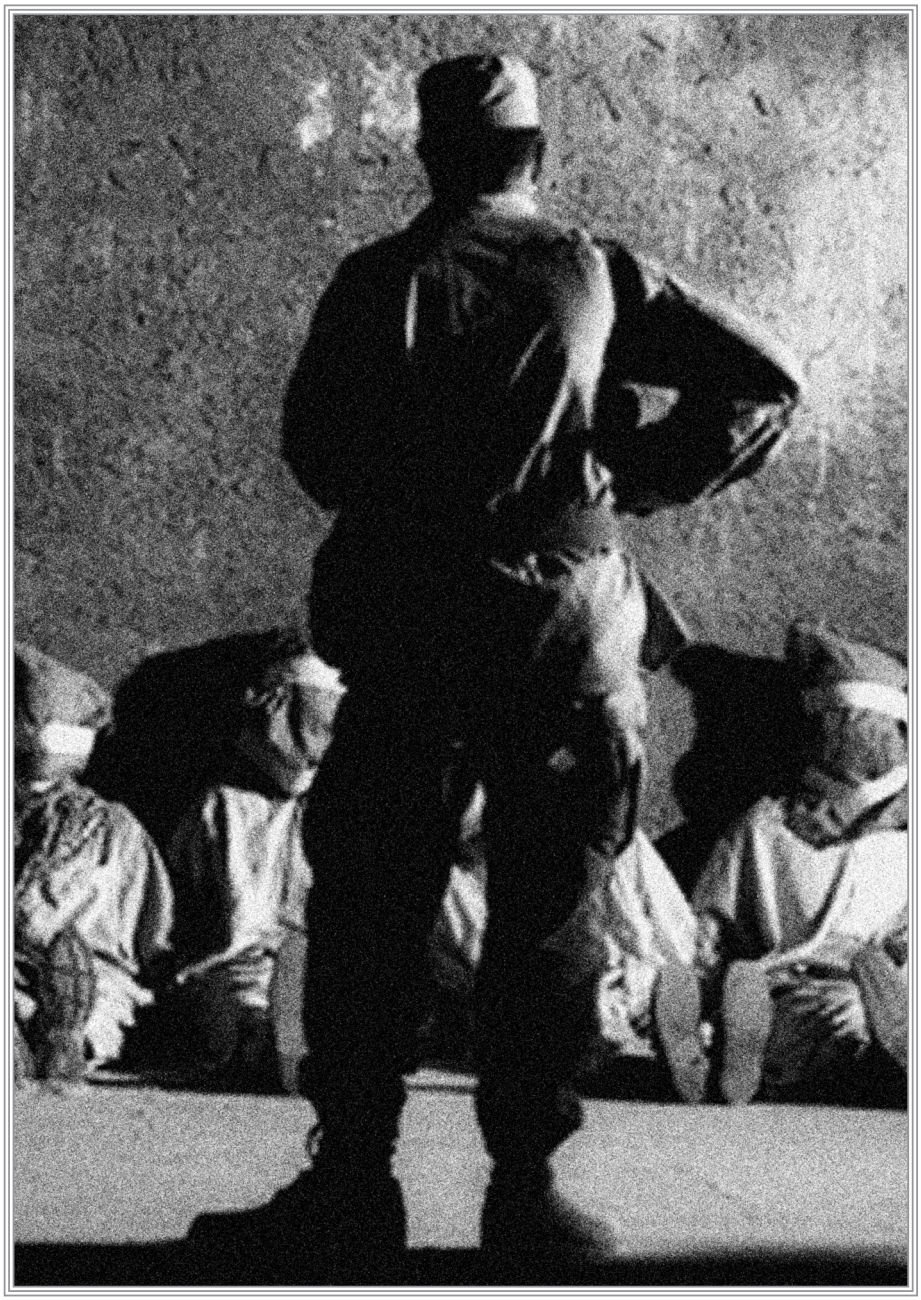
The World Can't Wait: Why We Demand U.S. Troops Out of Afghanistan Now



On October 7, 2001 the U.S. attacked Afghanistan. Many lies have been used to justify the continuation and escalation of this war. Obama is sending tens of thousands more troops to Afghanistan and is conducting a policy review in order to achieve victory for the U.S. empire there. But victory for the U.S. is not in the interests of the Afghanistan population or the people of the world.

LIES USED TO JUSTIFY THIS INCLUDE:

Afghanistan is a "good war" against the "real terrorists" who attacked Americans

Barack Obama referred to the war as the "the central front in our battle against terrorism." According to our the new president, "I think one of the biggest mistakes we've made strategically after 9/11 was to fail to finish the job. ... We got distracted by Iraq."

The wars in Afghanistan had nothing to do with responding to the 9/11 attacks. It was launched to defeat reactionary Islamic fundamentalist trends and groups that have posed obstacles to U.S power and to restructure the Middle East and Central Asian regions in order to deepen U.S. domination.

Afghanistan is one front in this global war because of its strategic location. It was a U.S. target before 9/11. A Pakistani diplomat told the BBC that he was informed of the U.S. intent to attack Afghanistan in mid-July of 2001 (see U.S. 'planned attack on Taleban', September 18, 2001, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/1550366.stm)

When various Islamic fundamentalist forces were fighting the Soviet Union in Afghanistan they were funded and armed by the U.S. President Reagan called them "freedom fighters." Today they are an impediment to U.S. goals and are now called "terrorists." We are supposed to accept that this requires the people of the U.S. to support U.S. aggressive wars in order to protect "our safety," regardless of how many lives are sacrificed in other nations.

The U.S. has freed the people of Afghanistan, particularly women, from oppressive rule

The Bush regime used concern for

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the women to justify slaughter of civilians, creating a situation where women were even more vulnerable to the Taliban, religious reactionary fundamentalists who oppress women, progressives, and the people of Afghanistan in general. Life under the Taliban was and is a living hell of reactionary religious strictures and suffocating social relations.

But during the years of Soviet occupation, the U.S. supported the Taliban in the hope that they could unite the various and fractious forces within the country, better enabling the U.S. to achieve its goals in the country. Even now, after the U.S. overthrow of the Taliban, both Obama and Biden have recently talked of negotiating with some "moderate" factions of the Taliban to get them to support the current Afghan government and U.S. goals.

Since the U.S. invasion, the people of Afghanistan continue to be under the domination of reactionaries who are now in the service of the U.S. The Karzai regime is a puppet government of the same hated landlords, militia heads, and feudal and tribal chieftains that have tormented the people of Afghanistan for decades. Corruption within the government is endemic. Opium production and trade makes up one-third of the country's gross domestic product.

Women are still deeply and cruelly oppressed in Afghanistan. An Afghan woman dies during childbirth every 30 minutes; 87 percent of Afghan women are illiterate; only 30 percent of girls have access to education in Afghanistan; one-third of women experience physical, psychological, or sexual violence, including honor killings; and 70 to 80 percent of women, including many children, face forced marriages in Afghanistan.

"We broke it, now we must rebuild it"

The argument is that even though the initial invasion was wrong, the U.S. now owes it to the Afghan people to rebuild the country. Obama has promised increased economic aid. But what little aid is delivered to the country evaporates into a cauldron of corruption and is used to support the reactionary rulers of the country. A recent poll conducted by the Afghan Center for Socio-Economic and Opinion Research indicates that the vast majority of the Afghan population views public corruption as a major problem, and wanted the United States military to leave.

Apologists for the U.S. occupation would argue that at least the U.S. is making people in Afghanistan more secure. But in the above poll, only 42% had confidence that the U.S. coalition forces could provide security in their areas. One in six of those polled reported nearby bombing or shelling by U.S. forces in their area. One in five reported civilians being killed by U.S. coalition forces in the last year in the areas where they lived. (See "Poll shows Afghan faith in U.S. eroding", Feb. 10, 2009, http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/c/a/2009/02/10/MN3C15Q9RL.DTL)

People continue to suffer. According to the United Nations Human Development Index, Afghanistan is the 174th poorest nation. Afghanistan's Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) in December 2008 reported that 37 percent or about ten million people in Afghanistan suffer from severe poverty, with millions earning less than $1 per day. The U.S. State Department in 2008 stated the infant mortality rate is 154.67 deaths per 1,000 live births. The U.S. State Department admits that at least 3 million Afghans are refugees in other countries. Less than 1/4th of the adult population is literate, with the U.S. State Department estimating that only 12 percent of females are literate. Life expectancy is only 43.1 years and the unemployment rate in 2008 was 40%.

More U.S. troops will only increase the death and destruction. The longer the U.S. and its allies remain, the longer the suffering will continue for the Afghan people.

If the U.S. and it allies leave, the Taliban will return to power and it will be even worse than before the invasion

Neither Taliban nor U.S. rule, through its puppet allies, is in the interests of the Afghan population. Two historically obsolete and reactionary forces are contending in the country: the Islamic fundamentalist forces led by the Taliban and the outmoded ruling strata of the imperialist system, led by the U.S. These two reactionary forces reinforce each other, even while opposing each other. But supporting the U.S. imperialists to defeat the Taliban will not advance the interests of the Afghan people. Our choices are not limited to supporting the Taliban or supporting the U.S. imperialists in the war.

We Demand U.S. Withdrawal of All Troops Now!

When Obama announced his escalation of the Afghan war on February 17th he said, "I do it today mindful that the situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan demands urgent attention and swift action." He is right that the situation is urgent and demands swift action, but not in the way he meant. We must demand the removal of all U.S. forces, including allied forces immediately. We must oppose the war and occupation and expose the crimes of the U.S. imperialists there. To do less will forsake the people of Afghanistan and enable the U.S. to continue its crimes in that country.