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Conference Backs Karzai Plan for Afghan-led Security by 2014

International leaders meeting at a conference held at the Afghan Interior Ministry in Kabul, Afghanistan, on July 20 renewed their commitment to turn over responsibility for the nation's security to the Afghan government by 2014.

"I remain determined that our Afghan national security forces will be responsible for all military and law enforcement operations throughout our country by 2014," President Hamid Karzai told the attendees, including Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and many other Foreign Ministers.



The *Los Angeles Times* reported that all of the major troop-contributing nations in the Afghan conflict were represented at the conference. And while an endorsement of Karzai's timeline was not mandatory, it reflected a growing desire on the part of NATO allies to have some kind of troop reduction/removal plan in place.

The *Times* report noted that Karzai had presented the goal of his nation assuming responsibility for security by 2014 last November, at the time of his inauguration for a second presidential term. Since then, however, the sense of urgency surrounding an exit strategy for the West has increased greatly.

Security in Kabul was tight in preparation for the conference, but when rockets were fired at the Kabul airport, a plane carrying UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Sweden's Foreign Minister, Carl Bildt, was diverted to the U.S.-operated Bagram airbase. The dignitaries were then taken to Kabul aboard Blackhawk helicopters.

The *New York Times* reported that Karzai promised at the conference to make substantial efforts in anti-corruption and to work toward ending the fighting in his country. He stated his belief that his country could prosper, lifting its "people from poverty to prosperity and from insecurity to stability."

"Our vision is to be the peaceful meeting place of civilizations," he said in an address. "Our location in the center of the new Silk Road makes us a convergence point of regional and global economic interests."

The *Times* report quoted Secretary of State Clinton, who acknowledged the unpopularity of the war in statements to foreign leaders gathered at the conference, in which she stated that achieving popular support for the continued International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission in Afghanistan, considering the relatively limited progress so far, would be a challenge. "We know the road ahead will not be easy," Clinton said. "Citizens of many nations represented here, including my own, wonder whether success is even possible — and if so, whether we all have the commitment to achieve it."

Clinton also tried to correct any misconceptions about the July 2011 date mentioned by President Obama in his speech outlining his Afghan policy last fall as the date when he would begin to bring



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troops home.

"The July 2011 date captures both our sense of urgency and the strength of our resolve," Clinton said. "The transition process is too important to push off indefinitely. But this date is the *start of a new phase, not the end of our involvement.*" (Emphasis added.)

In an online analysis at BBC News entitled ["What will come out of the 'historic' Kabul conference?"](#), BBC reporter Lyse Doucet explored some of the meeting's significant statements. Doucet quoted Afghan Finance Minister Omar Zakhilwal, who played a key role in organizing the gathering, who told the BBC: "We are putting on a display [for] Afghan leadership and asking for Afghan ownership."

Doucet asked rhetorically: "What will the day-long conference achieve for Afghanistan's future?" and then noted:

The targets range from job creation, to urban development, agriculture and mining.

"Its back to fundamentals," asserted former Afghan Finance Minister Ashraf Ghani, who is a key conference co-ordinator.

"It's about what to grow, and how to grow it, what to build and how to build it."

UN Special Representative Staffan de Mistura presented a similar assessment.

"The Afghans are saying 'trust us, give us benchmarks' and the international community is saying the same thing."

The buzz word is "*Afghanization*" with Afghan government ministries being organized in new clusters expected to meet new targets of financial accountability, efficiency and effectiveness. The expectation is that the Afghan National Army will be able to take over security soon. [Emphasis added.]

Doucet's use of the term "*Afghanization*" immediately brought to mind the term "[Vietnamization](#)," which is described in a Wikipedia article as follows:

Vietnamization was a policy of the Richard M. Nixon administration, as a result of [the North Vietnamese] Tet [offensive] to "expand, equip, and train South Vietnam's forces and assign to them an ever-increasing combat role, at the same time steadily reducing the number of U.S. combat troops." ... After Nixon's election in 1968, this became the policy of the United States.

Further along in the article, the author provides some interesting context for the policy:

Vietnamization fit into the broader Nixon Administration detente policy, in which the United States no longer regarded its fundamental strategy as containment of Communism, but a cooperative world order in which Nixon and his chief adviser Henry Kissinger were basically "realists" in world affairs, interested in the broader constellation of forces, and the biggest powers.

The comparison between the ongoing "war on terrorism" in the Middle East and previous undeclared "no-win wars" such as those in Vietnam and Korea is inevitable. However, much can be learned from exploring the forces supporting our nation's adversaries in all of these conflicts.

Writers for *The New American* magazine (notably William F. Jasper) have long noted that the most radical "Islamic" terrorist organizations take their inspiration more from Karl Marx than Muhammad and are beholden to the international communist network for their power. Another writer for *The New American*, Thomas Eddlem, noted in his article, "[The Soviet Roots of Terrorism](#)":

Americans have been conditioned to fear Islamic terrorism, but most Americans have been told



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little about how much of the international terror web was created by the former Soviet Union. The roots of Soviet sponsorship of international Islamic terrorist organizations go all the way back to the beginning. And the beginning of “Islamic” terrorism can be laid at the feet of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

The entire article is well worth reading for the basic background of international terrorism that it provides.

Going back to the previous description of “Vietnamization” as fitting into the Nixon administration’s detente policy (“in which the United States no longer regarded its fundamental strategy as containment of Communism, but a cooperative world order”) one can easily see a continuation of this policy as applying to our current “war on terror.” If detente applied to the Moscow communists (who provided aid to our communst enemy in Vietnam), by logical extension, it would also seem to apply to Middle East-based terrorists organizations operating under directives from Moscow.

“Vietnamization” eventually resulted in all of Vietnam coming under the control of the communists. Will the strategy of “Afghanization” fare any better? Or is the “war on terror” merely another campaign in a war to establish a “a cooperative world order” under the United Nations?

Photo: Afghan President Hamid Karzai, left, talks with US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton as they tour a bazaar near the hall of the International Conference on Afghanistan in Kabul on July 20, 2010.: AP Images



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