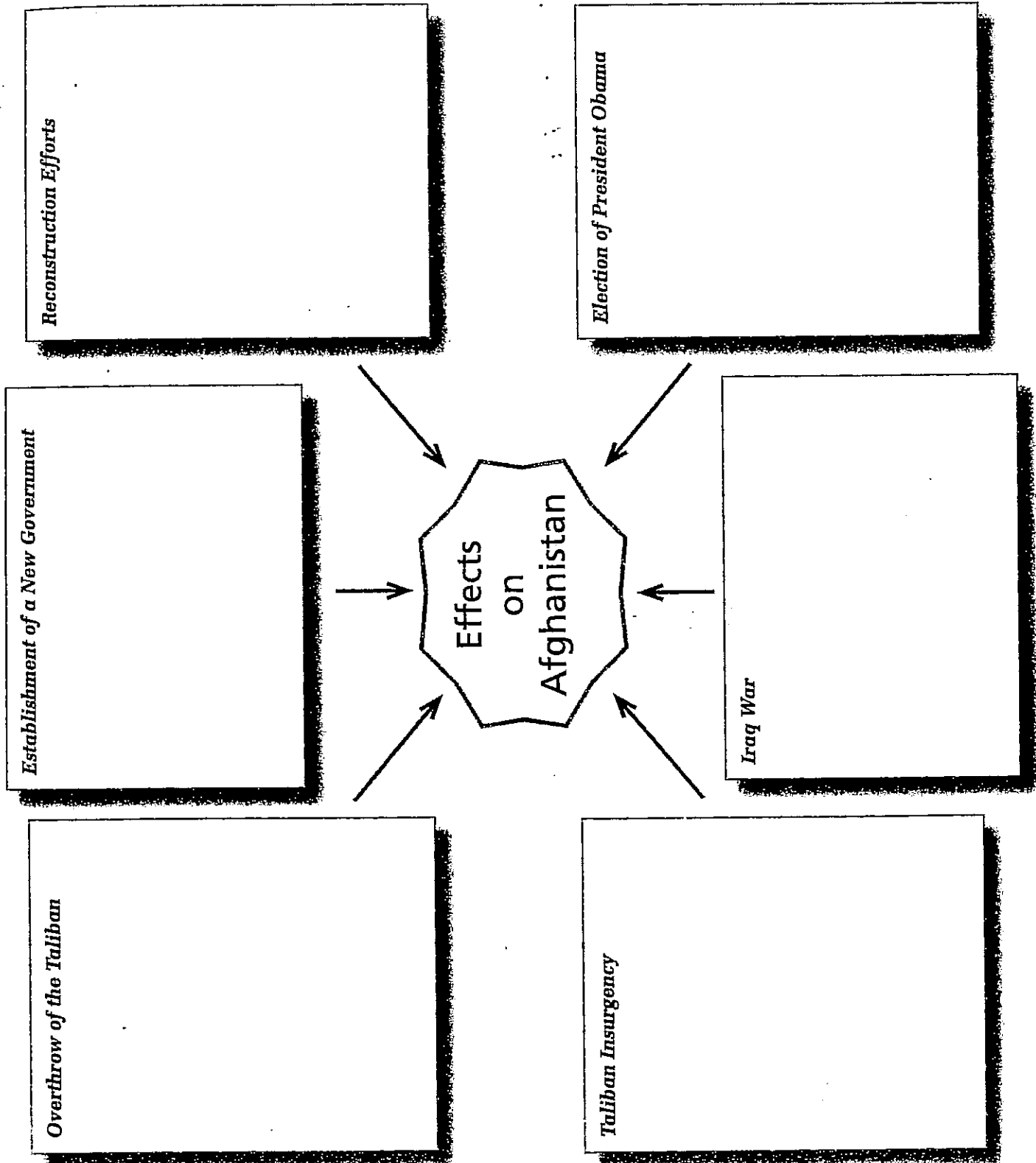


Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Major Events in the War

*Instructions:* Describe the following events and how they affected Afghanistan. This might include effects on Afghanistan's people, government, security, or relations with other countries.



## Overthrow of the Taliban

On October 7, 2001, U.S. and British forces began bombing strategic locations in Afghanistan. Operation Enduring Freedom aimed

to topple the Taliban and destroy al Qaeda networks in the country. Rather than deploy high numbers of U.S. troops, the U.S. military relied on the Northern Alliance and other local anti-Taliban groups to do the on-the-ground fighting. In addition, the United States paid off warlords across the country to guarantee their cooperation.

Three hundred U.S. troops and one hundred CIA officers in Afghanistan directed U.S. bombers from the ground. The bombing quickly weakened Taliban positions. The United States and its Afghan allies gained a foothold in the north of the country within a matter of weeks. Although U.S. officials wanted to avoid toppling the Taliban government until a new, UN-backed government was in place, the Taliban unexpectedly fled Kabul on November 13, 2001.

As the Taliban position grew increasingly weak, many Afghan Taliban fighters deserted, often joining the other side. The Taliban needed to rely on foreign fighters to reinforce their numbers. More than nine thousand fighters joined the Taliban from Pakistan, while thousands more came from Uzbekistan and other Arab countries. U.S. and Afghan forces drove the Taliban from the southern city of Kandahar, their last stronghold, in December 2001.

## Establishment of a New Government

When Bush administration officials drew up plans to topple the Taliban, they were reluctant to involve the United States in what they called “nation building,” or rebuilding Afghanistan and its government. But it quickly became clear that in the vacuum left by the overthrow of the Taliban, some nation building would be necessary.

***“[I]t would be a useful function for the United Nations to take over the so-called ‘nation building’—I would call it the stabilization of a future government—after our military mission is complete.”***

—President George W. Bush,  
October 11, 2001

In late November, the UN organized a meeting with representatives from Afghanistan’s anti-Taliban groups and world leaders in Bonn, Germany to choose an interim government and a new leader for the country.

The delegates at the conference selected someone relatively unknown to be Afghanistan’s interim leader—Hamid Karzai, a Pashtun leader from southern Afghanistan who had lived in Pakistan for many years and who was backed by the United States. Many believed a majority of Afghans would accept him as a leader.

In what became known as the Bonn Agreement, delegates drew up plans to establish an interim government, central bank, and supreme court. The agreement also stipulated that presidential and parliamentary elections would be held two years later to elect a permanent government.

In 2003, a group of five hundred people from all parts of Afghan society took part in a *loya jirga* (grand council) to write a new constitution. The draft drew on the 1964 constitution of King Zahir Shah, but ultimately included a president and not a king.

Presidential elections were held on October 9, 2004. Hamid Karzai was elected with 55 percent of the vote. Participation was high. More than eight million voted in the elections, nearly fifty percent of them women.

## Reconstruction Efforts

Afghanistan was one of the poorest countries in the world before the overthrow of the Taliban. The country lacked a comprehensive road system, and the majority of the population did not have electricity, access to basic health care, or education. During the civil war of the 1990s, the national police and army disbanded and local warlords and their militias controlled the countryside. The economy was weak, with few industries or large businesses to employ Afghans. In 2001 life expectancy was forty-five years—one of the lowest in the world.

Despite the reluctance of the Bush administration to become involved in “nation building,” the international community recognized that Afghans needed help establishing a government and rebuilding their economy after the invasion.

### ***What have been some obstacles to reconstruction?***

International governments and organizations pledged billions of dollars for the recovery effort, with the hope that it would stabilize Afghanistan and prevent the return of the Taliban. Ordinary Afghans had high expectations for the ways in which this reconstruction would improve their lives.

The reconstruction effort has had some successes. For example, the “Back to School” program launched in March 2002 saw millions of students return to school, many of them girls who had been unable to study under the Taliban regime.

***“It is the largest education program in UNICEF history and the first time we have started nationwide primary education.”***

—Eric Laroche, UNICEF, March 2002

International donors invested heavily in health care targeted at women and children, and ensured that there was at least one hospital in every province. As security conditions improved in 2002, two of the five million Afghan refugees living in Iran and Pakistan returned home.

But overall, the reconstruction effort in Afghanistan has largely been unable to improve the living standards of most Afghans. Development projects were designed by international donors, many of whom had little knowledge of Afghanistan’s history, culture, and development needs. For example, a donor might build a new school without making sure there were teachers to work there. Donors paid international organizations and foreign contractors to run their projects, which did little to strengthen the capabilities of the central government or create employment for the local population. The efforts were also underfunded, averaging \$60 per person per year—far below what was needed to address the country’s great development and security needs.

## Taliban Insurgency

### The Taliban Return

The Taliban were able to rebuild their strength in the relatively safe haven they found in Pakistan. In late 2001, many of the surviving members of the Taliban and al Qaeda fled Afghanistan into a northwestern part of Pakistan known as the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). Pakistan's government did not have the same authority there as it did in the rest of the country. This was because rules established by the British Empire in 1901 still governed the area, an arrangement that limited the central government's control.

The arrival of thousands of Taliban fighters brought problems for the residents of the region. The Taliban established bases and used violence to impose their extremist religious beliefs on locals. Hundreds of local leaders were murdered by the Taliban in a campaign designed to intimidate the population. The Taliban used its new bases in the FATA and other border regions to organize attacks against U.S. and international forces in Afghanistan.

With the knowledge and support of the Taliban, al Qaeda also set up shop in the FATA. Terrorist attacks in the cities of Madrid, London, and Bali that killed and injured thousands were planned in this region.

As security deteriorated in both countries, relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan grew very tense. Pakistan's government, for its part, was both infuriated and concerned about India's aid to Afghanistan. Afghan President Hamid Karzai called on Musharraf and the ISI to stop their continued support of the Taliban.

### *Why were the Taliban able to mount an insurgency inside Afghanistan?*

Sporadic Taliban attacks had been ongoing in Afghanistan since 2003 with little local support. But as conditions in the country failed to improve, some Afghans began to support the Taliban. This was particularly the case in the south, among the poorest and most neglected regions of Afghanistan. The Taliban set up courts in the regions they controlled, administering their own version of justice. While their punishments were often brutal, for many Afghans this was the only way they could get any justice at all. The local, government-run courts were corrupt and faced endless delays. In regions the Taliban controlled, crime dropped dramatically. At the same time, the Taliban—opposed to the education of girls—killed 85 teachers and students and burned down 187 schools in 2006.

*“ISI operatives reportedly pay a significant number of Taliban living/operating in both Pakistan and Afghanistan to fight.... A large number of those fighting are doing so under duress as a result of pressure from ISI. The insurgency cannot survive without its sanctuary in Pakistan, which provides freedom of movement, safe havens, logistic and training facilities, a base for recruitment, communications for command and control, and a secure environment for foreign extremist groups. The sanctuary of Pakistan provides a seemingly endless supply of potential new recruits for the insurgency.”*

—Afghan intelligence report presented to Afghan President Karzai, June 24, 2006

## Iraq War

Even as U.S. forces entered Afghanistan in late 2001, the Bush administration began to plan an invasion of Iraq. In January 2002, four months after the attacks of September 11, President George W. Bush identified Iraq as a member of an "axis of evil" that threatened the United States. Members of the Bush administration saw Iraq as part of a "global war on terror." President Bush warned that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and supported terrorism.

In 2003, U.S. forces invaded Iraq and toppled Saddam Hussein's government, which sparked an insurgency against U.S. forces. The United States shifted much of its resources and attention from Afghanistan to Iraq. At the end of 2005 as violence increased in Iraq, U.S. officials cut the U.S. budget for Afghanistan by 38 percent, and the Department of Defense announced that it would cut U.S. troops levels in Afghanistan and replace them with NATO forces. Critics warned that the U.S. focus on Iraq would cause security problems in Afghanistan.

***“Iraq was more than just a major distraction to Afghanistan. Huge resources were devoted to Iraq, which focused away from nation building Afghanistan. The billions spent in Iraq were the billions that were not spent in Afghanistan.”***

—Former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, June 27, 2007

To this day, no WMD have been found in Iraq, and intelligence officials have been unable to confirm any collaboration between the Iraqi government and al Qaeda.

## Election of President Obama

In November 2008, Barack Obama was elected president of the United States. He

came into office promising to reinvigorate the campaign against the Taliban and al Qaeda, which he believed had been side-tracked by the war in Iraq.

### ***How did President Obama change U.S. policy?***

President Obama pushed Afghanistan to the top of the U.S. foreign policy agenda. He emphasized the importance of focusing on the threat from al Qaeda, and linked success in Afghanistan to the stability of Pakistan.

After years of funneling money to Pakistan's military, in 2009 the United States tripled non-military aid to Pakistan to \$1.5 billion per year for five years. The goal is to strengthen Pakistan's

economy and democratic institutions. President Obama believes that the U.S. relationship with Pakistan is a key component of the U.S. approach to Afghanistan. The Obama administration sees reducing tensions between India and Pakistan an important step to a solution in Afghanistan.

President Obama also called for additional U.S. troops to be sent to Afghanistan. These troops would train the Afghan police and military, and establish a base level of security throughout the country. The United States deployed an additional 30,000 troops over the course of 2009 and 2010, bringing the total number of U.S. troops in Afghanistan to 100,000 by August 2010.

# Osama bin Laden's Death and Global Impact



## ***How has the killing of Osama bin Laden affected the region?***

On May 1, 2011 U.S. special forces stormed a compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan and killed Osama bin Laden. Bin Laden, the mastermind of the September 11 attacks, had eluded U.S. forces for ten years.

The killing of bin Laden raised serious questions about the U.S. relationship with Pakistan. Abbottabad is less than forty miles from Islamabad, the capital of Pakistan. Bin Laden's compound was one mile away from a Pakistani military academy. Many U.S. politicians have questioned how bin Laden was able to live there without detection. Others argue that this incident suggests that he was, in fact, aided by Pakistan's intelligence agency.

***“A lot of people on our side wonder how this could have happened without the Pakistanis knowing. If they weren't complicit, they were incompetent, so why should we bother partnering with them?”***

—Daniel Markey, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, May 2011

U.S. officials worry that Pakistan's government is waging a selective battle against extremists: pursuing some, while ignoring or protecting others. Another worry is that Pakistan's government does not have full control over the actions of its army and the ISI. While Pakistan's leaders promise to cooperate with the United States—and they have in many ways—other parts of the government may not be as willing.

At the same time, many Pakistanis were angry about the U.S. raid, arguing that it violated their country's sovereignty. Although the U.S. government had been in contact with Pakistani officials, it did not get permission

for U.S. forces to enter the country. This raises important issues about U.S.-Pakistan relations. Clearly, the United States chose not to inform the Pakistan government because it feared that information about the raid would somehow reach bin Laden and allow him to escape. For their part, Pakistan's government believes that the United States has no intention of treating them as an equal partner in fighting the Taliban and al Qaeda who have killed and wounded thousands of Pakistani citizens.

Many have questioned what effect the death of bin Laden will have on the strength of al Qaeda. After his death, there were reports of the Taliban fleeing Afghanistan back into Pakistan. Some experts argue that without its famous leader, al Qaeda's influence and appeal in the Muslim world will decrease. Others argue that his death could provide a rallying point, and fear that it might spark violence among al Qaeda sympathizers.