

Haven't We Had Enough of Afghanistan?

The forever war continues

By [Justin Raimondo](#)

Global Research, June 04, 2017

[Antiwar.com](#) 2 June 2017

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Crimes against Humanity](#),
[Military and WMD](#), [Terrorism](#), [US
NATO War Agenda](#)

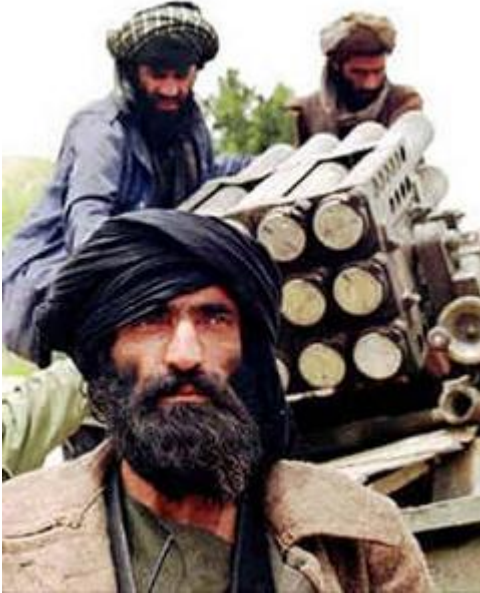
In-depth Report: [AFGHANISTAN](#)

Will there ever be an end to the war in Afghanistan? Apparently not if our generals have anything to say about it – and they do. President Trump has turned over the prosecution of our perpetual “war on terrorism” to the Pentagon, claiming that they’ve been held back by previous administrations. The new policy is to turn them loose.

We saw what this means when the so-called “Mother of All Bombs” was dropped in a remote location where ISIS was said to be hiding: [92 “militants”](#) were said to have been killed. Contrary to the triumphalist reports in US media, the biggest non-nuclear bomb ever deployed in combat had a [minimal effect](#). And the cost, [at \\$16 million](#) for a single MOAB, came to [around \\$174,000](#) per “militant.”

With anywhere from 1,000 to 3,000 ISIS fighters in Afghanistan, let’s take the median number of 2,000 and estimate that getting rid of all of them will cost around \$348 million, give or take \$10 million or so.

And you’ll note that we’re just talking about ISIS here. The Taliban is not only still in the mix, they’re actually in a better position than ever. In March, the Taliban [claimed](#) that 211 administrative districts of the country were either under their control or else contested: this isn’t far off the report of the Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, which [put the number at 171](#). The Taliban control more of Afghanistan than at any time since the war started, and they continue to make major gains, such as in [Helmand](#) province. The pace and severity of Taliban/ISIS attacks has recently escalated, with a suicide bombing [in Kabul](#) that killed 100 people, the culmination of [8 major attacks](#) just in the month of May.



The Taliban in Afghanistan (credits to the owner of the photo)

After 16 years of fighting, the US is no closer to defeating the radical Islamist insurgency than it was at the very beginning. The original rationale for the invasion - the presence of **Osama bin Laden** - is long since gone.

The justification for continuing the Afghan war, you'll recall, was that we couldn't allow any "safe havens" where the terrorists could plan and carry out attacks on the US and Western Europe. The logic of this is difficult to follow, however, since a "safe haven" can be defined as anywhere terrorists gather - which can occur just as easily in Hamburg, Germany, than in some mountain cave in Afghanistan. Furthermore, we are now told that the primary locus of terrorist activities is in territory controlled by ISIS, which has few strongholds and little support in Afghanistan.

The reality is that terrorist plots are more likely to be hatched in Western Europe and right here in the United States than in the Afghan wilds.

Yet that hasn't stopped our generals from requesting thousands more US troops to be sent to fight the longest war in our history: news reports tell us they want "[a few thousand](#)" more, but it's hard to imagine this will make much difference. It's also hard to imagine that the American people support this: while no recent polls have been taken — for some mysterious reason they [stopped measuring](#) support for the war in 2015 - the last time anyone looked opposition was over fifty percent.

Naturally, given the current atmosphere in Washington, there's an anti-Russian angle to all this: General John Nicholson recently testified before Congress that Moscow is pushing a "false narrative" that the Taliban is fighting ISIS while the Afghan government army is sitting on its haunches, collecting bribes and managing the drug harvest. Russia's goal, he said, is to "undermine the United States and NATO."

Yet the Taliban is not the same as ISIS, and the latter has largely alienated Afghan civilians, just as al-Qaeda did in Iraq: foreign fighters, no matter their religion, are not popular in Afghanistan. **The Taliban, for all its theological pretensions, is essentially a**

nationalist movement fighting a foreign invader: ISIS, however, is quite a different story.

The Trump campaign told us that all foreign commitments were going to be judged by new criteria: *how does this serve American interests?* And the question of how continuing to fight this war serves our interests has yet to be answered by the Trump administration. They have simply taken the war as a given.

In a 2009 [speech](#) at Tennessee State University, I asked my audience to

“remember the fate of the previous would-be conquerors of the proud Afghan people: the Russians, the British, the Golden Horde, and even Alexander the Great. They all failed, and the bones of their centurions are dust beneath the feet of a warrior people. In that kind of terrain, against that kind of enemy, there is no such thing as victory – there is only a question of how long it will take for them to drive us out – or whether we go bankrupt before that happens.”

Even earlier, [in 2001](#), I predicted that the Afghan war would be a quagmire, a mistake we would eventually come to regret – an opinion for which **David Frum**, then *National Review's* neocon enforcer of ideological correctness, saw cause to [label me “anti-American.”](#)

When the truth is considered “anti-American,” then we know we’re in trouble. Indeed, we’ve been in some pretty serious trouble for the past 16 years. Now is the time to reverse course and make it right.

It’s time to acknowledge that truth. It’s time to get the hell out of Afghanistan – now.

Justin Raimondo is the editorial director of *Antiwar.com*, and a senior fellow at the *Randolph Bourne Institute*. He is a contributing editor at *The American Conservative*, and writes a monthly column for *Chronicles*. He is the author of *Reclaiming the American Right: The Lost Legacy of the Conservative Movement* [Center for Libertarian Studies, 1993; Intercollegiate Studies Institute, 2000], and *An Enemy of the State: The Life of Murray N. Rothbard* [Prometheus Books, 2000]. [View all posts by Justin Raimondo](#)

Featured image: credits to the owner

The original source of this article is [Antiwar.com](#)
Copyright © [Justin Raimondo](#), [Antiwar.com](#), 2017

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Justin Raimondo](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will

not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca