



## 102 Days of War: How Osama bin Laden, al Qaeda & the Taliban Survived 2001

By Yaniv Barzilai

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Almost ten years before Osama bin Laden was killed, the United States had the opportunity of a decade to decapitate and decimate the organization that so ruthlessly enacted the deadliest foreign attack on American soil in the nation's history. During the battles that raged across Afghanistan in the 102 days after 9/11, CIA officers and special operations forces allied with local Afghan resistance forces to topple the Taliban and go after al Qaeda. Yet bin Laden escaped while al Qaeda and the Taliban endured the initial onslaught.

In *102 Days of War*, Yaniv Barzilai takes the reader from meetings in the White House to the most sensitive operations in Afghanistan to explain how America's enemies survived 2001. Using a broad array of sources, including interviews with U.S. officials at every level of the war, Barzilai concludes that the failure to destroy al Qaeda and kill bin Laden when he was cornered in the mountains of Tora Bora in Eastern Afghanistan was not only the result of a failure in tactics but, more importantly, the product of failures in policy and leadership.

Barzilai also explores critical moments in the U.S.-Pakistani relationship as Pakistan pivoted toward the United States but hedged its bets. As Operation Enduring Freedom draws to an inconclusive end, *102 Days of War* provides a new level of understanding about the successes and failures at the start of America's longest war.

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## **102 Days of War: How Osama bin Laden, al Qaeda & the Taliban Survived 2001** By Yaniv Barzilai **Bibliography**

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**Editorial Review**

Review

*"We may never unravel all the mysteries of those 102 days. Bin Laden took some of them with him to his grave in the Arabian Sea. Others are still concealed in the archives of the Pakistani intelligence service. But 102 Days of War is an essential book that provides the best account by far of what happened that fall and why. It is also a major contribution to understanding the leadership strengths and weaknesses of a presidency under siege."*

**-- From the Foreword by Bruce Riedel**

Senior Advisor on South Asia and the Middle East to the last four U.S. presidents

*"This deeply researched account of those critical days after the 9/11 attack provides enormous new insight into why the Bush administration failed to capture Osama bin Laden and how the seeds of failure for the American presence in Afghanistan were laid down from day one."*

**-- Ahmed Rashid**

Author of Pakistan on the Brink: The Future of America, Pakistan, and Afghanistan

*"Yaniv Barzilai has written a superb and well-researched account of the opening days of the Afghan War. It is rich in lessons learned and insightful descriptions of the decisions and actions that occurred. This should be recommended reading for all senior political and military leaders in order to understand the consequences of muddled decisions and planning. The heroic actions of a few courageous men on the ground are also marvelously captured by Yaniv."*

**--General Anthony C. Zinni, USMC (Retired)**

Former Commanding General of U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM)

*"I was in Afghanistan for many of the 102 days of war described by Yaniv Barzilai. This gripping story is full of insights and captures the feel of those tumultuous days."*

**-- Nathaniel Fick**

Author of One Bullet Away: The Making of a Marine Officer  
and former CEO of the Center for a New American Security

"*102 Days of War* provides an insightful look at the U.S. challenges in Afghanistan, especially the missed opportunities in targeting al Qaeda."

**--Seth G. Jones**

Senior Political Scientist at the RAND Corporation and  
Author of *In the Graveyard of Empires: America's War in Afghanistan*

"*102 Days of War* is both elegant and detailed. . . . It raises large issues that will concern us again and again in future crises." Ronald E. Neumann, *Parameters*  
(Ronald E. Neumann *Parameters*)

About the Author

YANIV BARZILAI is a diplomat in the U.S. Foreign Service. Yaniv graduated with highest honors and highest distinction from the University of North Carolina in 2011 with a B.A. in Peace, War, and Defense and a minor in Arabic. In 2013, Yaniv received an M.A. in International Relations with honors from the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), where he concentrated in Strategic Studies and International Economics.

Yaniv has worked for the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan at the U.S. Department of State in Washington D.C. and the Special Representative for Somalia at the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi, Kenya. He has also worked as a desk officer in the Office of Afghanistan Affairs at the State Department. He was awarded the Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs Fellowship from the U.S. Department of State in 2009.

Yaniv has a passion for military history, diplomacy, national security, and technology. He is 25 years old and currently lives in Washington, D.C.

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