Taliban fighters take control of the Afghan presidential palace in Kabul, Afghanistan, 15 August 2021 after President Ashraf Ghani fled the country. (Photo by Zabi Karimi, Associated Press)

Afghanistan

Extract from *Political Tribes: Group Instinct and the Fate of Nations*

Amy Chua

In Afghanistan, you don't understand yourself solely as an individual ... You understand yourself as a son, a brother, a cousin to somebody, an uncle to somebody. You are part of something bigger than yourself.

—Khaled Hosseini

May God keep you away from the venom of the cobra, the teeth of the tiger, and the revenge of the Afghans.

—Proverb

For most Americans, Afghanistan is a black box. We know that our soldiers have died there, that there are mullahs and caves, and that both may have harbored Osama bin Laden. We're vaguely aware that the war we're fighting in Afghanistan is the longest in our history. We've all heard of the Taliban, an organization that destroys art and bans girls from school, and that wears black or possibly white. Our dim memory is that we beat them once, but now for some reason they

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are back, and we have no idea what's going on, and we just want to forget about the whole country.

Yet we keep hearing ominous warnings from people in the know that things are going badly there and are likely to get worse—that Afghanistan is "a foreign policy disaster," a "neverending war." Or as one congressman recently wrote in the *National Interest*, "Fifteen years, thousands of lives and tens of billions of dollars later, the United States has failed to meet most of its key objectives in Afghanistan. Mission failed."

As in Vietnam, the core reason for America's failures in Afghanistan is that we were oblivious to the most important group identities in the region, which do not fall along national lines, but instead are ethnic, tribal, and clan based. Afghanistan's national anthem mentions fourteen ethnic groups, the largest four being the Pashtuns, Tajiks, Uzbeks, and Hazaras. There is a long history of animosity among these groups. For more than two hundred years, the Pashtuns dominated Afghanistan, but during the Cold War their dominance began to decline, and in 1992, a Tajikand Uzbek-led coalition seized control. The Taliban, supported by Pakistan, emerged against this background.

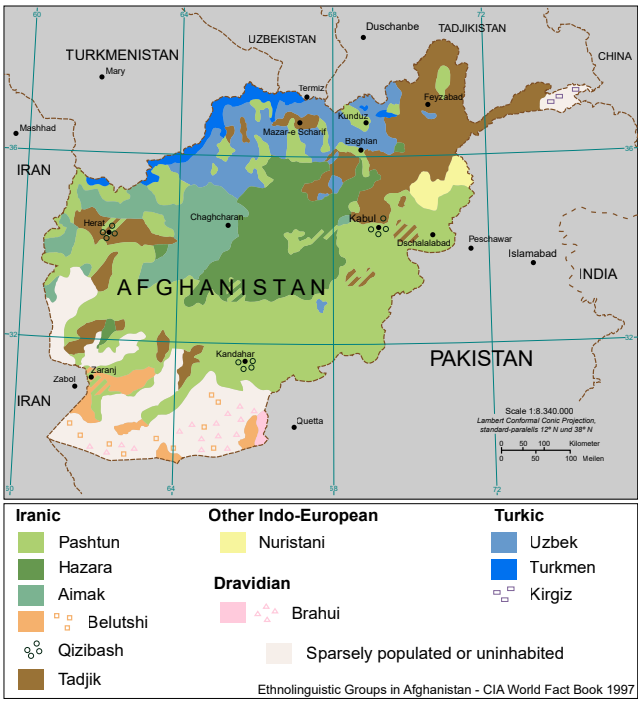
The Taliban is not only an Islamist movement but also an *ethnic* movement. The vast majority of its members are Pashtuns. It was founded by Pashtuns, it is led by Pashtuns, and it arose out of—and derives its staying power because of—threats to Pashtun dominance.

American leaders and policy makers entirely missed these ethnic realities, and the results have been calamitous. Our blindness to tribal politics allowed Pakistan to play us badly, turned large numbers of Afghans against us, and led us inadvertently to help create the Taliban, arming, funding, and training many of its key figures.

The problem in Afghanistan is not just radical Islam. It's also an ethnic problem. And it's rooted in a cardinal rule of tribal politics: once in power, groups do not give up their dominance easily.

Afghanistan and Pakistan

Afghanistan is landlocked. It shares its western border with Iran (indeed, Afghanistan's Tajiks speak Dari Persian and are often described as "Eastern Iranians"). To its north lie the former Soviet Central Asian republics of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan. To its east and southeast sits Pakistan, with which it shares a fifteen-hundred-mile-long border, known as the Durand Line.



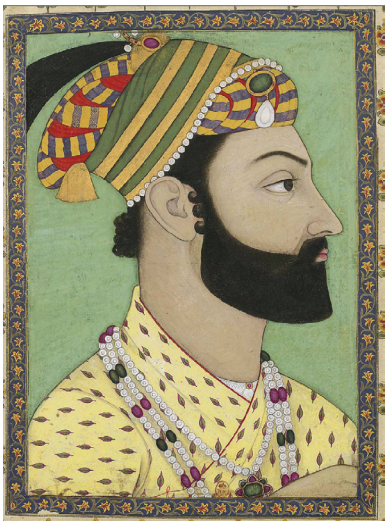
(Map courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)

Ethnolinguistic Groups in Afghanistan

The state of Afghanistan was established in 1747 by a Pashtun, the celebrated king Ahmad Shah Durrani. From 1747 to 1973, Pashtun leaders ruled Afghanistan almost continuously. Pashtuns pride themselves on being great warriors; Europeans never conquered Afghanistan—although the British and Russians certainly tried. Pashto is the mother tongue of the Pashtuns, who also have their own code of conduct, known as Pashtunwali, which is difficult to translate into Western terms but roughly includes honor, hospitality, reciprocity, and revenge among its key components. Many Pashtuns think of Afghanistan as "their country," and even today, the terms "Afghan" and "Pashtun" are often used interchangeably.

But Pashtuns don't live only in Afghanistan; they also live in Pakistan. Indeed, the name "Pakistan" is an acronym, invented in Cambridge, England, in 1933, denoting the country's major ethnic regions. *P* stands for Punjab, *A* for Afghan (referring to Pashtuns), *K* for Kashmir, *S* for Sindh, and *tan* for Balochistan.

While Pashtuns have politically dominated Afghanistan, Punjabis have politically dominated Pakistan. Representing somewhere around half the population, Punjabis control Pakistan's famous military



Ahmad Shah Abdali Durrani is considered the founder of the modern state of Afghanistan. (Image courtesy of Bibliothèque nationale de France via Wikimedia Commons)

as well as most state institutions. Punjabis are also intensely ethnocentric. They speak Punjabi, and they are highly endogamous, typically marrying other Punjabis, often their own cousins. This practice is common even among Punjabis in Great Britain, where first-cousin marriages among Pakistanis are leading to an "appalling" and "absolutely unacceptable" incidence of "disability among children," as a (Lahore-born) member of the House of Lords recently warned.

Ever since independence, the Pakistani government has viewed the Pashtuns as a major threat. This is because there are *a lot* of Pashtuns in Pakistan. In fact, although Pashtuns comprise only 15 percent of Pakistan's total population, there are actually *more* Pashtuns in Pakistan (about 28 million) than in Afghanistan (about 15 million). Worse, most of Pakistan's Pashtuns live clustered near the Afghanistan border, along the Durand Line, which British colonialists drew in 1893 and which Pashtuns scorn as illegitimate. Indeed, Pashtuns on both sides of the border cross the Durand Line at will, which is not difficult given that the "line" runs through rugged terrain practically impossible to police. A common saying among Pashtuns holds that "[y]ou cannot separate water with a stick," and many Pashtuns in Pakistan still identify themselves as Afghan.

Pakistani fear of Pashtun nationalism and irredentism grew even more acute after 1971, when Pakistan's Bengalis broke away in a violent, successful attempt to establish Bangladesh as an independent country. Pakistan's Punjabi elites were determined not to let that happen again with the Pashtuns.

"The Soviet Union's Vietnam"

In 1978, Afghanistan's president was overthrown and brutally murdered in his palace along with most of his family members, their bodies thrown in a ditch. Although pro-Communist rebels led the coup, it took not only the United States but also the Soviet Union by surprise. According to one historian of the Soviet Union, "even the KGB learned about the leftist coup ex post facto." Fortunately for the United States, the Soviet Union was as ethnically blind as we were during the Cold War, similarly viewing world events in terms of a grand battle between communism and capitalism. After the 1978 coup, the Soviet ambassador to Afghanistan tried valiantly to interpret what had happened in orthodox Marxist terms. In a letter to Moscow, he explained that the previous government had accelerated the contradictions of capitalism, leading to a proletariat revolution sooner than anyone had expected. This assessment bore no resemblance to reality. There was no proletariat in Afghanistan. The coup was the culmination of a festering feud between one faction dominated by rural

Afghan Amir Sher Ali Khan (*center with his son*) and his delegation in Ambala, near Lahore, in 1869. (Photo courtesy of the British Library via Wikimedia Commons)

Pashtuns (who were behind the coup) and another dominated by urban Tajiks.

The new government in Afghanistan was a disaster. While its leaders might have been nominally Communist, they were also, first and foremost, Pashtun nationalists who "viewed 'Afghan' as synonymous with 'Pashtun.'" To consolidate power, they embarked on a campaign of terror, hunting down rival religious and tribal leaders, and torturing and executing more than fifty thousand people. The Soviet Union's new "Afghan clients" became totally unmanageable. Moscow feared that the growing turmoil would bring anti-Communist, pro-American forces to power.

In December 1979, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. "It'll be over in three to four weeks," Leonid Brezhnev told the Soviet ambassador to the United States. Nine years later, the Soviets left Afghanistan with their tail between their legs, having been defeated by the U.S.-backed mujahedin. At the time, Washington policy makers were thrilled; we had beaten our rival superpower practically on their own turf. But the Soviet defeat was a Pyrrhic victory for America.

The last Soviet troop column crosses Soviet border 15 September 1989 after leaving Afghanistan. The banner reads "Слава солдатам отечества! Слава сынам родины!" (Glory to the soldiers of the fatherland! Glory to the sons of the motherland!) (Photo courtesy of the RIA Novosti Archive via Wikimedia Commons)

The United States as Pakistan's Geopolitical Pawn

The Soviet invasion of 1979 alarmed the Carter administration. Zbigniew Brzezinski, Carter's national security adviser, was simultaneously hopeful that Moscow had overreached but fearful of a reprise of 1956, when the Soviets invaded Hungary and crushed the resistance there, or of 1968, when they did the same in Czechoslovakia. At the same time, we were still stinging from Vietnam, and direct military involvement was out of the question. So we opted to covertly arm the anti-Soviet Afghan mujahedin, through Pakistan. All decisions about "who got the most guns, the most money, the most power" were left to Pakistan's anti-Communist dictator, General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq.

In other words, we outsourced our Cold War policy in Afghanistan to Pakistan. In turn, Pakistan took us for a ride, making the United States its geopolitical pawn. Pakistan knew exactly how to manipulate ethnic politics in Afghanistan.

Zia's strategy was classic divide-and-conquer. The Pashtun people are not homogeneous. On the contrary, they are notoriously internally fragmented, with a maze of hundreds of smaller tribes and clans, many with longstanding rivalries and conflicts. Indeed, the Pashtuns are the world's largest tribally organized society. Although virtually all Pashtuns are Sunni Muslims, some tribes (often rural) are more religious, while others (typically urban) are more secular. Zia shrewdly favored and empowered Islamist Pashtuns, splitting them off from moderates and allying them with his own Islamist regime. He built madrassas throughout the Pashtun regions. These Islamic schools cultivated an extremist and virulent fundamentalism among young Pashtun men. As former Afghan president Hamid Karzai would later put it, "Pakistan set out to destroy Pashtun nationalism by Islamizing Pakistani Pashtuns and killing Afghan Pashtun nationalists. Pakistan's goal was to have Afghanistan dominated by radical Islam."

U.S. policy makers, focused on the battle against communism, barely knew anything about the Pashtuns. On the contrary, the United States romanticized the

Pakistan-supported Afghan mujahedin as soldiers fighting for the free world. (Congressman Charlie Wilson had floor-to-ceiling framed photographs of mujahedin warriors in heroic pose hung on his office wall.) Even in the face of the stunning upheaval of the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979 and the taking of American hostages there, U.S. foreign policy in Afghanistan never saw the potent anti-American, anti-Western group identity fueling the Islamic fundamentalist fighters. Fixated on the Cold War, we were heedless of the monster we were helping to create.

Between 1980 and 1992 we funneled through Pakistan almost $5 billion worth of weapons and ammunition—including heavy machine guns, explosives, antiaircraft cannons, wireless interception equipment, and twenty-three hundred shoulder-fired Stinger missiles—to anti-Soviet mujahedin fighters, paying no attention to whom we were arming. The recipients included the likes of Mullah Mohammed Omar, who would eventually land on America's most-wanted list and become the Taliban's intensely anti-Western supreme commander. It's not an exaggeration to say that the United States was in significant part responsible for the rise of the Taliban and for turning Afghanistan into a hospitality suite for Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda militants.

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After the Soviet withdrawal in 1989, Afghanistan descended into years of brutal civil war. The U.S. government lost interest in the country, even as Pakistan and Saudi Arabia each continued to aggressively finance and arm their favored Afghan jihadist leaders. In 1996, America was caught completely off guard when a group of barefooted mullahs calling themselves the Taliban captured Kabul and took over two thirds of Afghanistan.

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The Taliban: Playing the Ethnic Card

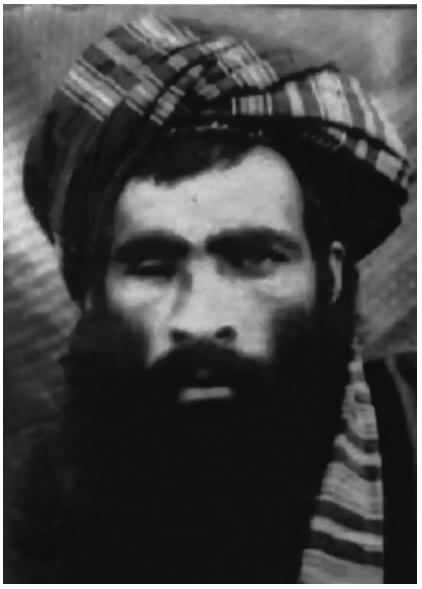
Afghanistan in the early nineties was lawless. Warlords ruled practically every city and town. Racketeers and drug mafias reaped enormous profits. Kidnappings, extortion, and rape—including of young girls—were rampant. One reason so many war-weary Afghans initially supported the Taliban was that it provided security where previously chaos reigned, even if security under the Taliban came with a strict Islamic dress code and bans on television, music, cards, kite flying, and most sports.

But the Taliban was able to provide security—to amass power and popular support broad and deep enough to establish law and order—because of its appeal to Pashtun ethnic identity.

For hundreds of years, the ruler of Afghanistan was always Pashtun. After the fall of the Afghan monarchy in 1973, the Soviet invasion, and years of civil war, Pashtun dominance was suddenly upended. In the early 1990s, much of the country was controlled by members of the Tajik minority. The Pashtuns had lost control of Kabul, the nation's capital, where Burhanuddin Rabbani—a Tajik—was now president. They had lost control of the state bureaucracy, to the extent that it was still functioning. The Pashto language, once dominant in the nation's government-run television, radio, and newspapers, had lost status and declined dramatically. The Pashtuns had even lost control of their core power base, the Afghan military, which had

fragmented, leaving non-Pashtun generals in command over the remaining units. As a result, deep resentment and fear of marginalization, of being eclipsed, had become widespread among Pashtuns of all different clans and tribes. Into this breach stepped the Taliban.

Virtually all of the Taliban leadership, and most of its rank and file, are Pashtuns—typically Ghilzai Pashtuns, from the "lowest socio-economic rung of society." The Taliban uses Pashto as its exclusive language of communication, and "[t]heir Pashtun identity is also obvious from their dress and individual behavior." The promise to restore Pashtun dominance in Afghanistan was a key part of the Taliban's rise to power.



One of the few portraits of Mullah Omar in 1993, just before he founded the Taliban. (Photo by Khalid Hadi)

Going from village to village, clan to clan, Taliban leaders combined their call for a simpler, purer Islam with appeals to Pashtun pride and resentment, offering Pashtuns a chance to reclaim their proper place. As Seth Jones writes:

> The Taliban's strategy was innovative and ruthlessly effective. Unlike the Soviets, they focused their initial efforts on bottom-up efforts in *rural* Afghanistan, especially the Pashtun south. They approached tribal leaders and militia commanders, as well as their rank-and-file supporters, and ... they offered to restore Pashtun control of Kabul, which was run by the Tajik Rabbani ... . It was a strategy accomplished on a very personal level: Taliban leaders who spoke the local dialect traveled to the Pashtun villages and district centers.

This is also why the Taliban was able to take over Afghanistan so quickly, catching the U.S. government unaware. "[T]he Taliban's Pashtun identity allowed them to sweep through the Pashtun areas relatively easily—in many cases without a shot being fired." It was primarily in non-Pashtun areas that the Taliban met with strong resistance. In the words of the influential Pashtun thinker Anwar-ul Haq Ahady (who later became head of Afghanistan's central bank under President Hamid Karzai), for many Pashtuns, fears of Pashtun marginalization were "more significant than the fall of communism. … The rise of the Taliban generated optimism among the Pashtuns about a reversal of their decline."

The Taliban's leader, Mullah Mohammed Omar, understood better than anyone the art of Afghan tribal politics. As Steve Coll writes in *Ghost Wars*, the poorly educated, one-eyed cleric from an undistinguished Pashtun clan "was an unlikely heir to Pashtun glory." But Omar was a master at interweaving fundamentalist Islam with Pashtun pride and symbolism. On the day he assumed leadership in the spring of 1996, he convened in Kandahar an audience of more than a thousand Pashtun leaders and religious scholars. There he called them to the tomb of the great Pashtun king Ahmad Shah Durrani, who after unifying the Pashtun tribes in 1747 had gone on to occupy Delhi and extend Afghan rule as far as Tibet. As Omar figuratively wrapped himself in Durrani's mantle, he climbed on the roof of the adjacent mosque and literally wrapped himself in the supposed "Cloak of the Holy Prophet." The crowd exulted and named him "Commander of the Faithful."

Ultimately, the Taliban never succeeded in unifying Afghanistan's Pashtuns. In part, this is because Pakistan's divide-and-conquer policies worked exactly as planned. More moderate, pro-Western Pashtuns found the Taliban's fanaticism increasingly repulsive. The Taliban's close ties with Pakistan also undermined its appeal to ordinary Afghans, who feared the "Pakistanization" of their country. Nevertheless, the Taliban's Pashtun identity and its readiness to exploit Pashtun ethnonationalism have been essential to its appeal, drawing large numbers of Pashtuns into its orbit from a surprising range of tribal, economic, and, to some extent, ideological backgrounds.

The ethnic side of the Taliban was even starker for the country's non-Pashtuns, who were systematically targeted. In 1998, for example, the Taliban massacred 2,000 Uzbeks and Hazaras (who for their part had

massacred Taliban Pashtuns in 1997) and tried to starve another 160,000. The Taliban also persecuted and killed Tajiks, particularly in the country's rural areas.

The United States never saw the ethnic side of the Taliban. In the eighties and early nineties, we saw the mujahedin only as anti-Communist and therefore as friends. Needless to say, we quickly soured on our "freedom fighter" allies—especially after we learned that they weren't allowing girls to attend school, had slaughtered entire communities, and had barbarically destroyed the ancient Buddha statues in the Bamiyan Valley. Osama bin Laden officially launched al-Qaeda from Taliban-controlled Afghanistan, announcing to the world that it was the duty of "every Muslim" to kill Americans "in any country in which it is possible to do it." But when it became clear that the Taliban were not our friends—specifically, when they refused to turn over bin Laden after he took down the World Trade Center—we simply traded in our Cold War lens for an antiterrorist or anti-Islamist one. We recast the Taliban as a bunch of cave-dwelling mullahs and once again failed to see the central importance of ethnicity.

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The U.S. Invasion of Afghanistan

In October 2001, just a few weeks after the 9/11 attacks, on a wave of collective grief and anger, we sent troops to Afghanistan. We continued to make terrible miscalculations, repeatedly underestimating the importance of ethnic and tribal identity.

Impressively, we toppled the Taliban in just seventy-five days. But in doing so, we joined forces with the Northern Alliance, led by Tajik and Uzbek warlords and widely viewed as anti-Pashtun. According to counterterrorism expert Hassan Abbas, the Uzbek warlord Abdul Rashid Dostum, one of the Northern Alliance's commanders, "mercilessly killed thousands of Taliban foot soldiers," even though many had already surrendered. Dostum "was known for such tendencies, but on this occasion he did it on the payroll of the CIA." In another horrific episode, Dostum's soldiers packed thousands of Taliban prisoners in shipping containers for transport, with no food or water. Although Dostum later insisted that the deaths were unintentional, "hundreds suffocated in the containers. More were killed when Dostum's guards shot into the containers. The bodies were buried in a mass grave. … [A]bout 1,500 Taliban prisoners died."

Most Pashtuns—including many who were not sympathetic to the Taliban—saw Dostum's brutality as an act of ethnic revenge. For them, he was an anti-Pashtun mass killer. When Dostum became one of "America's warlords," it didn't exactly endear us to the Pashtuns.

We compounded the problem with the post-Taliban government we helped set up, alienating Pashtuns all over the country by appearing to exclude them while favoring their rival ethnic groups. At a heavily U.S.-influenced postwar conference convened in Bonn to determine the "future of Afghanistan," Afghanistan was represented by a team consisting primarily of Uzbeks, Tajiks, and Hazaras from the Northern Alliance, along with a smaller number of exiled Pashtuns. American policy in Afghanistan was effectively to exclude almost anyone "remotely associated with the Taliban"—including thousands of more moderate Pashtuns who were connected to the Taliban through clan ties or who had worked with the Taliban without necessarily accepting its jihadist ideology.

Moreover, the United States was seen (to some extent correctly) as turning over the country's key positions of power to the Pashtuns' archrival ethnic group, the Tajiks, many of them known for corruption and patronage. Although President Hamid Karzai was a Pashtun, Tajiks filled most of the top ministry positions, such as army chief of staff, director of military intelligence, army inspector general, and director of counternarcotics forces. Only 24 percent of the population, Tajiks made up 70 percent of the army's corps commanders in the new U.S.-supported Afghan National Army. As Tajiks appeared

to grow wealthy while U.S. airstrikes pounded primarily Pashtun regions, a bitter saying spread among Afghan Pashtuns: "[t]hey get the dollars, and we get the bullets." Many who had initially welcomed the U.S. military intervention in 2001 grew increasingly alienated from the new U.S.-backed regime, which has left Pashtuns at the very bottom of global human development.

After U.S. and coalition troops "defeated" the Taliban—actually just sending many of its foot soldiers into hiding in the mountains—we effectively turned our back on the country. With our eyes set on Iraq, we failed to implement any measures ensuring security or basic services for the Afghan people. This was a grave error. One of the Taliban's main strengths was that it had put a stop to the previously rampant extortions, rapes, gang robberies, and abductions, and after the United States routed the Taliban, corruption and lawlessness surged anew.

In December 2001, Vice President Cheney declared, "The Taliban is out of business, permanently." By 2010, the Taliban had regained control of major swaths of eastern and southern Afghanistan—despite the United States having spent a staggering $650 billion on the war and sacrificed more than 2,200 American lives. In 2016, U.S. Forces Afghanistan reported that about 43 percent of the country's districts were either "contested" or back under insurgent control or influence. In March 2017, the Taliban recaptured a key area in Helmand Province—an area known for opium poppy production that U.S. and British troops had defended at great human cost. According to a CNN security analyst, the Taliban was able to do so in part because "the Taliban have popular support, the government in Kabul [doesn't]. The further away from Kabul you get the worse it becomes." Meanwhile, Afghanistan has once again become an epicenter for terrorism, attracting members of al-Qaeda, ISIS, and the Pakistani Taliban (which killed 132 schoolchildren in Peshawar in 2014).

From the Cold War through the present day, our foreign policy in Afghanistan has been a colossal failure. In daunting part, this is because we either failed to understand or chose to ignore the country's complex tribal politics. What General Stanley McChrystal said of the NATO-led security forces in 2009 was surely true of the United States as well: We had "not sufficiently studied Afghanistan's peoples, whose needs, identities and grievances vary from province to province and from valley to valley." Consequently, as with Vietnam, nearly every move we made in Afghanistan was practically designed to turn large segments of the population against us.

Specifically, we never saw and never solved—in fact, never really even tried to solve—the Pashtun problem. The Pashtuns see Afghanistan as *their* country. They founded it and ruled it continuously for more than two hundred years; they defeated two world superpowers—the British and the Russians. However much they loathe the Taliban, Pashtuns are not going to support any regime they view as subordinating the Pashtun people to their deeply resented ethnic rivals.

Today, there are a host of excellent and insightful books and articles with titles like "The Pashtun Dilemma," "The Pashtun Problem," and "The Pashtun Question," which, hopefully, U.S. foreign policy makers are now paying attention to. But, as always, it's a little late. ■

Notes

*The **bold face page numbers** correspond to the original notes as listed for chapter 3 in the book *Political Tribes: Group Instinct and the Fate of Nations* (New York: Penguin Press, 2018). The ***italicized page numbers*** correspond to the same notes but refer to those pages to which they refer in this extracted version of the chapter printed here.

[88] **59 "In Afghanistan, you don't":** Hermione Hoby, "Khaled Hosseini, 'If I Could Go Back Now, I'd Take the Kite Runner Apart,'" Guardian, June 1, 2013.

[88] **59 "May God keep you":** There are many versions of this saying, which is sometimes attributed to Alexander the Great. See, e.g., "May God Keep You Away from Revenge of the Afghans," *London Post*, April 22, 2014 (remarks of Sir James Bevan KCMG, UK High Commissioner to India, to the Delhi Policy Group).

[88] **59 longest in our history:** See Andrew J. Bacevich, "The Never-Ending War in Afghanistan," *New York Times*, March 13, 2017.

[89] **60 "a foreign policy disaster":** Ann Jones, "America Lost in Afghanistan: Anatomy of a Foreign Policy Disaster," *Salon*, November 6, 2015, http://www.salon.com/2015/11/06/america_lost_in_afghanistan_partner.

[89] **60 a "never-ending war":** Bacevich, "The Never-Ending War in Afghanistan."

[89] **60 "Fifteen years, thousands":** Dana Rohrabacher, "How to Win in Afghanistan," *National Interest*, January 18, 2017.

[89] **60 Afghanistan's national anthem:** Barnett R. Rubin, *Afghanistan from the Cold War Through the War on Terror* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 161. The other ethnic groups recognized in the anthem are the Turkmen, Baluch, Pashai, Nuristani,

Aymaq, Arab, Kyrgyz, Qizilbash, Gujar, and Brahui. Ibid.; see also Anwar-ul-Haq Ahady, "The Decline of the Pashtuns in Afghanistan," *Asian Survey* 35, no. 7 (1995): 621.

[89] **60 history of animosity:** Ahady, "The Decline of the Pashtuns in Afghanistan," 631–34.

[89] **60 For more than two hundred:** Hassan Abbas, *The Taliban Revival: Violence and Extremism on the Pakistan-Afghanistan Border* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014), 24.

[89] **60 in 1992:** Seth G. Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires: America's War in Afghanistan* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2009), 43–44; Ahady, "The Decline of the Pashtuns in Afghanistan," 623–24.

[89] **60 The vast majority:** Abbas, *The Taliban Revival*, 5–7, 10; Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires*, 59–60; Abubakar Siddique, *The Pashtun Question: The Unresolved Key to the Future of Pakistan and Afghanistan* (London: C. Hurst & Company, 2014), 56.

[89] **60 It was founded:** Abbas, *The Taliban Revival*, 10, 62–63, 65; Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004), 283–87; Siddique, *The Pashtun Question*, 198.

[89] **61 as "Eastern Iranians":** Michael Barry, "Afghanistan," in *Princeton Encyclopedia of Islamic Political Thought*, ed. Gerhard Bowering et al. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013), 20.

[89] **61 a fifteen-hundred-mile-long border:** Jayshree Bajoria, "The Troubled Afghan-Pakistani Border," Council on Foreign Relations, March 20, 2009, http://www.cfr.org/pakistan/troubled-afghan-pakistani-border/p14905; see also Abbas, *The Taliban Revival*, 35.

[89] **61 established in 1747:** Abbas, *The Taliban Revival*, 22; Peter Tomsen, *The Wars of Afghanistan: Messianic Terrorism, Tribal Conflicts, and the Failures of Great Powers* (New York: Public Affairs, 2011), xxi.

[89] **61 From 1747 to 1973:** Abbas, *The Taliban Revival*, 24.

[89] **61 Europeans never conquered Afghanistan:** Tomsen, *The Wars of Afghanistan*, 29, 37–39.

[89] **61 Pashto is the mother tongue:** Siddique, *The Pashtun Question*, 14.

[89] **61 known as Pashtunwali:** Abbas, *The Taliban Revival*, 17–19; Siddique, *The Pashtun Question*, 14.

[89] **61 often used interchangeably:** Siddique, *The Pashtun Question*, 11.

[89] **61 "Pakistan" is an acronym:** See Choudhary Rahmat Ali, "Now or Never: Are We to Live or Perish Forever?" (1933), reprinted in Pakistan Movement: Historic Documents, ed. Gulam Allana (Karachi: Paradise Subscription Agency for the University of Karachi, 1967), 104; Willem van Schendel, A History of Bangladesh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 89.

[89] **62 Punjabis have politically:** Christophe Jaffrelot, *A History of Pakistan and Its Origins* (London: Anthem Press, 2002), 69; Theodore P. Wright Jr., "Center-Periphery Relations and Ethnic Conflict in Pakistan: Sindhis, Muhajirs, and Punjabis," *Comparative Politics* 23, no. 3 (1991): 299.

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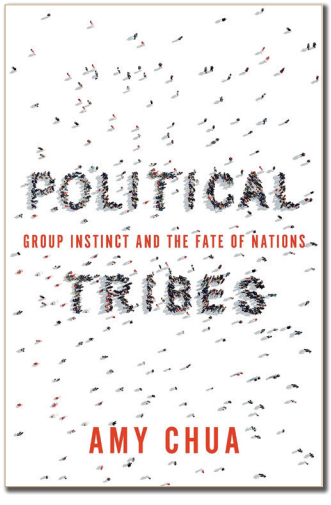
Military Review
WE RECOMMEND



An essential read and primer for any student of international affairs specializing in diplomacy, information and cross-cultural communications, economics, and/or military affairs. *Political Tribes* is a thought-provoking analysis that highlights the vital need for recognizing and appreciating the basic social instincts of human beings that translate into a human sociological imperative to form "tribes" in competition against other competing groups. In doing so, Amy Chua persuasively illuminates how the underlying failures in Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Iraq were directly related to an obtuse lack of understanding among planners for the role of tribalism in those societies, which made it difficult for strategists without such understanding of the anthropological forces at work to comprehend and deal with the overall situations. She goes on to apply the same penetrating analysis to the domestic sociopolitical environment of America today in the form of a warning, placing in relief the potential social and political dangers inherent in tribalism if ignored and unmitigated.