

Afghanistan Shows Why the War on Terror Is One Big Lie and Fiasco

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Instead of fighting terror, the War on Terror has only fueled terrorism. It's a smokescreen for the US to maintain world domination and keep China in check, as well as a great excuse for the military industrial complex to keep making fortunes.

Taste of their own medicine

The War on Terror started twenty years ago after the September 11 attacks. The Pentagon went to war against Al Qaeda and their patrons, the Taliban. An odd turn of events, really, since Al Qaeda was of their own making. None other than [Hillary Clinton](#), then U.S. Secretary of State, admitted that they were fighting terrorists they had first created and financed themselves.

Afghanistan turned out to be just a beginning. The West's foreign interventions in Iraq and Syria spawned terror groups like IS and Jabhaat al-Nusra. The war against Libya led to chaos throughout the region and gave wings to numerous jihadi groups. They plundered Libya's arsenals of weapons, [launching their holy wars](#) in numerous neighboring countries. Today, fundamentalist terrorist groups are active in [ten African countries](#).

In 2009, US President Obama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. A few years later, he was bombing [seven countries](#) simultaneously. So much warfare inevitably returns like a boomerang in one's own face. Starting in 2015, Western countries were hit by a wave of terror attacks. Or, [as jihadists](#) put it, “The West slaughters a sheep, but it doesn't want to get blood on its clothes.”

Who benefits from this?

The ignominious defeat in Afghanistan may not be the end of the War on Terror. Instead of fighting terror, this “endless war” has only fueled terrorism. The pyromaniacs are the firemen. Today, the Pentagon conducts counter-terror activities in [85 countries](#). This keeps the war industry running at full speed while the barons of the military industry reap huge profits.

The cost in resources and human lives is staggering. As a result of the post-9/11 violence of war, more than [800,000 people](#) have been killed, almost half of them civilians. The number of war refugees and displaced persons as a result of the War on Terror is at 37 million so far.

Meanwhile, the price tag of the US wars after 9/11 has already reached the astounding amount of \$6.4tn. That's \$320 billion a year or 8 times more than what [the UN estimates](#) is needed for all the world's humanitarian aid.

Oil and other minerals

There were two main reasons why the US invaded Afghanistan. A first reason was oil and more specifically the future construction of a major pipeline from the Caspian Sea through the country to Pakistan. Both the first Afghan president and the new U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan after 2001 had previously [worked for Unocal](#), a major American petroleum company that had long had plans for a pipeline through Afghanistan. The [first foreign contract](#) the new Afghan president signed was about building a pipeline from Turkmenistan to a port city in Pakistan, through Afghanistan...

In 2010, the U.S. military and geologists discovered that the Afghan underground contains precious minerals worth [\\$1,000 billion](#). These include iron, copper, and gold. But even more important are the rare earth metals. Possibly one of the largest reserves of lithium in the world is located in Afghanistan. Lithium is an essential but scarce component of rechargeable batteries and other technologies vital to addressing the climate crisis. We now know that lithium reserves in Bolivia were one of the main reasons for the coup [against Evo Morales](#) in 2019.

Pivot to China

A second important reason is the rise of China. After the fall of the Berlin Wall and the dismantling of the Soviet Union, the U.S. established itself as the undisputed leader of world politics. "Our first objective," [the Pentagon](#) said in 1992, is "to prevent the re-emergence of a new rival. We must maintain the mechanism for deterring potential competitors from *even aspiring* to a larger regional or global role." [italics added] Thirty years later, China has become the main "rival" to be reined in.

Afghanistan is a part of this story. The country is near the [New Silk Road](#) and borders the western province of Xinjiang where the Uyghurs live.

In a [candid speech](#) in 2018, Lawrence Wilkerson, former Colin Powell^[i] chief of staff, revealed the true reasons for their presence in Afghanistan:

"We're in Afghanistan as we were in Germany post WWII. (...) It has nothing to do with Kabul and state building, nothing to do with fighting Taliban (...) and nothing to do with fighting any terrorist group. It's everything to do with three primary strategic objectives."

Besides keeping Pakistan in check "with the potentially most unstable nuclear stockpile on the face of the earth," the retired colonel mentions two reasons directly related to China.

"It [the US army in Afghanistan] is the only hard power the United States has that sits proximate to the central Belt and Road initiative of China that runs across Central Asia.

If we had to impact that military power, we are in position to do so in Afghanistan.”

“The third reason we’re there is because there are 20 million^[ii] Uyghurs. If the Cia has to mount an operation using those Uyghurs as Erdogan has done in Turkey against Assad (...) well, [if] the CIA would want to destabilize China, that would be the best way to do it to form an unrest and join with those Uyghurs in pushing the Han Chinese in Beijing from internal places rather than external.”

No Cold War

All this makes it clear that the War on Terror is nothing more than a pretext. It’s a smokescreen for the U.S. to maintain world domination and a great excuse for the [military-industrial complex](#) to keep making fortunes.

The War on Terror is a complete fiasco and an abomination. Unfortunately, Washington won’t give up, quite the opposite. Today there is even a threat of an important new front: a new Cold War against China.

This new Cold War could have even more pernicious consequences than the War on Terror. A Statement of the [No Cold War](#) initiative puts it very sharply: “The increasingly aggressive statements and actions being taken by the US government in regard to China (...) constitute a threat to world peace and are an obstacle to humanity successfully dealing with extremely serious common issues which confront it such as climate change, control of pandemics, racist discrimination and economic development.”

The Peace movement has a lot of work to do.

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Notes

^[i] Colin Powell was Secretary of State under President Bush Jr. from 2001 to 2005. That was during the period of the invasion of Iraq.

^[ii] In reality, there are about 10 million Uyghurs.

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