

Seminar 2

Evolution of the international
intervention in Afghanistan, 2002-2014



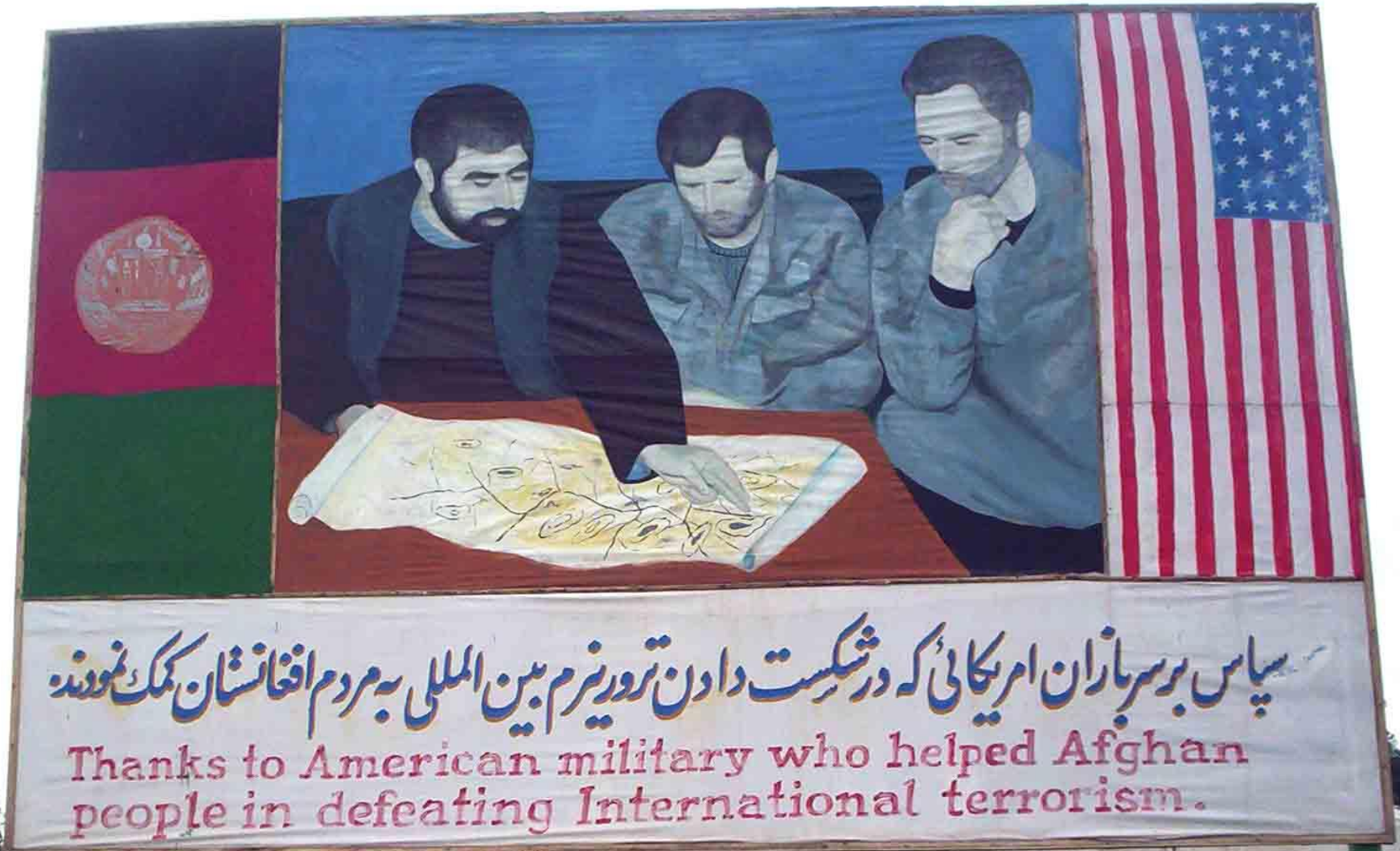
Characteristics of the Bonn Process

- It provided a roadmap conferring progressive legitimacy to the Afghan government and the post-Taliban political order
- It mobilized the members of the old, pre-Taliban ruling elites, notably mujahideen and old entourage of the King, adding some younger, Western-trained technocrats
- The ‘Light Footprint’
 - **UN and international community maintain a light, unobtrusive presence**
 - **Let the Afghans lead / Afghans in the Driver’s Seat**
 - **In as many fields as possible, Afghans take responsibility. Example: Loya Jirga**
- Attempt to enforce technocratic, non-political solutions

What happened?



Operation Enduring Freedom



- Warlords return to power
- Contradictory Objectives between UN and Coalition objectives fail to bring peace and stability

Observations about the ELJ

The chance to amend the Bonn Agreement and make it more representative of the aspirations of the Afghan people was missed

The Afghan government did not receive a mandate from its people, continuing its dependence on the international community

The Afghan people became cynical towards the political process

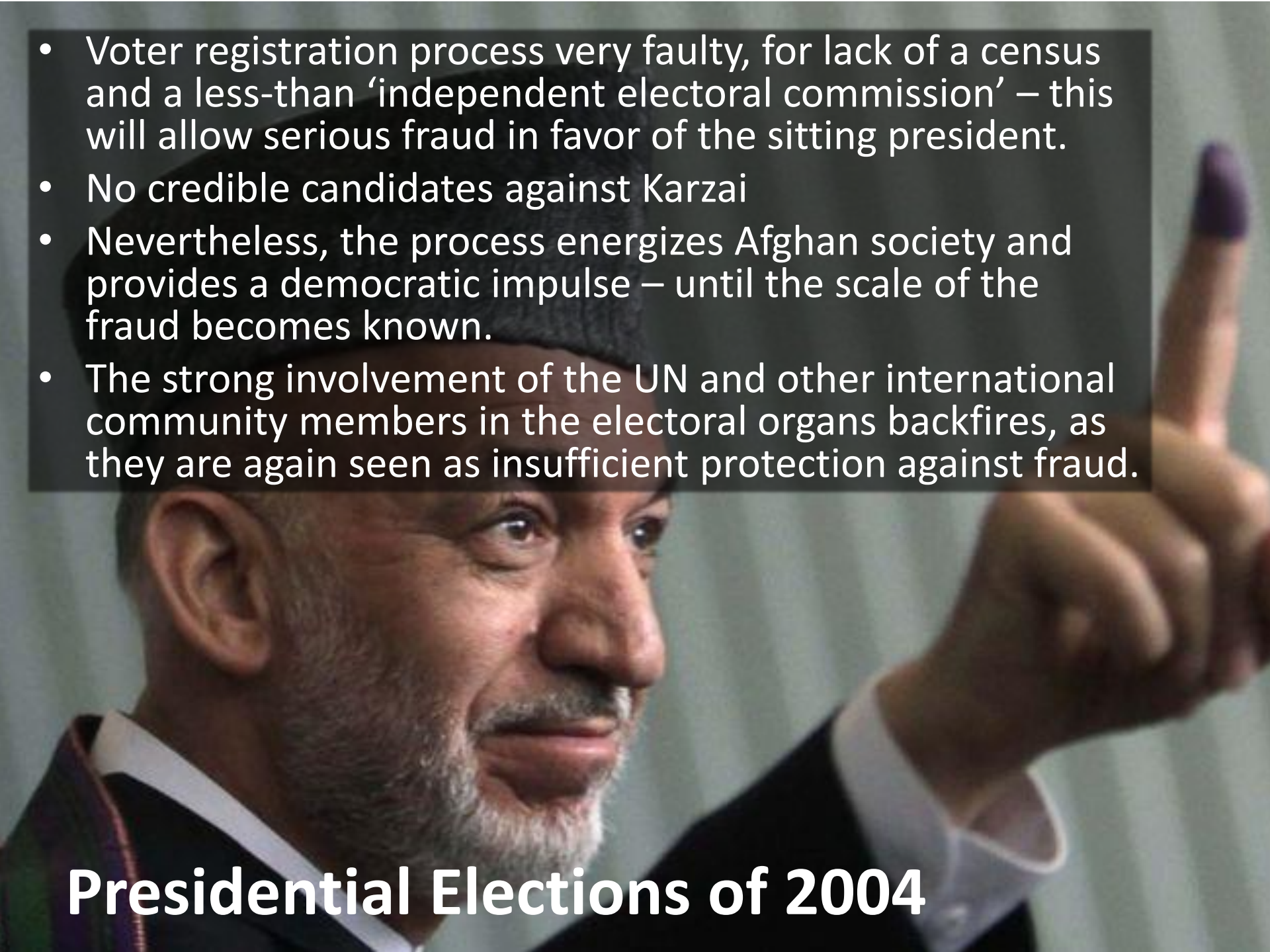
The new political elite understood that Western principles were flexible

Start of the Iraq War

- International attention shifts away from Afghanistan
- A different, more military, less internationally consensual and more overtly nation-building type of intervention is attempted by the USA and its 'Coalition of the Willing', who invest much more heavily in Iraq than in Afghanistan
- The emergence of AQ as a new type of enemy
- The end of the UN's aura of neutrality with the bombing of the UN offices in Baghdad

2003 Constitutional Process

- **Wrangling between French and US constitutional experts, to determine who will have most influence on crafting the Afghan constitution**
- **However, in a lengthy and messy process, the Afghan commission members impose their own kind of constitution: based on sharia but with the guaranteeing of many individual rights; sweeping executive powers with few checks and balances; a parliament and provincial councils elected by SNTV.**

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- Voter registration process very faulty, for lack of a census and a less-than 'independent electoral commission' – this will allow serious fraud in favor of the sitting president.
 - No credible candidates against Karzai
 - Nevertheless, the process energizes Afghan society and provides a democratic impulse – until the scale of the fraud becomes known.
 - The strong involvement of the UN and other international community members in the electoral organs backfires, as they are again seen as insufficient protection against fraud.

Presidential Elections of 2004

What is the relation between elections and democracy?



Parliamentary elections 2005

- Popular disillusionment with electoral and democratic processes increases, leading to less participation (< 50% of registered voters).
- The Parliamentary elections hail the definitive return of the warlords and local power brokers, and of patron/client politics.
- And signal the comeback of Taliban, whose insurgency is steadily gaining ground
- The result of the elections: an extremely fragmented Parliament (SNTV)

Transitional Justice and National Reconciliation

1. Establishment of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission in March 2002
2. Failed vetting process of parliamentary candidates in 2005.
3. Transitional Justice action plan developed by the AIHRC with UNAMA and donor input, completed in 2005; after serious stalling by the Presidency, it is finally adopted in December 2006.
4. Amnesty law adopted by Parliament to avoid prosecution for past crimes in January 2007
5. The government sets up the High Peace and Reconciliation Commission in 2010, in an effort to extend the amnesty to Taliban, Hezb-e Islami and other insurgents.



Disarmament

Vice-President Khalili, a Hazara warlord, headed the government's commission on the Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups (DIAG) while maintaining his own militia.

2006 UN: 1200 to 2000 illegal armed groups with 120.000 – 2.000.000 members and 3.5 million arms

DIAG 2006-07 only in 3 districts with 5000 weapons submitted, since then failure of DIAG programme confirmed.

(...)

The US provided 747,000 firearms to Afghan security forces worth \$626 million. They found that 43 per cent have disappeared from official stock lists that track their whereabouts in Afghanistan. (Sopko's 2014 report)

What was the legacy of the Bonn process?





Diplomatic Circus

2004... London 2006... Paris 2008... The Hague 2009...

“Strategic vision for the future”

“Better aid coordination”

“Strategic partnership”

“Alternative livelihoods”

etc etc

etc

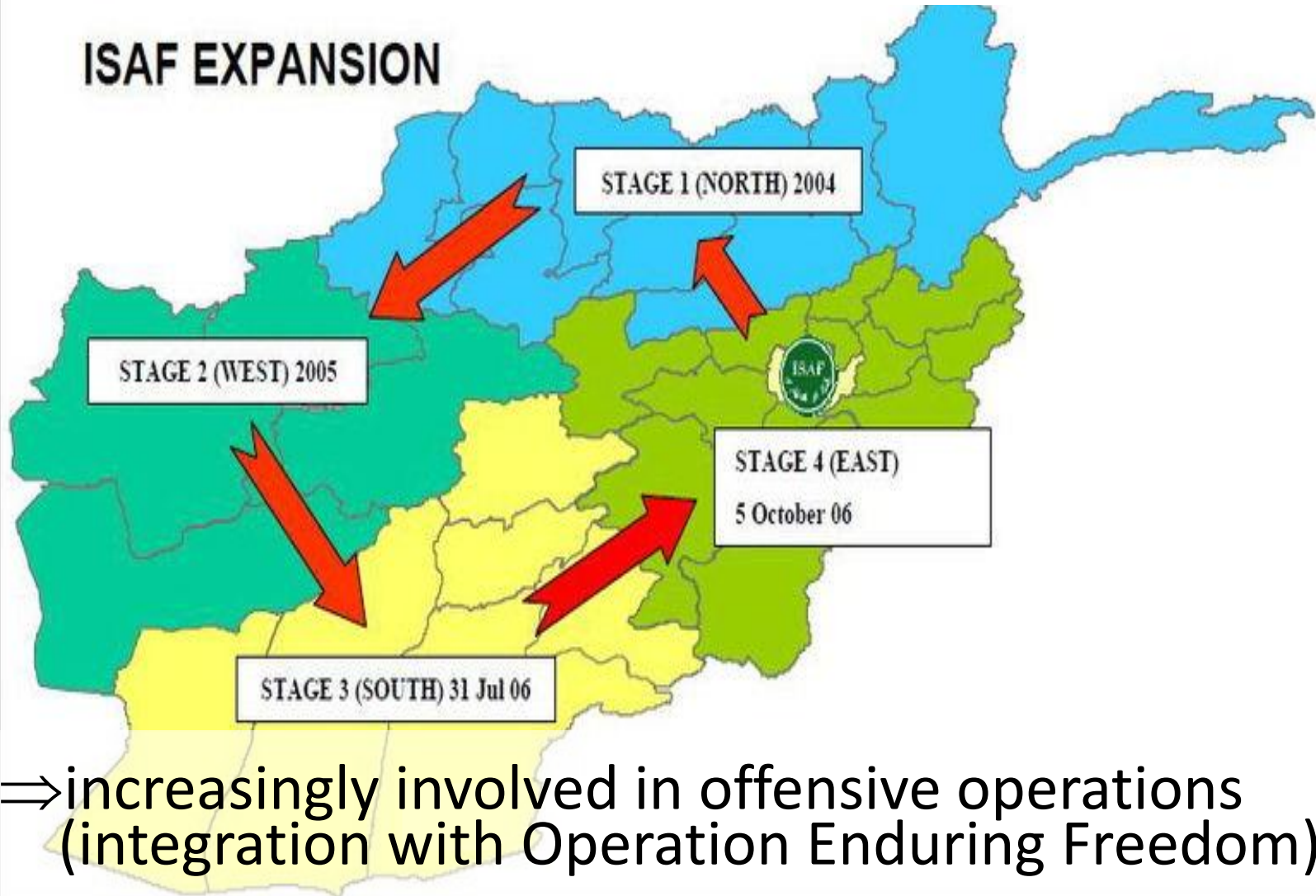
Afghan Ownership (?)



Increasing Militarization of International Presence

ISAF 2002: Smile & Wave; International Shopping Around Force

ISAF EXPANSION



⇒ increasingly involved in offensive operations
(integration with Operation Enduring Freedom)

Analysis of the White Paper (1)

Afghanistan and Pakistan now grouped together as one troublesome region

Democratic forces to be boosted in Pakistan but neglected in Afghanistan. No mention of Human Rights

3Ds: Diplomacy, Defence & Development
become **Disrupt, Dismantle and Defeat**

Analysis of the White Paper (2)

- **Primacy of the War on Terror**
 - **Good governance as a counterinsurgency strategy**
 - Minimal conditions of State legitimacy to be met
 - Employment creation, especially in agriculture
 - *This is to be achieved with a surge in US civilian assistance*
- => US-bolstered Afghan state to take over US War burden**
- + “a strategic communications plan” to win Afghan hearts and minds and counter Taliban propaganda (naive?)**

From Bush to Obama

- **Western mission in 2001 =
Civilizing mission**
- **Western mission in 2009 =
Damage control**

Western self-image



- Wise
- Compassionate
- Concerned
- Prone to doubt
- Firm in our resolve when we have to defend the values of our civilization
- Tolerant
- Multicultural
- We rule the world because our culture is best