

# Little America The War Within The War For Afghani

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## **A Bright Shining Lie** - Neil Sheehan

2010-08-03

Outspoken, professional and fearless, Lt. Col. John Paul Vann went to Vietnam in 1962, full of confidence in America's might and right to prevail. He was soon appalled by the South Vietnamese troops' unwillingness to fight, by their random slaughter of civilians and by the arrogance and corruption of the US military. He flouted his supervisors and leaked his sharply pessimistic - and, as it turned out, accurate - assessments to the US press corps in Saigon. Among them was Sheehan, who became fascinated by the angry Vann, befriended him and followed his tragic and reckless career. Sixteen years in the making, *A Bright Shining Lie* is an eloquent and disturbing portrait of a man who in many ways personified the US war effort in Vietnam, of a soldier cast in the heroic mould, an American Lawrence of Arabia. Blunt, idealistic, patronising to the Vietnamese, Vann was haunted by a shameful secret - the fact that

he was the illegitimate son of a 'white trash' prostitute. Gambling away his career, Vann left the army that he loved and returned to Vietnam as a civilian in the pacification programme. He rose to become the first American civilian to wield a general's command in war. When he was killed in 1972, he was mourned at Arlington cemetery by leading political figures of the day. Sheehan recounts his astonishing story in this intimate and intense meditation on a conflict that scarred the conscience of a nation.

[The Punishment of Virtue](#) - Sarah Chayes 2006

[The Wrong War](#) - Bing West 2011-02-22

NATIONAL BESTSELLER In this definitive account of the conflict, acclaimed war correspondent and bestselling author Bing West provides a practical way out of Afghanistan. Drawing on his expertise as both a combat-hardened Marine and a former assistant secretary of defense, West has written a tour de force narrative, rich with vivid characters and

gritty combat, which shows the consequences when strategic theory meets tactical reality. Having embedded with dozens of frontline units over the past three years, he takes the reader on a battlefield journey from the mountains in the north to the opium fields in the south. A fighter who understands strategy, West builds the case for changing course. His conclusion is sure to provoke debate: remove most of the troops from Afghanistan, stop spending billions on the dream of a modern democracy, and insist the Afghans fight their own battles. Bing West's book is a page-turner about brave men and cunning enemies that examines our realistic choices as a nation. With a new Afterword by the author.

*Afghanistan* - Olivier Roy 1995

**Understanding the U.S. Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan** - Beth Bailey 2015-12-18

Choice Outstanding Academic Title of 2016  
Investigates the causes, conduct, and consequences of the recent American wars in

Iraq and Afghanistan Understanding the United States' wars in Iraq and Afghanistan is essential to understanding the United States in the first decade of the new millennium and beyond. These wars were pivotal to American foreign policy and international relations. They were expensive: in lives, in treasure, and in reputation. They raised critical ethical and legal questions; they provoked debates over policy, strategy, and war-planning; they helped to shape American domestic politics. And they highlighted a profound division among the American people: While more than two million Americans served in Iraq and Afghanistan, many in multiple deployments, the vast majority of Americans and their families remained untouched by and frequently barely aware of the wars conducted in their name, far from American shores, in regions about which they know little. Understanding the U.S. Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan gives us the first book-length expert historical analysis of these wars. It shows us how

they began, what they teach us about the limits of the American military and diplomacy, and who fought them. It examines the lessons and legacies of wars whose outcomes may not be clear for decades. In 1945 few Americans could imagine that the country would be locked in a Cold War with the Soviet Union for decades; fewer could imagine how history would paint the era. Understanding the U.S. Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan begins to come to grips with the period when America became enmeshed in a succession of “low intensity” conflicts in the Middle East.

Outlaw Platoon - Sean Parnell 2012-02-28

A riveting story of American fighting men, *Outlaw Platoon* is Lieutenant Sean Parnell’s stunning personal account of the legendary U.S. Army’s 10th Mountain Division’s heroic stand in the mountains of Afghanistan. Acclaimed for its vivid, poignant, and honest recreation of sixteen brutal months of nearly continuous battle in the deadly Hindu Kesh, *Outlaw Platoon* is a Band of

Brothers or We Were Soldiers Once and Young for the early 21st century—an action-packed, highly emotional true story of enormous sacrifice and bravery. A magnificent account of heroes, renegades, infidels, and brothers, it stands with Sebastian Junger’s *War* as one of the most important books to yet emerge from the heat, smoke, and fire of America’s War in Afghanistan. *Land, the State, and War* - Jennifer Brick Murtazashvili 2021-09-09

The first detailed study of institutional economics and public choice traditions in Afghanistan.

The Fighters - C. J. Chivers 2019-05-21

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER \* “A CLASSIC OF WAR REPORTING...THERE IS NO DOWNTIME IN THIS RELENTLESS BOOK.”—The New York Times \* “REMARKABLE...A MEMORIAL IN PAGES.”—The Washington Post \* “GRIPPING AND THOUGHT-PROVOKING.”—USA Today \* “EVOCATIVE.”—Publishers Weekly, (Starred

Review) \* "IT JOINS THE BEST WAR LITERATURE THIS COUNTRY HAS EVER PRODUCED."—Sebastian Junger, bestselling author of *Tribes* and War Pulitzer Prize winner C.J. Chivers's unvarnished New York Times bestseller is a chronicle of modern combat, told through the eyes of the fighters who have waged America's longest wars: "A classic of war reporting...there is no downtime in this relentless book" (The New York Times). More than 2.7 million Americans have served in Afghanistan or Iraq since September 11, 2001, and C.J. Chivers reported on both wars from their beginnings. *The Fighters* vividly conveys the physical and emotional experience of war as lived by six combatants: a fighter pilot, a corpsman, a scout helicopter pilot, a grunt, an infantry officer, and a Special Forces sergeant. Chivers captures their courage, commitment, sense of purpose, and ultimately their suffering, frustration, and moral confusion as new enemies arise and invasions give way to

counterinsurgency duties for which American forces were often not prepared. *The Fighters* is a "gripping, unforgettable" (The Boston Globe) portrait of modern warfare. Told with the empathy and understanding of an author who is himself an infantry veteran, *The Fighters* is "a masterful work of atmospheric reporting, and it's a book that will have every reader asking—with varying degrees of urgency or anger or despair—the final question Chivers himself asks: 'How many lives had these wars wrecked?'" (Christian Science Monitor).

*Why We Lost* - Daniel P. Bolger 2014

A three-star general offers an insider account of the U.S. wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, explaining how garbled intelligence, poor decision making, and no clear understanding of the enemy resulted in the failure of both missions.

*Investment in Blood* - Frank Ledwidge  
2013-05-31

"In this follow-up to his much-praised book

Losing Small Wars: British Military Failure in Iraq and Afghanistan, Frank Ledwidge argues that Britain has paid a heavy cost - both financially and in human terms - for its involvement in the Afghanistan war. Ledwidge calculates the high price paid by British soldiers and their families, taxpayers in the United Kingdom, and, most importantly, Afghan citizens, highlighting the thousands of deaths and injuries, the enormous amount of money spent bolstering a corrupt Afghan government, and the long-term damage done to the British military's international reputation. In this hard-hitting exposé, based on interviews, rigorous on-the-ground research, and official information obtained through the Freedom of Information Act, Ledwidge demonstrates the folly of Britain's extended participation in an unwinnable war. Arguing that the only true beneficiaries of the conflict are development consultants, international arms dealers, and Afghan drug kingpins, he provides a powerful, eye-opening,

and often heartbreaking account of military adventurism gone horribly wrong."--  
The Hardest Place - Wesley Morgan 2021-03-09  
"One of the most important books to come out of the Afghanistan war."—Foreign Policy "A saga of courage and futility, of valor and error and heartbreak."—Rick Atkinson, author of the Liberation Trilogy and The British Are Coming Of the many battlefields on which U.S. troops and intelligence operatives fought in Afghanistan, one remote corner of the country stands as a microcosm of the American campaign: the Pech and its tributary valleys in Kunar and Nuristan. The area's rugged, steep terrain and thick forests made it a natural hiding spot for local insurgents and international terrorists alike, and it came to represent both the valor and futility of America's two-decade-long Afghan war. Drawing on reporting trips, hundreds of interviews, and documentary research, Wesley Morgan reveals the history of the war in this iconic region, captures the

culture and reality of the conflict through both American and Afghan eyes, and reports on the snowballing missteps—some kept secret from even the troops fighting there—that doomed the American mission. *The Hardest Place* is the story of one of the twenty-first century's most unforgiving battlefields and a portrait of the American military that fought there.

**Women at War** - James Wise 2011-08-15

Wise and Baron relate the compelling war experiences of thirty American female soldiers in the war zones of Iraq and Afghanistan, highlighting their extraordinary display of dedication to their mission and to the soldiers and sailors with whom they served. While the book's focus is on today's women in combat, it also reaches back to Korea, Vietnam and World War II to offer stories of inspiring women who served at the "cusp of the spear" as they fought and died for their country.

**American Cipher** - Matt Farwell 2019-03-12

The explosive narrative of the life, captivity, and

trial of Bowe Bergdahl, the soldier who was abducted by the Taliban and whose story has served as a symbol for America's foundering war in Afghanistan "An unsettling and riveting book filled with the mysteries of human nature."

—Kirkus Private First Class Bowe Bergdahl left his platoon's base in eastern Afghanistan in the early hours of June 30, 2009. Since that day, easy answers to the many questions surrounding his case—why did he leave his post? What kinds of efforts were made to recover him from the Taliban? And why, facing a court martial, did he plead guilty to the serious charges against him?—have proved elusive. Taut in its pacing but sweeping in its scope, *American Cipher* is the riveting and deeply sourced account of the nearly decade-old Bergdahl quagmire—which, as journalists Matt Farwell and Michael Ames persuasively argue, is as illuminating an episode as we have as we seek the larger truths of how the United States lost its way in Afghanistan. The book tells the parallel stories of a young

man's halting coming of age and a nation stalled in an unwinnable war, revealing the fallout that ensued when the two collided: a fumbling recovery effort that suppressed intelligence on Bergdahl's true location and bungled multiple opportunities to bring him back sooner; a homecoming that served to deepen the nation's already-vast political fissure; a trial that cast judgment on not only the defendant, but most everyone involved. The book's beating heart is Bergdahl himself—an idealistic, misguided soldier onto whom a nation projected the political and emotional complications of service. Based on years of exclusive reporting drawing on dozens of sources throughout the military, government, and Bergdahl's family, friends, and fellow soldiers, *American Cipher* is at once a meticulous investigation of government dysfunction and political posturing, a blistering commentary on America's presence in Afghanistan, and a heartbreaking story of a naïve young man who thought he could fix the

world and wound up the tool of forces far beyond his understanding.

*The Operators* - Michael Hastings 2012-01-05  
The inspiration for the Netflix original movie *War Machine*, starring Brad Pitt, Tilda Swinton, and Ben Kingsley From the author of *The Last Magazine*, a shocking behind-the-scenes portrait of our military commanders, their high-stake maneuvers, and the political firestorm that shook the United States. In the shadow of the hunt for Bin Laden and the United States' involvement in the Middle East, General Stanley McChrystal, the commanding general of international and U.S. forces in Afghanistan, was living large. His loyal staff liked to call him a "rock star." During a spring 2010 trip, journalist Michael Hastings looked on as McChrystal and his staff let off steam, partying and openly bashing the Obama administration. When Hastings's article appeared in *Rolling Stone*, it set off a political firestorm: McChrystal was unceremoniously fired. In *The Operators*, Hastings picks up where



his Rolling Stone coup ended. From patrol missions in the Afghan hinterlands to senior military advisors' late-night bull sessions to hotel bars where spies and expensive hookers participate in nation-building, Hastings presents a shocking behind-the-scenes portrait of what he fears is an unwinnable war. Written in prose that is at once eye-opening and other times uncannily conversational, readers of *No Easy Day* will take to Hastings' unyielding first-hand account of the Afghan War and its cast of players.

**No Good Men Among the Living** - Anand Gopal 2014-04-29

Told through the lives of three Afghans, the stunning tale of how the United States had triumph in sight in Afghanistan—and then brought the Taliban back from the dead In a breathtaking chronicle, acclaimed journalist Anand Gopal traces in vivid detail the lives of three Afghans caught in America's war on terror. He follows a Taliban commander, who rises from scrawny teenager to leading insurgent; a US-

backed warlord, who uses the American military to gain personal wealth and power; and a village housewife trapped between the two sides, who discovers the devastating cost of neutrality. Through their dramatic stories, Gopal shows that the Afghan war, so often regarded as a hopeless quagmire, could in fact have gone very differently. Top Taliban leaders actually tried to surrender within months of the US invasion, renouncing all political activity and submitting to the new government. Effectively, the Taliban ceased to exist—yet the Americans were unwilling to accept such a turnaround. Instead, driven by false intelligence from their allies and an unyielding mandate to fight terrorism, American forces continued to press the conflict, resurrecting the insurgency that persists to this day. With its intimate accounts of life in war-torn Afghanistan, Gopal's thoroughly original reporting lays bare the workings of America's longest war and the truth behind its prolonged agony. A heartbreaking story of mistakes and

misdeeds, *No Good Men Among the Living* challenges our usual perceptions of the Afghan conflict, its victims, and its supposed winners.

**Directorate S** - Steve Coll 2018-02-06

Winner of the 2018 National Book Critics Circle Award for Nonfiction Longlisted for the 2018 National Book Award for Nonfiction From the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Ghost Wars*, the epic and enthralling story of America's intelligence, military, and diplomatic efforts to defeat Al Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan since 9/11 Prior to 9/11, the United States had been carrying out small-scale covert operations in Afghanistan, ostensibly in cooperation, although often in direct opposition, with I.S.I., the Pakistani intelligence agency. While the US was trying to quell extremists, a highly secretive and compartmentalized wing of I.S.I., known as "Directorate S," was covertly training, arming, and seeking to legitimize the Taliban, in order to enlarge Pakistan's sphere of influence. After 9/11, when fifty-nine countries,

led by the U. S., deployed troops or provided aid to Afghanistan in an effort to flush out the Taliban and Al Qaeda, the U.S. was set on an invisible slow-motion collision course with Pakistan. Today we know that the war in Afghanistan would falter badly because of military hubris at the highest levels of the Pentagon, the drain on resources and provocation in the Muslim world caused by the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, and corruption. But more than anything, as Coll makes painfully clear, the war in Afghanistan was doomed because of the failure of the United States to apprehend the motivations and intentions of I.S.I.'s "Directorate S". This was a swirling and shadowy struggle of historic proportions, which endured over a decade and across both the Bush and Obama administrations, involving multiple secret intelligence agencies, a litany of incongruous strategies and tactics, and dozens of players, including some of the most prominent military and political figures. A sprawling

American tragedy, the war was an open clash of arms but also a covert melee of ideas, secrets, and subterranean violence. Coll excavates this grand battle, which took place away from the gaze of the American public. With unsurpassed expertise, original research, and attention to detail, he brings to life a narrative at once vast and intricate, local and global, propulsive and painstaking. This is the definitive explanation of how America came to be so badly ensnared in an elaborate, factional, and seemingly interminable conflict in South Asia. Nothing less than a forensic examination of the personal and political forces that shape world history, Directorate S is a complete masterpiece of both investigative and narrative journalism.

*Our Latest Longest War* - Aaron B. O'Connell  
2017-04-03

American and Afghan veterans contribute to this anthology of critical perspectives—“a vital contribution toward understanding the Afghanistan War” (Library Journal). When

America went to war with Afghanistan in the wake of 9/11, it did so with the lofty goals of dismantling al Qaeda, removing the Taliban from power, remaking the country into a democracy. But as the mission came unmoored from reality, the United States wasted billions of dollars, and thousands of lives were lost. Our Latest Longest War is a chronicle of how, why, and in what ways the war in Afghanistan failed. Edited by prize-winning historian and Marine lieutenant colonel Aaron B. O'Connell, the essays collected here represent nine different perspectives on the war—all from veterans of the conflict, both American and Afghan. Together, they paint a picture of a war in which problems of culture, including an unbridgeable rural-urban divide, derailed nearly every field of endeavor. The authors also draw troubling parallels to the Vietnam War, arguing that ideological currents in American life explain why the US government has repeatedly used military force in pursuit of democratic nation-building. In Afghanistan, as in

Vietnam, this created a dramatic mismatch of means and ends that neither money, technology, nor weapons could overcome.

**The Mirror Test** - J. Kael Weston 2016-05-24

A New York Times Editors' Choice A Military Times Best Book of the Year A powerfully written firsthand account of the human costs of conflict. J. Kael Weston spent seven years on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan working for the U.S. State Department in some of the most dangerous frontline locations. Upon his return home, while traveling the country to pay respect to the dead and wounded, he asked himself: When will these wars end? How will they be remembered and memorialized? What lessons can we learn from them? These are questions with no quick answers, but perhaps ones that might lead to a shared reckoning worthy of the sacrifices of those—troops and civilians alike—whose lives have been changed by more than a decade and a half of war. Weston takes us from Twentynine Palms in California to Fallujah

in Iraq, Khost and Helmand in Afghanistan, Maryland, Colorado, Wyoming, and New York City, as well as to out-of-the-way places in Iowa and Texas. We meet generals, corporals and captains, senators and ambassadors, NATO allies, Iraqi truck drivers, city councils, imams and mullahs, Afghan schoolteachers, madrassa and college students, former Taliban fighters and ex-Guantánamo prison detainees, a torture victim, SEAL and Delta Force teams, and many Marines. The overall frame for the book, from which the title is taken, centers on soldiers who have received a grievous wound to the face. There is a moment during their recovery when they must look upon their reconstructed appearance for the first time. This is known as “the mirror test.” From an intricate tapestry of voices and stories—Iraqi, Afghan, and American—Weston delivers a larger mirror test for our nation in its global role. An unflinching and deep examination of the interplay between warfare and diplomacy, this is an essential

book—a crucial look at America now, how it is viewed in the world and how the nation views itself.

*The Effect* - Nick Huntington-Klein 2021-12-20

The Effect: An Introduction to Research Design and Causality is about research design, specifically concerning research that uses observational data to make a causal inference. It is separated into two halves, each with different approaches to that subject. The first half goes through the concepts of causality, with very little in the way of estimation. It introduces the concept of identification thoroughly and clearly and discusses it as a process of trying to isolate variation that has a causal interpretation. Subjects include heavy emphasis on data-generating processes and causal diagrams. Concepts are demonstrated with a heavy emphasis on graphical intuition and the question of what we do to data. When we “add a control variable” what does that actually do? Key Features: • Extensive code examples in R, Stata,

and Python • Chapters on overlooked topics in econometrics classes: heterogeneous treatment effects, simulation and power analysis, new cutting-edge methods, and uncomfortable ignored assumptions • An easy-to-read conversational tone • Up-to-date coverage of methods with fast-moving literatures like difference-in-differences

Understanding War in Afghanistan - Joseph J. Collins 2011

Provides military leaders, civil servants, diplomats, and students with the intellectual basis that they need to begin to prepare for further study of or an assignment in Afghanistan. This book analyzes the land and its people, recaps Afghan history, and assesses the current situation. It also examines the range of choices for future U.S. policy toward Afghanistan.

*The Outpost* - Jake Tapper 2012-11-13

The basis of the film starring Orlando Bloom and Scott Eastwood, The Outpost is the

heartbreaking and inspiring story of one of America's deadliest battles during the war in Afghanistan, acclaimed by critics everywhere as a classic. At 5:58 AM on October 3rd, 2009, Combat Outpost Keating, located in frighteningly vulnerable terrain in Afghanistan just 14 miles from the Pakistani border, was viciously attacked. Though the 53 Americans there prevailed against nearly 400 Taliban fighters, their casualties made it the deadliest fight of the war for the U.S. that year. Four months after the battle, a Pentagon review revealed that there was no reason for the troops at Keating to have been there in the first place. In *The Outpost*, Jake Tapper gives us the powerful saga of COP Keating, from its establishment to eventual destruction, introducing us to an unforgettable cast of soldiers and their families, and to a place and war that has remained profoundly distant to most Americans. A runaway bestseller, it makes a savage war real, and American courage

manifest. "The Outpost is a mind-boggling, all-too-true story of heroism, hubris, failed strategy, and heartbreaking sacrifice. If you want to understand how the war in Afghanistan went off the rails, you need to read this book." -- Jon Krakauer

**The Afghanistan Papers** - Craig Whitlock  
2021-08-31

"The groundbreaking investigative story of how three successive presidents and their military commanders deceived the public year after year about the longest war in American history"--  
*Taliban Narratives* - Thomas H. Johnson  
2018-02-01

Why has the Taliban been so much more effective in presenting messages that resonate with the Afghan population than the United States, the Afghan government and their allies? This book, based on years of field research and the assessment of hundreds of original source materials, examines the information operations and related narratives of Afghan insurgents,

especially the Afghan Taliban, and investigates how the Taliban has won the information war. Taliban messaging, wrapped in the narrative of jihad, is both to the point and in tune with its target audiences. On the other hand, the United States and its Kabul allies committed a basic messaging blunder, failing to present narratives that spoke to or, often, were even understood by their target audiences. Thomas Johnson systematically explains why the United States lost this "battle of the story" in Afghanistan, and argues that this defeat may have cost the US the entire war, despite its conventional and technological superiority.

**Little America** - Rajiv Chandrasekaran  
2013-01-01

The author of *Imperial Life in the Emerald City* (winner of the 2007 Samuel Johnson Prize) now gives us the startling, behind-the-scenes story of the struggle between President Obama and the US military to remake Afghanistan.

*Eagle Down* - Jessica Donati 2021-01-19

A Wall Street Journal national security reporter takes readers into the lives of frontline U.S. special operations troops fighting to keep the Taliban and Islamic State from overthrowing the U.S.-backed government in the final years of the war in Afghanistan. A FINANCIAL TIMES BEST BOOK OF THE YEAR "Powerful, important, and searing." —General David Petraeus, U.S. Army (ret.), former commander, U.S. Central Command, former CIA director In 2015, the White House claimed triumphantly that "the longest war in American history" was over. But for some, it was just the beginning of a new war, fought by Special Operations Forces, with limited resources, little governmental oversight, and contradictory orders. With big picture insight and on-the-ground grit, Jessica Donati shares the stories of the impossible choices these soldiers must make. After the fall of a major city to the Taliban that year, Hutch, a battle-worn Green Beret on his fifth combat tour was ordered on a secret mission to recapture it

and inadvertently called in an airstrike on a Doctors Without Borders hospital, killing dozens. Caleb stepped on a bomb during a mission in notorious Sangin. Andy was trapped with his team during a raid with a crashed Black Hawk and no air support. Through successive policy directives under the Obama and Trump administrations, America came to rely almost entirely on US Special Forces, and without a long-term plan, failed to stabilize Afghanistan, undermining US interests both at home and abroad. Eagle Down is a riveting account of the heroism, sacrifice, and tragedy experienced by those that fought America's longest war.

The Great Gamble - Gregory Feifer 2010-01-05  
The Soviet war in Afghanistan was a grueling debacle that has striking lessons for the twenty-first century. In The Great Gamble, Gregory Feifer examines the conflict from the perspective of the soldiers on the ground. In gripping detail, he vividly depicts the invasion of a volatile country that no power has ever successfully

conquered. A riveting account as seen through the eyes of the men who fought in the war, The Great Gamble tells an unforgettable story full of drama, action, and political intrigue whose relevance in our own time is greater than ever.

**No-Win War** - Zahid Hussain 2021-08-03  
This book explores the post-9/11 relations between the US and Pakistan. The growing divergence between Washington and Islamabad has taken an already uneasy alliance to a point of estrangement. Yet, a complete breakup is not an option. The underlying cause of the tension, within the partnership the two had entered on 13 September 2001, has never been fully understood. What is rarely discussed is how Pakistan's decision to ally itself with the US pushed the country into a war with itself; the cost of Pakistan's tight roping between alignment with the US and old links with the Afghan Taliban; and its long-term implications for the region and global security. This book elucidates implications for Afghanistan in the so-



called war on terror while revealing US and Pakistan's foreign policy initiatives. The author explores all this through little known facts and through the players involved in this cloak and dagger game. The book tells the story behind the headlines: how equivocal is ISI's break with the Afghan Taliban fighting the coalition forces in Afghanistan; the shootout in Lahore involving a CIA agent; and the killing of Osama bin Laden. *The Terror Years* - Lawrence Wright 2016-08-25 Ten powerful pieces first published in The New Yorker recall the path terror in the Middle East has taken from the rise of al-Qaeda in the 1990s to the recent beheadings of reporters and aid workers by ISIS. With the Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Looming Tower*, Lawrence Wright became generally acknowledged as one of our major journalists writing on terrorism in the Middle East. This collection draws on several articles he wrote while researching that book as well as many that he's written since, following where and how al-Qaeda and its core cult-like beliefs

have morphed and spread. They include an indelible impression of Saudi Arabia, a kingdom of silence under the control of the religious police; the Syrian film industry, then compliant at the edges but already exuding a feeling of the barely masked fury that erupted into civil war; the 2006-11 Israeli-Palestinian conflict in Gaza, a study in disparate values of human lives. Others continue to look into al-Qaeda as it forms a master plan for its future, experiences a rebellion from within the organization, and spins off a growing web of terror in the world. The American response is covered in profiles of two FBI agents and a chief of the CIA. It ends with the recent devastating piece about the capture and beheading by ISIS of four American journalists and aid workers, and how the US government failed to handle the situation.

**The American War in Afghanistan** - Carter Malkasian 2021

A history of the war in Afghanistan between 2001 and 2020. The work follows a narrative

format to go through the 2001 US invasion, the state-building of 2002-2005, the Taliban offensive of 2006, the US surge of 2009-2011, the subsequent drawdown, and the peace talks of 2019-2020

Hopeless but Optimistic - Douglas A. Wissing  
2016-08-08

“A fascinating ground level account of the effect of absurd and inappropriate Washington strategies on Afghans and on American soldiers.”—Abdulkader Sinno, author of *Organizations at War in Afghanistan & Beyond* Award-winning journalist Douglas A. Wissing’s poignant and eye-opening journey across insurgency-wracked Afghanistan casts an unyielding spotlight on greed, dysfunction, and predictable disaster while celebrating the everyday courage and wisdom of frontline soldiers, idealistic humanitarians, and resilient Afghans. As Wissing hauls a hundred pounds of body armor and pack across the Afghan warzone in search of the ground truth, US officials

frantically spin a spurious victory narrative, American soldiers try to keep their body parts together, and Afghans try to stay positive and strain to figure out their next move after the US eventually leaves. As one technocrat confided to Wissing, “I am hopeless—but optimistic.” Along with a deep inquiry into the 21st-century American way of war and an unforgettable glimpse of the enduring culture and legacy of Afghanistan, *Hopeless but Optimistic* includes the real stuff of life: the austere grandeur of Afghanistan and its remarkable people; warzone dining, defecation, and sex; as well as the remarkable shopping opportunities for men whose job is to kill. Silver Medal, War & Military, Foreword Indies Awards Silver Medal, Current Events, Independent Publisher Book Awards “A scathing dispatch from an embedded journalist in Afghanistan . . . Pungent, embittered, eye-opening observations of a conflict involving lessons still unlearned.”—Kirkus Reviews “Here we confront

in granular detail the waste and folly that is America's war in Afghanistan."—Andrew J.

Bacevich, author of *The Age of Illusions*

**War Against the Taliban** - Sandy Gall

2013-02-19

The most comprehensive analysis of the current Afghanistan War yet published, by bestselling writer and legendary war reporter Sandy Gall

**War at the Top of the World** - Eric Margolis

2004-11-23

First Published in 2001. Routledge is an imprint of Taylor & Francis, an informa company.

*How We Won and Lost the War in Afghanistan* -

Douglas Grindle 2017-11

Douglas Grindle provides a firsthand account of how the war in Afghanistan was won in a rural district south of Kandahar City and how the newly created peace slipped away when vital resources failed to materialize and the United States headed for the exit. By placing the reader at the heart of the American counterinsurgency effort, Grindle reveals little-known incidents,

including the failure of expensive aid programs to target local needs, the slow throttling of local government as official funds failed to reach the districts, and the United States' inexplicable failure to empower the Afghan local officials even after they succeeded in bringing the people onto their side. Grindle presents the side of the hard-working Afghans who won the war and expresses what they really thought of the U.S. military and its decisions. Written by a former field officer for the U.S. Agency for International Development, this story of dashed hopes and missed opportunities details how America's desire to leave the war behind ultimately overshadowed its desire to sustain victory. *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan* - Mustafa Hamid 2015-04-16

A former senior mujahidin figure and an ex-counter-terrorism analyst cooperating to write a book on the history and legacy of Arab-Afghan fighters in Afghanistan is a remarkable and improbable undertaking. Yet this is what

Mustafa Hamid, aka Abu Walid al-Masri, and Leah Farrall have achieved with the publication of their ground-breaking work. The result of thousands of hours of discussions over several years, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan* offers significant new insights into the history of many of today's militant Salafi groups and movements. By revealing the real origins of the Taliban and al-Qaeda and the jostling among the various jihadi groups, this account not only challenges conventional wisdom, but also raises uncomfortable questions as to how events from this important period have been so badly misconstrued.

Imperial Life in the Emerald City - Rajiv

Chandrasekaran 2009-09-07

From a walled-off enclave of towering plants, smart villas and sparkling swimming pools - a surreal bubble of pure Americana known as the Green Zone - the US-led Coalition Provisional Authority, under imperial viceroy L. Paul Bremer III, attempted to rule Iraq in the first twelve

months after the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime. Drawing on hundreds of interviews and internal documents, Rajiv Chandrasekaran tells the memorable story of this ill-prepared attempt to build American democracy in a war-torn Middle Eastern country, detailing not only the risky disbanding of the Iraqi army and the ludicrous attempt to train the new police force, but also bringing to light a host of lesser-known yet typical travesties, among them: \* the aide who based Baghdad's new traffic laws on those of the state of Maryland, downloaded \* the contractor with no previous experience paid millions to guard a closed airport \* the people with prior experience in the Middle East who were excluded in favour of lesser-qualified Republican Party loyalists \* the case of the 24-year-old who had never worked in finance put in charge of revitalising Baghdad's stock exchange

Written with wit and urgency by a sharp-eyed observer, *Imperial Life in the Emerald City* provides a hair-raising portrait of the gap

between the Oz-like Green Zone and the brutal reality of post-war Iraq. It is American reportage at its best.

*America at War* - Terence T. Finn 2014-01-07  
War—organized violence against an enemy of the state—seems part and parcel of the American journey. Indeed, the United States was established by means of violence as ordinary citizens from New Hampshire to Georgia answered George Washington’s call to arms. Since then, war has become a staple of American history. Counting the War for Independence, the United States has fought the armed forces of other nations at least twelve times, averaging a major conflict every twenty years. In so doing, the objectives have been simple: advance the cause of freedom, protect U.S. interests, and impose America’s will upon a troubled world. More often than not, the results have been successful as America’s military has accounted itself well. Yet the cost has been high, in both blood and treasure. Americans have fought and

died around the globe—on land, at sea, and in the air. Without doubt, their actions have shaped the world in which we live. In this comprehensive collection, Terence T. Finn provides a set of narratives—each concise and readable—on the twelve major wars America has fought. He explains what happened, and why such places as Saratoga and Antietam, Manila Bay and Midway are important to an understanding of America’s past. Readers will easily be able to brush up on their history and acquaint themselves with those individuals and events that have helped define the United States of America.

*In the Graveyard of Empires: America's War in Afghanistan* - Seth G. Jones 2010-04-12  
A definitive account of the American experience in Afghanistan from the rise of the Taliban to the depths of the insurgency. After the swift defeat of the Taliban in 2001, American optimism has steadily evaporated in the face of mounting violence; a new “war of a thousand cuts” has

now brought the country to its knees. In the Graveyard of Empires is a political history of Afghanistan in the “Age of Terror” from 2001 to 2009, exploring the fundamental tragedy of America’s longest war since Vietnam. After a brief survey of the great empires in Afghanistan—the campaigns of Alexander the Great, the British in the era of Kipling, and the late Soviet Union—Seth G. Jones examines the central question of our own war: how did an insurgency develop? Following the September 11 attacks, the United States successfully overthrew the Taliban regime. It established security throughout the country—killing, capturing, or scattering most of al Qa’ida’s senior operatives—and Afghanistan finally began to emerge from more than two decades of struggle and conflict. But Jones argues that as early as 2001 planning for the Iraq War siphoned off resources and talented personnel, undermining the gains that had been made. After eight years, he says, the United States has

managed to push al Qa’ida’s headquarters about one hundred miles across the border into Pakistan, the distance from New York to Philadelphia. While observing the tense and often adversarial relationship between NATO allies in the Coalition, Jones—who has distinguished himself at RAND and was recently named by Esquire as one of the “Best and Brightest” young policy experts—introduces us to key figures on both sides of the war. Harnessing important new research and integrating thousands of declassified government documents, Jones then analyzes the insurgency from a historical and structural point of view, showing how a rising drug trade, poor security forces, and pervasive corruption undermined the Karzai government, while Americans abandoned a successful strategy, failed to provide the necessary support, and allowed a growing sanctuary for insurgents in Pakistan to catalyze the Taliban resurgence. Examining what has worked thus far—and what

has not—this serious and important book underscores the challenges we face in stabilizing the country and explains where we went wrong and what we must do if the United States is to avoid the disastrous fate that has befallen many of the great world powers to enter the region.

**The Long War** - David Loyn 2021-09-21

Just as U. S. soldiers and diplomats pulled out of Afghanistan, supposedly concluding their role and responsibility in the two-decade conflict, the country fell to the Taliban. In *The Long War*, award-winning BBC foreign correspondent David Loyn uncovers the political and military strategies—and failures—that prolonged America's longest war. Three American presidents tried to defeat the Taliban—sending 150,000 international troops at the war's peak with a trillion-dollar price tag. But early policy mistakes that allowed Osama bin Laden to escape made the task far more difficult. Deceived by easy victories, they backed ruthless corrupt local allies and misspent aid. The story

of *The Long War* is told by the generals who led it through the hardest years of combat as surges of international troops tried to turn the tide. Generals, which include David Petraeus, Stanley McChrystal, Joe Dunford and John Allen, were tested in battle as never before. With the reputation of a “warrior monk,” McChrystal was considered one of the most gifted military leaders of his generation. He was one of two generals to be fired in this most public of commands. Holding together the coalition of countries who joined America's fight in Afghanistan was just one part of the multi-dimensional puzzle faced by the generals, as they fought an elusive and determined enemy while responsible for thousands of young American and allied lives. *The Long War* goes behind the scenes of their command and of the Afghan government. The fourth president to take on the war, Joe Biden ordered troops to withdraw in 2021, twenty years after 9/11, just as the Taliban achieved victory, leaving behind

an unstable nation and an unforeseeable future.

**US Nation-Building in Afghanistan (Open Access)** - Conor Keane 2016-03-31

Why has the US so dramatically failed in Afghanistan since 2001? Dominant explanations have ignored the bureaucratic divisions and personality conflicts inside the US state. This book rectifies this weakness in commentary on Afghanistan by exploring the significant role of these divisions in the US's difficulties in the country that meant the battle was virtually lost before it even began. The main objective of the book is to deepen readers understanding of the impact of bureaucratic politics on nation-building in Afghanistan, focusing primarily on the Bush Administration. It rejects the 'rational actor' model, according to which the US functions as a coherent, monolithic agent. Instead, internal divisions within the foreign policy bureaucracy are explored, to build up a picture of the internal tensions and contradictions that bedevilled US nation-building

efforts. The book also contributes to the vexed issue of whether or not the US should engage in nation-building at all, and if so under what conditions.

Planning to Fail - James H. Lebovic 2019-03-14

The United States national-security establishment is vast, yet the United States has failed to meet its initial objectives in almost every one of its major, post-World War II conflicts. Of these troubled efforts, the US wars in Vietnam (1965-73), Iraq (2003-11), and Afghanistan (2001-present) stand out for their endurance, resource investment, human cost, and miscalculated decisions. Because overarching policy goals are distant and open to interpretation, policymakers ground their decisions in the immediate world of short-term objectives, salient tasks, policy constraints, and fixed time schedules. As a consequence, they exaggerate the benefits of their preferred policies, ignore the accompanying costs and requirements, and underappreciate the benefits



of alternatives. In *Planning to Fail*, James H. Lebovic argues that a profound myopia helps explain US decision-making failures. In each of the wars explored in this book, he identifies four stages of intervention. First and foremost, policymakers chose unwisely to go to war. After the fighting began, they inadvisably sought to extend or expand the mission. Next, they pursued the mission, in abbreviated form, to suboptimal effect. Finally, they adapted the mission to exit from the conflict. Lebovic argues that US leaders were effectively planning to fail whatever their hopes and thoughts were at the time the intervention began. Decision-makers

struggled less than they should have, even when conditions allowed for good choices. Then, when conditions on the ground left them with only bad choices, they struggled furiously and more than could ever matter. Policymakers allowed these wars to sap available capabilities, push US forces to the breaking point, and exhaust public support. They finally settled for terms of departure that they (or their predecessors) would have rejected at the start of these conflicts. Offering a far-ranging and detailed analysis, this book identifies an unmistakable pattern of failure and highlights lessons we can learn from it.