

# *THE UNIVERSE IS EXPANDING*



## A Brief History of the Taliban

1994: In Kandahar, a group of Islamic students with a radical interpretation of Islam form the Taliban, which means "God's Students". They are led by Mullah Mohammed Umar. It is widely alleged that the Taliban was formed purposefully by Pakistani intelligence.

September 1996: the Taliban capture Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, oust the Mujahadeen government, and form a government of their own which is recognized only by Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Republic. Pakistan's military regime is strongly supportive. At first the Taliban is relatively welcome by Afghani society, who are happy to be rid of the Mujahadeen. But soon the Taliban begins imposing some unpopular social policies.

The United Nations, among other international community organizations, condemn the Taliban for violating human rights of women in Afghanistan. (Girls can't go to school, women can't hold jobs or be seen by men, even in their own homes, without being fully swathed in a burka, a garment with a mesh face piece which covers the woman from head to toe. Women are not allowed to speak to men who are not their relatives. This makes life very difficult for widows and other women without men in their lives. Besides these strictures against women, the death penalty is imposed for shunning Islam, and beatings are administered for offenses on the street, without due process of law. It is illegal to make or listen to music, for women to laugh merrily, and for anyone to build a snowman.

October 10, 1999: U.S. imposes political and economic sanctions against Afghanistan for hosting Osama bin Laden.

October 25, 1999: the Taliban offers to come to the table with the U.S. Government and discuss the future of bin Laden.

October 28, 1999: bin Laden says he wants to leave Afghanistan

November 5, 1999: It is reported that bin Laden will likely stay in Afghanistan

March 2, 2001: Three million people in Afghanistan are on the brink of starvation as a result of a tremendous drought. Many have fled to Pakistan. In Kabul, a woman, a 2-month old baby, and a 4-year-old boy are trampled in a stampede for charity food coupons. Meanwhile, Taliban fighters are busy destroying 2000-year-old Buddhas carved into a hillside, previously Afghanistan's most famous tourist attraction. This prompts widespread condemnation, including Pakistan, their closest ally.

September 2001: The Taliban government, under pressure from the United States, refuse to extradite Osama bin Laden without proof linking him to the September 11th bombings.

October 2001: U.S. begins bombing Afghanistan, in an effort to cripple the Taliban regime.

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