



# Post-2014 Afghanistan & the Looming Consequences of Strategic Misappreciation

February 18, 2015

By Thomas F. Lynch III

**Thomas F. Lynch III** is a Distinguished Research Fellow for South Asia and the Near East at the National Defense University's Institute for National Strategic Studies. He was also the Special Assistant for South Asian security matters for then-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen from 2008-10. The views in this article are his and not those of the National Defense University, the Department of Defense or the United States Government.

*Abstract: The fast-moving events of Syria and Iraq in 2014 demonstrated the enormous risk to U.S. security interests when America and its allies have too little intelligence presence or operational agility in an area rife with insurgency and terrorist outfits. The United States cannot "fix" the region or eliminate the major challenges to security most dominant within Afghanistan. However, America can be better postured to support the already faltering Afghan National Security Force, better aware of the rapidly evolving jihadist militant milieu in the Af-Pak region, and better informed than it might otherwise be about the evolving nature of Indo-Pakistani proxy hostilities playing out across the border region. The promised post-2014 U.S./NATO military presence is insufficient to meet these major requirements.*

On October 1, 2014, the Obama Administration announced that it had concluded a long-awaited Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) with the newly formed government in Kabul, Afghanistan.<sup>1</sup> The announcement of this ten-year security arrangement, which had languished for almost a year, was made with a sense of relief. It alleviated fears that Afghanistan's lingering political morass might require the full departure of U.S. and western forces from that country by the end of 2014. But the details behind this agreement, one primarily focused on a post-2014 U.S. counterterrorism mission in Afghanistan, remain a source for serious concern. A parallel bilateral deal struck between Kabul and

<sup>1</sup> Marherita Stancati and Nathan Hodge, "U.S.-Afghan Bilateral Security Agreement Signed," *The Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 30, 2014, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-afghan-bilateral-security-agreement-signed-1412076436>.



U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry sits with then-Afghan presidential candidate Ashraf Ghani in Kabul on August 7, 2014. [Photo courtesy of U.S. State Department.]

NATO continues a heavily circumscribed post-2014 NATO mission of training, advising and equipping Afghan security forces.

Nothing in these agreements places a formal, low-threshold limitation on post-2014 U.S. or western military forces in Afghanistan. Indeed, there are strong indications that the newly seated Afghan government of President Ashraf Ghani would welcome a far more robust and capable extension of U.S. and western military forces in the country.<sup>2</sup> Yet President Ghani inherited a situation where the Obama Administration—in partial concert with an alienated Karzai Administration—generated a self-limiting framework for BSA implementation in which U.S. and NATO support troops in Afghanistan were voluntarily constrained

<sup>2</sup> “Afghan lower house approves 12,500 NATO-led troops remaining,” Agence Francais Presse, in *The Japan Times*, Nov. 23, 2014, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2014/11/23/world/politics-diplomacy-world/afghan-lower-house-approves-12500-nato-led-troops-remaining/#.VH9okDGkPME>; Clar Ni Chonghaile, “Afghanistan: what will happen when the troops—and their dollars—depart,” *The Guardian*, Nov. 27, 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2014/nov/27/afghanistan-nato-troops-withdraw-ashraf-ghani>; and Rod Nordland and Taimoor Shah, “Afghanistan Quietly Lifts Ban on Night Raids,” *The New York Times*, Nov. 23, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/24/world/asia/afghanistan-quietly-lifts-ban-on-night-raids.html?hp&action=click&pgtype=Homepage&module=photo-spot-region&region=top-news&WT.nav=top-news&r=1>.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/1127537>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/1127537>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)