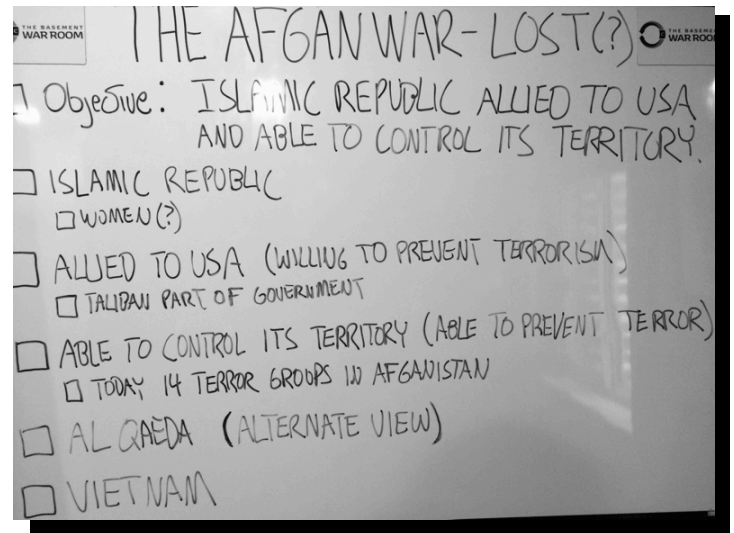




WAR IS A VITAL MATTER

Lesson 6: The United States has Lost the Afghanistan War

- I'm not comfortable saying that the United States has lost the war while we still have Soldiers deployed in harm's way, but I also believe it is necessary to make assessments of a war after 18 years of fighting.
- The United States' war objectives are to create an Islamic Republic allied to the United States and able to control its own territory.



- Islamic Republic. After the U.S. deal with the Taliban women will be disenfranchised and we have to question if a country is a republic when 50% of the population aren't citizens.
- Allied to the United States. The Afghans will have a major political realignment after the U.S.-Taliban deal is struck and what emerges as the formal government in Afghanistan may certainly not be allied to the U.S.
- Able to control its own territory. No chance. Today's CIA Factbook lists 14 terrorist groups that are active in Afghanistan.



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- An alternate view of the war in Afghanistan is that the United States' war aim is to destroy Al Qaeda. However, AQ is a global organization that hasn't been a significant factor in Afghanistan for most of the occupation.
- I am encouraged by Vietnam. Despite, on the U.S. side, 58,220 dead, 2,600 missing and torture and, on the Vietnamese side, around 3 million dead and Agent Orange, we now have thriving trade, military cooperation and tourism. There is very little animosity and the U.S. relationship with Vietnam is a significant strategic advantage. Of course, the threat of China is driving this, but it gives me hope that after 45 years we've transitioned our loss in the Vietnam War into an advantageous relationship.