

10 Afghanistan: Reasons to Resist Occupation

1. Like Iraq, it is also illegal

According to international law experts, the invasion and ongoing occupation of Afghanistan is as illegal as the US presence in Iraq. The UN Charter mandates that military force against another country is only justified when used in self-defense or authorized by the UN Security Council. Following the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks, President Bush sought an authorization from the UN Security Council. The resolutions passed—1368 and 1373—never authorized military force, but the criminalization and prevention of terrorist activities.

“The invasion of Afghanistan was not legitimate self-defense under art. 51 of the UN charter because the attacks on Sept. 11, 2001 were criminal attacks, not “armed attacks” by another country. Afghanistan did not attack the US. In fact, 15 of the 19 hijackers came from Saudi Arabia.”

—Marjorie Cohn, former president of the National Lawyers Guild

2. No military solution to terrorism

There can be no military solution to terrorism. “Terrorism” is a tactic that is not tied to any specific place. By pursuing the ever-elusive “terrorist” enemy, the US has waged an open-ended war of attrition in Afghanistan. This occupation breeds the discontent that gives rise to “terrorism” in the first place and has had the effect of bringing forward local opposition to the occupation.

If the US

and its allies are truly serious about diminishing the threat of terrorism and helping the people of Afghanistan build a better society, there must be commitment to building infrastructure, not destroying it.

3. Funds used for war are needed at home

The US government is wasting billions of dollars on open-ended wars overseas instead of tending to problems in our own backyard. To date, the Congress has allocated \$915 billion toward the wars in Iraq (\$687 billion) and Afghanistan (\$228 billion).

That amount does not include, among other things, the cost of borrowing the money, lost productivity, and the cost of health care for veterans. Include those expenses, and the total cost through 2009 for Afghanistan alone is \$864 billion. For both wars, its \$2.17 trillion!

On our current course, we will end up spending \$3.4 trillion within a few years. It is past time that we put those resources towards solving our growing problems here at home, including housing, healthcare, education, and food scarcity.

4. Civilian casualties are not acceptable

Since the Gulf War, the media has spent an inordinate amount of time covering state-of-the-art “smart” weaponry. This same hype is now being applied to the use of unmanned aerial systems (UASs) to watch and attack targets

in Afghanistan by the Cessna-size Predators and the larger and more heavily armed Reapers. These unmanned drones are usually remotely controlled from airbases in the US.

The promise is that these weapons will minimize civilian casualties in war zones. However, the reality is that civilian casualties rose 40% in 2008 according to a UN report. Civilian deaths in Afghanistan from US and NATO airstrikes nearly tripled from 2006 to 2007.

5. War is not good for women in Afghanistan

We have been told that the initial invasion, continued presence, and escalation in Afghanistan is needed to “protect” Afghani women and girls. However, women in Afghanistan have endured oppression and mistreatment at the hands of the Taliban, the current government, and by foreign occupiers.

Women have had their families torn apart by war and are themselves killed by military violence. The US has been guilty of arming warlords and armed militias in its fight against the Taliban, contributing to unstable conditions which breed violence against women and children. The increased presence of foreign troops has caused sex trafficking of young girls, prostitution, and rape to skyrocket.

Meanwhile, the US hypocritically supports regimes such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Qatar that have similar repressive policies towards women as exist in Afghanistan.





Continued from front

6. Support the Troops: Bring them home now

All branches of the Armed Services fighting the “Global War on Terror” are now stretched extremely thin. Units and individuals who have endured three or four deployments in Iraq are now being ordered to Afghanistan.

Over 840 US troops have been killed in Afghanistan so far. Casualties have steadily increased since 2004.

In February 2009, the US Army reported the highest level of suicides among soldiers (in 2008) since it began tracking suicides.

“Iraq Veterans Against the War calls for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all occupying forces in Afghanistan and reparations for the Afghan people, and supports all troops and veterans working towards those ends.”

—IVAW. March 6, 2009 resolution

7. Torture and human rights abuses in Afghanistan

The use of torture and “enhanced interrogation” methods by US forces in Afghanistan—all clearly outlawed by the Geneva Convention—has been well documented. The most infamous torture site in Afghanistan is the US Bagram Air Base.

“The investigative file on Bagram...showed that the mistreatment of prisoners was routine: shackling them to the ceilings of their cells, depriving them of sleep, kicking and hitting them, sexually humiliating them and threatening them with guard dogs—the very same behavior later repeated in Iraq.”

—NYTimes Editorial. May 23, 2005

In detailing one of the cases, Mr. Dilawar (photo right), being tortured to death by US soldiers, the *NYTimes* reported:

“A guard tried to force the young man to his knees. But his legs, which had been pummeled by guards for several days, could no longer bend. An interrogator told Mr. Dilawar that he could see a doctor after they finished with him. When he was finally sent back to his cell, though, the guards were instructed only to chain the prisoner back to the ceiling... Most of the interrogators had believed Mr. Dilawar was an innocent man who simply drove his taxi past the American base at the wrong time.”

8. Climate change and resource wars

With climate change one of the most serious problems facing our planet—contributing to increased incidence of floods, famines, and droughts—fighting resource wars will not address the underlining issues but further polarize the world’s peoples.

Researchers have found that for the past 500 years, climate change and conflict have been closely linked. Many experts predict that current climate trends are again likely to result in widespread global unrest and conflict in the near future.

9. War destabilizes Afghanistan and the region

According to UN Refugee Agency, 2.1 million Afghan refugees were reported in 72 asylum countries, making Afghanistan the largest country of origin of refugees. There are nearly a million internally displaced as well. Together,

these statistics represent 10% of the entire population. Dire conditions and lack of employment are forcing many to relocate to Iran and Pakistan in search of work.

The US supported anti-Soviet opposition in Afghanistan during the 80’s by funding training camps for the present home-grown Afghani oppressors and the development of the poppy trade as a resource to keep them funded. Backing the Karzai government today amounts to supporting one group of warlords over the others.

10. Respect Afghani self-determination; No to global military intervention

Afghanistan’s people must have the right of self-determination and be free to forge a society on its own terms. The war in Afghanistan is part of a trend of unwanted military intervention by the US.

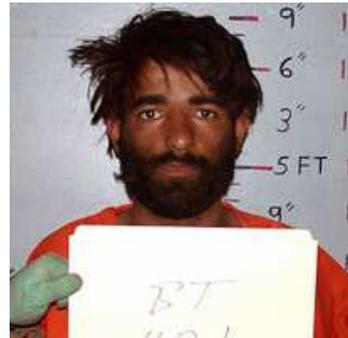
Even Milton Beardon, former CIA chief in Pakistan, said in 2001 of the then-nascent US war in Afghanistan:

“The first engagement in the new war on terrorism—with Osama bin Ladin in Afghanistan—poses severe challenges for the United States. Rooting out bin Ladin’s network will require military

success in a country that the Soviet Union could not conquer in ten years of trying, as well as support from unstable surrounding nations. Washington may be tempted to try to oust the Taliban regime, but doing so could rekindle Afghanistan’s brutal civil war. The US must proceed with caution—or end up on the ash heap of Afghan history.”

Eight years later, this prediction of doom for the US seems a possibility.

Full version with extensive footnotes available at courageto resist.org.



COURAGE TO RESIST

Support the troops who refuse to fight!

484 Lake Park Ave #41, Oakland CA 94610

www.courageto resist.org 510-488-3559