

Afghanistan: Sovereignty and Military Occupation

46 Countries, 155,000 foreign troops

By [The Islamic Peace and Reform Movement of Afghanis](#)

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Sovereignty, Neutrality, Self-Generated Security, and Self- Sustained Development for Afghanistan

A Statement from the Members of the Islamic Peace and Reform Movement of Afghanistan February 8, 2011

Afghanistan lacks sovereignty due to the war imposed on the country since October 7, 2001, now under occupation by 46 countries with military forces numbering more than 155,000, with 100,000 from the US alone. There are also foreign civilian, foreign intelligence agents, and private militias and mercenaries as bodyguards numbering 150,000, with 112,000 alone from the US. Repeated complaints from the regime in Kabul and from the common people in Afghanistan are heard about foreign interferences in many aspects of governance in support of their interests including those by the neighbors of Afghanistan at the expense of the Afghan people. Sixteen foreign companies from the US and Britain were accused of “major offenses” by the Kabul regime according to a report cited in Afghanistan Sun sourcing Washington Post, January 23, 2011.

The Provincial Reconstruction Teams organized by the US and NATO that are spread out throughout Afghanistan are accused of running parallel governance that competes with the central government, so reports New York Times, February 7, 2011. The latest heavy handed interferences also came in the “elections” of the Parliament last September 2010 when the Afghan people argued and demonstrated in many cities including Kabul against corrupt procedures and fraudulent ballots, yet foreign interests insisted that the results represented “democracy” at work. In the latest elections claims surfaced that over a million votes were invalidated and in many areas the majority ethnic Pushtuns were left out from participating altogether, exemplified by the Andar district of Ghazni where only three ballots were cast.

From the province of Ghazni no representation of the majority population who happened to be Pushtuns has gone to the new Parliament; eleven individuals who were “elected” in the last elections, were from one minority group. These conditions do not reflect democracy that is practiced in many countries; nor do they reflect the practice of democracy that Afghanistan was exercising without foreign interferences during the Parliamentary elections of 1951/52. An internally created framework for the workings of democracy based on Afghan historical traditions was at work before the communist coup de tat and the Soviet invasion.

A return to full participation by the people in elections without foreign interferences is critical to governance in Afghanistan. The US has stated it will start withdrawing its military forces , beginning in July 2011, as had been announced by President Barack Obama in his speech of December 1, 2009. Canada ,Germany, and Poland have also announced they will

start withdrawing their troops in 2011 and so has Britain indicating its government may do the same. According to the NATO summit of November 20, 2010 in Lisbon, Portugal, all NATO countries are to complete the withdrawal of their troops from Afghanistan by 2014, when the term of office of Hamid Karzai ends.

Yet, several foreign officials have recently stated their military may stay longer in Afghanistan than 2014; the latest being Vice President Joe Biden on his visit to Kabul on January 10, 2011 while affirming the start of US troop withdrawal he also stated, 'we will stay if we are asked' widely quoted by the media. Senator Lindsey Graham of North Carolina, a Republican, had gone a step further and had argued for "a couple of bases" in Afghanistan in several interviews on CNN and other US media. Equivocating in withdrawing all their military forces from a land that has been notorious for its struggle for freedom holds great risks we want to warn against; at the minimum it will continue to lead to lack of peace and stability as this condition will bring response from the Armed Opposition Factions.

Further, we are concerned that it may also bring the return of foreign fighters, which will clearly continue a vicious cycle of violence at the expense of the Afghan people. The continuation of these conditions in Afghanistan is an affront to the claim of sovereignty in Afghanistan and a mockery of democracy. Today revolutionary forces in Tunisia and Egypt are heralding a new era in the Islamic world removing any doubts about the demands of the Muslim peoples throughout the Middle East and Central Asia.

These voices are demanding fundamental changes for establishing sovereignty for their lands backed by the demands of the people and removal of corrupt regimes and foreign support for them. What we hear from the Afghan people are no different from what the Egyptians and Tunisians and those in Syria, Jordan and Yemen and other Muslim countries are saying. The uncertainty about the military and political intensions of the US and NATO about the present and future course of events in Afghanistan are creating great anxieties among the Afghan people. Frustrations are turning to anger and more political and social instabilities cannot be ruled out.

The present Parliament may become a major source for exhibiting these conditions demonstrated now in the discussions among the Afghan people in print media and Afghan run satellite television networks and public discourses. There are uncertainties about political issues in 2014 which can create the same difficulties experienced at the present, if there is no peace and full participation of the people. Rumors of permanent US military bases, the absence of prospects for peace, and continuation of rampant corruption along with the results of the recent elections make for a highly unstable set of dynamics that can explode easily into a national uprising like we have seen in Tunisia and Egypt.

Ten years of war and occupation and support for a corrupt regime have been the main causes of these conditions and other problems that have resulted in incompetence in governance and lack of social responsibilities toward the common people suffering from extreme abuses of wide spread corruption never seen before where the Afghan people have to pay an estimated \$2.5 billion in bribes annually to government officials, the police and even judges as payoffs for ordinary services. Problems are compounded by continued extreme unemployment of over 70% and poverty, while a few can indulge in luxury life styles through fraud and corruption exemplified by the missing funds of \$900 million at the Kabul Bank, Afghanistan's largest private bank; while some of the same individuals responsible for the bank's failure keep vacation villas in Dubai because they are politically

connected. Ten years of war based chaos and lack of respect for law have created conditions leading to these results by opening the doors to power and money to some of the worst elements of Afghan society, while the majority have languished inside the country, or as refugees in the neighboring countries.

We members of IPRMA feel that without a negotiated peace settlement and ending the war and occupation of Afghanistan none of the above problems can be solved. We have proposed a plan for peace, painstakingly worked out and, stated in three languages (English, Pushto, Dari) that provides a step by step set of procedures for achieving peace, stability, full participation in governance of Afghanistan by all the Afghan people, achieving long term economic and social justice for the betterment of the Afghan people, and progress in establishing good relations with the international community. We believe the war and occupation of Afghanistan must end now and not be dragged into 2014. We support the Afghan people's opposition to continued occupation of Afghanistan and the establishment of foreign military bases. We hope that the US and NATO countries do not ignore the demands of the Afghan people. We also reject along with the Afghan people any and all arguments for the division of Afghanistan, as some irresponsible individuals such as Robert Blackwill the former US Ambassador to India had suggested. The regime in Kabul has been capable of betraying the interests of the Afghan people when in August 2006 it signed an agreement with the Russian government about the spurious claim by that government that it was Afghanistan that owed \$11 billion arising from the Soviet "assistance" during and after its invasion of Afghanistan.

We hope that similar selling out of the rights of the Afghan people do not take place as the US and NATO and ISAF countries prepare to leave Afghanistan. The Afghan people are deeply concerned about the sovereignty and neutrality of Afghanistan. They are also concerned about signing of long term contracts for the exploitation of mineral resources of Afghanistan under the rampant corruption present in the regime. Afghanistan needs friends in the international community and among its neighbors, not occupiers, and abusers of the interests and rights of the defenseless Afghan people. A similar costly struggle in defense of their land and freedom against the former Soviet Union is vividly remembered by the Afghan people. The windfalls of the sacrifices of the Afghan people led to the freedom of Eastern Europe from Soviet domination, yet the Afghan people continued to suffer from war and neglect by the US and other countries that gained. Afghanistan must be respected as a sovereign and neutral country as the present occupation forces vacate the country and their governments seek new bilateral political and economic relations with Afghanistan.

We encourage the establishments of these relations based on the principles of mutual benefits and mutual respect. Only an Afghanistan at peace with itself, self relied and full participation of all its people in solving the problems faced by the country and its people, will bring peace and stability and security in the country and in the region. Our views on some of these issues are also expressed on our website: WWW.AfghanPRM.org.

Foreign Bases, Foreign fighters and Division of Afghanistan Afghanistan has a long history of neutrality. Therefore, establishment of permanent foreign military bases and the presence of foreign fighters are contrary to this history and the future interests of peace and stability in Afghanistan. Members of IPRMA also reject any notion of dividing Afghanistan and a federally structured form of governance discussed in some circles recently.

Sovereignty Members of IPRMA are concerned about security, and political stability in Afghanistan in the absence of a freely elected government acceptable to all the Afghan

people. These concerns also relate to historical interferences from the neighbors and regional powers. These issues should be taken up by the Peace Commission [as proposed by us on our website] at the UN and followed upon by the elected government to gain guarantees for historical neutrality, non-interference, sovereignty, security, and stability of Afghanistan.

Members of the Islamic Peace and Reform Movement of Afghanistan: Established April 18, 2010

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