**War in Afghanistan**

**Part 3- 2002-2008**

**2002 Operation Anaconda**

* Following Tora Bora, coalition forces consolidated their position
* Tribal leaders and former exiles established an interim government in Kabul under Hamid Karzai
* **Hamid Karzai**- First President of the Republic of Afghanistan
* U.S. forces established their main base just north of Kabul
* Kandahar airport also became an important U.S. base
* Outposts were established in eastern provinces to hunt for Taliban and al-Qaeda fugitives
* **Operation Anaconda-** First large-scale battle of 2002 where the U.S. led coalition forces conducted search and destroy mission to hunt down and destroy al Qaeda and the Taliban
* This was the first operation in the Afghanistan theater to involve a large number of U.S. conventional forces participating in direct combat activities
* Between March 2 and March 16, 2002 1,700 airlifted U.S. troops and 1,000 pro-government Afghan [militia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Militia) battled between 300 to 1,000 al-Qaeda and [Taliban](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taliban) fighters

**2003-2005 Insurgency**

* After evading coalition forces throughout mid-2002, Taliban remnants gradually regained confidence and prepared to launch the insurgency that Mullah Omar had promised
* During September, Taliban forces began a jihad recruitment drive in areas in Afghanistan and Pakistan.
* Pamphlets distributed in secret appeared in many villages in southeastern Afghanistan called for jihad
* Small mobile training camps were established along the border to train recruits in [guerrilla warfare](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guerrilla_warfare), according to Afghan sources and a United Nations report
* **Taliban Guerilla Warfare**- groups of around 50 to launch attacks on isolated outposts, and then breaking up into groups of 5–10 to evade counterattacks.
* Coalition forces were attacked indirectly, through rocket attacks on bases and IED's
* IED- Improvised Explosive Device that can be hidden anywhere to create a sense of insecurity among U.S. troops
* Throughout 2004 dozens of Afghan government soldiers, non-governmental organization and several U.S. soldiers died in the raids, ambushes and rocket attacks
* In late August 2005, Afghan government forces backed by U.S. troops and aerial bombardment advanced upon Taliban positions

**2006 Southern Afghanistan**

* In January 2006 a multinational force started to replace U.S. troops in southern Afghanistan
* The [British 16th Air Assault Brigade](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_16th_Air_Assault_Brigade) (later reinforced by [Royal Marines](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Marines)) formed the core of the force, along with troops and helicopters from Australia, Canada and the Netherlands
* The initial force consisted of roughly 3,300 British, 2,300 Canadian, 1,963 Dutch, 300 Australian, 290 Danish and 150 [Estonian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Estonia) troops.
* Air support was provided by U.S., British, Dutch, Norwegian and French combat aircraft and helicopters.
* Southern Afghanistan faced in 2006 the deadliest violence since the Taliban's fall.
* A combined force of [Dutch](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Netherlands_Army#Afghanistan) and [Australians](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australian_Army) launched [a successful offensive](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2006_Dutch/Australian_Offensive) between late April to mid July 2006 to push the Taliban out of some Southern areas

**2007 The Taliban Grows**

* March 2007, the US added more than 3,500 troops
* Western officials and analysts estimated the strength of Taliban forces at about 10,000 fighters fielded at any given time
* Of that number, only 2,000 to 3,000 were highly motivated, full-time insurgents
* The rest were part-timers, made up of alienated, young Afghans, angered by bombing raids
* In 2007, more foreign fighters came than ever before, according to officials.
* Approximately 100 to 300 full-time combatants were foreigners, usually from Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Chechnya, various Arab countries and perhaps even Turkey and western China.
* They were reportedly more fanatical and violent, often bringing superior video-production or bomb making expertise

**2008 Renewed Commitment**

* In the first five months of 2008, the number of U.S. troops in Afghanistan increased by over 80% with a surge of 21,643 more troops
* This brought the total from 26,607 in January to 48,250 in June
* In June, the British prime minister announced the number of British troops serving in Afghanistan would increase to 8,030 – a rise of 230
* In September, President Bush announced the withdrawal of over 8,000 from Iraq and a further increase of up to 4,500 in Afghanistan
* Taliban fighters demonstrated their ongoing strength, liberating all prisoners in Kandahar jail, freeing 1200 prisoners, 400 were Taliban, causing a major embarrassment for NATO