



# The Taliban: Important Points For Teachers And Students

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1. The term “Taliban” means “students” in Pashto; the organization originated in Qandahar in the early 1990s; most members were Pashtu; they ruled over the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (1995–2001).
2. The Taliban emerged victorious in the civil war conflict with the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan between 1992 and 1995, with military support of Pakistan and funding from Saudi Arabia.
3. The Taliban won control of Kabul and southern Afghanistan, and their numbers increased because of the transfer of 15,000 madrassa-educated youth from Pakistan, which aspired regional domination.<sup>1</sup>
4. Between 1996 and 2001, the al-Qaeda organization became a state within the Taliban state.
5. Toward the end of 2000, one faction in the Taliban was supportive of Osama bin Laden, and another appears to have developed reservations about continuing the alliance with al-Qaeda, mainly because of the latter’s transnational activities, especially the bombings of American Embassies in African countries.
6. The 9/11 attacks brought NATO forces and American armies to the Afghan theater. The Taliban was displaced after 2001, chiefly for failing to shut down terrorist training camps on the Pak-Afghan border and for refusal to disassociate with al-Qaeda and deliver Osama to the US.<sup>2</sup>
7. Pakistan believed that the Taliban would help them prevent the establishment of a pro-Indian government in Kabul and that the Taliban would attack India and others in the name of Islam. Support for the Taliban regime made Pakistan suspect in the eyes of most of the Afghan governments that succeeded them.<sup>3</sup>
8. Both the US and the deposed Taliban showed their tenacity between 2005 and 2012. The Taliban is now operating via the Quetta Shura from Quetta in Pakistan.<sup>4</sup> It appears that commoners prefer the Taliban to the Afghan government, mainly because they are seen to be more committed and less corrupt than the government. Tribal communities are divided between support of the government and the Taliban.
9. Simultaneous attacks in April 2012 in Kabul indicated the strength and tenacity of the Taliban even after Osama’s elimination at Abbottabad in 2011. A very uncertain future exists in Afghanistan.
10. Many instances demonstrate that the Taliban have attempted to refine the Pashtu tribal law for the benefit of women, against the popular perception that they were harsh to women.<sup>5</sup> If the international community and the Afghan government fail to restore normalcy in Afghanistan, a society tired of internecine wars might swing toward the Taliban once again.

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## Notes

1. Sajit Gandhi, ed., “The Taliban File,” *The September 11 Source Books Volume VII*; *National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 97*, September 11, 2003, George Washington University, accessed March 19, 2012, <http://tiny.cc/4i2qhw>.
2. Daniel Byman, *Deadly Connections: States that Sponsor Terrorism* (Boston: Cambridge University Press), 195.
3. Peter Bergen, *Holy War, Inc. Inside the Secret World of Osama bin Laden* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002). See also Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Islam, Oil, and the New Great Game in Central Asia* (New Haven: Yale, Nota Bene Books, 2001).
4. James Mazol, “The Quetta Shura Taliban: An Overlooked Problem,” *International Affairs Review*, November 11, 2003, last accessed March 19, 2012, <http://www.iargwu.org/node/106>.
5. Gilles Dorronsoro, *Revolution Unending. Afghanistan: 1979 to the Present* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

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