

"Then what can I do? One of my daughters is dead. She died, and they will die, too. This child, I can sell her, but nobody will buy her. What can I do? I can sell her, but nobody wants her. What can I do? For God's sake, I want to sell this child, but nobody wants her. What can I do? I have nothing. I am poor. I don't have any blankets, I don't have any shawls, I don't have any clothes. There is no food that I can put in her mouth. For God's sake, I am poor. Otherwise, I wouldn't give her for one million. I know nobody wants to sell their daughter, but I have to. She is innocent, but I am poor. I have nothing."

(Part of an interview with a displaced Afghan civilian in Robert Greenwald's new film, "Rethink Afghanistan" at www.rethinkafghanistan.com)

October 7 marked the eighth year of the U.S. invasion and occupation of Afghanistan, making it one of the longest wars in U.S. history, and the end is nowhere in sight.

Why the U.S. is at War with Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Ending the war and leaving Afghanistan is off the table, Obama's press secretary Robert Gibbs made clear (October 5, 2009).

Barack Obama has insisted on having a thorough debate within his administration over which military and political strategy the U.S. should follow in Afghanistan. Obama has not yet announced his decision, but he has said before that Afghanistan is a war the U.S. "must win."

The stakes for the imperialists are extremely high in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and defeat or retreat would seriously weaken the whole U.S. empire on a number of different levels.

First, Afghanistan and Pakistan are located in the middle of Central Asia, one of the most strategically important regions in the world. Central Asia and the Middle East together contain 80 percent of the world's oil and natural gas.

Whoever controls global energy supplies can exert enormous influence over the whole world economy and any country that depends on oil and natural gas.

With demand for energy outstripping supplies, competition for control of energy sources and the energy pipelines that criss-cross Central Asia has been heating up among the U.S., Russia, China and others. Whoever controls global energy supplies can exert enormous influence over the whole world economy and any country that depends on oil and natural gas.

Beyond this, dominance in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Central Asia has enormous political and military significance, and is a linchpin in the current world order with U.S. imperialism as the sole superpower.

Any retreat or defeat in Afghanistan would weaken U.S. global credibility—the sense that it is militarily unchallengeable. It would undermine support in the U.S. for other wars, invasions and occupations. And it could weaken the NATO military alliance, which the U.S. is counting on for more support, not less.

What the U.S. Brings to Afghanistan

This is a big reason that life remains a horror for the Afghan people. Since 2003, life expectancy has fallen to 43.1 years, and adult literacy has fallen to 23.5 percent. Up to 70% of Afghanistan's estimated 26.6 million people are considered food-insecure by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), which reports millions have recently been pushed into high-risk food-insecurity because of high food prices. One of every three Afghan children under five is malnourished, and in 2005 (the last year for which estimates are available), the average Afghan earned roughly \$271 a year—less than \$1 a day, and 42 percent of the people exist on less than \$14 a month.

Afghanistan produces 92 percent of the world's opium, the raw ingredient used to make heroin. The US allows the warlords to produce it because it wants their cooperation.

The U.S. is a far, far greater danger to the planet than the Taliban—which does not have thousands of nuclear warheads and a massive, globe-straddling military machine, does not have a stranglehold on the global economy that enforces hunger on a billion people, and is not the force driving global environmental destruction. And imperialism is primarily what has driven the revival and spread of reactionary Islamic fundamentalism. Supporting either one strengthens both, when what the world really needs is to bring forward a whole other way.

***For the ful I article:** Behind the "Debate" Over Afghanistan: Suffering, Death, and the Needs of Empire, By Larry Everest, 21 October 2009, <http://revcom.us/>*

EMERGENCY ACTIONS

1. Join the Emergency Response Protest on the day that President Obama announces a troop surge into Afghanistan with the demands:

- Bring all the troops home now!
- Funding for human needs, not war!

When: 5:00 PM on the day President Obama makes the announcement.

Where: Federal Plaza, Corner of Dearborn and Adams Streets, Chicago.

2. A follow up protest will also be held at 12 noon, Federal Plaza on the Saturday following the President's announcement.

OTHER ACTIONS

1. Join us to see the film "Rethink Afghanistan" (quoted above) by award winning filmmaker Robert Greenwalk. This ground-breaking documentary shatters all perceived truths behind the war in Afghanistan.

This free screening will be held at 2:00 pm, Tuesday, 11/3/09 at 8th Day Center for Justice, 205 W. Monroe St., Chicago, 312-641-5151. For more info and trailer see www.rethinkafghanistan.com

2. Join the Peaceable Assembly Campaign: A Campaign to Demand Alternatives to U.S. Militarism. For more info www.vcnv.org

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Why the U.S. is at War with Afghanistan and Pakistan



An Afghan woman who lost family members weeps after air strikes in Azizabad district of Shindand August 23, 2008. A UN investigation suggested that 60 children were killed in the airstrike. (REUTERS/Mohammad Shoiaab)

Before, I was a farmer, but I can't go back. I was growing wheat and poppy and corn, melons. I was taking care of the children. But right now I can't do anything. Look, they are barefoot in this cold weather. I don't have anything. I am very poor. They are standing in the water barefoot. I am scared they will die.