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Noam Chomsky, Op-Ed: “At every level of society, Lieven writes, Pakistanis overwhelmingly sympathize with the Afghan Taliban, not because they like them but because ‘the Taliban are seen as a legitimate force of resistance against an alien occupation of the country,’ much as the Afghan mujahedeen were perceived when they resisted the Russian occupation in the 1980s. These feelings are shared by Pakistan’s military leaders, who bitterly resent U.S. pressures to sacrifice themselves in Washington’s war against the Taliban. READ | DISCUSS | SHARE http://www.nationofchange.org/was-war-only-answer-911-1315234772

10 Years of 9/11 Wars Is Enough
Peter Hart, Op-Ed: “The 10th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks is sure to bring televised images of somber reflection. Looking back is, in some ways, easier for commentators and pundits than wrestling with the current state of Washington’s so-called ‘war on terror.’ The United States is mired in two major wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, along with undeclared drone bombing campaigns in Pakistan, Yemen, and Somalia. Launching these wars was fairly easy for the White House, with or without congressional approval. How any of them ends, though, remains unclear. Even the NATO war in Libya, which by many accounts has ‘ended,’ could become more chaotic and bloodier in the very near future.” READ | DISCUSS | SHARE http://www.nationofchange.org/10-years-911-wars-enough-1315234934
Action: Tell Congress: $200 Billion In "Real Savings" If We End the Wars "On Time"

JUST FOREIGN POLICY
Most Americans don't realize that the Super Committee can reach 1/6 of its debt reduction goal just by withdrawing U.S. troops from Iraq and Afghanistan when we said we were going to. Urge your representatives in Congress to make this part of any debt reduction deal.

http://www.justforeignpolicy.org/act/endwarsontime

Help Support Our Advocacy for Peace and Diplomacy
The opponents of peace and diplomacy work every day. Help us be an effective counterweight.

http://www.justforeignpolicy.org/donate

Partial Lists of Congressional Town Halls
Urge your reps. to cut the base military budget by a trillion and end the wars as part of the debt deal.

[Note: these lists of "town halls" are incomplete.]

http://nolabels.org/blog/60-congress-not-holding-town-halls

AMAZING ANTI-WAR SPEECH BY WAR VETERAN
From: Barbara Bakie Sent: Saturday, August 13, 2011
Watch this before it disappears!!!!!
quand la vérité blesse.       http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=akm3nYN8aG8

Where will you be on October 7?
War Resisters League to jbennet August 12, 2011
wrl@warresisters.org
Will you help WRL mark 10 years of the "Global War on Terror"?
October 7th, 2011 will mark 10 years since the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan and the start of the Global War on Terror. To commemorate this sad anniversary, we* are calling for a month of local and national activities from September 7th to October 7th. During this time, we hope to promote relationship-building among people and communities affected by U.S. militarism and the U.S. war economy, both in the U.S. and Afghanistan, reflect on how our world has changed in the past 10 years, and share our "war stories" from the last decade.
We have spent the last 10 years marching in the streets and participating in many forms of nonviolent action to end the wars, put a stop to the growing militarization of U.S. communities and borders, and redirect our country’s resources to meeting human needs here at home. Despite of these efforts, we’re
still entangled in two (or more) wars; at least 200,000 civilians have been killed in Iraq and Afghanistan, over 6,000 U.S. troops have died in combat, and thousands more have taken their own lives; Muslim individuals and communities as well as immigrants to the U.S. are under ever-increasing surveillance by a racist and Islamophobic "Homeland Security" system; unemployment numbers keep rising and funding for education, social security, and healthcare are all being gutted while Congress continues to increase military spending.

In Washington D.C. on October 7th, we will be marking this commemoration of the Global War on Terror with a unique forum, War Voices: Stories from a Decade of Militarism at Home and Abroad, which will bring together people directly impacted by U.S. militarism, including the Afghan-American/Afghan-Canadian group Afghans for Peace, and the U.S. war economy with ally groups, as well as writers, musicians, and artists. Through story-telling, workshops, discussions, and cultural performances, we will build our power as a movement by meeting one another, building relationships that will inspire us for the long haul, and envisioning new directions for the future. We will be providing a live webcast of the forum in D.C. for those who are unable to join us for the event. At the forum, we also hope to premiere new digital media featuring Afghan organizations talking about their work.

On September 7th, we will be launching a new popular education-inspired curriculum on the U.S. war economy, as well as a section on the current on-the-ground reality in Afghanistan and Afghan-led efforts for a more just society. These materials will be posted to our website on September 7th, as well as the excellent clearinghouse and network of educators and artists engaged with this decade of war called '10 Years and Counting'. If you are interested in hearing more about the curriculum or using it to build with economic justice groups in your local area, we welcome you to contact us at: ali@warresisters.org

We’re calling on our members and supporters to help us promote these events nationwide and organize a workshop or forum in your own community on or before October 7th. We will soon be posting resources on our website on how to adapt these tools and projects to meet your local needs.

For general questions about the month of local and national activities against 10 years of war and occupation, contact: info@warvoices.org

Please help us to spread the word!

In solidarity,

*War Resisters League, Iraq Veterans Against the War, Military Families Speak Out, Veterans for Peace, Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Peace Action, United for Peace and Justice

Check out the latest from the frontlines of antimilitarism on the WRL Blog!

"The Flavor of Freedom"...and War: Day of Honey by Annia Ciezadlo

Written by Jeanne Strole, co-director of the A.J. Muste Memorial Institute, this is a review of a memoir that explores themes of "love, food, family, friends, clashes of culture, prejudice and war's profound effects on the everyday lives of civilians." This memoir details the history of food in the Middle East, a romantic relationship between two transplanted New Yorkers, one from Chicago the other from Beirut, and describes the "flavor of freedom" in Iraq.

Wisconsin Updates!

This post lays out the current on-the-ground reality in Wisconsin following the amazing weeks of resistance of workers in the state in February and March. It also provides links to recent protests, events, and actions led by Wisconsinites committed to resisting the government assault against organized labor.

Check out WRL's latest counter-military recruitment leaflet!

Know Before You Go, 'Cause There's No Reset Button is a collaboration with the Ya-Ya Network (Youth Activists-Youth Allies), a youth-led antimilitarist organization based in NYC.
Our leaflet breaks down the enlistment contract and life in the military and provides new stats about sexual assault in the military, racial disparities in becoming an officer, and stop-loss. Written to be accessible to everyone while providing the most important info for making a fully informed choice about joining the military, this leaflet will be a staple for counter-recruiters. Available on our online store for $0.15/copy plus 20% shipping. The black and white and color versions of the leaflet are also available for FREE download.

For more information on WRL’s counter-recruitment work, email Kimber@warresisters.org or call 212.228.0450 x12
Send mail to War Resisters League 339 Lafayette St. New York, NY 10012

Bored to Death in Afghanistan (and Washington): Stereotyping, Bigotry, Xenophobia

“Mating Déjà Vu with a Mobius Strip in the Graveyard of Empire”
By Tom Engelhardt

One day in October 2001, a pilot for Northwest Airlines refused to let Arshad Chowdhury, a 25-year-old American Muslim (“with a dark complexion”) who had once worked as an investment banker in the World Trade Center, board his plane at San Francisco National Airport. According to Northwest’s gate agents, Chowdhury writes in the Washington Post, “he thought my name sounded suspicious” even though “airport security and the FBI verified that I posed no threat.” He sued.

Now, skip nearly a decade. It’s May 6, 2011, and two New York-based African-American imams, a father and son, attempting to take an American Airlines flight from New York to Charlotte to attend a conference on “prejudice against Muslims,” were prevented from flying. The same thing happened to two imams in Memphis “dressed in traditional long shirts and [with] beard,” heading for the same conference, when a pilot for Atlantic Southeast refused to fly with them aboard, even though they had been screened three times.

So how is the war in Afghanistan going almost 10 years later? Or do you think that’s a non sequitur? I don’t, and let me suggest two reasons why: first, boredom; second, the missing learning curve. http://aep.typepad.com/american_empire_project/2011/05/bored-to-death-in-afghanistan-and-washington.html#more
THE “ENEMY” IS THE LOCAL AFGHAN WHO HATES OCCUPATION


The New York Times, in their typically understated way, manages to touch in this report all the key points to understanding the forces that took the lives of over 20 US Special Forces troops yesterday in Afghanistan’s Wardak Province. In this report the story is in the details and between the lines, so careful reading is required. The keys to understanding will look like this, "The fighters are entirely Afghans and almost all local residents ... forcing commanders to weigh the mission's value given the cost in soldiers’ lives and dollars spent in places where the vast majority of the insurgents are local residents ... They [the local residents] do not like having military in that area - no matter whether they are Taliban or foreigners ..." -- ma/RSN

In the deadliest day for American forces in the nearly decade-long war in Afghanistan, insurgents shot down a Chinook transport helicopter on Saturday, killing 30 Americans, including some Navy Seal commandos from the unit that killed Osama bin Laden, as well as 8 Afghans, American and Afghan officials said.

The helicopter, on a night-raid mission in the Tangi Valley of Wardak Province, to the west of Kabul, was most likely brought down by a rocket-propelled grenade, one coalition official said.

The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack, and they could hardly have found a more valuable target: American officials said that 22 of the dead were Navy Seal commandos, including members of Seal Team 6. Other commandos from that team conducted the raid in Abbottabad, Pakistan, that killed Bin Laden in May. The officials said that those who were killed Saturday were not involved in the Pakistan mission.

Saturday's attack came during a surge of violence that has accompanied the beginning of a drawdown of American and NATO troops, and it showed how deeply entrenched the insurgency remains even far from its main strongholds in southern Afghanistan and along the Afghan-Pakistani border in the east. American soldiers had recently turned over the sole combat outpost in the Tangi Valley to Afghans.

Gen. Abdul Qayum Baqizoy, the police chief of Wardak, said the attack occurred around 1 a.m. Saturday after an assault on a Taliban compound in the village of Jaw-e-Mekh Zareen in the Tangi Valley. The fighting lasted at least two hours, the general said.
A spokesman for the Taliban, Zabiullah Mujahid, confirmed that insurgents had been gathering at the compound, adding that eight of them had been killed in the fighting. President Obama offered his condolences to the families of the Americans and Afghans who died in the attack. "Their death is a reminder of the extraordinary sacrifice made by the men and women of our military and their families," Mr. Obama said. President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan also offered his sympathies.

Gen. John R. Allen, the commander of the international military mission in Afghanistan, said: "All of those killed in this operation were true heroes who had already given so much in the defense of freedom. Their sacrifice will not be forgotten."

The Tangi Valley traverses the border between Wardak and Logar Province, an area where security has worsened over the past two years, bringing the insurgency closer to the capital, Kabul. It is one of several inaccessible areas that have become havens for insurgents, according to operations and intelligence officers with the Fourth Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, which patrols the area. The mountainous region, with its steeply pitched hillsides and arid shale, laced by small footpaths and byways, has long been an area that the Taliban have used to move between Logar and Wardak, local officials said.

Officers at a forward operating base near the valley described Tangi as one of the most troubled areas in Logar and Wardak Provinces. "There's a lot happening in Tangi," said Capt. Kirstin Massey, 31, the assistant intelligence officer for Fourth Brigade Combat Team in an interview last week. "It's a stronghold for the Taliban."

The fighters are entirely Afghans and almost all local residents, Captain Massey said, noting that "We don't capture any fighters who are non-Afghans."

The redoubts in these areas pose the kind of problems the military faced last year in similarly remote areas of Kunar Province, forcing commanders to weigh the mission's value given the cost in soldiers' lives and dollars spent in places where the vast majority of the insurgents are local residents who resent both the NATO presence and the Afghan government.

The dilemma is that if NATO military forces do not stay, the areas often quickly slip back under Taliban influence, if not outright control, and the Afghan National Security Forces do not have the ability yet to rout them.

When the Fourth Brigade Combat Team handed over its only combat outpost in the Tangi Valley to Afghan security forces in April, the American commander for the area said that as troops began to withdraw, he wanted to focus his forces on troubled areas that had larger populations. But he pledged that coalition forces would continue to carry out raids there to stem insurgent activity.

"As we lose US personnel, we have to concentrate on the greater populations," said Lt. Col. Thomas S. Rickard, the commander of 10th Mountain Division's Task Force Warrior, which has responsibility for
the area that includes Tangi. "We are going to continue to hunt insurgents in Tangi and prevent them from having a safe haven." Within days of the transition, the Taliban raised their flag near the outpost, said a NATO official familiar with the situation. Afghan security forces remained in the area but were no match for the Taliban, the official said.

Local officials in Wardak said that residents of the Tangi Valley disliked the fighting in the area, and that though they had fallen under the Taliban's sway, the residents were not willing allies. "They do not like having military in that area - no matter whether they are Taliban or foreigners," said Hajji Mohammad Hazrat Janan, the chairman of the Wardak provincial council. "When an operation takes place in their village," he said, "their sleep gets disrupted by the noise of helicopters and by their military operation. And also they don't like the Taliban, because when they attack, then they go and seek cover in their village, and they are threatened by the Taliban."

However, when local residents are hurt by the NATO soldiers, then, he said, they are willing to help the insurgents.

This was the second helicopter to be shot down by insurgents in the past two weeks. On July 25, a Chinook was shot down in Kunar Province, injuring two people on board. Of 15 crashes or forced landings this year, those two were the only confirmed cases where hostile fire was involved.

Before Saturday, the biggest single-day loss of life for the American military in Afghanistan came on June 28, 2005, during an operation in Kunar Province when a Chinook helicopter carrying Special Operations troops was shot down as it tried to provide reinforcements to forces trapped in heavy fighting. Sixteen members of a Special Operations unit were killed in the crash, and three more were killed in fighting on the ground.

Although the number of civilian deaths in Afghanistan has steadily risen in the past year, with a 15 percent increase in the first half of 2011 over the same period last year, NATO deaths had been declining - decreasing nearly 20 percent in the first six months of 2011 compared with 2010.

Ray Rivera and Alissa J. Rubin reported from Kabul, and Thom Shanker from Washington. Jack Healy, Abdul Waheed Wafa and Sharifullah Sahak contributed reporting from Kabul.

Comments

+3 # Activista 2011-08-07 10:50
"the insurgents are local residents who resent both the NATO presence and the Afghan government"
i.e. Afghan people against Afghan government - aka Libyan people against Libyan government - by this logic why NATO is not bombing Kabul and Karzai government?
A New Way Forward: Rethinking U.S. Strategy in Afghanistan & Pakistan

Matthew Hoh, Director Afghanistan Study Group
I Submit My Resignation By Laura Flanders
www.afghanistanstudygroup.org

Matthew Hoh is the Director of Afghanistan Study Group, a network of foreign and public policy experts and professionals advocating for a change in U.S. strategy in Afghanistan.

Hoh's Dallas talk is titled "Rethinking U.S. Strategy in Afghanistan & Pakistan." He says that, to move forward, the U.S. must realize that the violence in Afghanistan is the result of local, long-held rivalries, not a comprehensive national policy; that the U.S. presence in Afghanistan heightens the violence; and local leaders and entities must be included in power distribution in order to bring about political and economic stability.

October 6, 2011: Stop the Machine! Create a New World! (July 14, 2011)
A coalition has been formed, groups and individuals are being added daily. If you haven’t pledged your support please go to the website and sign up now. We need all of you!

The VFP Action group has been involved with the planning from the inception. A large, talented and savvy coalition is being built, which must happen if we are to prevail. The focus has been broadened to draw in more people because we all know that just about everything that ails our country comes from the same (insert expletive here) source: corporatism.

This action will be different. No more sweeping us quickly off to jail. We are going to stay in Freedom Plaza as long as we possibly can. If we get arrested, we will return as soon as we are released. People understand that these illegal, immoral and unfunded wars, the high unemployment, the foreclosures, the sky rocketing, uncontrolled debt, the lack of the promised “green economy,” the scorched-earth policies, the wealth divide, the corporate bailouts, the lack of decent health care for all, the failing infrastructure and services, are ALL coming from the same (insert expletive again) place.

Watch this video! vfp@veteransforpeace.org

VFP is playing a important leadership role in all of this. Besides being well represented on the steering committee, we are responsible for logistics, which, among other things, includes communications and peace keepers. There is no better group for this task than veterans. Training for these crucial roles will take place at the Portland Convention. If we want this action to be successful, non-violence training is imperative. We have jobs for everyone. If you
plan on going, please look for us. Chapters are encouraged to sponsor at least one or more members to represent them at the convention and at the action.

The tipping point is getting closer. Peaceful Revolution is happening all over the world and the time has come for it to happen in the United States.

Please join us October 6 and hasten the change we all desire.

We have the power. History is Knocking. We can, and must, Stop the Machine!

For more info contact Mike Tork at im4peacenow@yahoo.com or info@october2011.org

Pew Poll: Pakistanis Don’t Like US, Pew Global Attitudes Project

69% - Pakistanis See U.S. as an Enemy

Pakistanis have a very negative view of the United States. By an overwhelming 69%-to-6% margin, Pakistanis see the U.S. as more of an enemy than as a partner, and 73% have an unfavorable opinion of the U.S. Most Pakistanis also consider the U.S. a potential military threat and oppose American-led anti-terrorism efforts. President Obama is just as unpopular as President Bush was. Just 12% say they have confidence in Obama to do the right thing in world affairs, little better than the 8% who had confidence in Bush in 2008. None of these views were much changed by the killing of Osama bin Laden in Pakistan, an operation that was disapproved of by 63% of Pakistanis. Read more http://pewresearch.org/databank/dailynumber/?NumberID=1276

View more Daily Numbers
Go to PewResearch.org homepage

Afghanistan

Reporting on the UN civilian casualty figures, Laura King of the Los Angeles Times notes that the figures "contrast with the relatively upbeat security assessments presented recently by senior U.S. military officials." Even in parts of the country where the U.S. military has cited significant progress, civilians feel trapped between the warring parties. Just Foreign Policy News July 15, 2011

“US Soldier Sentenced to Life in Prison for Afghan Civilian Murder”

Associated Press
Intro: "A US Army National Guardsman has been sentenced to life in prison with the chance of parole for the murder of an Afghan civilian."
naiman@justforeignpolicy.org [Dick: Murderers should be held accountable. The problem
raised here is that perhaps thousands of innocents have been murdered by our soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan who were never prosecuted. In the first place, both wars are illegal. Second, numerous reports, articles, books, and films have reported murders. For example, the book Blood on Our Hands gives case after case of killings in violation of Geneva conventions and protocols. And include the drone and special forces assassinations. And the prisoners tortured to death. But the main criminality in all this is that no high officers or civilian leaders, from whom the orders came, have been prosecuted.]

US WILL RETAIN CONTROL OF PARWAN PRISON
From Just Foreign Policy News, August 12, 2011

7) The US will remain in control of Afghanistan's highest-profile prison well beyond January 2012, missing a key milestone in the plan to transfer judicial and detention operations to Afghans, the Washington Post reports. The US will now not relinquish authority at Parwan until at least 2014, the Post says. The existence of the U.S. military prison near Bagram Airfield has long been seen by Afghans as a sign of imperial overreach. Parwan now holds 2,600 inmates. Most have been held without trial.

Among the "reforms" the Afghans are proposing to meet U.S. standards for a handover is the establishment of a national security court that could detain suspected insurgents indefinitely without trial, just like the U.S., the Post says. Human Rights First says Parwan's U.S.-military-run detainee review board "fails to provide detainees with an adequate opportunity to defend themselves against charges that they are collaborating with insurgents and present a threat to U.S. forces."

END OF NEWSLETTER #12 on Afghanistan and Pakistan Sept. 5, 2011