

# Overcoming the Myths of Afghanistan and Pakistan

*Cato Institute*

The death of Osama bin Laden presents an important opportunity to reassess U.S. strategy in Afghanistan. Current U.S. thinking centers on two interests. The first is preventing al Qaeda and its Taliban allies from reestablishing a safe haven. The second is preventing the violence in Afghanistan from destabilizing Pakistan, thus putting its nuclear forces at risk and increasing the likelihood of nuclear terrorism. Coalition strategy is based on the assumptions that the only way to deny al Qaeda safe haven is by building a strong central Afghan state and that Pakistan's nuclear complex will become increasingly vulnerable to militant attacks if the Taliban succeeds in Afghanistan.