



Bring the Troops Home Now

Why a military mission will not bring peace to Afghanistan

By Sid Lacombe

For the Canadian Peace Alliance

February 16, 2007

Table of Contents

1- Introduction.....	3
2- A Brief History.....	4
3- The New Government of Afghanistan	8
4- The Conduct of the Occupation Forces.....	10
5- Reconstruction is Failing the People of Afghanistan.....	11
6- Women’s Rights.....	14
7- Opium.....	15
8- Energy Resources.....	15
9- The Rise of the Resistance.....	16
10- Grassroots Democracy in Afghanistan.....	17
11- Debates – “A Better war is Possible?”	18
12- Notes.....	21

“These are detestable murderers and scumbags, I’ll tell you that right up front. They detest our freedoms, they detest our society, they detest our liberties.”

General Rick Hillier, July 11, 2005

“When the Taliban or al-Qaeda came out of Afghanistan, they attacked the Twin Towers and in those twin towers, 25 Canadians were killed. The previous government and this government will not allow Canadians to be killed without retribution,”

Defence Minister Gordon O’Connor, January 20, 2007

Canada is in Afghanistan at the request of the democratically elected government, along with 36 other nations, and as part of a UN-sanctioned mission to help build a stable, democratic, and self-sufficient society.

Department of National Defence

Looking for clarity about Canada’s war in Afghanistan can be confusing. The justifications run the gamut from ousting the Taliban and Al-Qaeda in retribution for 9/11, to outright racist attacks against an entire people (“they” according to General Rick Hillier), to providing reconstruction, security and women’s rights.

The Government of Canada has developed new phrases designed to engender support for the mission. We hear of “failed and failing states” that need our support and of the “responsibility to protect” those less fortunate and, it is assumed, less capable of providing for themselves.¹ The phrases are no more than a rewording of Kipling’s “White Man’s Burden;” but the implications are broad. What is not discussed by government officials are the historical realities that have caused the failure of these states now requiring our “help”.

Various described as colonialism, imperialism, neo-colonialism or globalization, the processes that have resulted in weak or failed states have their roots the political and economic needs of the great powers, not in the traits of the countries they exploit. In Afghanistan the warring factions of the Taliban and the warlords that run the current government are the product of foreign interventions.² Indeed it is a country that has, because of its strategic location at the crossroads of Asia, been subject to more unwanted foreign influence than most. The processes that resulted in the collapse of the state of Afghanistan are instructive for the larger discussion of these new justifications for our foreign policy interventions.

General Hillier’s comments have inflamed anti-Arab and anti-Muslim sentiment in Canada. New figures published by the Canadian Labour Congress have shown that Arab and West Asian minorities have the highest unemployment rate in the country,³ and a recent Sun media poll has found that Canadians have a very low opinion of Arab and Muslim minorities.⁴ Hillier was simply following an age old pattern of demonization used by nations throughout history to characterize their enemies as less than human, thus providing an excuse for slavery and murder.

With US-led wars raging in Iraq and Afghanistan and new threats aimed at Iran, the government of Canada is furthering racist assumptions about Arabs and Muslims to win public support for more wars in the Middle East and Central Asia. It is therefore vital that we increase our understanding of the situation in Afghanistan and dispel the myths surrounding Canada's intervention, so we can dispense with this negative stereotyping, and see the people of the countries being destroyed as human beings rather than statistics.

For each stated goal for the war in Afghanistan, we have moved backward and not forward. The Taliban is stronger than ever. Freedom and security are more elusive than before the October 2001 invasion. There has been more destruction than reconstruction, and women's rights are being eroded. The prospects for the future are grim. A Canadian Senate committee released a report on February 12, 2007, that states "Anyone expecting to see the emergence in Afghanistan within the next several decades of a recognizable modern democracy capable of delivering justice and amenities to its people is dreaming in Technicolor."⁵

Canada is propping up a corrupt warlord-led government in Kabul that is every bit as violent as the Taliban. We are using counter-insurgency operations that have created more resentment and hatred towards NATO forces. This, coupled with a failure to provide any real improvement in the lives of the people of Afghanistan, is fuelling a renewed resistance to foreign occupation. This is a pattern we have seen before and one that the people of Afghanistan have seen for the last 30 years of war. The foreign occupiers are not interested in providing freedom and prosperity for the people. Their interests rest with their own geo-political needs.

The only solution to the crisis affecting the people of Afghanistan is to strengthen the grassroots initiatives that are working to provide a democratic base for the future of the country. Given that we are currently supporting a government inimical to those grassroots movements, the only moral choice is to bring our troops home now.

A Brief History – 1979-2001

In 1978 a movement of communist forces under the banner of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) had overthrown the government of General Mohammed Daud. The first edicts coming from the communist government were equality for women and redistribution of the land from the landlords, but unfortunately these new laws were largely symbolic. The main problem with these edicts is that they challenged powerful landowners in rural areas where the communists had very little control. The PDPA was largely centered on the urban areas. While there was considerable support for land redistribution from farmers, the communists barely had time to sell or implement their plans before infighting between the Khalq and Parcham factions of the PDPA bogged down the process.

At the same time resistance movements supported by the US, Pakistan, Iran, China and Saudi Arabia began fighting against the communist government.⁶ The official history is that the US began supporting the “mujahadeen” in 1980. In reality the US saw an opportunity to drag the USSR into a guerrilla war, and began supporting groups hostile to the communist government before the invasion. In an interview with *Le Nouvel Observateur* in 1998 Zbigniew Brzezinski, former National Security Advisor for Jimmy Carter described the success of this operation:

That secret operation was an excellent idea. It had the effect of drawing the Russians into the Afghan trap... The day that the Soviets officially crossed the border, I wrote to President Carter, in substance: We now have the opportunity of giving to the USSR its Vietnam War. Indeed, for almost 10 years, Moscow had to carry on a war unsupportable by the government, a conflict that brought about the demoralization and finally the breakup of the Soviet Empire.⁷

The USSR began sending troops into Afghanistan because they were worried about the possibility of an erosion of their power, and therefore access to energy resources, on their southern border. The Islamic revolution in Iran, coupled with the growing revolt in the Afghan countryside, brought about a fear of expansion of forces hostile to the USSR. The USSR relied heavily on the oil and gas from the Central Asian territories, now Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan. In public, however, the stated aims of the Russian invasion were the same as the NATO occupation today. Soldiers were told that their job was to bring democracy and women’s rights to the Afghan people.⁸

With the Afghan army on the verge of collapse, the first Russian soldiers moved in to install Babrak Karmal, leader of the PDPA’s Parcham faction as the new ruler. Karmal began a futile campaign against the resistance movements. It took less than a year for the Afghan army, made up primarily of impoverished conscripts from the country, to revolt and abandon the new government. The soldiers couldn’t bring themselves to fight their brothers and sisters for a power that had grown hostile and violent. The Russians, hoping to have a proxy army on the ground to do most of the fighting, found themselves bearing the brunt of the work.⁹

It is estimated that more than 5 million Afghans or 1/5 of the population were made refugees by the Russian invasion.¹⁰

In 1986 the US upped the ante and started supplying specific mujahideen groups with Stinger anti-aircraft missiles. This changed the tide of the war by neutralizing the strong air power that the Russians had used to inflict massive damage on the country. The USSR lost hundreds of planes and helicopters, and it is estimated they also lost billions of dollars. Within two and half years the last troops were withdrawn, perhaps because of the change in the tide, or because the new Russian leader Mikhail Gorbachev was facing more problems at home. In any event the USSR and the US agreed to end support for both sides in the conflict and to withdraw forces.¹¹

It was expected that the government of Muhammad Najibullah, who replaced Kamal in 1986, would fall as soon as Russian soldiers were withdrawn. He was, however, able to hold on to power until 1992, partly because regional warlords

continued to fight among themselves, and partly because he was able to make deals with individual warlords. It was also because most mujahideen fighters went home. Their conflict was with the Russians, and after 15 years of war they wanted to live in peace. It was not to be. Some of the mujahideen commanders stepped into the vacuum created by the Russian withdrawal and began a war to take control of the national government in Kabul. Local fighters who had risked their lives to repel the Russians were unwilling to get involved in what looked increasingly like a civil war between factions dominated by drug gangsters. During the infighting between 1992-1996 more than 65,000 people were killed in the fight to control Kabul. Many of the faction leaders involved in the fighting are the parliamentarians of Afghanistan today.¹²

It is important to note that during the fight for Kabul, some of the country lived under local commanders, and areas that they controlled experienced very different living conditions. In some cases, peace and stability reigned and the local leadership treated people with respect.¹³ Far from being a nation made up exclusively of ruthless fighters, the people of Afghanistan showed that given certain conditions, they were more than capable of creating a stable life.

There were many exceptions, such as Kandahar, where virtual anarchy plagued the population. The area was divided among several “petty ex-mujahideen warlords and bandits who plundered the population at will.”¹⁴

The Taliban came on to the scene relatively late in the period of civil war. It began in 1994, as a movement based around Kandahar but quickly became a major force. Initially the main cadre of the Taliban were students, angry at the corrupt and violent warlords vying for power in the country.¹⁵ Their stated aims were to “restore peace, disarm the population, enforce Sharia law and defend the integrity and Islamic character of Afghanistan.”¹⁶ The leader of the Taliban, Mullah Mohammed Omar was seen as a Robin Hood figure for his work helping the poor and powerless against the warlords.¹⁷

There is a knee-jerk tendency by those in the west to see Islamic movements as fanatical and primitive. The phrase "Islamic Fundamentalism" is used as a catch-all to describe these movements. Movements grow because of a desire to see the end of the status quo. In the case of religious movements, there is a tendency for "revivalist" currents to develop in response to the decadence or violence of the traditional leadership. The brutality of life under the warlords made the Taliban look like such an alternative. The fact that they disarmed people in areas that they captured, acted in a disciplined manner, and were not as likely to rape and attack civilians after their military victories made them initially popular.¹⁸

It is important to understand where the Taliban gained its support in the first instance because the conditions that led to their rise are strikingly similar to the conditions that exist in Afghanistan today

The Taliban was fierce in its fight to gain control of the country but ill-prepared to rule it. They had no experience with administration, which resulted in factionalism and a lack of central control for much of the period of their rule. Also, the frequent fights with members of the Northern Alliance (NA), for control of the north of the country, and the successes of

some NA armies, made them fearful and paranoid. At this point we began to hear stories of roundups of opposition forces, in Kabul, Mazar, and other areas to the north and west of the country. The Taliban attacked and murdered thousands, and this civil war effectively entrenched sectarian and ultra conservative policies. Much has been written on the human rights record of the Taliban, and every detail of their abuses has been amplified to justify the current invasion. Suffice it to say, their particular distortion of Islam is sectarian and violent. They murdered thousands of civilians and imposed brutal conditions on women.

With the overt help of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia and the covert help of the US the Taliban began to take control of large parts of the country, and by 1996 had taken Kabul. The international community was lukewarm to the Taliban, primarily because of their attacks on women's rights, but certain groups seemed eager to welcome them into power. In particular, the US was pleased by the Taliban's willingness to support a US sponsored pipeline deal.¹⁹ The US oil giant UNOCAL released a statement on October 2, 1996 describing the Taliban takeover as a positive development.²⁰

Meanwhile, the fall of the USSR had resulted in independence for countries in central Asia. These nations, such as Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, had also recently discovered new reserves of oil and gas and were eager to get these commodities to market. As landlocked countries, they required pipelines to move the oil and gas to seaports and to market. The Russians were still buying Caspian resources, but at about half the market rate for the products. The leadership in these newly independent countries needed to find other markets.

Attempts were made between 1997 and 1998 to develop the Trans Afghan Pipeline through the Central Asia Gas Pipeline Consortium (Centgas), of which US corporation UNOCAL was the major stakeholder. The hope was that the Taliban had finally provided adequate stability to allow the pipeline to be built from the Caspian sea through Afghanistan to Pakistan.²¹ A key player in this plan was the Taliban's new deputy foreign minister and paid UNOCAL consultant, Hamid Karzai.²² US envoy to Afghanistan from 2002 to 2005, Zalmay Khalilzad, was also paid by UNOCAL and was responsible for lobbying Bill Clinton to reengage with the Taliban.²³ As late as 1999 the US government was paying the salaries of the Taliban in the hope of achieving the stability required to construct the trans-Afghan pipeline.²⁴

The Taliban, fearful of US dominance and influence, had decided not to allow UNOCAL to have the pipeline route, but to give the contract to the Argentinian gas company, Bidas. UNOCAL and the US government then changed their tune. The population of the US began to hear about the violence and repression of the Taliban. UNOCAL said that they would no longer support their pipeline plan until an internationally recognized government (which the Taliban was not) was sitting in Kabul.²⁵

The proposed pipelines through Afghanistan have dominated US foreign policy toward the region. Afghanistan is important because it is the only route that would provide total control for US oil companies. The other possible routes for the pipeline run through Iran, China or Russia, states which will not allow for US control.

According to Zbigniew Brzezinski, the states of Central Asia including Afghanistan are key to maintaining US domination of the “Grand Chessboard” of Eurasia: “For America, the chief geopolitical prize is Eurasia... Now a non-Eurasian power is preeminent in Eurasia - and America's global primacy is directly dependent on how long and how effectively its preponderance on the Eurasian continent is sustained.”²⁶ The fear is that Brzezinski was expressing was that if any other nation such as China or Russia, were to gain influence in the area, they could directly challenge US dominance of oil resources in the Persian Gulf.²⁷

The Energy Information Administration estimates there are proven reserves of between 17 and 44 billion barrels of oil and 232 trillion cubic feet of gas in the Caspian region. Production of these reserves is very limited. As of 2004 only about 11% of the regions gas reserves, which equal those of Saudi Arabia, were under production.²⁸

Although the initial pipeline deal was eventually scrapped a new pipeline deal was struck as one of the first acts of the newly installed President Karzai. On December 27, 2002, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Turkmenistan signed an agreement to build a 1,500 kilometre long Trans-Afghanistan Pipeline – a \$3.2 billion project expected to deliver 30 Billion cubic meters of natural gas a year.

The new government of Afghanistan

When the invasion began in 2001 the US was faced with a conundrum. The hope was for a speedy and decisive victory in Afghanistan that could show the world the dominance of the US military. There was, however, a problem with that plan. History had taught that a smooth takeover of Afghanistan would be immensely difficult. The British fought and lost 3 wars in Afghanistan between 1838 and 1919, and the USSR, with a massive and technically advanced army of 140,000 troops, was unable to take the country. The US therefore, needed a slightly different plan. They began to arm members of the Northern Alliance (NA), a loose grouping of warlords, to act as a proxy army on the ground so that they may have some control of the countryside. The NA groups are now the source of much of the violence in the country.²⁹

In December 2001 US and UN officials and hand-picked NA warlords met in Bonn, Germany to develop a new constitution and a process for elections in Afghanistan.

In the Presidential Election in 2004, there was direct interference by US envoy Zalmay Khalilzad, who made deals with candidates to win support for Karzai. Presidential candidate, Mohammed Mohaqiq, said “We all know the Americans are

not interested in a real election, they just want Karzai to win."³⁰ Another candidate, Abdul Latif Pedram who was running on a campaign to improve women's rights was initially disqualified by Karzai's appointed chief justice. Pedram complained that, while most candidates were not able to travel around the country Karzai was transported in US military helicopters to ten provinces a day.³¹

That Bonn process ended with the parliamentary elections in Afghanistan on October 18, 2005. These elections were heralded as the birth of a new democracy, yet below the surface the same old problems emerged. More than 60% of those elected to the Afghan Parliament were from known warlord groups³² or former Taliban officials.³³ Voter turnout was low, even in Kabul (36%), amid voter intimidation and fears of retribution from warlords.³⁴ In most cases the warlords who held secure control over their respective regions were virtually acclaimed, and have since used the legitimacy bestowed by a parliamentary seat to further entrench their power. Some candidates not within the inner circle of the warlords were threatened, arrested and even killed.³⁵ Although there were rules disqualifying candidates who held private armies, these were largely ignored or selectively enforced.³⁶

Hamid Karzai has not distanced himself from these warlords but has frequently appointed them to positions of power in his cabinet and in leadership positions of local police forces.³⁷ For example, Abdul Rabb al Rasul Sayyaf, a warlord responsible for killing, torturing and mutilating hundreds of people during the Afshar Massacre in February 1993, acts as a special advisor to Hamid Karzai.³⁸ General Rashid Dostum was appointed minister of Defence by Karzai, but public outcry about his links to former human rights abuses had him sacked from that position. He was subsequently moved to the position of Afghanistan's Army Chief of Staff.³⁹ Rather than challenge the past abuses of the warlords, the parliament recently passed a bill granting amnesty for past war crimes.⁴⁰ Police commanders are frequently associated with warlord groups and are notoriously corrupt.⁴¹

The annual reports about Afghanistan from Human Rights Watch might give readers the impression they are stuck in a time warp. Each and every year the point is the same:

2005: "Despite the (Taliban) insurgency's growing strength, the majority of Afghans cited the numerous regional warlords as the greatest source of insecurity".⁴²

2004: "Political repression, human rights abuses, and criminal activity by warlords—the leaders of militias and remnants of past Afghan military forces, who were brought to power with the assistance of the United States after the Taliban's defeat—are consistently listed as the chief concerns of most Afghans."⁴³

2003: "Life outside of Kabul is dominated by military faction leaders—Afghanistan's warlords. In most areas outside the capital, independent political movements and media have been stifled: in many areas it is impossible to form political groups or freely publish newspapers or broadcast radio without incurring the wrath of local warlord leaders. Women and girls especially are suffering from insecurity and lack of protection. In some areas, security and human rights conditions have actually gotten worse, and most warlords have become more entrenched."⁴⁴

Cathy Gannon, an associated press reporter who worked in Afghanistan for more than 15 years has described the current government as "the biggest collection of mass murderers you'll ever get in one place."⁴⁵ The Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA) paint a similar picture of the state of the government: "The Northern Alliance criminals are now ruling the country. The NA comprises these millionaire rapists busy in the heroin trade under the very nose of the US troops. They are the people behind the insecurity, kidnappings, embezzlement of billions of dollars of foreign aid, injustices, anti-women constraints, covering up of the day light murders, and so on and so forth."⁴⁶

The Conduct of the Occupation Forces

Occupation forces have been implicated in widespread abuses of the civilian population in Afghanistan, and have been operating outside the framework of international law, despite UN sanction for the invasion and occupation.⁴⁷ Their tactics have resulted in tens of thousands of civilian deaths.

The United States has operated secret prisons in Afghanistan, and has been involved in arbitrary arrest, detention, torture and extra-judicial killing of Afghan civilians. Canadian soldiers have also been implicated in abuse of prisoners⁴⁸ and have been told that Geneva Convention regulations do not apply to people they capture in Afghanistan.⁴⁹ The practise of handing prisoners over to the US certainly implicates Canada in the ongoing torture of detainees. Reports have detailed the extent of the abuses, showing that, far from being isolated incidents, these are the order of the day for NATO forces.⁵⁰ According to Amnesty International:

Since 2001, thousands of Afghans and some non-Afghans have been arbitrarily detained, held incommunicado (without access to the outside world) and subjected to torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment by US forces and by armed groups acting under US control. Former detainees from Bagram say that they were stripped naked, hooded, humiliated, handcuffed and shackled for days, forced to maintain painful postures for hours at a time, and subjected to sleep deprivation.⁵¹

There have also been frequent cases of death at the hands of US interrogators. Dilawar and Mullah Habibullah were killed in US custody at Bagram base after being "chained to a ceiling and kicked and beaten during sustained assaults by numerous military personnel. According to one medical examiner, Dilawar's legs were so badly damaged that they would have had to be amputated had he survived. He was also forced into painful positions with water poured into his mouth so he could not breathe."⁵²

Military operations have resulted in widespread civilian casualties. To make up for troop shortages, airpower has been stepped up. Air strikes are notoriously inaccurate and tend to kill large numbers of civilians. Abdul Ghafar buried twenty members of his family, killed in a NATO air strike in October 2006.⁵³ Ghulab Shah, a man from southern Kandahar, saw nine of his neighbours killed while they slept.⁵⁴ This list goes on. In their world report for 2007, Human Rights Watch

expressed “serious concerns about NATO’s ability to distinguish between combatants and civilians due to extensive reliance on aerial bombardment.”⁵⁵ According to the Campaign for Innocent Victims of conflict, “There have been more bombs dropped on Afghanistan in the last 6 months of 2006 than in the 4 years since the invasion.”⁵⁶

The use of cluster bombs has also been widespread. By January 2002, the UN estimated that there were 25,000 unexploded bomblets littering the countryside.⁵⁷ This is a conservative number. According to US forces themselves, 244,420 sub-munitions (bomblets) were dropped in the first three months of the air campaign. “Precision strikes” are impossible when using these banned weapons and their use on civilian neighbourhoods has been well documented.⁵⁸

Afghanistan now contains millions of displaced people. While many of them were displaced before the invasion of 2001, many more have been forced from their homes or have been unable to return because of ongoing insecurity and violence. According to the UNHCR, 1.3 million people have been displaced since 2001, to a total of 3.5 million Afghans still displaced.⁵⁹ This trend has continued, with more than 20,000 being displaced in the final few months of 2006 in the south of the country.⁶⁰

Reconstruction is failing the people of Afghanistan

While we cannot expect Afghanistan to be developed overnight, there are disturbing signs that the current processes of reconstruction are not only inefficient, but are likely to move in the opposite direction. The fact that NATO bombs continue to fall and destroy homes and infrastructure means that this is an uphill battle at best.

The majority of the money being used for reconstruction goes to US and allied corporations. Most of it is tied aid, in which the recipient country is required to spend the aid in the donor country. This process results in huge profits for multinational corporations but little real development. The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank have been using these tied aid structures for decades, resulting in massive debt for recipient countries. At present, the developing world now spends \$13 on debt repayment for every \$1 it receives in aid.⁶¹ The elite of the countries being given the aid are made quite wealthy but the majority of the population suffers for lack of services such as education and health care, which are slashed as demanded by IMF structural adjustment programs (SAP’s). These SAP’s, sometimes called austerity programs, force countries who default on their loans to privatize essential services and resources in return for “bridge loans” which keep the government afloat.

The result of this process is that governments are required to become more repressive as populations become more impoverished and begin to demand justice. The west generally turns a blind eye to this repression, so long as debt payments are made on time. It is only when the local rulers are overthrown, or they decide that they won’t play the game of debt slavery, that we are told that we have a responsibility to protect the people of these failed states.⁶² That is when the

military moves in. Perhaps the most blunt assertion of this position came from Admiral Arthur Cebrowski, former Director of the US Department of Defense's Office of Defense Transformation, when he said "If you are fighting against or losing to globalization, you are likely a problem for the U.S."⁶³

In the comprehensive report, "Afghanistan Inc.," the group Corpwatch summarizes this process:

Many development experts find the process by which aid contracts and loans are awarded to be counterproductive. International and national aid agencies—including the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and USAID—that distribute aid money to developing countries have, in effect, designed a system that is efficient in funnelling money back to the wealthy donor countries, without providing sustainable development in poor states.⁶⁴

The ultimate goal of these debt policies is to create subservient states that can be used for the political purposes of the US. In his book *Confessions of an Economic Hitman*, John Perkins outlines how he was responsible for pulling countries into the US sphere of influence by using the structures of the IMF, WB, WTO and USAID. The goal is not development but control:

If an EHM (Economic Hitman) is completely successful, the loans are so large that the debtor is forced to default on its payments after a few years. When this happens, then like the Mafia we demand our pound of flesh. This often includes one or more of the following: control over United Nations votes, the installation of military bases, or access to precious resources such as oil or the Panama Canal. Of course, the debtor still owes us the money—and another country is added to our global empire.⁶⁵

In Afghanistan this process is continuing. While there is a mix of loans and grants (which don't need to be paid back) being used for reconstruction, the debt burden on the people will still increase through these policies. For example, The Louis Berger Group (LBG) was given contracts totaling \$655 million for schools, clinics and road construction, yet their record on delivering these essential projects is dismal. The Kabul to Kandahar highway is a good case study. Turkish and Indian firms had offered to build the highway at \$250,000 USD per kilometre. The LBG offered to build the highway for \$700,000 per kilometre. The US gave the contract to LBG (which has strong ties to the White House). They agreed to subcontract the highway construction to the same Indian firm and pocketed the rest of the money.⁶⁶ Using substandard materials, 3,000 Afghan labourers worked 12 hour shifts, 7 days a week at \$5 a day to complete the work.

This highway was held up as a beacon for the future development of Afghanistan. Both George Bush and Hamid Karzai referred to it at length in speeches before the 2004 elections.⁶⁷ However, three years after its construction the highway is crumbling and there is no money for repairs. The Karzai government has decided to charge tolls for the repairs placing a larger burden on the people of Afghanistan to pay for this mismanagement. Not surprisingly, the Louis Berger Group was awarded contracts to make repairs. The result is that, the construction of the Kabul Kandahar highway, which is on the books as \$360,000,000 in delivered reconstruction, will likely result in a net outflow of money from Afghanistan.

What little money does get through is frequently stolen and pocketed by the parliamentary warlord groups⁶⁸ or by private contractors. More than 75% of the money coming from donor countries is funneled through these groups. Jean Mazurelle, the World Bank director in Kabul says, "In Afghanistan, the wastage of aid is sky-high. There is real looting going on, mainly by private enterprises. It is a scandal. In 30 years of my career, I have never seen anything like it."⁶⁹

The result of this corruption is that Afghanistan is number 175 on the UN development index out of 177 countries.⁷⁰

Famine has also become a serious issue with 7.5 million people on the verge of starvation.⁷¹ Rather than prioritize aid to the hungry, the US has "demanded...the elimination of truck convoys that provide much of the food and other supplies to Afghanistan's civilian population."⁷²

The reconstruction funds being given to the Karzai government go to inappropriate projects such as the new Kabul shopping mall, which have little value to a country where millions are on the verge of starvation. Poverty is increasing, while a select few are growing rich off the spoils of heroin, aid, and reconstruction money. In a country with millions of homeless and displaced people, there is a new five-star luxury hotel, put forward as a sign of progress.⁷³

According to the United Nations, Afghanistan is a land that is facing health disasters even worse than the lands struck by the 2004 Tsunami. 700 children and 50-70 women die each day due to the lack of health services.⁷⁴

After the invasion, there were numerous reports from aid workers saying that the US military was offering reconstruction money to local groups if they would hand over information that lead to the capture of Taliban and Al-Qaeda suspects. This is one reason why the aid agencies are leaving. They were made pawns in a very dangerous game, and more than 150 of their personnel have paid with their lives since the invasion. Aid must be impartial, or the reconstruction money will be nothing more than another way to buy political favours. In the case of Canada the reconstruction projects are even more closely tied to the conflict, as they are being implemented by the soldiers themselves. This ensures that the only way you will receive a new hospital or school is if you support the government and the foreign occupiers.

According to a report in the Guardian, Vickie Hawkins, acting head of the Médecin Sans Frontières mission in Afghanistan, said the international humanitarian group left Afghanistan for these very reasons:

The US-led coalition has made the situation worse by blurring the line between humanitarian work and military operations. During the war in 2001, Hawkins said, US soldiers were driving around in civilian clothes in white cars, taking on the appearance of humanitarian aid workers. In May, the Pentagon was forced to apologize for dropping leaflets in southern Afghanistan which promised humanitarian assistance if local people gave the coalition information about the Taliban and al-Qaida [sic].

She despaired that military campaigns were employing “hearts and minds” strategies more and more often, making it difficult for aid workers to maintain their aura of all-important impartiality. If armies are handing out food assistance and medical equipment, it becomes harder for locals to tell the aid workers from the occupiers.⁷⁵

Women’s Rights

While there have been some highly publicized examples of improvement in the lives of women and girls, these are isolated and are quickly being eroded by the government. Women’s rights have actually deteriorated since the invasion of 2001, and the NA warlords have shown themselves to be equally as brutal as the Taliban, as the continued stoning of women, endorsed by the Afghan Chief Justice, Fazal Hadi Shinwari,⁷⁶ suggests.⁷⁷ According to Womankind Worldwide “Some forms of violence against women, such as honour killings, have been on the rise; while security for women living in many provinces is worse now than it was in 2001.”⁷⁸ There are many reports of women being raped and abused by the police and militias loyal to warlord groups, many of which hold parliamentary seats and are therefore above the law.⁷⁹

The United Nations Development fund for women summarized the lack of progress on women’s rights.⁸⁰ Women in Afghanistan suffer from numerous hardships, and “rank among the world’s worst off by most indicators, such as life expectancy, maternal mortality and literacy. Afghan women and girls continue to suffer extremely low social, economic, and political status.”⁸¹

The Karzai government has done little to change this trend. In 2005 his appointed cabinet approved a proposal to re-establish the Department for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice, which was a notorious symbol of abuses, particularly against Afghan women and girls under the Taliban.⁸² Simultaneously Karzai and the warlord parliament have begun a debate to close the largely ineffective but symbolically important Ministry of Women’s Affairs.⁸³

Malalai Joya, an MP from Farah Province and a strong advocate for women’s rights, has been attacked and threatened for speaking up in the Afghan parliament. In response to this Karzai pulled her security funding in 2006, indicating that women’s rights are not on the agenda of any government he leads.⁸⁴

While there have been symbolic improvements in the lives of women, particularly the 68 women elected to parliament, many of the women MPs are also associated with warlord groups. According to RAWA, “In Afghanistan unfortunately we have woman warlords too and some of them are now in the parliament.”⁸⁵

Opium

The opium eradication programs have resulted in hardship for farmers and are creating more hatred of the occupation forces and more recruits for the resistance.⁸⁶

Revenue from poppy cultivation – between \$2-3 billion annually - is now double the amount of international aid and is the chief source of “reconstruction funds” in the country. Afghan farmers have little option but to produce poppies and will continue to do so. It is the only crop that will generate enough money to survive, and they are being offered no alternatives. The British Government, began an eradication program for poppy cultivation. Afghan farmers were promised aid and new seeds in return for ending their production, but the aid never arrived, and many have returned to poppy cultivation.⁸⁷

British Prime Minister Tony Blair stated that “The Taliban regime is funded in large part on the drug trade - 90% of all heroin sold in Britain originates from Afghanistan. Stopping that trade is directly in our interests.” This is a distortion. The Taliban virtually eliminated heroin production as of 1999. In fact, Colin Powell gave the Taliban a gift of \$43 million in early 2001 as a reward for ending the drug trade.⁸⁸ The resurgence in poppy production has come because of the invasion and occupation.⁸⁹

The Karzai government is filled with corrupt officials who support the opium trade. Mohammed Daoud is a former warlord and is now in charge of the war on drugs in Afghanistan. Yet he is involved in the trade himself. One trafficker told the Los Angeles Times that Daoud personally “helped him retrieve heroin worth \$200,000 that had been seized at the Salang Tunnel.”⁹⁰

Energy Resources

The stated motivations for the invasion of Afghanistan are a smokescreen. US policy towards Afghanistan is about control of strategic areas of central Asia and securing transit routes for energy resources. However, the new trans-Afghan Pipeline is not only a goal for American corporations. In September 2004 a joint Omani-Canadian delegation, led by Yusuf bin Alavi, foreign minister of Oman, and Jean Chretien, former Prime Minister of Canada, met in Turkmenistan to negotiate a deal between Edmonton based Buried Hill Energy and the government of Turkmenistan to develop the Serdar block in the Caspian area. This is not the first or only time that the former Prime Minister, a man responsible for sending thousands of Canadian soldiers to Afghanistan, has intervened on behalf of Canadian corporations for contracts in the area.⁹¹ On the same trip Chretien met with Saparmurat Niyazov, the self proclaimed president for life of Turkmenistan, and discussed potential involvement from Canadian corporations in the Trans-Afghan pipeline.⁹²

On October 20, 2004 Thermo Design received a contract worth \$42 million for the production of an LPG and gas condensate plant in Turkmenistan that would produce 50,000 tons of LPG and 200,000 tons of condensate gas (light gasoline) annually.⁹³ Signing multi-million dollar deals with one of the worst human rights abusers in the region⁹⁴ while simultaneously arguing that Canada's soldiers are bringing peace to Afghanistan clearly hypocritical. It is also standard operating procedure for successive governments of Canada to ignore issues of human rights if there is money to be made in international deals.

Its not just oil and gas transit routes that are important. Other resources in Central Asia are increasingly important to corporations in the west. Canadian corporations have been riding the coattails of US predominance in the region, and are poised to make billions of dollars off of the resources of the area. Cameco Corporation of Saskatchewan is set to make \$2 billion off a joint uranium mining venture with Kazatomprom, Kazakhstan's state owned mining company.⁹⁵ Gold deposits have also been found in the region, and Canadian corporation Centerra Gold has already mined 5.5 million ounces of gold from their mine in the Kyrgyzstan.⁹⁶ This ongoing plunder will eventually result in what the CIA describes as "blow-back". The people of these nations begin to mobilize opposition to governments that allow this theft, often resulting in civil unrest or war. One wonders how long it will be before we are told that we have a "responsibility to protect" the people of the failed states of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.⁹⁷

The Rise of the Resistance

The Afghan resistance is growing. There are now as many as 600 attacks a month on NATO soldiers.⁹⁸ According to the directors of the CIA and the Defense Intelligence Agency, al-Qaeda and the Taliban are back and growing bigger than they were before the invasion in 2001.⁹⁹ Having said that, we must note that many of the fighters acting against NATO forces are not Taliban or al-Qaeda, but farmers and villagers who are angry about the lack of security and development in the country. The irony is that the Taliban was largely a spent force in 2001 with little popular support. The conduct of the NATO forces and the officials of the Afghan government has caused the Taliban to grow and gain popularity.¹⁰⁰ The Taliban are reportedly offering protection against the warlord gangs in rural areas, cementing their support. According to Cathy Gannon:

The Taliban defeat in 2001 provoked a backlash against their harsh rule and a surge in support for the new government. From Zabul province in southeast Afghanistan, 2,000 young men went to Kabul to sign up for the new national army or police forces. All returned, police officials say, frustrated by poor salary or perceived ethnic bias in the new government. All but four joined the Taliban, they said.¹⁰¹

According to Stars and Stripes, the magazine of the US military, "the recent surge in fighting could be attributed more to American aggressiveness than anything al-Qaida [sic] is doing."¹⁰² The UK defence secretary, Des Browne, has also admitted that the conduct of NATO forces has "energised" the Taliban.¹⁰³

Supporters of the war continue to suggest that NATO forces kill only Taliban fighters. This provides a useful foil, but these assertions don't stand up to scrutiny. Operation Medusa, launched by Canada, US and UK in the south, was described by NATO officials as a definitive success because they had allegedly killed 1000 Taliban fighters. This turned out to be untrue. As Graeme Smith reported in the Globe and Mail, "Many of the fighters killed - 'perhaps half of them, by one estimate' - were not Taliban stalwarts, but local farmers who reportedly revolted against corrupt policing and tribal persecution."¹⁰⁴

That the military operation will not bring peace is becoming more evident. In Iraq and Afghanistan, resistance movements grow more with each new deployment. In Afghanistan the history of fighting foreign invaders is a source of national pride. The resistance to the USSR is still seen as a heroic struggle, and the new invaders are in for a much more difficult fight. The expected spring offensive by the Taliban will foreshadow the real scale of this fight.¹⁰⁵

Grassroots democracy in Afghanistan

There are democratic forces in Afghanistan, but they are consistently undermined and attacked by the state we are supporting.

Malalai Joya, the most prominent women in the Afghan parliament has been attacked by the warlords in parliament. "When I speak in parliament they threaten me. In May they beat me by throwing bottles of water at me and they shouted, 'Take her and rape her.' These men who are in power, never have they apologized for their crimes that they committed in the wars, and now, with the support of the US, they continue with their crimes in a different way. That is why there is no fundamental change in the situation of women."¹⁰⁶

President Karzai claims that one of his government's achievements is establishing freedom of speech and expression in Afghanistan. But the facts prove contrary to this claim. There have been many cases of attacks on journalistic freedom. According to the Afghan Independent Journalists Association, there have been cases of murder, abduction, assault and imprisonment of journalists.¹⁰⁷ Human Rights Watch reports, "In June the National Directorate of Security (NDS, the state intelligence agency) distributed to Afghan journalists a list of restrictions intended to curtail their reporting on the deteriorating security situation. The NDS increasingly resorted to intimidation and strong-arm tactics to gather information and silence government critics."¹⁰⁸

As noted above, the warlord groups in concert with Hamid Karzai have murdered and intimidated democratic forces in Afghanistan. We can support these grassroots groups in Afghanistan, but not while Canadian soldiers kill to support the warlords who murder democratic movements.

Debates – “A Better War is Possible?”

There are some excellent critiques about the situation in Afghanistan, but they frequently point to the same dead end solution – more NATO troops. The Canadian Senate followed this trend by delivering a substantial critique of the mission, admitting that "Life is clearly more perilous because we are there," but then arguing for more troops. Thomas Walkom, writing in the Toronto Star, summarized the contradiction of the Senate's conclusion. "It's as if the 11 senators on the committee, having successfully outlined the near insurmountable problems associated with the Afghan war, couldn't bring themselves to accept the logical conclusion of their own analysis."¹⁰⁹

If the problems facing the people of Afghanistan are being created by the new government and the occupying forces, how do we end the corruption and violence and bring about peace and stability? Sending more troops will not solve the problem. When you discover that the fox is doing a horrible job guarding the hen-house the solution is not to send in more foxes.

The Russians spent years, massing troops in Afghanistan in a vain hope that new soldiers would alter the course of the war. It never worked. NATO countries seem content to assume that the Russians failed because they were not on the side of “freedom”, but there is no evidence to suggest that the US and the NATO powers have any interest in freedom themselves. Indeed, if the US and allies really wanted to create freedom in Afghanistan they would not have deliberately, and with great effort, inserted and kept Karzai and the warlords in power. They would not have continued with a counter insurgency action that is, by their own account, invigorating the Taliban. There would not have been a concerted effort to support a government that would openly enact the same anti-woman policies as the Taliban. They would not have committed to a development process that is proven to create increased poverty for the developing country. To assume that these continued disasters are unintentional policy mistakes is to be deliberately blind to the facts.

One debate about Canada's role in the war is centred on the need for Canada to find a new role of peacekeeping rather than combat in the south. Peacekeeping in support of the warlords is no better than combat in support of the warlords. The issue is support for the warlords, not the tactical choices made by Canadian soldiers and generals. These warlord groups are seen as the enemies of the Afghan people. Any support for them is an attack on the democratic aspirations of the majority of the population there. We have seen countless demonstrations by the people of Afghanistan demanding a better life than the one that the warlords offer them.¹¹⁰ These demonstrations offer a small but important example of the democratic movement that could be the foundation of a new Afghanistan, but each and every time they are attacked and frequently murdered by the warlords Canada supports.

Some argue that Canada needs to be fighting alongside the US to keep them in check and to end their more violent practices. Only by being on the inside with the US are we able to steer them in the right direction. This argument has been used by the government of Canada to support working with human rights abusers in countries around the world, and has, as yet, never changed the erring ways of those abusers. Tony Blair used the same argument to justify support for the US invasion of Iraq, but to this day we have not seen any evidence that the presence of British troops has altered the behaviour of the US. In the case of Afghanistan, Canada will likewise have little influence on the US.

Even if Canadian soldiers can change their hats and become peacekeepers in Afghanistan, they will remain under the policy framework developed by the US that is motivated, not by a desire to “liberate” but by the need to control the region.

Some argue that Canada should remain in Afghanistan, but change our mission. To make a decision to no longer support the current mission, our government would have to publicly denounce US and NATO policy in Afghanistan and end official support for the current Afghan government. There is not a shred of hope that our current government would do this. It would turn Canada into some sort of rogue 3rd army no longer in league with either side of the war and it would run counter to Canadian interests. It would also end our long standing position of being a willing fig leaf to US political aims.

Despite Canada’s reputation of being a peaceful nation, we have proven to be nothing more than willing supporters of this US led fiasco. Labeling this war as fulfilling Canada’s “responsibility to protect” the people of Afghanistan is a farce. The responsibility to protect cannot begin *after* we have systematically plundered a nation of its resources, imposed a tin-pot dictator and forced debt slavery on the population.

Canada has no intention of altering US policy in Afghanistan. It makes little sense to Canadians that we would tie our wagon to the US Government. It does, however, make sense to the Canadian Council of Chief Executives (CCCE), an organization representing 150 of the largest Canadian corporations, who have a tremendous influence in Ottawa. In April 2004, the CCCE argued for more integrated economic and military partnerships with the US.¹¹¹ This is an assertion of Canadian support for the US National Security Strategies, which call on allies of the US to join in the pre-emptive “war against terrorism” in support of democracy, free markets and free trade.¹¹² The Government of Canada is moving quickly to cement these new partnerships, not out of a need to placate our bully neighbour, but to support the ambitions of Canadian corporations in places like Central Asia and Afghanistan.¹¹³

There is no military solution to the problems facing the people of Afghanistan. The actions of NATO are increasing the strength of forces on both sides of what is essentially a re-armament of the Afghan civil war. Neither of these sides will bring peace and democracy to Afghanistan, and their growth will only condemn the people there to more violence. The only option is to begin a process of negotiated settlement with all stakeholders at the table.

The Government of Canada has falsely framed the debate about the war in Afghanistan. A call to end the occupation is not a call to “cut and run”, despite what Stephen Harper says. There are many other options but they must be led by the people of Afghanistan, and not administered by the occupation forces, which have lost all credibility. The principle of self-determination must, therefore, be the foundation of our discussion and we cannot be allowed to slip into the arrogant position of arguing for self-determination while simultaneously demanding how that will be implemented. It is up to the people of Afghanistan to determine their future. However, we can offer supports and it may be good to outline some of the options.

To start with, there needs to be a plan for reparations to make up for the crushing blows of 30 years of war initiated by outside powers. Give this money to the chronically under-funded front line aid agencies that are already trying to provide food, housing and medical care in Afghanistan.

If democracy is to flourish in Afghanistan, there needs to be a systematic program of funding and support for the democratic forces under fire. In the case of Malalai Joya, when her security funding was slashed, there was an immediate and successful international campaign to raise the money needed to pay for her security and to keep her safe. Further movement solidarity of this kind will be required, and will be difficult, but there are precedents. NGO’s such as Médecin Sans Frontières, and other aid agencies must be able to engage in their activity without interference from the occupation forces. Unions can also play a role, as we have seen with successful worker to worker solidarity campaigns between Canadian and Columbian Unions.

Solutions to the problems of Afghanistan exist. What is lacking is the political will to make the necessary changes.

Implementing these solutions will not be easy, but the current occupation is running counter to the goal of providing freedom in Afghanistan. It would be naive to believe that this will change. Far from being an issue of ineptitude on the part of the Bush and Harper, or a conspiracy of the neo-conservative cabal, the failures in Afghanistan and Iraq are based on military and economic orthodoxy. The assumption that a heavy handed military operation will eventually quell an “insurgency” is being disproved each day in Iraq and Afghanistan. The belief, against all evidence, that a privatized economy administered by drug warlords and former US oil company employees, will create a trickle down effect is likewise false.

The extension of Canadian troop deployments to 2009, rushed through our parliament prove that Stephen Harper is perfectly at ease with continuing the bloodshed. It is up to us to end the killing that our government is so eager to continue. This is a very real possibility. We kept Canada out of the Iraq war, with 400,000 marching across the country. Take this document, print it, distribute it, and we will see you in the streets.

¹ “A Role of Pride and Influence in the World,” Canadian Defence Policy Statement, 2005

http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/reports/dps/main/toc_e.asp

² This is documented in several texts but rarely with the force of the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan in “The “Miracle” or a Mockery of Afghanistan?” <http://www.rawa.org/seattletimes.htm> .

See also, *The Taliban, War Religion And The New Order In Afghanistan* By Peter Marsden, Oxford University Press, 1999, p.126: and, *Taliban, Militant Islam, Oil And Fundamentalism In Central Asia*, By Ahmed Rashid, Yale University Press, 2000

³ *Racial Status and Employment Outcomes*, Canadian Labour Congress, February 22,

http://canadianlabour.ca/index.php/Wokers_of_Colour/834

⁴ “Racial Tolerance Report,” Sun Media, January, 2007

<http://cnews.canoe.ca/CNEWS/CNEWSImages2003/Sun%20Media%20Tolerance%20Report.pdf>

⁵ David Ljunggren, “NATO's Afghan mission in trouble: Canadian Senate,” Reuters, February 12, 2007

<http://www.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUSN1239035120070212>

⁶ “Timeline: Afghanistan,” Prepared using BBC News, May 24, 2005

<http://www.rawa.org/afg-info.htm>

⁷ “How Jimmy Carter and I Started the Mujahideen,” Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Le Nouvel Observateur* (France), January, 1998

<http://www.counterpunch.org/brzezinski.html>

⁸ Nikolai Lanine, “Canada in Afghanistan,” *Globe & Mail*, January 13, 2007

<http://www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?SectionID=49&ItemID=11846>

⁹ Peter Marsden, *The Taliban, War Religion And The New Order In Afghanistan*, Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 27

¹⁰ British Agencies Afghanistan Group, Refugee Council, “Return And Reconstruction,” London, 1997

¹¹ Peter Marsden, *The Taliban, War Religion And The New Order In Afghanistan*, Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 35

¹² For a complete list of the current warlords in power please see: “The New Face of Terror in Afghanistan,” in *Press for Conversion!* (Issue #59) September 2006 <http://coat.ncf.ca/upcoming59.html> : and, Human Rights Watch,

“Blood-Stained Hands: Past Atrocities in Kabul and Afghanistan’s Legacy of Impunity,”

<http://hrw.org/reports/2005/afghanistan0605/>

¹³ Marsden, p. 42

¹⁴ Rashid, p. 6

¹⁵ Marsden, p. 43

¹⁶ Rashid, p. 7

¹⁷ Rashid, p. 11

¹⁸ Marsden, p. 48

¹⁹ Rashid, p. 7

²⁰ Marsden, p. 129

²¹ From Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*,

Cited at <http://www.alternet.org/story/11692/>

²² Alfred Mendes, “A Pipeline too far! Oil and Oil Pipelines: Why the US invaded Afghanistan,” *Global Research*, April 29, 2005

²³ Chris Shumway, "Departing Afghanistan Envoy Pledges to Use Same Approach in Iraq," *The New Standard*, June 20, 2005
<http://newstandardnews.net/content/index.cfm/items/1953>

²⁴ Rashid,

²⁵ Marsden, p. 141

²⁶ Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy And Its Geostrategic Imperatives*, Basic Books, 1997, p. 30

²⁷ Ibid., PG 53

²⁸ *Caspian Sea Region: Survey of Key Oil and Gas Statistics and Forecasts*, Energy Information Administration, July 2006
http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/Caspian/images/caspian_balances.pdf

²⁹ "U.S. arms Afghani warlords, faces criticism" Associated Press, October 17, 2002.
<http://media.www.dailylobo.com/media/storage/paper344/news/2002/10/17/News/U.s-Arms.Afghani.Warlords.Faces.Criticism-299448.shtml?sourcedomain=www.dailylobo.com&MIIHost=media.collegepublisher.com> ;
Afghanistan: Warlords Return, Human Rights Watch, June 6, 2002,
<http://hrw.org/english/docs/2002/06/06/afghan4020.htm>

³⁰ Chris Shumway, "Departing Afghanistan Envoy Pledges to Use Same Approach in Iraq," *The New Standard*, June 20, 2005
<http://newstandardnews.net/content/index.cfm/items/1953>

³¹ Amy Waldman, "Poetic Justice for an Afghan Gadfly: He's on the Ballot," *New York Times*, October 2, 2004

³² Human Rights Watch Report 2005
<http://hrw.org/english/docs/2006/01/18/afghan12266.htm>

³³ Sonali Kolhatkar and Jim Ingalls, "US Exporting Fake Democracy -- By Force," Foreign Policy In Focus (FPF), September 16, 2005
<http://www.rawa.org/sonali-jim.htm>

³⁴ Beth DeGrasse and Emily Hsu, "Afghanistan: Old Problems, New Parliament, New Expectations," United States Institute for Peace Briefing, By October 2005
http://www.usip.org/pubs/usipeace_briefings/2005/1025_afghanwomen.html

³⁵ "No End To Suffering?" *The Times of India* (Calcutta), June 24, 2006
<http://www.rawasb.org/news.html>

³⁶ Kolhatkar and Ingalls

³⁷ Human Rights Watch World Report 2007
<http://www.hrw.org/wr2k7/wr2007master.pdf>

³⁸ *Blood-Stained Hands: Past Atrocities in Kabul and Afghanistan's Legacy of Impunity*, Human Rights Watch
<http://hrw.org/reports/2005/afghanistan0605/>

³⁹ Kolhatkar and Ingalls

⁴⁰ "Afghan bill gives amnesty to Mullah Omar, Hekmatyar," *The Nation*, February 2, 2007
<http://www.nation.com.pk/daily/feb-2007/2/index3.php>

⁴¹ "Afghan police part of the problem," Institute for War & Peace Reporting, June 6, 2006
<http://www.rawa.org/police-3.htm>

⁴² Human Rights Watch Report 2005

<http://hrw.org/english/docs/2006/01/18/afghan12266.htm>

⁴³ Human Rights Watch Report 2004

<http://hrw.org/english/docs/2005/01/13/afghan9827.htm>

⁴⁴ Human Rights Watch Report 2003

<http://hrw.org/english/docs/2003/12/31/afghan6991.htm>

⁴⁵ Stephen Zunes, “Afghanistan: Five Years Later, Foreign Policy in Focus Report,” October 13, 2006

<http://www.fpif.org/fpiftxt/3597>

⁴⁶ “No End To Suffering?”

⁴⁷ A larger discussion of the process of UN sanction for the war in Afghanistan is needed. In the immediate aftermath of September 11th 2001 the UN Security Council, in an effort to show that they were “with the US” and not with the terrorists, wrote Resolutions 1368, 12 September 2001, and 1373, on 28 September 2001. These resolutions are some of the worst pieces of international law ever written and give member states an incredible amount of leeway with respect to national self-defence in the war against terrorism. The resolutions allow member states to act to “prevent and suppress terrorist attacks and take action against perpetrators of such acts”. The resolutions gave the US sanction to take action against any state that provides funding, safe haven, planning or support for terrorism, in the name of self defence. This resolution is quoted in each subsequent discussion of the war in Afghanistan and is the foundation of UN policy since the invasion.

⁴⁸ “Military probes abuse allegations in Afghanistan” CBC On line, <http://www.cbc.ca/canada/story/2007/02/06/military-probe.html>

⁴⁹ Paul Koring, “Troops told Geneva rules don't apply to Taliban,” *Globe and Mail*, May 31, 2006

http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/Page/document/v5/content/subscribe?user_URL=http://www.theglobeandmail.com%2Fservlet%2Fstory%2FRTGAM.20060530.wxdetainee30%2FBNStory%2FAfghanistan%2F&ord=1170857590429&brand=theglobeandmail&force_login=true

⁵⁰ “Afghan detainees routinely tortured and humiliated by US troops,” Guardian On Line

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/afghanistan/story/0,1284,1245236,00.html> ; Human Rights Watch,

<http://hrw.org/english/docs/2005/12/19/afghan12319.htm> ;

<http://hrw.org/reports/2006/ct0406/>

⁵¹ Amnesty International’s campaign to stop torture and ill-treatment in the ‘war on terror’, 1 March 2006

<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGASA110052006?open&of=ENG-AFG>

⁵² “USA / Afghanistan: More deaths and impunity,” Amnesty International, Public Statement, 31 October 2005

<http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engamr511722005>

⁵³ “Air war costs NATO Afghan supporters,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, December 18, 2006

<http://www.csmonitor.com/2006/1218/p01s02-wosc.html?s=widep>

⁵⁴ Kathy Gannon, “Government, coalition gaffes in Afghanistan help Taliban,” By The Associated Press, November 24, 2006

http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/html/nationworld/2003445385_taliban24.html

⁵⁵ Human Rights Watch World Report 2007

<http://www.hrw.org/wr2k7/wr2007master.pdf>

⁵⁶ Campaign for Innocent Victims of Conflict, December 17, 2006

http://www.civicworldwide.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=178&Itemid=0

⁵⁷ Thalif Deen, “UN to tackle live US explosives in Afghanistan,” *Asia Times Online*, January 3, 2002

<http://atimes.com/c-asia/DA03Ag02.html>

⁵⁸ “Afghanistan: UN to clear coalition cluster bombs,” January 2, 2002, *IRIN UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs*

<http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportid=17793>

-
- ⁵⁹ “Afghanistan – Still Major Challenges Ahead,” UNHCR, February 7, 2007
<http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/afghan?page=home>
- ⁶⁰ The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
<http://www.internal-displacement.org/>
- ⁶¹ Anup Shah, “The Scale of the Debt Crisis,” Global Issues, July 02, 2005
<http://www.globalissues.org/TradeRelated/Debt/Scale.asp>
- ⁶² For a more complete look at this process see Susan George, *A Fate Worse than Debt*, Penguin Books, 1988, and John Perkins, *Confessions of an Economic Hit Man*, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2004
- ⁶³ Dave Ranney, “Militarism and U.S. Trade Policy,” *FPIF Policy Report* December 15, 2006
<http://www.fpif.org/fpifxt/3807>
- ⁶⁴ For more information on the corporate connection to reconstruction please see: Corpwatch, “Afghanistan Inc.,”
<http://www.corpwatch.org/article.php?id=13518>
- ⁶⁵ John Perkins, *Confessions of an Economic Hit Man*, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2004 p.5
- ⁶⁶ Zia Sarhadi, “Afghan Resistance Causing Political Unrest in Canada,” Crescent International, October 2006
www.muslimmedia.com
- ⁶⁷ “Afghanistan Inc.”
- ⁶⁸ Gethin Chamberlain, “US military: Afghan leaders steal half of all aid,” *Sunday Telegraph*, January 29, 2007
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2007/01/28/wafg28.xml>
- ⁶⁹ Fariba Nawa, “Broken Promises: Foreign Aid Squandered in Afghanistan,” *New America Media*, June 01, 2006
http://news.newamericamedia.org/news/view_article.html?article_id=6f5e0da4d32534af851c809351b18f0a
- ⁷⁰ UNDP, “Afghanistan: National Human Development Report,” 2004
http://www.undp.org.af/nhdr_04/pdfs/keyfindings_final.pdf
- ⁷¹ Noam Chomsky, “The Food Crisis in Afghanistan”,
<http://www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?ItemID=8660>
- ⁷² Chomsky,
- ⁷³ Marc W. Herold, Departments of Economics and Women's Studies, Whittemore School of Business & Economics, University of New Hampshire, “Pulling the rug out: Pseudo-development in Karzai's Afghanistan,” March 7, 2006
<http://www.cursor.org/stories/emptyspace2.html#1>
- ⁷⁴ Zoya, “Five Years Later, Afghanistan Still in Flames,” October 11, 2006
<http://www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?SectionID=15&ItemID=11169>
- ⁷⁵ Ewen MacAskill, “Aid agency quits Afghanistan over security fears,” *Guardian Unlimited*, July 29, 2004
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/afghanistan/story/0,,1271197,00.html>
- ⁷⁶ Juan Cole, “Great Justices Installed by Bush,” Tuesday, January 10, 2006
<http://www.juancole.com/2006/01/great-justices-installed-by-bush-as.html>
- ⁷⁷ “12-years old Rahima was gang-raped by warlords,” *Shafaq Monthly*, November 2004
<http://rawa.org/rahima.htm>
Human Rights Watch World Report 2007,
<http://www.hrw.org/wr2k7/wr2007master.pdf>

-
- ⁷⁸ “Taking Stock Update: Afghan Women and Girls Five Years On,” *Womankind Worldwide*, October 2006
http://www.womankind.org.uk/upload/Taking_Stock_5_Years_On_Oct2006_english.pdf
- ⁷⁹ “No End To Suffering?”
- ⁸⁰ For a comprehensive list of UNIFEM Reports on Afghanistan see:
<http://www1.bpcd.net/cgi-bin/nph-proxy.cgi/000000A/http/afghanistan.unifem.org/publication.htm>
- ⁸¹ Human Rights Watch World Report 2007,
<http://www.hrw.org/wr2k7/wr2007master.pdf>
- ⁸² “‘Ministry of vice’ fills Afghan women with fear,” *The Sunday Times*, July 23, 2006
<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/article691340.ece>
“All set to reactivate Vice and Virtue Dept,” *Pajhwok Afghan News*, June 7, 2006
<http://www.pajhwak.com/viewstory.asp?lng=eng&id=19442>
“Afghan women protest against reintroduction of ‘vice and virtue police’,” *Christian Aid*, June 09, 2006
<http://www.christian-aid.org.uk/news/stories/060905s.htm>
- ⁸³ Human Rights Watch, “Afghanistan, Events of 2006,”
<http://hrw.org/englishwr2k7/docs/2007/01/11/afghan14863.htm>
- ⁸⁴ “Canada's Debt to Afghanistan,” Afghan Women’s Mission,
<http://www.afghanwomensmission.org/news/index.php?articleID=58>
- ⁸⁵ “No End To Suffering?”
- ⁸⁶ Senlis Council, “*Canada in Kandahar: No Peace to Keep - A Case Study of the Military Coalitions in Southern Afghanistan*,”
http://www.senliscouncil.net/modules/publications/013_publication
- ⁸⁷ Fraser Nelson, “Huge Risks And Meagre Rewards From Our New War In Afghanistan,” *Scotland on Sunday*, January 29, 2006
<http://scotlandonsunday.scotsman.com/opinion.cfm?id=144412006>
- ⁸⁸ Robert Scheer, “Bush's Faustian Deal With the Taliban,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 22, 2001
- ⁸⁹ Nelson,
- ⁹⁰ Paul Watson, “The Lure of Opium Wealth Is a Potent Force in Afghanistan,” *LA Times*, May 29, 2005
<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-drugs29may29,0,3324290.story?coll=la-home-headlines>
- ⁹¹ “Canadian Firm Interested in Serdar Caspian Block of Turkmenistan,” *News Central Asia*, 18 January 2005
<http://www.newscentralasia.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=1140>
- ⁹² “Turkmenistan Invites Canada, Oman to Join Trans-Afghan, Other Projects,” *News Central Asia*, 4 September 2004
<http://www.newscentralasia.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=876>
- ⁹³ “Thermo Design to Build LPG, Gas Condensate Plant in Turkmenistan,” *News Central Asia*, 20 October 2004
<http://www.newscentralasia.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=959>
- ⁹⁴ For more discussion see Human Rights Watch, Turkmenistan resources, at:
<http://hrw.org/english/docs/2006/01/18/turkme12244.htm>
- ⁹⁵ Cameco Inc., “Cameco To Develop Uranium Mine In Kazakhstan,” Press Release, April 01, 2004
http://www.cameco.com/media_gateway/news_releases/2004/news_release.php?id=80
- ⁹⁶ Centerra Gold, Kumtor mine web site <http://www.centerragold.com/properties/kumtor/>

⁹⁷ Since 2001 Kyrgyzstan has allowed a US airbase on their soil. Some Kyrgyz government officials are growing increasingly concerned that the money paid in rent for the base seems to disappear.

“Kyrgyzstan insists on transparent US payments for air base,” ITAR-TASS, February 12, 2007
<http://www.itar-tass.com/eng/level2.html?NewsID=11244344&PageNum=0>

⁹⁸ Robert Matthews, “Afghanistan: Reckoning with US Failure and the Return of the Armed Men,” Peace Research Center
http://www.cipresearch.fuhem.es/pazyseguridad/docs/Afghanistan_CIP%20Matthews.pdf

⁹⁹ Dafna Linzer and Walter Pincus, “Taliban, Al-Qaeda Resurge In Afghanistan, CIA Says,” Washington Post, November 16, 2006
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/11/15/AR2006111501622.html>

¹⁰⁰ “Weary Afghans ‘may opt for Taliban’,” *Al-Jazeera*, October 11, 2006
<http://english.aljazeera.net/news/archive/archive?ArchiveId=36626>

¹⁰¹ Kathy Gannon, “Government, coalition gaffes in Afghanistan help Taliban,” The Associated Press, November 24, 2006
http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/nationworld/2003445385_taliban24.html

¹⁰² Kolhatkar and Ingalls

¹⁰³ Patrick Wintour and Declan Walsh, “UK has boosted Taliban, admits defence chief,” from Camp Bastion, Afghanistan
The Guardian, July 8, 2006
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/afghanistan/story/0,,1815736,00.html>

¹⁰⁴ Graeme Smith, “Inspiring tale of triumph over Taliban not all it seems,” *Globe and Mail*, September 23, 2006
http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/Page/document/v5/content/subscribe?user_URL=http://www.theglobeandmail.com%2Fservlet%2Fstory%2FRTGAM.20060922.wmedusa0923%2FBNStory%2FspecialComment%2F&ord=1171041517517&brand=theglobeandmail&force_login=true

¹⁰⁵ “Taliban prepare for spring offensive in Afghan south,” Reuters, February 11, 2007
http://today.reuters.com/news/articlenu.asp?type=topNews&storyID=2007-02-11T113419Z_01_ISL205266_RTRUKOC_0_US-TALIBAN-AFGHAN.xml&WTmodLoc=NewsHome-C1-topNews-10

¹⁰⁶ Natasha Walter, “We are just watching things get worse” *The Guardian*, November 28, 2006
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/afghanistan/story/0,,1958707,00.html>

¹⁰⁷ “Philippines, Afghanistan listed as Asia's worst for journalists,” *International Herald Tribune*, February 6, 2007
<http://www.iht.com/articles/2007/02/06/news/press.php>

¹⁰⁸ Human Rights Watch World Report 2007,
<http://www.hrw.org/wr2k7/wr2007master.pdf>

¹⁰⁹ Thomas Walkom, “Senators nail problem, flub solution,” *Toronto Star*, February 13, 2007
<http://www.thestar.com/News/article/181030>

¹¹⁰ There are too many examples to list all incidents, but here are news articles with coverage of just a few:
“Protesters for Jawzjan governor resignation,” *Pajhwok Afghan News*, Nov. 16, 2006
“Takhar residents took to streets against armed men,” *Pajhwok Afghan News*, October 2, 2006
“People of Paghman protest against Sayyaf, Police Kill 2 Protesters,” RAWA, July 12, 2006

¹¹¹ New Frontiers Building a 21st Century Canada-United States Partnership in North America, April 2004
http://www.ceocouncil.ca/en/view/?document_id=365

¹¹² Dave Ranney

¹¹³ This discussion is too broad for this paper but there are some excellent resources available. Please see:
“Integrate This!, A Citizen’s Guide to Fighting Deep Integration,” Council of Canadians, April 2006