

# Afghan History: The Central Asian Grand Chessboard

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In 1997 Trilateral Commission founder Zbigniew Brzezinski, the godfather of the Afghan *mujahadeen*, wrote a book titled, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and its Geopolitical Imperatives*. In the book Brzezinski - who sat on the board at BP Amoco - argues that the key to global power is control of Eurasia and that the "key to controlling Eurasia is controlling the Central Asian Republics".

Brzezinski's plan called for ruling Central Asia *via* control of Uzbekistan - which borders Afghanistan to the north. In 1997 Enron attempted to negotiate a \$2 billion deal with the Uzbek state-owned *Neftegaz* with help from the Bush White House. [1] When that effort and other privatization attempts were rebuffed in 1998, CIA-backed Islamist attacks on Uzbekistan's government were ratcheted up.

In 1999 a series of explosions rocked the Uzbek capital of Tashkent. Islamic *al-Qaeda*-trained militants were to blame. The rebels - who called themselves the Islamic Party of Turkistan - attempted to assassinate socialist President Islam Karimov. They attacked the fertile Fergana Valley in an attempt to disrupt harvests and the Uzbek food supply. Karimov was also attacked by the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and *Hizb-ut-Tahrir*.

After the "carpet of bombs" began raining down on neighboring Afghanistan in October 2001, Uzbekistan - along with neighbors Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan - were coerced into accepting new US military bases. In 2005 Kyrgyzstan's nationalist President Askar Akayev was deposed by Islamists in the Tulip Revolution. Within days Donald Rumsfeld was

meeting with the new leaders. [2] Karimov had seen enough and ordered US troops out of Uzbekistan.

The timing of both Brzezinski's book and the Bush Jr. Administration "carpet of bombs" threat to the Taliban are instructive since both occurred prior to the 911 attacks, which provided the perfect pretext for the massive Central Asian intervention that Brzezinski, Bush and their City of London bosses were advocating.

Dr. Johannes Koepl – former German Defense Ministry official and adviser to NATO Secretary General Manfred Werner – explained of this rash of "coincidences" in November 2001, "The interests behind the Bush Administration, such as the Council on Foreign Relations, the Trilateral Commission and the Bilderberger Group, have prepared for and are now implementing open world dictatorship (which will be established) within the next five years. They are not fighting against terrorists. They are fighting against citizens."

## **Drugistan**

Central Asia produces 75% of the world's opium. According to the UN, the surge in opium production in the region coincided with the disintegration of the Soviet Union, which was "encouraged" by the Reagan Administration and the CIA. It also coincided with the Four Horsemen's (Exxon Mobil, Chevron Texaco, BP Amoco & Royal Dutch/Shell) Caspian Sea oil boom.

While the US issued humiliating certifications to judge countries on their ability to stop drug traffic, Big Oil produced 90% of the chemicals needed to process cocaine and heroin, which CIA surrogates process and distribute. CIA chemists were the first to produce heroin.

As Ecuadorian Presidential Candidate Manuel Salgado put it, "This world order which professes the cult of opulence and the growing economic power of illegal drugs, doesn't allow for any frontal attack aimed at destroying narco-trafficking because that business, which moves \$400 billion annually, is far too important for the leading nations of world power to eliminate. The US...punishes those countries which don't do enough to fight against drugs, whereas their CIA boys have built paradises of corruption throughout the world with the drug profits." [3]

The Afghan "paradise of corruption" yielded 4,600 metric tons of opium in 1998. In 1999 the Taliban announced a crack down on opium production in Afghanistan. The move angered the CIA, the Afghan aristocracy and their Turkish Gray Wolves allies, whose smuggling routes mirror those of the Four Horsemen's Caspian Sea oil pipeline recently opened for business through Turkey.

When the Taliban cracked down on opium production, poppy fields bloomed to the north where CIA/ISI-sponsored Islamists were fighting in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Chechnya, Dagestan, Armenia and Azerbaijan. *Asia Times* writer Pepe Escobar termed the entire region "Drugistan". [4]

Pakistani writer Ahmed Rashid says the Saudis- fulfilling their usual "paymaster" role – funded the northward shift in poppy production. [5] It was part of a larger operation run by Western intelligence agencies to encircle Russia, seize oilfields and destabilize the entire Central Asia region using Islamic fundamentalists and heroin proceeds.

In 1991 Air America/Iran-Contra super spook Richard Secord showed up in Baku, Azerbaijan

under the cover of MEGA Oil. [6] Secord did military training, sold Israeli arms, passed “brown bags filled with cash” and shipped in over 2,000 Islamist fighters from Afghanistan with help from CIA-favorite Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.

Afghan heroin began flooding into Baku. Russian economist Alexandre Datskevitch said of 184 heroin labs that police discovered in Moscow in 1991, “Every one of them was run by Azeris, who use the proceeds to buy arms for Azerbaijan’s war against Armenia in Nagorno-Karabakh”. [7]

A Turkish intelligence source claims that Exxon and Mobil (now Exxon Mobil) were behind the 1993 *coup* against elected Armenian President Abulfaz Elchibey. Secord’s Islamists helped. Osama bin Laden set up an NGO in Baku as a base for attacking the Russians in Chechnya and Dagestan.

A more pliant President Heidar Aliyev was installed in Armenia. In 1996, at the behest of Amoco’s (now BP) president, he was invited to the White House to meet President Clinton – whose National Security Advisor Sandy Berger held \$90,000 worth of Amoco stock. [8]

Not content with the Polish Solidarist-led grab of Eastern Europe and the partitioning of oil-rich Soviet Central Asian republics, the CFR/Bilderberger crowd now used *mujahadeen* surrogates in Chechnya to further squeeze Russia.

In 1994 35,000 Chechen fighters were trained at Amir Muawia camp in Afghanistan’s Khost Province. Osama bin Laden built the camp for the CIA. Now-deceased Chechen commander Shamil Basayev graduated from Amir Muawia and was sent to advanced guerrilla tactics camp at Markazi-i-Dawar, Pakistan. There he met with Pakistani ISI officials. [9] ISI has historically excelled at carrying out the CIA’s dirty laundry.

The Chechen Islamists took over a big chunk of the Golden Crescent heroin trade, working with Chechen crime families affiliated with the Russian Alfa Group that did business with Halliburton. They also had ties to the Albanian heroin labs being run by the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). A Russian FSB report stated that the Chechens began buying real estate in Kosovo in 1997, just prior to the US-led partition of Kosovo from Yugoslavia.

Saudi-born Chechen commander Emir al-Khattab set up guerrilla camps to train KLA Albanian rebels. The camps were funded by the heroin trade, prostitution rings and counterfeiting. Recruits were invited by Basayev and funded by the House of Saud’s Muslim Brotherhood Islamic Relief Organization. [10]

In February 2002 sent 200 military advisers and attack helicopters to Georgia to “root out terrorism”. On September 20, 2002, Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov stated that the *al-Qaeda*-trained Chechen rebels targeting his country were being given safe-haven by the government of Georgia. The Four Horsemen’s strategic Baku-Tblisi-Ceyhan pipeline was set to open through the Georgian capital Tblisi. The US deployment was a smokescreen for pipeline protection.

In October 2003 Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze was forced to step down despite the fact that he had been elected to serve until 2005. IMF darling Mikheil Saakashvili was installed to complete the banker *coup* which was dubbed the Rose Revolution. According to *The Guardian*, Rose Revolution funders included the U.S. State Department, USAID, National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, International Republican Institute, Bilderberg

Group, the NGO Freedom House, George Soros's Open Society Institute and National Endowment for Democracy (NED).

When Gulbuddin Hekmatyar ceded Kabul to the Taliban in 1995, Taliban training camps in Pakistan and Afghanistan were taken over by *Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Islam* (JUI) who, with help from Saudi Wahhabist clerics, recruited and trained Islamic fundamentalist volunteers to fight wars of destabilization throughout the Balkans and Central Asia.

Financed by Golden Crescent heroin, these terrorists shipped out to fight with Chechen rebels, the Kosovo Liberation Army, the Bosnian Muslim Army, the National Liberation Army (Albanian separatists fighting the government of Macedonia) and Chinese East Turkistan Uighur rebels fighting against Beijing.

Out of these same camps came *Lakshar e-Taiba* and *Jamiash-i-Mohammed*, who in December 2001 attacked India's Parliament in New Delhi, killing fourteen legislators and provoking the Indians into a massive military deployment along the Pakistani border.

In the early 1990's the CIA had helped Afghan *mujahadeen* veterans get passports to immigrate to the US. The *Al-Kifah* Refugee Center in Brooklyn, where many Afghans landed, turned into a CIA recruiting base for wars in Yugoslavia and Central Asia.

Among those who frequented the center were El Sayyid Nosair, who assassinated far-right Israeli Rabbi Meir Kahane; and Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman, a fundamentalist Egyptian cleric linked to the assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat. The CIA brought the sheik to Brooklyn as a recruiting tool. [11] His son was killed in December 2001 – a key *al Qaeda* leader fighting the US in Afghanistan.

The CIA arranged for Egyptian *al Qaeda* leaders to flee to Albania in 1997, where they helped train and fight with the Kosovo Liberation Army. Bin Laden's #2 man Ayman al-Zawahiri heads Egyptian Islamic Jihad. Al-Zawahiri's sidekick Ali Mohammed came to the US in 1984. He trained terrorists in Brooklyn and Jersey City on weekends. His regular job was to instruct US Special Forces at Fort Bragg. In 1998 he helped bomb the US Embassies in Africa. [12]

According to British MP Michael Meacher, in an article for *The Guardian*, M16 recruited up to 200 British Muslims to fight in Afghanistan and Yugoslavia. Meacher says a Delhi-based foundation describes Omar Saeed Sheikh, the man who beheaded US journalist Daniel Pearl in 2002, as a British agent. He says it was Sheikh who – at the behest of ISI General Mahmood Ahmed – wired \$100,000 to Mohammed Atta just prior to 9/11, a fact confirmed by Dennis Lomel, director of FBI's financial crimes unit. [13]

### **Restoring Petromonarchy**

According to Mossad intelligence reports, as of July 1, 2001, 120,000 metric tons of opium was warehoused in Afghanistan awaiting shipment. Two months later the US was bombing Afghanistan. Opium shipments resumed.

The US paid several Afghan warlords \$200,000 each and gave them satellite phones to lead a surrogate army Northern Alliance-led ground assault on the Taliban. Over \$7 million was spent buying off these opium-trafficking warlords, including Uzbek butcher Rashid Dostum. [14]

Amnesty International and UN Human Rights Commissioner Mary Robinson called for an investigation of an incident at Mazar-i-Sharif where Dostum oversaw the surrender of hundreds of Taliban and *al Qaeda* fighters, who were then massacred in a bombing raid by US aircraft during an alleged prison uprising. The “American Taliban” John Walker Lindh was among the few survivors.

The prisoners had come from Konduz where, according to investigative journalist Seymour Hirsch of *The New Yorker*, the White House had ordered US Special Forces to create an evacuation corridor whereby Pakistani military aircraft were allowed to fly no less than 2,500 *al Qaeda* and Taliban fighters – along with their ISI advisers and at least two Pakistani generals – to safety in Pakistan.

While the Bush Administration used an alleged *al Qaeda*/Saddam Hussein alliance as a pretext to turn its guns towards oil-rich Iraq, *al Qaeda* and Taliban leadership remained unharmed in Pakistan.

In Afghanistan US envoy and former Unocal executive Zalmay Khalilzad was busy paving the way for the construction of the Unocal-led Centgas pipeline. Later Khalilzad became US Ambassador to Iraq. US Ambassador to Pakistan Wendy Chamberlain huddled with Pakistan Oil Minister Usman Aminuddin and the Saudi Ambassador to Pakistan to plan the pipeline, which would run next to Khandahar – home of Taliban leader Mullah Mohammed Omar.

Omar favored the Centgas consortium and remains mysteriously at large. Northern Alliance leader Burhanuddin Rabbani- who had been Afghan Prime Minister until he was deposed by Hekmatyar and the Taliban in 1996 – was quietly dealt out of the new Kabul government, ostensibly for favoring the Argentine-led Bidas pipeline consortium. [15]

The World Bank and IMF set up shop in Kabul after a twenty-five year hiatus. Halliburton’s Brown & Root subsidiary and other post-war “reconstruction specialists” lined up for contracts. On December 27, 2002 Turkmenistan, Pakistan and Afghanistan signed a deal paving the way for the Centgas pipeline.

The US-handpicked Afghan Prime Minister Hamid Karzai emerged after the assassination of contender Abdul Haq, who walked into a trap inside Afghanistan while supposedly under CIA protection. Haq’s handler was Robert “Bud” McFarlane, Reagan’s National Security Advisor who now runs a K Street oil consulting firm. Haq had no ties to the oil industry and was considered by the CIA to be too cozy with Iran and Russia. Rabbani’s Northern Alliance military commander Sheik Massoud was mysteriously assassinated just two days before 911.

According to Iranian, Afghan and Turkish government sources, Hamid Karzai was a top adviser to Unocal during their negotiations with the Taliban. He was also a CIA contact during the Company’s decade-long Afghan War. Bill Casey made sure Karzai’s family was moved safely to the US after anarchy took over in Kabul. [16]

Karzai is close to King Zaher Shah, who returned to Afghanistan from exile to convene the royalist *loya jerga* in July 2002. When all other presidential candidates mysteriously dropped out of the race just 24 hours before the election, Karzai got the nod as head of state. His people then shut down debate at the conference, stonewalled on the formation of parliament and refused to appoint a cabinet. Karzai secret police roamed the grounds of the conference looking for dissenters to jail. According to tribal representative Hassan Kakar,

delegates disagreeing with Karzai were not even allowed to speak. [17]

The Karzai government represents a return of the Afghan monarchy, compliant as ever to international banker interests in the region. In 2005 Chevron Texaco bought Unocal, cementing Four Horsemen control over the trans-Afghan Centgas pipeline.

## Notes

[1] "Central Asia Unveiled". Mike Edwards. *National Geographic*. 2-02

[2] *Reaping the Whirlwind: The Taliban Movement in Afghanistan*. Michael Griffin. Pluto Press. London. 2001. p.124

[3] "The Geostrategy of Plan Columbia". Manuel Salgado Tamayo. *Covert Action Quarterly*. Winter 2001. p.37

[4] "The Roving Eye: Pipelineistan, Part I: The Rules of the Game". Pepe Escobar. *Asia Times Online*. 1-25-02

[5] *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*. Ahmed Rashid. Yale University Publishing. New Haven, CT. 2001. p.145

[6] *Azerbaijan Diary: A Rogue Reporter's Adventures in a Oil-Rich, War-Torn, Post- Soviet Republic*. Thomas Goltz. M.E. Sharpe. Armonk, NY. 1999. p.272

[7] "*al-Qaeda*, US Oil Companies and Central Asia". Peter Dale Scott. *Nexus*. May-June, 2006. p.11-15

[8] *See No Evil: The True Story of a Ground Soldier in the CIA's War on Terrorism*. Robert Baer. Crown. New York. 2002. p.243-244

[9] "Who is Osama bin Laden?" Michel Chossudovsky. [www.copvicia.com](http://www.copvicia.com) 12-17-01

[10] Ibid

[11] "The Road to September 11". Evan Thomas. *Newsweek*. 10-1-01. p.41

[12] "Bin Laden's Invisible Network". Evan Thomas. *Newsweek*. 10-29-01. p.42

[13] *The Asian News*. 9-30-05. [www.theasiannews.co.uk](http://www.theasiannews.co.uk)

[14] "US Paid Off Warlords". Andrew Bushnell. *Washington Times*. 2-7-02

[15] Michel Chossudovsky. [www.globalresearch.ca](http://www.globalresearch.ca) 1-23-02

[16] Ibid

[17] "Evening Edition". National Public Radio. 6-17-02

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