



Photo: AP

Afghanistan, 2010



Photo: AP

August 2009. Bodies of two children following a U.S. air strike in the village of Kowuk, Afghanistan.

These imperialists make the Godfather look like Mary Poppins.

Bob Avakian, *Basics 1:7*



Photo: AP

June 2011. An Afghan shepherd grazing his goats on a roadside garbage dump in Kabul, Afghanistan.



Photo: AP

Afghanistan, 2003

Afghanistan—10 Years of U.S. War

The U.S. war in Afghanistan—started almost 10 years ago—is the longest war in U.S. history. We're told this is a "war on terror" to prevent another 9/11. But from the beginning, this war has been about EMPIRE—an unjust, imperialist war of conquest aimed at U.S. domination and control in the Middle East. The U.S. occupation now includes 100,000 U.S. and 50,000 NATO troops. The corrupt lackey government, installed by the U.S., is widely hated. Living conditions, including the situation of women, has gotten worse. The people of Afghanistan have suffered horribly, subjected to massacres, bombings, night raids, torture, covert assassinations, drone strikes... and more.

U.S. bombs, missiles and bullets have killed thousands of Afghani men, women and children. The U.S. considers large gatherings a threat and has bombed wedding parties, killing and injuring dozens at a time. In one province U.S. forces bombed 150 civilians—mostly women and children—in one day, using white phosphorous. Civilian deaths have risen every year under Obama.

U.S. soldiers carry out **night raids**, storming into homes, guns drawn, often shooting without warning. People are often rounded up, illegally detained and sent to interrogation and torture centers. These raids have increased under Obama. In the small town of Gardez, six members of a single extended family, including three pregnant women, were shot dead. U.S. soldiers detained, brutalized and interrogated some of the survivors, then lied about and tried to cover up the whole incident.

Afghani women suffered terribly during the 1990s under the brutal rule of the Taliban. When the U.S. invaded Afghanistan in 2001, it claimed to be fighting for the rights of women. But the U.S. has only brought continuing oppression and suffering to women in Afghanistan—military assaults, malnutrition and lack of health care, and putting into power reactionary Islamist warlords who enforce extreme anti-women practices in every realm of life. The U.S.-backed Karzai government pushed a law supporting rape in marriage, and the only two rights women are guaranteed by the Constitution are the right to obey their husbands and the right to pray, but not in a mosque.

The U.S., especially under Obama, has stepped up use of unmanned **drone aircraft** to launch missile strikes. The Air Force now flies at least 20 Predator drones—twice as many as a year ago—every day. Between January 2009 and February 2010, the U.S. fired at least 184 missiles and 66 laser-guided bombs at what they said were "militant suspects," often killing or wounding civilians.

Endless war: The mainstream press made a big deal of Obama's June 22 speech which announced plans for withdrawing troops from Afghanistan—as if this was the beginning of an end to the war. But do the math: When Obama took office in January 2009 there were 32,000 U.S. troops in Afghanistan. By December 2009—when this number had grown to 68,000—Obama announced an "Afghan surge," to add over 30,000 U.S. soldiers. Now Obama plans to withdraw the 33,000 "surge troops"—10,000 by the end of 2011 and the rest by the Summer of 2012. This means by the end of 2012, there will still be 68,000 troops in Afghanistan—*twice as many* as the 32,000 when Obama took office.

The U.S. invasion in 2001 grew out of a decade of U.S. planning *before 9/11* aimed at seizing greater initiative and hegemony in the Middle East and Central Asia. And the history of U.S. domination in Afghanistan goes back several decades. In 1979, the Soviet Union, then an imperialist rival of the U.S., invaded Afghanistan. And throughout the 1980s, the U.S. funneled more than \$3 billion in arms and aid to reactionary Islamic fundamentalists to fight the Soviet occupation. *This* CIA-led insurgency is where Osama bin Laden got his start.

The U.S. war in Afghanistan is almost 10 years old... and counting... and the horrible crimes being committed by the U.S. against the Afghani people will continue to pile up. At the same time, the U.S. is facing real problems in continuing this war and there are differences among the rulers over how to deal with this. Look for analysis of this in a future issue of *Revolution*.