

AFGHANISTAN: GRAVEYARD OF EMPIRES

Peace Action 

**IN IRAQ & IN AFGHANISTAN:
THERE IS NO MILITARY SOLUTION**

LOSS OF LIFE

INNOCENT AFGHANS

At least **18,000** Afghans have been killed since the U.S. invasion and **TENS OF THOUSANDS** of innocent people have been injured. (United for Peace and Justice)

MILITARY CASUALTIES

Nearly **1,100** U.S. and coalition troops have been killed in Afghanistan since the 2001 invasion. (United for Peace and Justice)

VETERANS SUICIDE

In 2008 a record number of service members – **128** – committed suicide. This number is strongly correlated with multiple combat tours.

30% of suicides occurred during deployment

35% occurred after deployment

(Friends Committee on National Legislation)

PROMOTING TORTURE

The torture of detainees by the U.S. did not originate at Abu Ghraib or Guantanamo. These practices were exported from Bagram Air Base and other military prisons in Afghanistan. More military activity will mean more detentions, even while there is no policy to process the 600 currently held without charges at Bagram.

(United for Peace and Justice)

DESTABILIZING THE REGION

Bombing of targets in the mountains of Pakistan and the deployment of additional troops to Afghanistan have happened with little or no discussion in Congress. (United for Peace and Justice)

Paying off tribal chiefs in Afghanistan, as the U.S. did with the Sunni Awakening Councils in Iraq, for their cooperation will force US and allied troops to remain in the country paying off their clients, while destroying any chance of building a strong national authority or rooting out the endemic corruption that plagues the country. (1)

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A CHANGED U.S. POLICY

Set a swift timetable for the withdrawal of US and NATO military forces, to be substituted by UN forces for short-term security.

Immediately cease air strikes on targets in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Support negotiations between all parties involved in the conflict, including Afghan women leaders.

Reform humanitarian aid and reconstruction funding efforts to prioritize Afghan organizations over foreign contractors. Invest in long-term aid that increases self-reliance such as sustainable agriculture efforts.

Immediately discontinue the use of Provincial Reconstruction Teams, which are costly, inefficient, and have militarized the aid process.

Standardize, increase, and publicly document compensation to Afghan families and communities.

Sign the treaty to ban cluster bombs, pay for cluster bomb and landmine clean up in Afghanistan, and pledge never to use these weapons again.

AFGHANISTAN: GRAVEYARD OF EMPIRES

Peace Action 

NO SUPPORT FOR THE OCCUPATION

1995: Then, **70%** of Afghans believed their country was headed in the right direction. (4)

2009: Under U.S. and NATO control only **40%** believe their country is headed in the right direction. (4)

The number of Afghans who favor the U.S. occupation has dropped **18%** this year (4)

2/3 of Americans oppose increasing troops in Afghanistan

NO EXIT STRATEGY

"Before I support any more troops to Afghanistan, I want to see a strategy that includes an exit plan,"
Rep. Jim McGovern (2)

No member of the Obama Administration has suggested a political or diplomatic outcome that would allow troops to come home. (1)

According to counter-insurgency strategists, success requires some **20** counter-insurgents for every **1,000** people, which would be **600,000** troops. (1)

Many Democrats acknowledge that they are skittish about sending more troops, even in small numbers. The concern, they say, is that the military could become further entrenched in an unwinnable war on their watch. (2)

"If you think about what we did in Vietnam, we escalated, we overthrew that leader, we took control of the problem, we tried to fix it and we couldn't fix it, couldn't afford it"

David Kilcullen, a counterinsurgency adviser to Condoleezza Rice advising the Senate on Afghanistan.

TOUGHER THAN IRAQ

"Afghanistan has been known over the years as the graveyard of empires. We cannot take that history lightly." General David Patreaus (3)

AFGHAN SECURITY SHOULD BE LEAD BY AFGHANS

Defense Secretary Robert Gates worries that the "Afghans [will] come to see us as the problem, not the solution, and then we are lost." We would, he said, "go the way of every other foreign army that's ever been in Afghanistan." (1)

U.S. & INTERNATIONAL MILITARY FORCES COMPLICATE PEACE TALKS

"The British think Afghanistan is Helmand, the Canadians think it's Kandahar, the Dutch think it's Uruzgan, the Germans think it's the Panjshir valley and the U.S. thinks it's chasing Osama bin Laden." Paddy Ashdown, a British Diplomat (3)

"U.S. President Barack Obama should learn from the Soviet defeat in Afghanistan and pull his troops out of the country to allow Afghans to decide their own fate. We have no problem with Obama...He must learn lessons from [former US president George W. Bush] and before that the Soviets." Yousuf Ahmadi, a spokesman for the Taliban

1. "Afghanistan: Losing a No-Win War," by: Steve Weissman, [truthout](#) | Perspective February 5, 2009.
2. "Anti-war lawmakers worry over plan for Afghanistan," by ANNE FLAHERTY, AP February 9, 2009.
3. "Afghanistan Appeal May Temper European Allies' Ardor for Obama," Craig Whitlock Washington Post Foreign Service February 9, 2009; A13.
4. Poll commissioned by ABC News, the BBC and ARD German TV February, 2009