

Withdraw US, NATO troops from Afghanistan!

Statement by Jerry White, SEP candidate for US president

**SEP candidate for president Jerry White
25 April 2012**

With the deal announced on Sunday between the Obama administration and the Afghan government, the US and its puppet Hamid Karzai have codified the long-term presence of American forces in the country, until at least 2024.

This deal means that the US war in Afghanistan could go on longer than all the wars waged by American imperialism throughout the 20th Century—World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and the Persian Gulf War—combined. By 2024, American soldiers who were not even born when the war began would be carrying out tours of duty in Afghanistan.

The announcement comes only a week after the release of images showing American soldiers posing with dismembered Afghan corpses, a revolting spectacle that gave expression to the real character of the occupation.

While offering nothing to the Afghan people but another decade of occupation, violence and humiliation, the deal means at least \$2 billion a year in US subsidies for the corrupt Karzai government and the profiteers, both American and Afghan, who have raked in billions from the first decade of war.

It is telling that the two biggest exports from Afghanistan are American dollars, transported in suitcases by government officials and businessmen to offshore bank accounts in the Persian Gulf, and narcotics—the country produces 90 percent of the world's supply of opium.

The US intervention in Afghanistan is deeply unpopular in both countries. The Afghan people overwhelmingly oppose the occupation of their country by US and NATO forces, which have perpetrated countless atrocities, from the bombing of wedding

parties to night raids to outright massacres like that carried out by a US army sergeant near Kandahar earlier this year.

After every exposure of the brutality of this war, the Obama administration, the Pentagon and the American media all join in a chorus to declare that these events are isolated exceptions.

But all these so-called exceptions, and their counterparts in Iraq, are the essential product of imperialist war. An occupation inevitably brutalizes and demoralizes the soldiers who engage in it, as they are conditioned to view the entire population of the occupied country—the people they are supposedly “liberating”—as the enemy.

The American people have long since seen through the pretense that the purpose of the war is to defend the United States from terrorist attacks like 9/11. Two-thirds of those who responded to recent polls said they felt the war was not worth fighting and that all the troops should be brought home. And there is growing understanding that the real motivation for the war is not the 9/11 attacks, but to give the United States a dominant strategic position in an oil-rich region of the world.

The war in Afghanistan is an unanswerable refutation of all the arguments by liberals and pseudo-lefts that electing a Democratic president who claimed to be antiwar would put an end to the explosion of American militarism under the Bush administration. Afghanistan has become Obama's war. He did not just continue the war policies of George W. Bush, he greatly escalated the fighting in Afghanistan, tripling the number of troops, with a corresponding increase in both Afghan and American casualties.

This has been followed by the war against Libya and preparations for new aggressions against Syria and Iran, along with increased threats against China and Russia. The danger of another world war, with incalculable consequences, looms on the horizon.

The Socialist Equality Party calls for an immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all US, British and other foreign troops and contractors from Iraq and Afghanistan. All US military camps, air bases, prisons and other facilities must be dismantled. The US government must pay reparations to the Afghan people for the destruction caused by more than a decade of war and occupation.

We demand the prosecution of all those responsible for the crimes committed by American imperialism in Afghanistan. This cannot be limited to those involved in individual acts of murder, but must include those guilty of much greater crimes: from Obama and Bush to the generals and diplomats who have organized and led the slaughter.

Ending the war in Afghanistan is only the first step in putting an end to the global campaign of American imperialism to use its residual military superiority to offset its protracted historical decline. The SEP demands the complete dismantling of the US military machine, the withdrawal of US forces from bases and facilities throughout the world, and an end to American military aggression in any form, from troops on the ground to drone-fired missiles.

This requires the building of a new type of antiwar movement, one based on the working class, and fighting for a program of socialist internationalism: the unification of the world working class in a common struggle against the global capitalist system. To find out more about the SEP and our program, visit www.socialequality.com



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