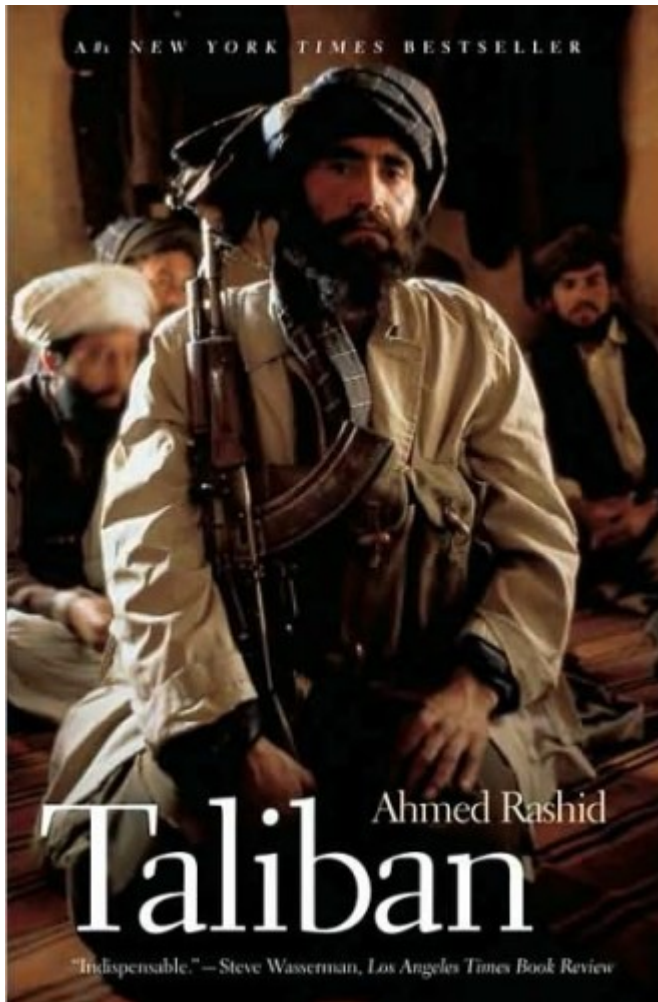


Taliban, by Ahmed Rashid

Books in the [March 8, 2011](#) issue

In Review



Taliban

By Ahmed Rashid
Yale University Press

First published in 2000, this book was the definitive account of the rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan in the vacuum left after the defeat of the Soviet Union and the retreat of the rest of the world. Written by a well-regarded Pakistani journalist, it was the go-

to book in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. The Taliban had given sanctuary to Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda. This new edition is not a thorough revision, but a chapter has been added covering the last ten years. It chronicles the initial defeat of the Taliban by the American-backed Northern Alliance and its eventual return and growing influence in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Strategic mistakes were made by the United States, especially in shifting its focus on Iraq. Afghanistan is a country that the rest of the world tends to ignore until it gives cause for attention. The Taliban's presence and power is a continuing reason for not letting Afghanistan fall off our maps.