

Afghanistan - Fool's War

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Fifteen years ago this week, the US launched the longest war in its history: the invasion and occupation of remote Afghanistan. Neighboring Pakistan was forced to facilitate the American invasion or 'be bombed back to the stone age.'

America was furious after the bloody 9/11 attacks. The Bush administration had been caught sleeping on guard duty. Many Americans believed 9/11 was an inside job by pro-war neocons.

Afghanistan was picked as the target of US vengeance even though the 9/11 attacks were hatched (if in fact done from abroad) in Germany and Spain. The suicide attackers made clear their kamikaze mission was to punish the US for 'occupying' the holy land of Saudi Arabia, and for Washington's open-ended support of Israel in its occupation of Palestine.

This rationale was quickly obscured by the Bush administration that claimed the 9/11 attackers, most of whom were Saudis, were motivated by hatred of American 'values' and 'freedoms.' This nonsense planted the seeds of the rising tide of Islamophobia that we see today and the faux 'war on terror.'

An anti-communist jihadi, Osama bin Laden, was inflated and demonized into America's Great Satan. The supposed 'terrorist training camps' in Afghanistan were, as I saw with my eyes, camps where Pakistani intelligence trained jihadis to fight in India-occupied Kashmir.

Afghanistan, remote, bleak and mountainous, was rightly known as 'the graveyard of empires.' These included Alexander the Great, Genghis Khan, Timur, the Moguls and Sikhs. The British Empire invaded Afghanistan three times in the 19th century. The Soviet Union, world's greatest land power, invaded in 1979, seeking a corridor to the Arabian Sea and Gulf.

All were defeated by the fierce Pashtun warrior tribes of the Hindu Kush. But the fool George W. Bush rushed in where angels feared to tread, in a futile attempt to conquer an unconquerable people for whom war was their favorite pastime. I was with the Afghan mujahidin when fighting the Soviet occupation in the 1980's, and again the newly-formed Taliban in the early 1990's. As I wrote in my book on this subject, '[War at the Top of the World](#),' the Pashtun warriors were the bravest men I'd ever seen. They had only ancient weapons but possessed boundless courage.



Kabul in 2011

During the 2001 US invasion, the Americans allied themselves to the heroin and opium-dealing Tajik Northern Alliance, to former Communist allies of the Soviets, and to the northern Uzbeks, blood foes of the Pashtun and former Soviet Communist allies.

Taliban, which had absolutely nothing to do with 9/11, had shut down 90% of Afghanistan's heroin and opium trade. The US-allied Northern Alliance restored it, making Afghanistan again the world's leading supplier of heroin and opium. US occupation forces, backed by immense tactical airpower, allied themselves with the most criminal elements in Afghanistan and installed a puppet regime of CIA assets. The old Communist secret police, notorious for their record of torture and atrocities, was kept in power by CIA to fight Taliban.

Last week, Washington's Special Inspector General for Afghan Relief (SIGAR) issued a totally damning report showing how mass corruption, bribery, payoffs and drug money had fatally undermined US efforts to build a viable Afghan society.

What's more, without 24/7 US air cover, Washington's yes-men in Kabul would be quickly swept away. The Afghan Army and police have no loyalty to the regime; they fight only for the Yankee dollar. Like Baghdad, Kabul is a US-guarded island in a sea of animosity.

A [report](#) by Global Research has estimated the 15-year Afghan War and the Iraq War had cost the US \$6 trillion. Small wonder when gasoline trucked up to Afghanistan from Pakistan's coast it costs the Pentagon \$400 per gallon. Some estimates put the war cost at \$33,000 per citizen. But Americans do not pay this cost through a special war tax, as it should be. Bush ordered the total costs of the Iraq and Afghan wars be concealed in the national debt.

Officially, 2,216 American soldiers have died in Afghanistan and 20,049 were seriously wounded. Some 1,173 US mercenaries have also been killed. Large numbers of US financed mercenaries still remain in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Noble Peace Prize winner Barack Obama promised to withdraw nearly all US troops from Afghanistan by 2016.

Instead, more US troops are on the way to protect the Kabul puppet regime from its own people. Taliban and its dozen-odd allied resistance movements ('terrorists' in Pentagon speak faithfully parroted by the US media) are steadily gaining territory and followers.

Last week, the US dragooned NATO and other satrap states to a 'voluntary' [donor conference](#) for Afghanistan where they had to cough up another \$15.2 billion and likely send some more troops to this hopeless conflict. Washington cannot bear to admit defeat by tiny Afghanistan or see this strategic nation fall into China's sphere.

Ominously, the US is encouraging India to play a much larger role in Afghanistan, thus planting the seeds of a dangerous Pakistani-Indian-Chinese confrontation there.

There was no mention of the 800lb gorilla in the conference room: Afghanistan's role as the world's by now largest heroin/opium/morphine producer - all under the proud auspices of the United States government. The new US president will inherit this embarrassing problem.

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