

PRE-DEPLOYMENT AFGHANISTAN READING LIST

INSTRUCTIONS: This reading list is broken down into three distinct levels tailored to the rank and mission role deploying members will most likely fulfill. Start at the top of your respective reading list and work your way down through the list. Based on nominal reading pace for each list (75, 125, and 200 pages per week respectively), each list is designed to be completed in approximately 5-6 months prior to deployment.

The Tactical Level list is designed for deploying E1-E3 personnel. The Small Unit Leaders list is designed for deploying E4-E6 and O1-O3 personnel. The Operational/Strategic Planners list is designed for deploying E7-E9 and O4-O6 personnel. The week numbers (in parentheses) provides the approximate week the book will be completed based upon nominal reading paces.

Note: All but two publications in these lists is hyperlinked to the document itself or Amazon.com. In MS Word, hold the CTRL key and click title to follow the hyperlink.

TACTICAL LEVEL (E1 to E3) [nominal pace 75 pp/week]:

- (Week 1) [Revised COMISAF Tactical Directive \(Unclassified, dated 6 July 2009\)](#) – COMISAF (2 pp)
- (Week 1) [Commander's Initial Guidance \(dated 13 June 2009; available AFPAK SIPR Portal\)](#) – COMISAF (1 pp)
- (Week 1) [MCIA Afghanistan Cultural Field Guide](#) – Marine Corps Intelligence Activity (44 pp)
- (Week 1) [MCIA Afghanistan Culture Smart Card](#) – Marine Corps Intelligence Activity (2 pp)
- (Week 1) [Twenty-Eight Articles: Fundamentals of Company Level Counterinsurgency](#) – Dr. David Kilcullen (11 pp; also available for download on Amazon.com for a fee)
- (Week 1) [Counter-Insurgency – Commander's Guidance](#) – LTG Sir Graeme Lamb (Commander, Field Army, United Kingdom, 17 pp, June 2009)
- (Week 2-4) [Afghanistan 101](#) – Ehsan M Entezar (172 pp)
- (Week 5-8) [Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia](#) – Ahmed Rashid (294 pp)
- (Week 9) [Afghanistan's Cave Complexes 1979 – 2004](#) – Mir Bahmanyar (64 pp)
- (Week 10-13) [Hezbollah](#) – Hala Jaber (288 pp)
- (Week 14-18) [Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Mission to Promote Peace...One School at a Time](#) – Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin (349 pp)
- (Week 19-20) [MCDP 1, Warfighting](#) – USMC (113 pp)

Additional Readings:

- [Small Unit Leader's Guide to Counterinsurgency](#) – USMC (136 pp)
- [Culture and Customs of Afghanistan](#) – Hafizullah Emadi (284 pp)
- [Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia](#) – Ahmed Rashid (320 pp)
- [The Kite Runner](#) (FICTION NOVEL) – Khaled Hosseini (352 pp)
- [A Thousand Splendid Suns](#) (FICTION NOVEL) – Khaled Hosseini (432 pp)
- [Flashman: A Novel](#) (FICTION NOVEL) – George MacDonald Fraser (256 pp)

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SMALL UNIT LEADERS (E4 to E6 & O1 to O3) [nominal pace 125 pp/week]:

- (Week 1) **Revised COMISAF Tactical Directive (Unclassified, dated 6 July 2009)** – COMISAF (2 pp)
- (Week 1) **Commander's Initial Guidance (dated 13 June 2009; available AFPAK SIPR Portal)** – COMISAF (1 pp)
- (Week 1) **Small Unit Leader's Guide to Counterinsurgency** – USMC (136 pp)
- (Week 2) **Counter-Insurgency – Commander's Guidance** – LTG Sir Graeme Lamb (Commander, Field Army, United Kingdom, 17 pp, June 2009)
- (Week 2) **MCIA Afghanistan Cultural Field Guide** – Marine Corps Intelligence Activity (44 pp)
- (Week 2) **MCIA Afghanistan Culture Smart Card** – Marine Corps Intelligence Activity (2 pp)
- (Week 2–3) **Afghanistan 101** – Ehsan M Entezar (172 pp)
- (Week 4–6) **Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia** – Ahmed Rashid (294 pp)
- (Week 6–9) **Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia** – Ahmed Rashid (320 pp)
- (Week 9) **Afghanistan's Cave Complexes 1979 – 2004** – Mir Bahmanyar (64 pp)
- (Week 10-12) **Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Mission to Promote Peace...One School at a Time** – Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin (349 pp)
- (Week 13–15) **Hezbollah** – Hala Jaber (288 pp)
- (Week 16–18) **Soldiers of God: With Islamic Warriors in Afghanistan and Pakistan** – Robert Kaplan (304 pp)
- (Week 19–22) **The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power** – Max Boot (464 pp)
- (Week 23) **The Other Side of the Mountain: Mujahideen Tactics in the Soviet–Afghan War** – Ali Ahmad Jalali and Lester Grau (156 pp)
- (Week 24–26) **Bear Went Over the Mountain: Soviet Combat Tactics in Afghanistan** – Lester Grau (272 pp)

Additional Small Unit Leader Readings:

- War In The Shadows: The Guerrilla In History** – Robert Asprey (602 pp)
- Afghan Guerilla Warfare: In the Words of the Mujahideen Fighters** – Ali Ahmad Jalali and Lester Grau (420 pp)
- Through Our Enemies' Eyes: Osama bin Laden, Radical Islam, and the Future of America** – Michael Scheuer (472 pp)
- Tactics of the Crescent Moon: Militant Muslim Combat Methods** – H. John Poole and Ray Smith (360 pp)
- Soldier Sahibs: The Daring Adventurers Who Tamed India's Northwest Frontier** – Charles Alan (384 pp)
- Reaping the Whirlwind: Afghanistan, Al Qa'ida and the Holy War** – Michael Griffin (320 pp)
- The Man Who Would Be King: The First American in Afghanistan** – Ben Macintyre (368 pp)
- Afghanistan: A Short History of Its People and Politics** – Martin Ewans (368 pp)
- MCDP 3, Tactics** – USMC (150 pp)
- MCDP 6, Command and Control** – USMC (154 pp)
- Flashman: A Novel (FICTION NOVEL)** – George MacDonald Fraser (256 pp)

PRE-DEPLOYMENT AFGHANISTAN READING LIST

OPERATIONAL/STRATEGIC PLANNERS (E7 to E9 & O4 to O6) [nominal pace 200 pp/week]:

- (Week 1) **Commander's Initial Guidance** (dated 13 June 2009; available **AFPAK SIPR Portal**) – COMISAF (1 pp)
- (Week 1) **Revised COMISAF Tactical Directive (Unclassified, dated 6 July 2009)** – COMISAF (2 pp)
- (Week 1) **Counter-Insurgency – Commander's Guidance** – LTG Sir Graeme Lamb (Commander, Field Army, United Kingdom, 17 pp, June 2009)
- (Week 1–2) **Afghanistan: A Military History** – Stephen Tanner (368 pp)
- (Week 3–4) **The Fragmentation of Afghanistan: State Formation and Collapse in the International System, Second Edition** – Barnett Rubin (420 pp)
- (Week 5-7) **Descent into Chaos: The U.S. and the Disaster in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia** – Ahmed Rashid (560 pp)
- (Week 8-9) **The Soviet Afghan War: How a Superpower Fought and Lost** – Russian General Staff (392 pp)
- (Week 10) **The Battle for Peace: A Frontline Vision of America's Power and Purpose** – General Anthony Zinni (240 pp)
- (Week 11-12) **6 Nightmares: The Real Threats to American Security** – Anthony Lake (336 pp)
- (Week 13-14) **Pakistan: Eye of the Storm** – Bennett Jones (384 pp)
- (Week 15-16) **Hezbollah** – Hala Jaber (288 pp)
- (Week 16-17) **Afghanistan's Endless War: State Failure, Regional Politics, and the Rise of the Taliban** – Larry Goodson (264 pp)
- (Week 18-19) **The Punishment of Virtue** – Sarah Chayes (400 pp)
- (Week 20-21) **Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Mission to Promote Peace...One School at a Time** – Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin (349 pp)
- (Week 22-23) **Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam** – John Nagl (280 pp)
- (Week 24-26) **War In The Shadows: The Guerrilla In History** – Robert Asprey (602 pp)

Additional Operational/Strategic Planner Readings:

- MCDP 1-1, Strategy** – USMC (117 pp)
- MCDP 1-2, Campaigning** – USMC (120 pp)
- The Great Game: The Struggle for Empire in Central Asia** – Peter Hopkirk (564 pp)
- The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan** – Ayesha Jalal (336 pp)
- War at the Top of the World: The Struggle for Afghanistan, Kashmir and Tibet** – Eric Margolis (292 pp)
- Afghan Guerilla Warfare: In the Words of the Mujahideen Fighters** – Ali Ahmad Jalali and Lester Grau (420 pp)
- The Osama Bin Laden I Know: An Oral History** – Peter Bergen (528 pp)
- Imperial Hubris** – Michael Scheuer (336 pp)
- Ghost Wars** – Steve Coll (736 pp)
- The Village** – Bing West (400 pp)
- Afghanistan** – Louis Dupree (804 pp)
- Flashman: A Novel** (FICTION NOVEL) – George MacDonald Fraser (256 pp)