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Dear Dick,

Today, the 10th year of the Afghanistan War begins.

This counterproductive, unnecessary, and damaging war is destroying one of the most impoverished countries in the world, killing Afghan civilians at very high rates and undermining the United States.

The war pushes the U.S. further into debt. Our country spends $1.5 billion per month in borrowed money on this war.

It undermines the rule of law; the U.S. holds thousands of Afghans in prisons without charges. Torture is reported. And robotic drones result in deaths. Legal experts have described these actions as war crimes.

It undermines democracy by propping up a corrupt leader put in office by a low-voter-turnout election rife with fraud.

And it undermines national security by creating more enemies every day--enemies that will hate the United States for a generation or more.

Now the war is expanding into an Af-Pak war. Since coming to office, President Obama escalated attacks in Pakistan with drone after drone killing civilians and local insurgent leaders. Pakistanis are no longer sitting back but are responding by exploding oil tankers and blocking key border routes. Cutting off U.S. supply lines and burning the oil used to keep tanks rolling and planes flying may end up being the nail in a coffin of a war that cannot be won and should not have been fought. Even before this, it cost $1 million per year to keep a soldier in Afghanistan. With supply routes cut and oil burning, that cost will escalate.

Let’s work to end the wars in 2011 and begin to get the United States to turn its back on weapons, war, and militarism.

Thank you for your support. Sincerely, Kevin Zeese

“TALIBAN”
What is it? Well, it’s not “it”. “Taliban” is a complex mix; the word should be enclosed in quotation marks to indicate its ambiguity. I expect everyone who reads a good daily newspaper already knows the following. Taliban “is”

--Mainly Pashtun, the largest tribal group in Afghanistan and western
Pakistan, which the British split in an arbitrary borderline to weaken them.
--Afghans whose relatives have been killed by US/NATO troops.
--Afghans and foreigners trained in the madrassas
--Afghans victimized by massive nighttime sweeps in which doors were knocked down, women and children were terrorized, women and men were humiliated, large numbers of men were detained, and innocent and guilty alike were thrown into overcrowded detention camps. --Others who despise foreign occupation out of national, ethnic, local loyalty, disruption of customs, or just dislike of the constant threat and fear caused by the occupation.
--Fundamentalist Muslims who feel their religion and customs are under attack In 2002 Pakistan had some 10,000 madrassas, Muslim schools.
--People who opposed and oppose the war lords who generally control the country and did control prior to the “Taliban” partial conquest (The war lords are also fundamentalist and brutal to women. Malalai Joya describes Afghanistan as a hierarchy of war lords: US military, Karzai government, regional war lords. Women are worse off under US occupation because outside of Kabul women are still as oppressed as before plus the killings, home intrusions, home destruction, etc. .)
All of the above are incubators of anti-US resistance. But these features are only the present "Taliban." They are not only regular traditional Pashtun Muslims reacting to foreign invasion and attacks on civilians. The madrassas for example and the foreign Muslims. Also, we should remember the "Taliban" when in power in Kabul were as a friend said "very very nasty." And the Pakistani "Taliban" should be differentiated from the Afghan.

Andrew Bacevich on Afghanistan War: "The President Lacks the Guts to Get Out"
Retired US Army colonel and historian Andrew Bacevich joins us for his first interview about his new book, Washington Rules: America’s Path to Permanent War. "The question demands to be asked: Who is more deserving of contempt?" Bacevich asks. "The commander-in-chief who sends young Americans to die for a cause, however misguided, in which he sincerely believes? Or the commander-in-chief who sends young Americans to die for a cause in which he manifestly does not believe and yet refuses to forsake?"

TREATMENT OF WOMEN
From Democracy Now, Thursday, September 30, 2010

Ann Jones on "War Is Not Over When It’s Over: Women and the Unseen Consequences of Conflict"
CIA-TRAINED ELITE AFGHAN UNITS TO HUNT DOWN MILITANTS


**1st U.S. Soldier of Alleged "Kill Team" Targeting Afghan Civilians Faces Military Tribunal for War Crimes**

Army Specialist Jeremy Morlock is the first of twelve US soldiers accused of forming a secret "kill team" in Afghanistan that murdered unarmed Afghan civilians at random and collected body parts, such as fingers, for trophies. They are also accused of using hashish, dismembering and photographing corpses, and possessing human bones such as a skull and leg bones. The Army is attempting to prevent the release of dozens of photographs that reportedly show Morlock and other soldiers posing with the murdered Afghan civilians.

ENDING THE WAR(S)


Democratic Rep. John Conyers, chair of the House Judiciary Committee and the co-chair of the Out of Afghanistan Caucus, joins us to discuss his opposition to the $33 billion earmarked for the escalation of the war in Afghanistan. Conyers and other antiwar lawmakers are holding a news conference today after the end of the bloodiest month for international troops in Afghanistan.
A Senseless War Begins Its 10th Year ...an address to the nation from President Barack Obama (we wish)

A Senseless War Begins Its 10th Year ...an address to the nation from President Barack Obama (as reported by Michael Moore)

Thursday, October 7th, 2010

My Fellow Americans:

Nine years ago today we invaded the nation of Afghanistan. I’d just turned 40. I had a Discman and an Oldsmobile and had gotten really into LiveJournal. That was a long time ago. It was so long ago, does anybody remember why we're even there? I think everyone wanted to capture Osama bin Laden and bring him to justice. But he got away sometime in the first month or so. He left. We stayed. Looking back now, that makes no sense.

Needing to find a new reason for the mission, we decided to overthrow the religious extremists who were running Afghanistan. Which we did. Sorta. Unlike Osama, they never left. Why not? Well, they were Afghans, it was their country. And, strangely enough, a lot of other Afghans supported them. To this day, the Taliban only have 25,000 armed fighters. Do you really think an army that tiny could control and suppress a nation of 28 million against their will? What's wrong with this picture? WTF is really going on here?

The truth is, I can't get an answer. My generals can't quite tell me what our mission is. If we went in there to rout out al-Qaeda, well, they're gone too. The CIA tells me there are under 100 of them left in the whole country!

My generals have also admitted the following to me:

1. There is no way we can defeat the Taliban. They enjoy too much popular support in the rural areas, the majority of the country.

2. Even though we've been there nine years, the truth is the Taliban, not us, not the Afghan government, control the country. After nine years, we've only completely run the Taliban out of 3% of Afghanistan. 3%!! (Just for reference, it took us only ELEVEN MONTHS after D-Day to entirely defeat the Nazis across all of Europe.)

3. Our troops and their commanders are still trying to learn the language, the culture, the customs of Afghanistan. The fact is, our troops are simply not trusted by the average people (especially after they've killed numerous civilians, either through recklessness or for sport).

4. The Afghan government we installed is corrupt beyond belief. The public does not trust them. President Karzai is on anti-depressants and our advisors tell us he is erratic and loopy on many days. His brother has a friendly relationship with the Taliban and is believed to be a major poppy (heroin) dealer. Heroin poppies are the #1 contributor to the Afghan economy.
The war in Afghanistan is a mess. The insurgency grows -- and why wouldn't it: foreign troops have invaded and occupied their country! The people responsible for 9/11 are no longer there. So why are we? Why are we offering up the lives of our sons and daughters every single day -- for no reason anyone can define.

In fact, the only reason I can see is that this war is putting billions of profits into the pockets of defense contractors. Is that a reason to stay, so Halliburton can post a larger profit this quarter?

It is time for me to bring our troops home -- right now. Not one more American needs to die. Their deaths do not make us safer and they do not bring democracy to Afghanistan.

It is not our mission to defeat the Taliban. That is the job of the Afghan people -- if that is what they choose to do. There are many groups and leaders of countries in this world who are despicable. We are not going to invade 30 countries and remove their regimes. That is not our job.

I am not going to stay in Afghanistan just because we're already there and we haven't "won" yet. There is nothing to win. No one from Genghis Khan to Leonid Brezhnev has been able to win there. So the troops are coming home.

I refuse to participate in scaring the American people with a phony "War on Terror." Are there terrorists? Yes. Will they strike again? Sadly, yes. But these terrorist acts are few and far between and should not dictate how we live our daily lives or make us ignore our constitutional rights. They should never distract us from what our real priorities are in making our country safe and secure: Everyone with a good job, families able to own a home and send their kids to college, universal health care that's coordinated by your elected representative government -- not by greedy, profit-hungry insurance companies. THAT would be true homeland security.

And what about Osama bin Laden? Nine years and we can't find a 6'5" Arab man who apparently is on dialysis? Even after offering $25 million to anyone who will tell us where he is? You don't think someone would have taken us up on that by now?

Here's what I know: Osama bin Laden is a multi-millionaire -- and if there's one thing I've learned about the rich is that they don't live in caves for 9 years. Bin Laden is either dead or hiding out in a place where his money protects him. Or maybe he just went home.

Just like we should do. Now. My condolences to the families of all who died in this war. Most of them signed up after 9/11 and wanted to do their duty because we were attacked. But we were not attacked by a country. We were attacked by a few religious extremists. And you don't defeat a few thugs by shipping halfway around the world thousands of armored vehicles and hundreds of thousands of soldiers. That is just sheer idiocy.

And it ends tonight. God be with you.

I'm not a Muslim.

(End of speech, as transcribed by Michael Moore) (via Fran A)

AFSC SUGGESTS WAYS OF RESISTANCE
“U.S. Nears A Decade of War in Afghanistan”
Peter Lems and Mary Zerkel, AFSC to jbennet
The national tour of Windows & Mirrors opens tonight in Philadelphia. For more about the exhibit, including future tour stops, see the Windows & Mirrors home page.

Dear James,

Today marks nine years since the U.S. and U.K. invaded Afghanistan. It is now the longest running war in U.S. history. Following the tragic events of September 11, 2001, AFSC supporters and activists around the country rallied around the vision of "No More Victims". We called for nonviolent solutions to break the cycle of violence and retribution before it spun further out of control.

Now, nine years later, with many thousands of lives lost and billions of dollars wasted, our path is clear: we must renew our work to end this war....

Organizers have created an online toolkit for these days of action: http://www.endafghanistanwar.com/toolkit/

Please join us in this worldwide call to end the war in Afghanistan by choosing one of the options for action in the toolkit. You can choose from five sample letters to the editor, along with a host of other resources to help you continue to raise your voice for peace at this crucial time.

AFSC is marking the ninth anniversary by launching our touring art exhibit in memory of Afghan civilian casualties called “Windows and Mirrors: Reflections on the War in Afghanistan.” The exhibit will debut tonight at the historic Arch Street Meeting House in Philadelphia. These works created by 40 muralists and Afghan students are “windows” on a war-torn people and country, windows that also become “mirrors” reflecting back our own identity as a nation at war.

In the coming months, we'll be taking these new resources on the road, engaging new communities around the country. We'd love to bring Windows and Mirrors to your community. If you're interested in helping to host this exhibit please contact Mary Zerkel at mzerkel@afsc.org.

Wage Peace,
Peter Lems and Mary Zerkel
American Friends Service Committee
1501 Cherry Street Philadelphia, PA 19102
http://www.afsc.org/

VETERANS SUPPORTING PTSD TROOPS
Democracy Now 10-7 presented interviews of two Afghan War vets, Ethan McCord and Brock McIntosh, who were in DC to demonstrate against the redeployment of traumatized troops. By this day in the 10th year, 1300 US troops had been killed, over 370 in 2010, the largest number in one year yet.

http://www.democracynow.org/2010/10/7/operation_recovery_on_9th_anniv
"Operation Recovery": On 9th Anniversary of Afghan War, Veteran-Led Campaign Seeks to End Deployment of Traumatized Soldiers

To mark the ninth anniversary of the Afghanistan war, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans Against the War are marching in Washington, DC today to launch the first veteran-led campaign to stop the deployment of soldiers traumatized by multiple tours of duty.

**Brock McIntosh**, served in Afghanistan from November 2008 to August 2009. He is still serving in the military and is filing for conscientious objector status.

**Ethan McCord**, Iraq war veteran. He was one of three US soldiers who were on the ground during the Apache helicopter assault on 12 civilians in Baghdad in 2007 that was captured in a video released by WikiLeaks.

Related stories

- Michael Hastings of Rolling Stone on the Story that Brought Down Gen. McChrystal and Exposed Widening Disputes Behind the US Debacle in Afghanistan
- John Pilger: There Is a War on Journalism
- Tom Engelhardt on "The American Way of War: How Bush’s Wars Became Obama’s"

Read more, go to: [http://www.democracynow.org/2010/10/7/operation_recovery_on_9th_anniversary_of](http://www.democracynow.org/2010/10/7/operation_recovery_on_9th_anniversary_of)

**WIKILEAKS: TRANSPARENCY AGAINST WAR AND ATROCITIES**

**WikiLeaks’ Afghan War Diary**

It’s one of the biggest leaks in US military history. More than 90,000 internal records of US military actions in Afghanistan over the past six years have been published by the whistleblower website WikiLeaks. The documents provide a devastating portrait of the war in Afghanistan, revealing how coalition forces have killed hundreds of civilians in unreported incidents, how a secret black ops special forces unit hunts down targets for assassination or detention without trial, how Taliban attacks have soared, and how Pakistan is fueling the insurgency.

Wikileaks.org has done it again, publishing thousands of classified documents about the U.S. war in Afghanistan. The website provides a secure platform for whistle-blowers to deliver documents, videos and other electronic media while maintaining anonymity.

- WikiLeaks Founder Julian Assange: "Transparent Government Tends to Produce Just
We spend the hour with Julian Assange, the founder of WikiLeaks, talking about the biggest leak in US history: the release of more than 91,000 classified military records on the war in Afghanistan. As the Pentagon announces it is launching a criminal probe into who leaked the documents, Assange asks what about investigating the "war crimes" revealed in the leaked military records? He also talks about the media, why he isn’t coming to the US anytime soon, and what gives him hope. "What keeps us going is our sources. These are the people, presumably, who are inside these organizations, who want change," Assange says. "They are both heroic figures taking much greater risks than I ever do, and they are pushing and showing that they want change in, in fact, an extremely effective way."

WikiLeaks Founder Says "Evidence of War Crimes" in Afghan War Logs, White House Downplays Leak, Claiming "No Broad New Revelations"

The disclosure of a massive trove of classified military records documenting the Afghanistan war has ignited a firestorm and increased pressure on the White House to defend its military strategy. We play highlights of the White House press conference in Washington and Julian Assange’s press conference in London.

Guardian Editor on Coverage of Afghan War Logs: European Audience "Troubled More...by the Toll this War is Taking on Innocent People"

We speak with David Leigh, the investigations editor at The Guardian, one of the three newspapers, along with the New York Times and Der Spiegel, WikiLeaks gave the Afghanistan war documents to. "Broadly, we see a similar picture in the three media. What we do see is quite a different political perspective. From the New York Times’s point of view...it was interesting to see that the relationship with Pakistan was a political priority," Leigh says. "With us, we’re more concerned about the casualties, I think. We’re troubled more, a European audience, by the toll this war is taking on innocent people.

The New Pentagon Papers: WikiLeaks Releases 90,000+ Secret Military Documents Painting Devastating Picture of Afghanistan War

We host a roundtable discussion with independent British journalist Stephen Grey; Pentagon Papers whistleblower, Daniel Ellsberg; former State Department official in Afghanistan, Matthew Hoh; independent journalist Rick Rowley; and investigative historian Gareth Porter.

PAKISTAN

Public Opinion in Pakistan’s Tribal Regions

By Peter Bergen, Patrick C. Doherty, New America Foundation and Ken Ballen, Terror Free Tomorrow

September 28, 2010 | New America Foundation

Executive Summary

The New America Foundation and Terror Free Tomorrow have conducted the first comprehensive public opinion survey covering sensitive political issues in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan.

The unprecedented survey, from June 30 to July 20, 2010, consisted of face-to-face interviews of 1,000 FATA residents age 18 or older across 120 villages/sampling points in all seven tribal Agencies of FATA, with a margin of error of +/- 3 percent, and field work by the locally-based Community Appraisal & Motivation Programme. Funding for the poll was provided by the United States Institute of Peace, a congressionally funded think tank, which had no other role in the poll. The poll was conducted before the large-scale floods that have inundated Pakistan.

Public Opposition to the U.S. Military and Drone Campaign

Nearly nine out every ten people in FATA oppose the U.S. military pursuing al-Qaeda and the Taliban in their region. Nearly 70 percent of FATA residents instead want the Pakistani military alone to fight Taliban and al-Qaeda militants in the tribal areas.

The intensity of opposition to the American military is high. While only one in ten of FATA residents think suicide attacks are often or sometimes justified against the Pakistani military and police, almost six in ten believe these attacks are justified against the U.S. military. (The United Nations has determined that many of the suicide attackers in Afghanistan hail from the Pakistani tribal regions.)

More than three-quarters of FATA residents oppose American drone strikes. Indeed, only 16 percent think these strikes accurately target militants; 48 percent think they largely kill civilians and another 33 percent feel they kill both civilians and militants. Directed by the Central Intelligence Agency, missiles are launched from unmanned drone aircraft in the FATA region of Pakistan. President Obama has dramatically ramped up the drone program, authorizing 122 so far during his administration, more than double the number authorized by President George W. Bush during his entire eight-years in office. This may help account for why Obama is viewed unfavorably by 83 percent of FATA residents in our poll.

A plurality of FATA residents consider the United States to be the party most responsible for the violence that is occurring in their region today. Nearly 80 percent of the people in FATA also oppose the U.S.-led “war on terror,” and believe its real purpose is to weaken and divide the Islamic world, while ensuring American domination. Only 10 percent thought the U.S. was motivated to defeat Al-Qaeda and its allies. Similarly, three-quarters of FATA residents thought that the continuing American occupation of Afghanistan was because of its larger war on Islam or part of an effort to secure oil and minerals in the region. 11 percent said it was because of the 9/11 attacks,
Pakistan Threatens to End Protection of NATO Supply Routes

Pakistan is warning it will stop protecting NATO supply routes to Afghanistan if the U.S. continues to carry out cross-border attacks. More than seventy alleged militants have been killed in recent strikes from U.S. Apache helicopters crossing the Afghan border. According to the Associated Press, Pakistani officials have told NATO leaders in Brussels that they won’t tolerate attacks from manned aircraft. About eighty percent of NATO’s non-lethal supplies in Afghanistan are delivered through Pakistan. Democracy Now 9-29-10

AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN
Tariq Ali on "The Obama Syndrome: Surrender at Home, War Abroad"

We speak with British Pakistani political commentator, writer, activist and editor of the New Left Review, Tariq Ali. He is the author of numerous books; his latest is The Obama Syndrome: Surrender at Home, War Abroad.

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Tariq Ali, British Pakistani political commentator, writer, activist and editor of the New Left Review. His latest book is The Obama Syndrome: Surrender at Home, War Abroad.

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- Michael Hastings of Rolling Stone on the Story that Brought Down Gen. McChrystal and Exposed Widening Disputes Behind the US Debacle in Afghanistan
- John Pilger: There Is a War on Journalism
- Tom Engelhardt on "The American Way of War: How Bush’s Wars Became Obama’s"
Johan Galtung on the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, Mideast Peace Talks, and Why Obama Is Losing His Base

We speak with Johan Galtung, known as a founder of the field of peace and conflict studies. He’s spent the past half-century pursuing nonviolent conflict resolution in international relations. Galtung discusses the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Mideast talks, why President Obama is losing his base, and much more.

END OF NEWSLETTER ON AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN #6

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Dick Bennett

Wars and Warming: Reducing the Footprints

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