OMNI NEWSLETTER ON AFGHANISTAN #4 (see Iraq Newsletters for more),
April 12, 2010, WE, THE PEOPLE BUILDING A CULTURE OF PEACE,
Of, BY, and For the People. Edited by Dick Bennett. (#1 Feb. 18, 2008; #2 Jan. 2009, “26
Reasons for Leaving Afghanistan.”; #3 Oct. 4, 2009)

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William Polk, “Legitimation Crisis in Afghanistan.” The Nation (April 19, 2010). We cannot win over the moderates while fighting the hardliners. Nor can we defeat the insurgents, as Obama has admitted. A stable government and an end to insurgency are possible—but only if the US withdraws and a loya jirga is held soon after. See Polk’s Violent Politics, a history of two centuries of insurgencies.

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[March 19, 2003] is the seventh anniversary of the Iraq invasion. There's a temptation as we begin to end our combat presence in Iraq to search for a happy ending. But there has been no ‘victory’ in Iraq. We created this video as a reminder of the damage done to Iraq and to our country over the last seven years. We also know that there will be no economic recovery here at home as long as we're spending $100 billion a year on another war that isn't making us any safer - the war in Afghanistan.
That's why we're asking you to report the Afghanistan
War as an example of waste, fraud and abuse on the White House's official economic recovery website, Recovery.gov, today. Simply scroll down to the field marked "What" and paste this message into the text box:

"I'd like to report the waste of billions of dollars of our national wealth in Afghanistan on a war that doesn't make us safer. It's fraud to portray this as a war that increases our security, and it's abusive of U.S. troops and local civilians to drag out this war any longer. End the war so we can have real economic recovery."

Join the discussion and tell us what you think on Rethink Afghanistan's Facebook Page

KEEP UP THE MOMENTUM:
Use this tool to send a video to your friends that matches to a specific concern about the war.

Check out the 2 for 1 Rethink Afghanistan DVD special
or
Sign up for the DVD referral program

DANIEL ELLSBERG ON DEMOCRACY NOW 3-30-10 ON WHISTLEBLOWING, OBAMA'S TRIP TO AFGHAN. AND SPEECH AT BAGRAM, US COUNTERINSURGENCY IN AFGHANISTAN, AND ENDING THE OCCUPATION (for complete text Google Democracy Now)

AMY GOODMAN: Well, we’re joined now by a man who played a major role in efforts to end the Vietnam War in the ’70s. In 1971, the then-RAND Corporation analyst Daniel Ellsberg leaked to the media what became known as the Pentagon Papers, a 7,000-page classified history outlining the true extent of US involvement in Vietnam. After avoiding a life sentence on espionage charges, Daniel Ellsberg has continued to speak out against US militarism until the present day. He joins us now from the University of California at Berkeley.

Welcome to Democracy Now!, Dan Ellsberg. In the wake of the surprise visit by President Obama to Afghanistan, your thoughts?

DANIEL ELLSBERG: President Obama is taking every symbolic step he can to nominate this as Obama’s war, just as the Vietnam War became Nixon’s war in November of 1969, just about the time I was copying the Pentagon Papers in hopes of forestalling that, and Johnson made Vietnam his war, Johnson’s war, and McNamara’s war in June of 1965, when I was working for him, when he decided to escalate, an open-ended escalation there, following the previous commitment of Eisenhower and of Kennedy that made it an open-ended war, just as Obama is doing there now, and, I think, with very much the same results in the end, tragic results, especially for the country involved and for the Americans, and with probably the same kinds of pressures on him, actually, as Johnson faced.

AMY GOODMAN…..

DANIEL ELLSBERG: … for years now, really since we set out to go into Iraq on much the same kinds of lies in 2002 that sent us into Vietnam when I was in the Pentagon, since then, I’ve been saying to officials in the government, “Don’t do what I did. Do what I wish I had done in ’63 or ’64, before we had entered the war, before the bombs had fallen. Don’t wait, as I did, ’til we were in the war and the war was essentially unstoppable, before telling the truth about the hopelessness, understood within the
government, and the impossibility—the unlikelihood of any kind of victory there. But do it now.”

Actually, almost as I—in recent times, that call has been answered. I don’t know whether it was direct or not, but some government official who is now the most dangerous man in America in the eyes of President Obama, I’m sure—I’m sure there’s a Plumbers operation going on right now to find out who leaked the cables, the secret cables, of our ambassador in Kabul, Lieutenant General, retired, Karl Eikenberry, who had been in charge in Afghanistan, and first in charge of training Afghan troops and then in charge of all of our operations in Afghanistan, before McChrystal, and is now our accredited ambassador to Karzai, the head of the so-called government that we’re supporting there now.

And in those cables, secret cables, which someone leaked in January, after the President had announced his decision, I’m sorry to say—I wish he had done what I most called for, and that is, send the cables, the truth that he was telling, in before that decision had been announced. Still, the decision hasn’t been fully implemented, especially by Congress, in terms of appropriation. And they would do well to read what it is they’re appropriating money for.

Eikenberry’s cables now, at this stage, read like a summary of the Pentagon Papers of Afghanistan. And that’s the first installment of papers that we need right now. Just change the place names from “Saigon” to “Kabul” and the Afghan national forces serving as the surrogate of our mercenary ARVN of Vietnam, and they read almost exactly the same. He’s describing the President, Karzai, to whom he’s accredited and who he just visited with President Obama. And Karzai has presumably read Eikenberry’s assessment of him as—that he is not an adequate strategic partner for the United States, and for reasons of corruption and inefficiency.

Allegedly, we hear that Obama’s reason for going seventeen hours over to Afghanistan was to convey in person our desire that he clean up his government. I’m really reminded of when Kennedy and Johnson decided to enlist our Mafia in an effort to get Castro. I don’t think they spent time telling the Mafia, “By the way, it’ll be helpful to us, if you’re going to be our partner, to clean up your act, get out of the drug business.” In Karzai’s government, as in the Mafia, corruption are us, drugs are us. Corruption is his government. That’s his constituency, his source of income. There is no chance whatever that he’ll, for instance, root out his brother, Ahmed Wali Karzai, from Kandahar, which is our next base of operations, despite the fact that our chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff says no success is possible in Kandahar while corruption is still the heart of that, while drug dealing is the heart of that, so long as Wali, the President’s, Karzai’s brother, is in charge there.

It’s obviously—it’s not just a symbolism. It’s the fact that we have a government there that has no prospect of achieving legitimacy in the eyes of the people we’re supposedly appealing to in Afghanistan. And that’s symbolic of the whole effort. There is no prospect of any kind of success in Afghanistan, any more than the Soviets achieved in their ten years there, just as in Vietnam we really had no realistic prospect of more success than the French. But countries find it very hard to learn from the failures of other countries.

ANJALI KAMAT: And Dan Ellsberg, what’s your assessment of the counterinsurgency strategy that the Obama administration is pushing, that General Petraeus and Stanley McChrystal are pushing?

DANIEL ELLSBERG: I’m very familiar with that theory, because that’s what I was working on in Vietnam for so many years, the counterinsurgency theory, strategy theory. My job was to evaluate its, quote, “progress,” which meant lack of progress, total stalemate, total lack of progress in Vietnam. And to that end, I visited thirty-eight of the forty-three provinces of Vietnam and reported stalemate, which McNamara heard and understood, even while the word “progress” was the word to be used, just as Obama was talking about progress.
What it ignores is that the recruiting tool of our adversaries there is predominantly the presence of foreign troops. And when we add more foreign troops, we are sustaining that recruiting tool. And for every enemy trying to eject foreigners from his country that we kill, and especially his families, the wedding parties, and the funeral parties after we’ve hit the wedding parties, all of those recruit more people in a way that will—assures us that, contrary to what President Obama is saying, we will not prevail. When he does say we aren’t going to quit, in the short run, at least, he’s right, unfortunately. We have many years ahead of us.

I believe, by the way, that that applies to Iraq, as well, that I believe that our president is deceiving the American public—I don’t say that lightly—in the same way that all of his predecessors deceived us with respect to Vietnam……..

And in Afghanistan, in the same State of the Union address, when he implies that this first installment of extra troops in Afghanistan, which Ambassador [Karl] Eikenberry specifically recommended against to the President, saying that it would make the situation worse, not better, make the Karzai government more dependent on us and postpone any possible date of our withdrawal, rather than shorten it—that’s just the first installment. He implies that by the end of next year—or this year, rather, when we have those extra 30,000 to 40,000 troops there and are up to the level of 100,000, which, with NATO troops, will bring us up to the level at which the Soviets occupied Afghanistan and failed after ten years, the thought that that’s the last request by McChrystal is simply absurd. McChrystal himself was asking for 80,000 troops at this point, and that, too, was a first installment.

My knowledge of counterinsurgency doctrine, which is, from what I read of McChrystal and Petraeus’s doctrine statements, is as good as theirs, or as bad as theirs, says that in a country of that size, hundreds of thousands of troops are needed. .....

AMY GOODMAN: Military officials in Kabul have admitted US and NATO troops have killed thirty Afghans and wounded eighty others in or near military checkpoints since last summer. In no instance did the victims prove to be a danger to troops. In a recent videoconference, military commander General Stanley McChrystal said, “We have shot an amazing number of people, but to my knowledge, none has ever proven to be a threat.” Your response to this?

DANIEL ELLSBERG: That’s an amazingly, amazingly candid assessment by McChrystal. I’ll give him credit for saying that. He also, for the first time, talks about wanting to reduce civilian casualties. But by increasing the number of US troops over there greatly and increasing the number of engagements, even if you reduce the rate of civilian deaths per engagement, the overall effect is going to be that you’re killing the relatives of people who are going to enlist in the insurgency.

You’re talking about a country, like Vietnam, that has 2,000 years of a tradition, and not just of self-image, but of actual success, in ejecting foreign invaders. They aren’t organized for much there. You could say it’s a state of disorganization, valley by valley and tribe by tribe. They’re ideally organized for ejecting control by foreigners, and even control by a central government—that’s somewhat unlike Vietnam—controlled by Kabul, even if Kabul were to clean up its act, which is—means to transform its nature altogether.

One of Eikenberry’s points is that there is no basis for assuming that Karzai, at this point in his life, is going to change his nature or the nature of his government. By the way, that was in secret cables to the President. That’s like the Pentagon Papers. In public testimony, what we heard from Eikenberry in front of Congress was, “Oh, I fully support McChrystal’s program,” which he had just demolished in secret. “I fully support the program. I have every confidence.” In short, like any official working for the President, after the President had made his decision, Eikenberry lied, or, at any rate, he contradicted his secret testimony. And what Congress should do is simply bring him back and let him clarify the
difference between his secret cables, which were published on the New York Times archive, which anyone can get, and his public testimony and give him a chance to tell the truth and resign.

ANJALI KAMAT: Dan Ellsberg, your leaking of the Pentagon Papers helped bring the Vietnam War to an end. What do you think needs to happen now to end the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan?

DANIEL ELLSBERG: Congress, somehow, has to be brought to have the courage to follow its convictions and cut off the funding for the wars, for escalation, in particular. Barbara Lee, the one congressperson who had the guts to vote against the Tonkin Gulf Resolution with respect to Afghanistan back in 2001, pointing out that it had been done without—like the Tonkin Gulf Resolution years before, without hearings, without debate, without evidence, just a blank check to the President—one person in Congress who did that, now has a bill—I think it’s 3966, something like that—calling for cutting off appropriations for further escalation in Afghanistan. And that bill, that appropriations lie ahead.

The head of the Appropriations Committee, David Obey, Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House, Harry Reid in the Senate have all said they oppose further escalation, just like Eikenberry, the general who is our ambassador in Afghanistan. But does that mean they will vote against the appropriations that send those people over there to die and to kill? No, very, very unlikely. But some of their colleagues will.

AMY GOODMAN: We have ten seconds.

DANIEL ELLSBERG: And if we press our colleagues that that’s what we want, ultimately that’s the way the war can be ended. The only way the Vietnam could have been ended was by Congress cutting off the money. It’s the only way this war will be—in what I call Vietnamistan.

KILLING CIVILIANS
http://www.legitgov.org/#breaking_news

Whistleblowers on US 'massacre' fear CIA stalkers 11 Apr 2010 Activists behind a website dedicated to revealing secret documents have complained of harassment by police and intelligence services as they prepare to release a video showing an American attack in which 97 civilians were killed in Afghanistan. Julian Assange, one of the founders of Wikileaks, has claimed that a restaurant where the group met in Reykjavic, the capital of Iceland, came under surveillance in March and one of the group’s volunteers was detained for 21 hours by police. Assange, an Australian, says he was followed on a flight from Reykjavik to Copenhagen by two American agents.

Iraq murder video leaked by officers 11 Apr 2010 Wikileaks Co-founder Julian Assange says the website obtained the video of the killing of Iraqi civilians by US soldiers in 2007 from American military officers. Assange told Press TV that the footage "obviously passed through the hands of military officers."

Wikileaks 'to release video of US strike on Afghan civilians' --Wikileaks, the whistle-blower website, is reportedly preparing to release secret video of a notorious US air strike said to have killed scores of Afghan civilians. 11 Apr 2010 The video apparently shows previously classified footage from US warplanes called in to bomb Taliban fighters during a fire fight in Farah province last year. The Afghan government said at the time that the strikes by F-18 and B1 planes near Granai killed 147 civilians. An independent Afghan inquiry later put the toll at 86.

CINDY SHEEHAN’S SOAPBOX January 19, 2010

A IR WAR DRONES KILL KIDS

I have become increasingly distressed about the expanded use of drones in the USA's War OF Terror-as I oppose "manned aerial vehicles" that target and kill civilians--I find "unmanned aerial vehicles" particularly morally reprehensible. General Atomics builds the Predator series of drones and profits off
of the innocent blood and terrorization of millions. The company also sponsors a drone exhibit at the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum in DC—Peace of the Action sponsored its own field trip there on this past Sunday.

**DN 2-21-10, 30 civilians killed by air strike in Uruzgan, Afghan.**


CIVIC: Campaign for Innocent Victims in Conflict - Home
Campaign for Innocent Victims in Conflict (CIVIC) advocates on behalf of victims of armed conflict, working to ensure they receive recognition and ...www.civicworldwide.org/

KILLING OUR TROOPS

**Six Foreign Troops Die in Afghanistan**

In Afghanistan, six international troops, including at least three Americans, died Monday in the deadliest day in more than two months for international forces. The deaths come one week after retired US General Barry McCaffrey said the US should expect to see between 300 and 500 troops killed and wounded each month in Afghanistan by summer. From Democracy Now 1-12-10

**Suicide Rate for Veterans Jumps 26 Percent**

In other military news, Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki said the suicide rate among eighteen-to twenty-nine-year-old men who have left the military rose 26 percent from 2005 to 2007. Shinseki said an average of eighteen veterans commit suicide each day. From DN 1-12-10

MILITARY RESISTERS


CONGRESSIONAL CALL FOR "OUT OF AFGHANISTAN" BY DECEMBER 2010 FAILS

Washington D.C. (March 4, 2010) - Congressman Dennis Kucinich (D-OH) introduced H. Congressional Resolution 248, a privileged resolution with 16 original co-sponsors that will require the House of Representatives to debate whether to continue the war in Afghanistan. Vote was on Wednesday March 11, 2010. SUPPORT KUCINICH and all who voted for this resolution.

VIDEO: WHY ARE WE IN AFGHANISTAN?

Mike Zweig of U.S. Labor Against the War has made a partly historical video entitled “Why Are We in Afghanistan.” The 27-minute video can be seen at http://www.WhyAreWeInAfghanistan.org, and this web page also has ordering information.
BOOKS

AFGHANISTAN
----Joya, Malalai. *A Woman Among Warlords*.

IRAQ
David Finkel, *The Good Soldiers*. This book is about the Iraq war in Baghdad, but applicable to other counterinsurgencies. Rev. *The Nation* (December 7, 2009): strong praise for the book. “…this is the saddest story I have ever heard,” about “trauma and regret, leaving us defenseless against the steadily accruing collateral damage of combat”

WASHINGTON REPORT ON MIDDLE EAST AFFAIRS a good magazine for ME information, for example Dec. 2009:
“Afghanistan: No Reason to Stay”
“Flames from Afghanistan Ignite Pakistan”
:”Health Care Has Center Stage, But Iran, Afghanistan Draw congressional Attention.”

Your Afghanistan War Bill
$57,077.60. That’s what we’re paying per minute.
"Of all the enemies to public liberty, war is perhaps the most to be dreaded because it comprises and develops the germ of every other. War is the parent of armies; from these proceed debts and taxes—known instruments for bringing the many under the domination of the few....No nation could preserve its freedom in the midst of continual warfare. James Madison, *Political Observations*, 1795

END OF AFGHANISTAN WAR & OCCUPATION NEWSLETTER #5, APRIL 12, 2010