

A strategy that went from a 'good war' to the shorthand 'Afghan good enough' reflects Obama's coming to terms with what was possible in Afghanistan.

Fractured World Tested the Hope Of a Young President

By MARK LANDLER

WASHINGTON — President Obama's advisers wrestled with an intractable problem in the spring and summer of 2015: How could they stabilize Afghanistan while

lars spent and more than 2,000 American lives lost — would ever transform Afghanistan into a semblance of a democracy able to defend itself.

At the same time, he added, "the counterterrorism challenges are real." As bleak as Afghanistan's prospects were, the United States could not afford to walk away and allow the country to become a seedbed for extremists again.

A few weeks later, the president halted the withdrawal and announced that he would leave thousands of American troops in the country indefinitely.

It was a crucial turning point in the evolution of Barack Obama. The antiwar candidate of 2008 who had pledged to turn around Afghanistan — the "good war" to George W. Bush's "bad war" in Iraq — had conceded that the longest military operation in American history would not end on his watch. The optimistic president who once thought Afghanistan was winnable had, through bitter experience, become the commander in chief of a forever war.

He remains defensive

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THE OBAMA ERA

The 'Good War'



preserving Mr. Obama's longtime goal of pulling out the last American troops before he left office?

As it happened, the president solved the problem for them. In early August of that year, when Mr. Obama convened a meeting of the National Security Council, he looked around the table and acknowledged a stark new reality.

"The fever in this room has finally broken," the president told the group, according to a person in the meeting. "We're no longer in nation-building mode."

What Mr. Obama meant was that no one in the Situation Room that day, himself included, thought that the United States — after 14 years of war, billions of dol-



LUKE SHARRETT/THE NEW YORK TIMES

President Obama on Veterans Day in 2009, visiting a section of Arlington National Cemetery where many Americans killed in Afghanistan and Iraq are buried.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALEX WROBLEWSKI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

After decades of failed efforts to bring a line to one of the few corners of Manhattan the subway system didn't reach, the Second Avenue subway opened to the public Sunday, with three stations.

Train Delay Ends in (Happy) Tears

2nd Ave. Subway Opens at Last, Stoking a City's Spirit

By EMMA G. FITZSIMMONS

Finally. The Second Avenue subway opened in New York City on Sunday, with thousands of riders flooding into its polished stations to witness a piece of history nearly a century in the making.

They descended beneath the streets of the Upper East Side of Manhattan to board Q trains bound for Coney Island in Brooklyn. They cheered. Their eyes filled with tears. They snapped selfies in front of colorful mosaics lining the walls of the stations.

It was the first day of 2017, and it felt like a new day for a city that for so long struggled to build this sorely needed subway line. In a rare display of unbridled optimism from hardened New Yorkers, they arrived with huge grins and wide eyes, taking in the bells and whistles at three new stations.

"I was very choked up," Betsy Morris, 70, said as she rode the first train to leave the 96th Street station, at noon. "How do you explain something that you never thought would happen? It's going to change the way everybody lives as far as commuting goes."

It was a major moment for New York's sprawling transit system after decades of failed efforts to bring the line to one of the few corners of Manhattan the subway did not reach.

The opening of the first segment of the line — an extension of the Q train to 96th Street — promises to lighten the crush of passengers on the Nos. 4, 5 and 6 trains along Lexington Avenue, the nation's most overcrowded subway line, which had been the only line on the Upper East Side of Manhattan. When the stations opened shortly before noon, they were quickly filled with giddy riders both young and old, and



The new line is intended to ease an overcrowded system.

strollers, suitcases and dogs — all familiar sights across the system.

But for all the excitement, the line, with just three new stops, is much more modest than the ambitious route running the length of Manhattan that was once envisioned. It serves a relatively affluent

G.O.P. LEADERSHIP POISED TO TOPPLE OBAMA'S PILLARS

CONGRESS IS SET TO OPEN

Overreach and Pushback Could Slow Efforts to Undo Regulations

By JENNIFER STEINHAUER

WASHINGTON — The most powerful and ambitious Republican-led Congress in 20 years will convene Tuesday, with plans to leave its mark on virtually every facet of American life — refashioning the country's social safety net, wiping out scores of labor and environmental regulations and unraveling some of the most significant policy prescriptions put forward by the Obama administration.

Even before President-elect Donald J. Trump is sworn in on Jan. 20, giving their party full control of the government, Republicans plan quick action on several of their top priorities — most notably a measure to clear a path for the Affordable Care Act's repeal. Perhaps the first thing that will happen in the new Congress is the push for deregulation. Also up early: filling a long-vacant Supreme Court seat, which is sure to set off a pitched showdown, and starting confirmation hearings for Mr. Trump's cabinet nominees.

"It's a big job to actually have responsibility and produce results," said Senator Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, the majority leader. "And we intend to do it."

But as Republicans plan to reserve the first 100 days of Congress for their more partisan goals, Democrats are preparing roadblocks. The party's brutal election-year wounds have been salted by evidence of Russian election interference, Mr. Trump's hard-line cabinet picks and his taunting Twitter posts. (On Saturday, he offered New Year's wishes "to all," including "those who have fought me and lost so badly they just don't know what to do.")

Obstacles will also come from Republicans, who are divided on how to proceed with the health care law and a pledge to rewrite

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MAR-A-LAGO The site of an opulent New Year's Eve party in Florida is the future winter White House and home of the calmer Donald J. Trump. PAGE A9

Scientists Loved and Loathed By an Agrochemical Colossus

By DANNY HAKIM

EXETER, England — The bee findings were not what Syngenta expected to hear.

The pesticide giant had commissioned James Cresswell, an

with the company, Dr. Cresswell said in a recent interview that "Syngenta clearly has got an agenda." In an email, he summed up that agenda: "It's the varroa, stupid."

For Dr. Cresswell, 54, the foray into corporate-backed research threw him into personal crisis. Some of his colleagues ostracized him. He found his principles tested. Even his wife and children had their doubts.

"They couldn't believe I took the money," he said of his family. "They imagined there was going to be an awful lot of pressure and thought I sold out."

The corporate use of academia has been documented in fields like soft drinks and pharmaceuticals. But it is rare for an academic to provide an insider's view of the relationships being forged with corporations, and the expectations that accompany them.

A review of Syngenta's strategy shows that Dr. Cresswell's experi-

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UNCERTAIN HARVEST

Companies Shaping Science

expert in flowers and bees at the University of Exeter in England, to study why many of the world's bee colonies were dying. Companies like Syngenta have long blamed a tiny bug called a varroa mite, rather than their own pesticides, for the bee decline.

Dr. Cresswell has also been skeptical of concerns raised about those pesticides, and even the extent of bee deaths. But his initial research in 2012 undercut concerns about varroa mites as well. So the company, based in Switzerland, began pressing him to consider new data and a different approach.

Looking back at his interactions

Massacre at Nightclub Exposes Deepening Fault Lines in Turkey

By TIM ARANGO

ISTANBUL — When a lone gunman murdered dozens of New Year's revelers early Sunday, he targeted a symbol of a cosmopolitan Istanbul that is increasingly under threat: a dazzling nightclub where people from around the world could party together, free from the mayhem and violence gripping the region.

It was there, at the Reina nightclub on the Bosphorus — a hot spot for soap opera stars and professional athletes, Turks and well-heeled tourists — that those hoping to move past a particularly troubled year died together.

The assault was the second in two weeks in Turkey, and it further exposed the fault lines in a country that is increasingly tearing apart amid terrorist attacks and political instability.

With the gunman still on the loose Sunday night and a nationwide manhunt underway, the killings brutally highlighted a dilemma for Turkey's authoritarian president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan: Even though he has cracked down on opponents and put in place security measures to bring



SEDAT SUNA/EUROPEAN PRESSPHOTO AGENCY

The coffin of Ayhan Arik, one of at least 39 victims of Sunday's shooting at an Istanbul nightclub.

stability to his rattled country, the attacks keep mounting.

"I don't know what to say," said Zeynep Ozman, whose brother, Ali, was wounded in the attack. "I don't want to say anything political, but this can't be accepted as

the new norm. Terrorism is everywhere now, and the government has no control. Something needs to be done. There is no life left in Istanbul."

Turkey has been reeling for several years now, as it has been in-

creasingly drawn into the Syrian civil war. By opening its borders to foreign fighters trying to reach Syria, critics say, it inadvertently supported the rise of the Islamic State, which is now carrying out

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Wartime Outreach in China

The Communist base of China's civil war still honors an American delegation's 1944 visit. Yan'an Journal. PAGE A4

India Feels Pain of Cash Ban

A ban in India on large currency bills has created a divide over government efforts to combat corruption. PAGE A4

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Killer Rejects His Best Defense

Dylann S. Roof, awaiting sentencing for killing nine black worshippers, opposes a mental health defense. PAGE A8

Homeless in a Hub of Power

The rate of homelessness in Washington, D.C., is more than twice the national average, and researchers blame record housing prices. PAGE A8

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Putting Faces to the Names

After reading a front-page Times article about missing faces at the World Trade Center memorial, immigration officials turned to their records. PAGE A11

BUSINESS DAY B1-6

Some Shun a Google System

Small web publishers are opting for control over their content rather than have faster mobile pages. PAGE B1

What Goes Around

Panasonic is reviving its Technics SL-1200 turntable, aiming at audiophiles who won't mind paying \$2,800. PAGE B1



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A Star-Crossed Supernova

Diana Damrau and Vittorio Grigolo combine chemistry, passion and vocal prowess in "Roméo et Juliette," directed by Bartlett Sher, at the Met. A review by Anthony Tommasini. PAGE C1

Schemes of Mules and Men

Lydia Peelle's human and animal characters, the mules in particular, are at center stage and finely wrought in "The Midnight Cool," her first novel, set as America prepares to enter World War I. A review by John Williams. PAGE C4

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Paul Krugman

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SPORTSMONDAY D1-5

The Compromised Raiders

After the team's starting quarterback was hurt last week, Oakland and Connor Cook stumbled against Denver. PAGE D1



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