

Letters on the US massacre of POWs in Afghanistan

12 December 2001

Below we post a selection of recent letters on the US massacre of POWs in Afghanistan.

Thank you for your coverage and analysis of the mass killing of Taliban POWs at the Qala-i-Janghi fortress. If any of your web site's visitors still have trouble accepting that what happened at the fort was a one-sided massacre, instigated by "our guys," I would refer them to the transcript of the videotaped "interview" of the American Taliban volunteer John Walker by two CIA agents, one of whom later died in the uprising. A portion of the transcript can be found at newsweek.com.

The tape was shot "hours" before the uprising. The transcript makes it plain that the CIA agents were threatening the prisoners with murder. The CIA agents went further to state that the Red Cross would only be able to save a few of the prisoners—implying that it was planned that most of the POWs were going to be killed. Rather than the inspiration for the uprising being a desire for "mass suicide" by religious fanatics, as the official story puts it, the release of the videotape shows that the POWs were given reason to believe that they were going to be murdered. Thus they made a desperate attempt to avoid that fate—they revolted. In the end, most of the prisoners were killed.

Given the content of the videotaped "interview" of Mr. Walker, it is curious that the US government would have released it. Apparently the US government thinks that it can give its "spin" to the tape and have the press go along without criticism or analysis. In the tape Mr. Walker did not confess to having had any role in, or any knowledge of, any terrorist activities. Mr. Walker did not say anything to his "interviewers." The only thing the tape proves is that Mr. Walker was at the fort before the revolt. It's been suggested that just his having been in Afghanistan with the Taliban is enough for Mr. Walker to be tried for treason and executed.

When it was proposed that the US use secret military tribunals to try suspected terrorists, the US government attempted to assuage the fears of civil libertarians by saying that only foreigners would be tried in these tribunals. With an American "terrorist" now in custody, it would appear that the US government is making a public case for trying US citizens in secret tribunals. Pandora's box is wide open.

LG

8 December 2001

Dear WWS,

You have correctly called what happened at Qala-i-Janghi a war crime. A far greater crime, and a crime against humanity, is still being committed against the Afghan people, turned into the most abject refugees by the war against terrorism. When this winter is over, the toll is, tragically, going to be apocalyptic. You have said as much in your December 7 report. And who is going to be found guilty of creating the conditions conducive to such sustained and needless loss of life?

Sincerely,

RG

10 December 2001

Comrades:

Now that the rule of law has been abolished by the highest-ranking law

officer in the country, it leaves us no choice but to begin holding Peoples Tribunals to bring to justice and accountability those lawbreakers who have violated their oath of office. These people have deliberately sought to undermine the Constitution of the United States by actions that are treasonous. A large measure of accountability must include crimes against humanity by the bombing of innocent civilians in Afghanistan and Iraq as well as the torture and murder of prisoners of war. This is only a beginning of their crimes. I suggest we, the American people, present a Bill of Indictment against the following, just as a beginning:

George W. Bush, President of the United Banana Republics

Dick Cheney, Vice President in Hiding

John Ashcroft, Lawbreaker Extraordinaire

Donald Rumsfeld, Warlord Extraordinaire

Colin Powell, Whoever the hell he thinks he is

The Supreme Court of the United States, Derelicts All

Various generals in the fields of death

The entire corporate-sponsored press corps AND their corporate sponsors

The banks, last but not least

I could continue.

In struggle,

JC

North Carolina

6 December 2001

You distort the facts. You obviously care nothing about the truth. The United States doesn't support killing prisoners in Afghanistan—nor were they being killed or abused until they rebelled and started fighting. The Northern Alliance even released Afghan Taliban. The Taliban prisoners are the ones who started the killing in Mazar.

You people are so mixed up and so full of anti-Americanism that you can't see what's really going on: the people of Afghanistan feel liberated—due to US actions. You twist the truth. You are clueless. Afghanistan finally has some hope for a better society— thanks to the United States.

You are just like Osama bin Laden in your dishonest "hate America" campaign. Do the world a favor: Go out of business and stop spreading lies.

FC

28 November 2001

Many thanks for the informative piece and your principled analysis. I share your viewpoint and join you in condemning the genocidal attack.

NS

Norway

28 November 2001

Thank you very much for this thoughtful article on the atrocities committed by US forces in Afghanistan. Here we go. The US had blamed Milosevic for committing atrocities, now they are doing exactly the same thing. I am positive and certain if there is an international tribunal for Milosevic, there should be one for Donald Rumsfeld and his subordinates.

If these people who have committed those crimes, prohibited by the convention of Geneva regarding the treatments of prisoners of war, countries should arrest them anywhere they travel. Who in his right mind can believe what CNN or the American [media] are saying? How can you be in prison and somebody with a gun watching you and you end up fighting the person with the gun? Use your common sense. This crap is for feeble-minded people in the American media and the American government. Something that I know for sure, that those crimes will not stay unpunished. You do not cure violence by using violence. The way Americans think is like they are the most important people in this world. If an American dies, the world has to suffer. But if 800,000 Rwandans die, it is nothing. They are Rwandans, they are not Americans. If 5,000 people die in Haiti in a coup d'état organized by Bush's father, it is nothing. This is what happens when you have a unipolar world with a superpower whose only job is to create instability around the world. One thing I know for sure, you can be a superpower, but you cannot be superpower for your whole life.

Regarding the American media, I do not want to talk about them, they are just crap. I do not watch them anymore. Especially CNN. I do not think that this TV station will survive.

Once again, thank you for your thoughtful analysis and your intuitive research. Keep doing the job that only you can do.

JC

28 November 2001

I just have one question. Why is it OK for the Taliban or other governments to abuse human rights continuously, yet the US is held to a higher standard? We didn't fly planes into buildings full of civilians to start this conflict.

MM

5 December 2001

Thanks for your truthful and courageous editorial of 11/27/01. WWSW is the only US news publication I can bear to read. I am an Asian American and even though I am a native born citizen I feel constrained from speaking out because of the precarious situation of minorities in this country, especially when war hysteria and jingoism are rampant in this land.

Keep up the good work.

MA

28 November 2001

You know, I am a very simple person who hates all wrongs, the September 11 attacks were an horrendous crime but I have too many questions in my mind about this so-called war on terrorism.

That bombing of a prison deeply disturbed me. I have given up watching the CNN's of America because they all ignore issues such as this and no one asks any hard questions.

God have mercy on us all.

TC

27 November 2001

Greetings:

(For the record, I am a Christian and an admirer of the so-called "anti-Federalist" movement of our Founding era.) I picked up your article via link from an American Islamic site and, upon reading it, thought you were right on target. I would like to share two items with you which you might find of interest.

The first is that, as a humble painting contractor, I can often adjust my schedule to attend events which occur during the workday. One such event occurred the last Monday in October here in central Virginia. It was a "town meeting" called by our new congressman, Randy Forbes. The meeting was full of retirees and suited professionals, all of them concerned about preserving Medicare, veterans and military benefits. As I listened my rage grew. As the congressman told us of his need to leave, I began waving furiously from my side of the building in my work clothes.

Curiously, I was the only obvious proletarian there!

The congressman called on me, figuring me to be good for a softball question. I recited to him a long list of government lies and asked him why we should now trust them; that Bush would make the case for war to chekist Putin, he would make it to a coup leader (the Pakistani general); that he would make it to all sorts of foreign leaders, but that he wouldn't make the case for us. "Why won't you declare war?"

The first thing out of his mouth was that if we did, then certain privileges would accrue to the Taliban which we did not wish to see. How about that? He approvingly saw an avoidance of formal war as an opportunity to have our way with our enemies. It sickened me. He was so easy in his deportment as these words tumbled off his lips. Fortunately, no one applauded as he continued to mumble about how grand it was that the ACLU had gone to ground over the public mentionings of God. Truly, I think God is sickened by all this facile and false "patriotism."

Secondly, on Thursday night (December 6) Greta Van Susteren on CNN's "The Point" announced (at about 8:20 p.m.) that they were going to play their exclusive interview with an American Taliban fighter. I told my wife, "You watch, they are going to remove his voice." Well, I had to wait another 20 minutes for my promise to occur. They did play portions of the interview. The kid was obviously in shock and yet he was amazingly articulate. He, due to the obvious seriousness of his faith, lamented that some of his fellow prisoners kept grenades hidden in their tunics. He said such conduct was a "serious offense" in Islamic military law, especially so because they had surrendered to fellow Muslims.

Well, apparently the old hands knew more of their enemy's capability than did the American greenhorn. At any rate, his closing statement was that they, all of the prisoners, knew they were going to be shot. He repeated that statement twice and the video came to an end. I guess, due to previous experience with the Northern Alliance, the prisoners figured they had nothing to lose.

About 20 minutes later in the program, a stateside editor showed video portions of the interview, and even played a few portions with the audio. The final statements, which I recorded in the previous paragraph, were gone, and no one has said anything about it to this day. His voice was gone and has not been played again in any reportage that I have seen.

Yours sincerely,

WP

11 December 2001

Hello,

It is depressing to be so occasionally prescient, but I told my wife over a week ago that the CIA was probably torturing prisoners who then revolted because they thought they had nothing to lose.

I am curious about the videotape. I am sure that unreleased parts of the tape would be even more incriminating. Is someone making a Freedom of Information Act request for release of the rest of the material? The UN Human Rights Commission certainly should be.

You are doing important work. If only it didn't take so long for the truth to catch up and overcome the star-spangled shroud of lies these people always wrap themselves in. It is people like you who are the true patriots, and people like them, who betray the rule of law at their whim, who are the traitors.

MS

11 December 2001



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Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact