themselves.<sup>25</sup> This experience should cause the United States, particularly our military leaders, to look back at the lessons of history with true humility.

In South Korea the U.S. generals empowered the ROK military by coaching and training them. More than 30,000 ROK military men were trained in U.S. military and civilian institutions over a 30-year period. These U.S.-trained individuals formed the core of Korean leaders who led South Korea to its current position as an industrialized advanced country. Thus, our aid to Korea is a shining example that should be repeated when we go into other troubled third-world countries to help. More to the point of handling their internal conflicts, let us remember that by assigning the primary responsibility of fighting the communist guerillas to the fledgling ROK military and police, those empowered organizations did a marvelous job of cleaning out the insurgency in less than five years—while also engaged in regular warfare against North Korean and Chinese invaders. What a difference it made when we empowered the indigenous forces to solve their own problems by providing proper tactical guidance, material, intelligence and air support! And yet we did not apply this valuable lesson from Korea to Afghanistan or Iraq. It is time for the United States to seriously review how we should conduct military interventions.

*Dr. Douglas Cho had a navy career in South Korea before immigration to the United States. He is a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy and holds a Ph.D. in Industrial Engineering from Oregon State University. He recently served as a Coalition advisor to the Afghan Ministry of Defense for one year. Dr. Cho is a senior analyst with the U.S. Air Force Headquarters A9 [Studies, Analysis, Assessments and Lessons Learned].*

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Some U.S. administration officials estimate that al Qaeda in Afghanistan has a very insignificant strength and is sheltered in the remotest part of the country. See Kimberly Dozier, “Officials: Al Qaida plots comeback in Afghanistan,” Associated Press, 28 February 2014, <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/officials-al-qaida-plots-comeback-afghanistan>.
- <sup>2</sup> “Operation Enduring Freedom: U.S. Wounded Totals,” iCasualties.org, <http://icasualties.org/OEF/USCasualtiesByState.aspx>.
- <sup>3</sup> Costs of War Project, “Afghanistan: At Least 21,000 Civilians Killed,” *Costs of War*, updated as of May 2014, <http://costofwar.org/article/afghan-civilians>.
- <sup>4</sup> Amy Belasco, “The Cost of Iraq, Afghanistan and Other Global War on Terror Operations Since 9/11,” Congressional Research Service, 29 March 2011, <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/RL33110.pdf>.
- <sup>5</sup> Neta Crawford, “U.S. Costs of Wars Through 2013: \$3.1 Trillion and Counting,” Watson Institute for International Studies, Brown University, March 2013, <http://costsofwar.org/article/economic-cost-summary>.
- <sup>6</sup> Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction report to the U.S. Congress, 30 April 2014, <http://www.sigar.mil/pdf/quarterlyreports/2014-04-30qr.pdf>.
- <sup>7</sup> Elisabeth Bumiller, “Threats and Responses: The Cost; White House Cuts Estimates of Cost of War with Iraq,” *The New York Times*, 31 December 2002, <http://www.nytimes.com/2002/12/31/us/threats-responses-cost-white-house-cuts-estimate-cost-war-with-iraq.html?module=Search&mabReward=relbias%3As>.
- <sup>8</sup> As in note 3 above, the residual al Qaeda group present in Afghanistan at this writing is estimated to be a very small number. However, this number can grow significantly after the ISAF troops leave and depending on their arrangement with the Afghan Taliban leadership.
- <sup>9</sup> For one such view, see: Asia Report No. 236, “Afghanistan: The Long, Hard Road to 2014 Transition,” International Crisis Group, 8 October 2012, [http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/asia/south-asia/afghanistan/236-afghanistan-the-long-hard-road-to-the-2014-transition.ashx](http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/asia/south-asia/afghanistan/236-afghanistan-the-long-hard-road-to-the-2014-transition.ashx).
- <sup>10</sup> Eileen Olexiuk, “20-20 Hindsight: Lessons from DDR,” *Snapshots of an Intervention* (eds. Martine van Bijlert and Sari Kouvo), Afghanistan Analysis Network (e-book), 7 July 2012, p. 68, <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/publication/aan-e-books/aans-first-e-book-snapshots-of-an-intervention>.
- <sup>11</sup> Antonio Giustozzi, “The Afghan National Army: Marching in the Wrong Direction?” *Snapshots of an Intervention* (eds. Martine van Bijlert and Sari Kouvo), Afghanistan Analysis Network (e-book), 7 July 2012, p. 63, <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/publication/aan-e-books/aans-first-e-book-snapshots-of-an-intervention>.
- <sup>12</sup> See Matthieu Aikins, “Kabubble: Counting down to economic collapse in the Afghanistan capital,” *Harpers Magazine*, February 2013, <http://harpers.org/archive/2013/02/kabubble>.
- <sup>13</sup> Not all of these sympathizers considered themselves to be “communists” but rather leaned to the left because of their family experiences of persecution and extortion by local powers and landlords in the past. To them, the communist slogan “liberation of the masses” held great appeal. After experiencing the senseless cruelty of communist occupying forces and the local collaborators during their three to four months of brief rule during the early period of the Korean War in 1950, most public sentiments turned against the communist north. Consequently, South Korea became a staunch anti-communist nation during and after the war.
- <sup>14</sup> Andrew Birtle, *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine 1942–1976* (Washington, DC: United States Army Center of Military History, 2006), p. 86, [http://www.history.army.mil/html/books/us\\_army\\_counterinsurgency/CMH\\_70-98-1\\_US%20Army\\_Counterinsurgency\\_WQ.pdf](http://www.history.army.mil/html/books/us_army_counterinsurgency/CMH_70-98-1_US%20Army_Counterinsurgency_WQ.pdf).
- <sup>15</sup> Total U.S. assistance to South Korea over the prewar period of 1945–1949 was \$2.97 billion in 2012 dollars. Compare this amount to \$103 billion spent by USAID for Afghanistan from 2002 to 2014.
- <sup>16</sup> The ROK army established a dedicated division, Division 11, for the COIN mission, in October 1950. In May 1951 three field commands were established within the ROK army for COIN operations by geographic sector.

Also, Task Force Paik, commanded by the famous General Paik Sun Yup, considered the father of the ROK army, was established on 26 November 1951 to clean up the newly infiltrated guerilla force in the southern mountainous areas of the country. See [http://www.koreastory.kr/bbs/board.php?bo\\_table=book3&wr\\_id=10](http://www.koreastory.kr/bbs/board.php?bo_table=book3&wr_id=10) for details of the achievements of Task Force Paik.

- <sup>17</sup> See Birtle, *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency*, chapter 2, for details on how COIN operations were conducted by U.S. and ROK forces.
- <sup>18</sup> Stephen Daggett, *Cost of Major U.S. Wars*, Congressional Research Service, 29 June 2010, p. 2, <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/RS22926.pdf>.
- <sup>19</sup> For the ISAF policy toward ANA, see Giustozzi, “The Afghan National Army: Marching in the Wrong Direction?”.
- <sup>20</sup> The logic for paying more than \$300 per soldier is supposedly based on the compensation the Taliban offers a young Afghan man for giving up his life as a suicide bomber, neglecting the fact that a soldier gets this monthly pay every month whereas a poor Afghan family can well survive with some \$30 per month in the countryside. The \$10 compensation to a South Korean army conscript private is the monthly stipend with food and lodging provided, as is the case with Afghan soldiers who are paid to serve in ANA voluntarily. In comparison, a U.S. private (E2) receives an annual basic pay of \$20,602, which translates to a monthly pay of \$1,717, not including bonus, allowances and other benefits, according to the 2014 U.S. military pay table, [http://www.militaryfactory.com/military\\_pay\\_scale.asp](http://www.militaryfactory.com/military_pay_scale.asp).
- <sup>21</sup> In fact, I heard several times from Afghan generals that the ISAF advisors and generals should not treat them as ignorant and incompetent because they had a well-run, capable army which had been trained by the Russians.
- <sup>22</sup> The logic that the Coalition has to fight Taliban so as not to let them make Afghanistan a haven of international terrorists is eerily similar to the Domino Theory that the United States used to justify its involvement in the Vietnam War. We now know that such a Cold-War view employed for justifying the hugely unpopular war effort was not very wise, although it was quite persuasive at the time. This hindsight should cause us to review this “unjustified fear” about the future state of Afghanistan without our deep involvement.
- <sup>23</sup> Abdul Sayyaf is known to be the most notoriously cruel and corrupt warlord still leading an influential life as a member of the Parliament. He is said to have invited al Qaeda into Afghanistan prior to 9/11 and facilitated their foot-hold in the country. For details, see: <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/afghanistan/sayyaf.htm>.
- <sup>24</sup> Olexiuk, “20-20 Hindsight.”
- <sup>25</sup> For insightful coverage of corruption in Afghanistan, see Dilip Hiro, “The Great Afghan Corruption Scam,” *OutlookIndia.com*, 2 April 2013, [http://fpif.org/the\\_great\\_afghan\\_corruption\\_scam](http://fpif.org/the_great_afghan_corruption_scam).



**Association of the United States Army**  
2425 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington, Virginia 22201-3385  
703-841-4300      [www.ausa.org](http://www.ausa.org)