How Much Did You Pay For The War This Year?

http://rethinkafghanistan.com/iou

[The next two entries are from The Peace Exchange Bulletin]
https://mail.google.com/mail/?hl=en&shva=1#inbox/12f5006f6bca58c3

The War Goes Savage

The death toll of American soldiers in Afghanistan has jumped to 1,516 since 2001. 886 of the deaths have occurred during the Obama presidency. Pentagon predictions of heavier fighting ahead could translate to overall U.S. troop fatalities reaching 1,900 during the 2012 presidential campaign.

Continue reading...

Protect Your Manhood: End the War in Afghanistan
Every young man thinking of enlisting or facing deployment to Afghanistan should
consider carefully the findings of a new study on combat injuries in Afghanistan.
http://www.commondreams.org/view/2011/04/08-6

Anatomy of An Afghan War Tragedy
David S. Cloud, Los Angeles Times
David S. Cloud reports: "More than two dozen people were wedged into the three vehicles. Many were Hazaras, an ethnic minority that for years has been treated harshly by the Taliban. They included shopkeepers going for supplies, students returning to school, people seeking medical treatment and families with children off to visit relatives. There were several women and as many as four children younger than 6. 'We weren't worried when we set out. We were a little scared of the Taliban, but not of government forces,' he said referring to the Afghan national army and its US allies. 'Why would they attack us?' American aircraft began tracking the vehicles at 5 am."
READ MORE

HOSTILITY BETWEEN TALIBAN AND AL QAEDA
Just Foreign Policy News on the Web:
http://www.justforeignpolicy.org/node/821
6) A report published by New York University says the Afghan Taliban have been wrongly perceived as close ideological allies of Al Qaeda, and could be persuaded to renounce Al Qaeda, Carlotta Gall reports in the New York Times. The report says there was substantial friction between the groups' leaders before the Sept. 11 attacks and that hostility has intensified. The authors, Alex Strick van Linschoten and Felix Kuehn, have worked in Afghanistan for years and edited the autobiography of a Taliban diplomat, many of whose ideas are reflected in the report.

Some US officials have argued that the military surge in Afghanistan will weaken the Taliban and increase the incentive to negotiate. But the report cautions that the campaign may make it harder to reach a settlement, by eliminating older Taliban leaders and replacing them with younger, more radical fighters more susceptible to Al Qaeda influence. The authors suggest that the US should engage older Taliban leaders before they lose control of the movement.

In November 2002, the report says, senior Taliban figures agreed to join a process of political engagement and reconciliation with the new government of Afghanistan. Yet the decision came to nothing, since neither the Afghan government nor the US saw any reason to engage with the Taliban, the report says.
7) The central justification of the war against the Afghan Taliban - that the Taliban would allow al Qaeda to return - has been challenged by new historical evidence of offers by the Taliban leadership to reconcile with the Karzai government after the fall of the Taliban government in 2001, Gareth Porter writes for Inter Press Service. Porter notes that the NYU study's account of the Taliban offer to reconcile with the Karzai government confirms an account by journalist Anand Gopal, who has reported on Afghanistan for the Wall Street Journal and the Christian Science Monitor. The Taliban initiative was frustrated by the unwillingness of the US and the Afghan government to provide any assurance that they would not arrested and detained, Gopal wrote.

The NYU study also cites evidence that the Taliban leadership recognize that they will have to provide guarantees that a Taliban-influenced regime in Afghanistan would not allow al Qaeda to have a sanctuary, Porter notes.

AFGHANS FOR PEACE
Fatima Mojaddidy
Afghans for Peace presents
Women’s Rights in Afghanistan
Talk by Rangina Hamidi
Founder of Kandahar Treasure
kandahartreasure.com
To learn more about Rangina Hamidi and her work: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QWKT_VhzGJc
Thanks, Fatima Mojaddidy Afghans for Peace - CA
http://afghansforpeace.org/

AFGHANS FOR PEACE
January 23, 2011
Dear Friend,
Today on Cindy Sheehan's Soapbox, I interview Spogmai Akseer from the international organization Afghans for Peace.
I hope you listen to this VERY INFORMATIVE show beginning at 2pm Pacific time--and then in the archives forever.
Love & Peace Cindy Sheehan
Show available at: www.CindySheehansSoapbox.com

Boxer Introduces Legislation on Redeployment of U.S. Combat
Forces from Afghanistan
S.186; similar to last year's Feingold-McGovern bill; endorses 2011
drawdown, requires President Obama to set an end date for withdrawal
of combat troops.
Press Release:
Text of legislation:
http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c112:S.186:

THE War Department’s “December review of Afghanistan
strategy glossed over real challenges....” See Greg
Kaufmann’s interview of Michael Shank “on how the United
States could get serious about promoting freedom and
democracy in the country.” (The Nation Jan. 24, 2011).
1. A Real December Review for Afghanistan | The Nation

“Afghani-Scammed: Only Profiteers Win” by Cindy Sheehan
www.CindySheehansSoapbox.com

Statesmen will invent cheap lies, putting blame upon the nation that
is attacked, and every man will be glad of those conscience-soothing
falsities, and will diligently study them, and refuse to examine any
refutations of them; and thus he will by and by convince himself that
the war is just, and will thank God for the better sleep he enjoys
after this process of grotesque self-deception.
- Mark Twain, "Chronicle of Young Satan"

The current president of the USA is no less skilled at
being the Liar-in-Chief than the last one-after all, to be
fair, that is the job description of the CEO of the Empire.
CLICK HERE TO READ THE REST www.CindySheehansSoapbox.com

Ann Wright: War in Afghanistan is "unwinnable."
We've spoken with Ret. Col. Ann Wright of Oahu before-about her
decision to resign from the State Department on the eve of the 2003
Iraq invasion, about the follies of the Bush Administration, about
Israel, and about the importance of dissent.
Ret. Col. Ann Wright. "Afghans do not want the international
community to abandon or forget them," she says. "But they want the
killing of Afghan civilians to end."Now, recently returned from a
fact-finding trip to Afghanistan, Wright has plenty to say about
America's oft forgotten, decade-old war.
CLICK HERE TO READ THE REST
Cindy Sheehan's Soapbox | PO Box 6264 | Vacaville | CA | 95696
www.CindySheehansSoapbox.com

MYTHS OF THE AFGHAN COUNTER-INSURGENCY

WHY WE ARE STILL IN AFGHANISTAN
“How the Power of Myth Keeps Us Trapped in War”
http://www.tomdispatch.com/post/175344
By Ira Chernus, TomDispatch.com, posted January 20, 2011

LAT TELLS OBAMA TO WITHDRAW FROM AFGHANISTAN
In an editorial, the Los Angeles Times takes the Obama Administration to task for appearing to hedge on its deadlines for troop reductions and withdrawal from Afghanistan. The LAT calls for a significant withdrawal this year and an unambiguous completion of the mission in 2014. "Biden was right the first time," the LAT says. https://mail.google.com/mail/?hl=en&shva=1#inbox/12d967c342a607d0

“Barbara Lee: We Need to Convince Obama to Campaign Against War” by Tom Hayden
President Obama needs to be convinced to "shift his political calculus" and campaign in 2012 "on a platform of ending the war in Afghanistan," Rep. Barbara Lee told representatives of several peace organizations in a conference call on January 10. Continue reading...
https://mail.google.com/mail/?hl=en&shva=1#inbox/12d7894f8e41dd2b

An Important Message from Kathy Kelly in Kabul Posted by: "Frank Dorrel"
fdorrel@sbcglobal.net frankdorrel
Thu Dec 30, 2010
United National Antiwar Committee: www.UNACpeace.org
Voices for Creative Nonviolence: www.vcnv.org

An Invitation to Join the United National Antiwar Committee & Voices for Creative Nonviolence

In a New Year's Campaign to End the War in Afghanistan!

Dear Friends,
Greetings from Kabul, where Afghan Youth Peace Volunteers have welcomed us to join their New Year's Eve - New Year's Day call for peace. Please help us distribute this call far & wide.

Sincerely,
Kathy Kelly
kathy.vcnv@gmail.com

Dear Afghanistan: A New Year's Call for Peace

While the US may be the world's single super power in military terms, it faces another super power: the voices of war-weary millions who detest violence and killing. In Afghanistan, in the United States, and among the populations of countries whose governments have joined the NATO coalition, millions of people are calling for an end to war in Afghanistan.

On New Year’s Day, 01/01/11, people around the world are invited to raise their voices, through Facebook, Twitter, Free Conference calls, Skype, and blogs at several websites in a massive refusal to accept this war any longer. Let your New Year's resolution be to stand for the people and end wars by sending a digital or spoken peacemaking message to people in Afghanistan. By amassing millions of messages calling for peace, we can create yet another indication that ordinary people within and beyond Afghanistan have had enough of war.

Afghanistan's people need food not bombs, health care not warfare and courage for peace, not war. In the words of Abdulai, an Afghan teenager whose father was killed by the Taliban, the "Dear Afghanistan" campaign offers an alternative to the Obama administration's most recent review of the war. Abdulai's experiences of impoverishment, bereavement, and discrimination highlight realities that Afghans face every day. The U.S. government's December review paid no attention to these conditions.

You can let Afghan people know that their lives matter as much as yours. Assure them that the U.S. government's war is unacceptable to you and that you are working to end it.

We can catch courage from one another, sparking a New Year's momentum to put an end to war.

We're technically too late for the following, but we can still perform some of the actions. D]

Follow the steps below to communicate the simple yet crucial demand: Stop the Killing in Afghanistan.

On New Year's Day 2011, from 7.05 pm Eastern Standard Time on the 31st of December 2010 to 7.05 pm Eastern Standard Time on the 1st of January 2011, from wherever in the world, you can:
Call from your Mobile or Home phone by dialing (661) 673-8600 & access code: 295191#. Please arrange to talk by sending an email to CallAfghanistan@gmail.com

SKYPE: Please arrange to call Afghanistan by sending your Skype ID in an email to CallAfghanistan@gmail.com

Send an email message to DearAfghanistan@gmail.com

Text or sms by mobile at +93 7791 84146 or +1 727-248-0308 (001-727-248-0308 if text messaging from outside U.S.)

Facebook: Afghan Youth Peace Volunteers

For more information: Visit Dear Afghanistan

Amy Goodman, “The Comeback Kid” and the Kids Who Won’t” Truthdig

Excerpt: "One of the main reasons Barack Obama is president today is that by openly opposing the US war in Iraq, he won first the Democratic nomination and then the general election. If he took the same approach with the war in Afghanistan, by calling on US troops to come back home, then he might truly become the 'Comeback President' in 2012 as well."

READ MORE

PAKISTAN

“Pakistan Tells US It Must Sharply Cut CIA Activities

Pakistan has demanded that the United States steeply reduce the number of Central Intelligence Agency operatives and Special Operations forces working in Pakistan, and that it halt CIA drone strikes aimed at militants in northwest Pakistan. The request was a sign of the near collapse of cooperation between the two testy allies.

Pakistani and American officials said in interviews that the demand that the United States scale back its presence was the immediate fallout from the arrest in Pakistan of Raymond A. Davis, a CIA security officer who killed two men in January during what he said was an attempt to rob him.

In all, about 335 American personnel - CIA officers and contractors and Special Operations forces - were being asked to leave the country, said a Pakistani official closely involved in the decision.

It was not clear how many CIA personnel that would leave behind; the total number in Pakistan has not been disclosed. But the cuts demanded by the Pakistanis amounted to 25 to 40 percent of United States Special Operations forces in the country, the officials said. The number also included the removal of all the American contractors used by the CIA in Pakistan. For more go http://readersupportednews.org/news-section2/309-13/5595-pakistan-tells-us-it-must-sharply-cut-cia-activities

bad guys and good guys

In Lahore, Pakistan, reported the Washington Post on May 29, 2010, "Militants staged coordinated attacks ... on two mosques of a minority Muslim sect, taking hostages and killing at least 80 people. ... At least seven men armed with grenades, high-powered rifles and suicide vests stormed the mosques as Friday prayers ended."

Nice, really nice, very civilized. It's no wonder that decent Americans think that this is what the United States is fighting against — Islamic fanatics, homicidal maniacs, who kill their own kind over some esoteric piece of religious dogma, who want to kill Americans over some other imagined holy sin, because we're "infidels". How can we reason with such people? Where is the common humanity the naive pacifists and anti-war activists would like us to honor?

And then we come to the very last paragraph of the story: "Elsewhere in Pakistan on Friday, a suspected U.S. drone-fired missile struck a Taliban compound in the South Waziristan tribal area, killing eight, according to two officials in the region." This, we are asked to believe by our leaders, is a higher level of humanity. The United States does this every other day, sending robotic death machines called Predators flying over Afghanistan and Pakistan, to send Hellfire missiles screaming into wedding parties, funerals, homes, not knowing who the victims are, not caring who the victims are, many hundreds of them by now, as long as Washington can claim each time — whether correctly or not — that amongst their number was a prominent infidel, call him Taliban, or al Qaeda, or insurgent, or
militant. How can one reason with such people, the ones in the CIA who operate the drone flights? What is the difference between them and a suicide bomber? The suicide bomber becomes one of the victims himself and sees his victims up close before killing them. The CIA murderer bomber sits safely in a room in Nevada or California and pretends he's playing a video game, then goes out to dinner while his victims lay dying. The suicide bomber believes passionately in something called paradise. The murderer bomber believes passionately in something called flag and country.

The State Department's Legal Advisor justifies the Predator bombings as ... yes, "self-defense". 5 Try reasoning with that.

These American drone bombings are of course the height of aggression, the ultimate international crime. They were used over Iraq as well beginning in the 1990s. In December 2002, shortly before the US invasion in March, the Iraqis finally managed to shoot one down. This prompted a spokesman for the US Central Command, which oversees US military operations in the Middle East, to call it another sign of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's "campaign of military aggression." 6

This particular piece of hypocrisy may have actually been outdone by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's comment about the US flights and bombings over Iraq during that period: "It bothers the dickens out of me that US and British pilots are getting fired at day after day after day, with impunity." 7

[I regret I failed to record the source of the above essay. D]

END OF AFGHANISTAN/PAKISTAN NEWSLETTER # 8