

Protecting Afghan Opium Fields, Bribing Taliban

Obama Allies Want New Tax. Despite the fact that 36 per cent of income tax already goes to national defense

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Not content with savaging American taxpayers with two huge new financial burdens during an economic recession, in the form of health care reform and cap and trade, close allies of Barack Obama have proposed a new war surtax that will force Americans to foot the bill for the cost of protecting opium fields in Afghanistan, paying off drug lords, and bribing the Taliban.

Warning that the cost of occupying Afghanistan is a threat to the Democrats' plan to overhaul health care, lawmakers have announced their plan to make Americans pay an additional war tax that will be taken directly from their income, never mind the fact that around 36 per cent of federal taxes already go to paying for national defense.

"Regardless of whether one favors the war or not, if it is to be fought, it ought to be paid for," the lawmakers, all prominent Democratic allies of Obama, said in a joint statement on the "Share The Sacrifice Act of 2010 (PDF)," reports AFP.

The move is being led by the appropriately named House Appropriations Committee Chairman Dave Obey, Representative John Murtha, who chairs that panel's defense subcommittee; and House Financial Services Committee Chairman Barney Frank.

The tax would apply to anyone earning as little as \$22,600 per year in 2011.

The proposal is described as "heavily symbolic" with little chance of passing, but it once again illustrates the hypocrisy of an administration that swept to power on the promise of "change" to the Neo-Con imperial agenda and a resolve to reduce U.S. military involvement overseas. In reality, there are more troops in Iraq and Afghanistan now under Obama than at any time during the Bush administration.

At the height of the Bush administration's 2007 "surge" in Iraq, there were 26,000 US troops in Afghanistan and 160,000 in Iraq, a total of 186,000.

According to DoD figures cited by The Washington Post last month, there are now around 189,000 and rising deployed in total. There are now 68,000 troops in Afghanistan, over double the amount deployed there when Bush left office. What precisely would this extra tax be used to pay for? Namely, bribing the Taliban, paying off CIA drug lords, and protecting heroin-producing opium fields.

Numerous reports over the past two weeks have confirmed that the U.S. military is paying off the Taliban with bags of gold to prevent them from attacking vehicle convoys, proving

that there is no real “war” in Afghanistan, merely a business agreement that allows the occupiers to continue their lucrative control of record opium exports while they finalize construction of dozens of new military bases from which to launch new wars.

The Afghan opium trade has exploded since the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, following a lull after the Taliban had imposed a crackdown. According to the U.N., the drug trade is now worth \$65 billion. Afghanistan produces 92 per cent of the world’s opium, with the equivalent of at least 3,500 tonnes leaving the country each year.

This racket is secured by drug kingpins like the brother of disputed president Hamid Karzai. As a New York Times report revealed last month, Ahmed Wali Karzai, a Mafia-like figure who expanded his influence over the drug trade with the aid of U.S. efforts to eliminate his competitors, is on the CIA payroll.

As Professor Michel Chossudovsky has highlighted in a series of essays, the explosion of opium production after the invasion was about the CIA’s drive to restore the lucrative Golden Crescent opium trade that was in place during the time when the Agency were funding the Mujahideen rebels to fight the Soviets, and flood the streets of America and Britain with cheap heroin, destroying lives while making obscene profits.

Any war surtax will merely go straight to maintaining the agenda that Obama inherited from Bush, the continued looting of Afghanistan under the pretext of a “war on terror” that, as revelations about bribing the Taliban prove, doesn’t even exist.

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