

Afghanistan rises in revolt against US occupation

Patrick Martin
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Mass protests at US and NATO facilities throughout Afghanistan over the past week, after US troops burned Korans at Bagram Air Base, testify to the Afghan population's deep hatred for the US-led occupation, now in its eleventh year.

After Afghan laborers witnessed the desecration of the Korans, word spread rapidly throughout the country. US bases and UN facilities have been attacked even in cities like Kunduz, far from the centers of Taliban operations in southern Afghanistan. Press reports document overwhelming popular hostility to the occupation forces, even among police and soldiers of the Afghan puppet regime of President Hamid Karzai.

The *Washington Post* quoted two Afghan policemen at a Kabul checkpoint. "Afghans and the world's Muslims should rise against the foreigners. We have no patience left," one said, while his partner added, "We both will attack the foreign military people."

A particularly revealing incident was the killing of a US colonel and major by an Afghan official inside the Afghan Interior Ministry's Command and Control Center—supposedly one of the most secure facilities in Kabul. The two US officers mocked the Koran and argued with an Afghan official, identified as Abdul Saboor, 25. Saboor then shot eight rounds at them, killing both.

Saboor reportedly walked out of the heavily-guarded ministry without interference, which suggests that his actions evoked widespread sympathy.

The outbreak of mass popular protests against the occupation of Afghanistan has sent chills through the

occupying powers. All US military advisers were abruptly pulled out of Afghan government ministries; Germany and France took similar action. The strategy of the Obama administration—which calls for transferring the main role in anti-Taliban warfare to the Karzai puppet regime—is in tatters.

As for Karzai himself, installed as president by the US-led invasion of 2001 and long derided as the "mayor of Kabul," he stands exposed as the tool of a hated foreign occupation, despised even by his own policemen.

The desecration of the Korans at Bagram flows inexorably from the reactionary character of the US-led occupation of Afghanistan—a war of aggression waged against the Afghan people in the face of widespread opposition to war in the American and European working class.

Such a war could only be presented to the population of the NATO countries, and to the soldiers fighting it, on the basis of lies. US soldiers were told that the war against a popular insurgency in Afghanistan was part of the "war on terror," and that as they attacked Afghans fighting the occupation they were fighting terrorists responsible for the September 11 attacks.

Such a criminal neo-colonial war inevitably leads to acts of barbarism like the recent video of US Marines urinating on the corpses of Afghans they had just killed, or the case of Stryker Brigade soldiers who murdered Afghan civilians and cut off their fingers and other body parts as trophies.

Such events are part of the daily crimes and atrocities

involved in maintaining an imperialist occupation of Afghanistan. NATO air strikes routinely incinerate dozens of innocent civilians, US Special Forces break into homes in night raids and terrorize entire families, NATO forces oversee the arrest, detention and torture of thousands.

Major responsibility for these continuing crimes lies with the political forces that disoriented mass anti-war sentiment and channeled it behind the Democratic Party. Barack Obama ran in the 2008 presidential election as a purported opponent of the war in Iraq, while promising to continue the war in Afghanistan. He has since tripled the number of US troops deployed in Afghanistan, and the death toll of Afghan civilians has risen every year since he entered the White House.

The war in Afghanistan demonstrates that the Democratic Party is just as much a party of imperialist war and aggression as the Republican Party. The war is an indictment not only of the Obama administration, but of all those organizations of the liberal and pseudo-socialist “left” that portrayed Obama as an “anti-war” alternative to Bush and the Republicans, and which are rallying behind the Obama reelection campaign in 2012.

The social basis of opposition to war is not to be found in any section of the political establishment, but in the international working class—the force whose struggles last year toppled US-backed dictators in Egypt and Tunisia.

Workers in the United States and throughout the world must demand the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of US and NATO forces, the prosecution on war crimes charges of those responsible for the invasion and occupation of Afghanistan, and massive reparations to the Afghan people.

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