

America's Afghanistan Legacy

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In his book titled, "Freedom Next Time: Resisting the Empire," John Pilger discussed Afghanistan, saying:

"Through all the humanitarian crises in living memory, no country has been abused and suffered more, and none has been helped less than Afghanistan."

He described what looked more like a moonscape than a functioning nation. In Kabul, "contours of rubble rather than streets (exist), where people live in collapsed buildings, like earthquake victims waiting for rescue....(with) no light or heat."

If hell on earth exists, it's headquartered in Afghanistan, but has many global affiliate locations.

Afghanistan's Troubled History: A Brief Account

It goes back centuries since before Alexander the Great. Afghans endured what few can imagine. Marauding armies besieged cities, slaughtered thousands, and caused vast destruction.

In the 19th century, imperial Britain and Czarist Russia intervened. "Great Game" struggles followed. Wars, devastation and deep poverty resulted.

Until 1919, Afghanistan was a UK protectorate. After Czarist Russia fell, King Amanullah declared his country's independence. At the same time, he signed an aid and friendship treaty with Lenin and fought Britain.

Border skirmishes followed. Kabul was bombed. Finally London gave it up and quit, but conspired with anti Amanullah elements against him. As a result, he abdicated in 1929. Warlords contended for power.

King Muhammad Nadir Shah took over. Four years later he was assassinated. Muhammad Zahir Shah replaced him. As Afghanistan's last king, he ruled autocratically for 40 years.

In 1973, he was ousted and a republic declared. However, little changed under family member Daoud Khan as president. In 1978, a military coup removed him. In 1979, Soviet Russia invaded. Moscow put Babrak Karmal in charge, then Mohammad Najubullah in 1987. He lasted until 1992.

In the 1980s, US recruited mujahideen fighters battled Soviet occupiers. In 1989 they left, but a ravaged country remained.

Civil war followed. Then came 9/11, America's attack, invasion, occupation, millions of deaths, further destruction, and continued horrific human suffering to this day.

Pilger quoted the CIA once calling Vietnam "the grand illusion of the American cause." It's true of all US post-WW II wars, the last one producing victory. Others left defeat, stalemate, and today's unresolved conflicts heading for more defeats.

Nonetheless, imperial America won't quit waging wars and plans more, no matter the human toll. For long-suffering Afghans, it's incalculable.

Amnesty International's (AI) Afghanistan Report

In its new report titled, "Fleeing War, Finding Misery: The Plight of the Internally Displaced in Afghanistan," AI discussed their deprivation and harm.

One woman interviewed said she didn't know what problem was worst. So many cause pain and hardships, including "school, employment, not having proper housing, food, health – when my children are getting sick and I have to pay for the doctor and medications. It's everything."

With little or no income, Afghans can't cope, especially under occupation and war. Another woman told AI: "We are miserable here." Imagine how many others feel the same way. No one's helping. Conditions go from bad to worse.

"Conflict affects more Afghans now than at any point in the last decade," said AI. In many areas, it's intense, including in once relatively peaceful towns and villages. As a result, many families and entire communities fled for safety and security.

Four hundred people a day are displaced. In January 2012, they numbered around 500,000, plus another 2.8 million or more in other countries. Tens of thousands sought refuge around Kabul and other cities. Though hard to precisely estimate, perhaps 35,000 or more live in Kabul slums alone under horrific conditions.

Some construct makeshift dwellings from mud, poles, plywood, plastic sheeting, and cardboard. They offer little protection from Afghanistan's harsh weather. As a result, around two dozen children under age five froze to death in January 2012 alone.

Water's another major problem, both its safety and amount. So is hard to find work, enough income to survive, and food to avoid starving, let alone unaffordable/inadequate/unavailable healthcare.

Moreover, families "live under constant threat of forced eviction." Bulldozers level their shelters. They have to scramble to save belongings and scavenge to retrieve what they can from rubble.

"Life in close quarters in unhygienic conditions means that illness spreads rapidly, particularly among young children."

Some slum areas lack health clinics. Others get scant services from mobile ones. They're unable to address gynecological, pre and post-natal, and other specialized medical needs.

As a result, Afghanistan's infant mortality rate is one of the world's highest at 129 per 1,000, according to Afghan Ministry of Public Health data. Moreover, pre-age five mortality is 191 per 1,000.

Afghans also endure extreme poverty, unemployment, and deprivation in virtually all aspects of their lives. They constantly worry about getting enough food to eat, forced evictions, lack of vital services, and occupation related violence.

"Afghanistan's human development indicators - in categories such as health, education and income - are below the regional average (and) among the world's worst-off countries."

Internally displaced people are most affected. Most fled after homes or communities were razed, after violence killed family members and forced them out, after receiving threats, or other conflict related reasons.

Wherever America shows up, mass killings, destruction and incalculable human misery follow. After a decade of war and occupation, Afghans perhaps suffer most of all.

Those displaced lack virtually everything necessary to survive - housing, water, sanitation, healthcare, education, employment, enough income, and sufficient food to avoid starvation. Neither America or its puppet government provide help.

Hamid Karzai, in fact, is a caricature of a leader. A former CIA asset/UNOCAL Oil consultant, he's little more than Kabul's mayor. Outside the capital, he has no mandate, support or authority. So many despise him, he wouldn't last a day without extensive round-the-clock protection.

During the 1990s, ruling Taliban officials kept order, despite their ultra-puritanical extremism and harsh treatment for non-believers. They also eradicated opium production. Under occupation that changed.

Afghanistan's the world's leading producer. Crime bosses and CIA profit hugely. So do major banks. They launder an estimated \$500 billion annually, plus up to another \$1 trillion in other illicit laundering.

None of it trickles down to Afghans, except minimally in crop grower underpayments. To the extent authorities respond to human need, AI calls it "inconsistent, insufficient, and ineffective." In addition, no plan exists to help internally displaced refugees.

Some officials say they don't exist to avoid responsibility. As a result, expect protracted extreme deprivation for many years to come - for certain under occupation and conflict.

A Final Comment

Neither America or puppet authorities prioritize human need. They either ignore it or pretend it doesn't exist. They don't care.

America came to conquer, colonize, occupy, plunder, and dominate Afghanistan and the region. War without end rages. Conflict and killing continue daily. Civilians always suffer most.

Obama lied saying all US combat forces will be out by 2014. America didn't come to leave. Think Japan and Korea. Washington arrived post-WW II, never left, and plans to stay.

Imagine what Afghans, Iraqis, Libyans, and other occupied people can look forward to. They're assured protracted misery unless sustain long-term liberating struggles.

Perhaps Afghans have the best chance, but not without years more conflict, human suffering, and mass deaths.

It's America's imperial legacy, especially across North Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia. Afghanistan best reflects it. Why else would fierce resistance continue.

Inspired, perhaps others will replicate its struggle, and slay the beast once and for all. It can't happen a moment too soon.

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