

THE AFTERMATH OF 9/11, TEN YEARS LATER

Tragedy Leads to Destructive US Foreign and Domestic Policies

September 9,
2011

On the tenth anniversary of September 11, Americans are remembering the roughly 3000 people who died that day in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania. For some, the date also brings anger at the US government for manipulating the nation's collective grief and fear. Rather than taking the world's sympathy and seeking to bring violent criminals to court, the US became embroiled in ongoing and ever-expanding illegal, immoral, expensive wars and passed laws to threaten the freedoms it claims to be protecting.

SIX COUNTRIES AND COUNTING: AFGHANISTAN, IRAQ, YEMEN, PAKISTAN, SOMALIA AND LIBYA

****AFGHANISTAN**** The first post-9/11 war, launched without a specific UN mandate or reasonable self-defense claim, was the US bombing, invasion, and occupation of Afghanistan starting October 7, 2001. While UN Security Council Resolution 1373 (9/29/01) invoked the militarily enforceable Chapter VII, it called for all member states to reject "terrorism" and for a progress report to be issued 90 days later.

Security Council Resolution 1378, passed November 14—over a month after the US war began, called upon the Afghan people to build a new government and condemned the then-faltering Taliban regime for having harbored Osama Bin Laden. The Taliban fell from power December 22, 2001.

Afghanistan has been racked by violence for over 30 years beginning with the US and Soviet Union fighting for control from 1979 to 1989. Bin Laden was a product of the US efforts funding the "Mujahideen" to fight the USSR.

Although a new Afghan government was installed by the US, the Taliban and others have initiated guerilla attacks against international forces and the new regime. In 2006, NATO troops technically took over much of the military control from the US. In 2009 and 2010, President Obama sent a "surge" of troops, increasing the number from roughly 34,000 at the end of the Bush era to over 100,000. In June, 2011, a much-ballyhooed announcement that 30,000 troops will come home by the end of 2012 was considered progress, ignoring that there will still be both nearly double the number of troops from 2008 and 100,000 or so "contractors" in the country.

It is unknown exactly how many Afghan civilians have died as a result of the invasion, but the BBC reports (7/14) there were "1,462 civilian deaths in January to June [2011], a 15% increase" from 2010. Meanwhile, US troop deaths went up from 50-150 per year in 2002-2008 to 300-500 in 2009-2011. As of September 7, 1760 US troops and almost 1000 others had died in Afghanistan (icasualties.org).

****IRAQ**** To justify the US-led March 2003 invasion of Iraq, the Bush administration asserted that because Iraq supported terrorists, Iraq is part of the "War on Terror." However, the 9/11 commission report among others found that Saddam Hussein provided no material support for Al Qaeda prior to 9/11 (Reuters, 9/8/06). President Bush himself conceded that there was no connection between Iraq and 9/11. Not a single one of the hijackers was alleged to have been Iraqi. Iraq had no reconstituted weapons of mass destruction program.

US soldiers and Iraqi civilians and combatants continue to die as a result of these manipulations. 4474 Americans

had died in Iraq as of September 9, 2011; that means combined, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have cost more than twice the 2973 Americans lives lost on September 11. And that's not counting more than 94,000 American men and women who've been wounded and disabled since then (Department of Defense statistics, 8/23).

After the initial invasion and resulting factional fighting, Iraq Body Count estimates between 102,416 and 111,937 Iraqi civilians have died, based on verifiable news reports (www.iraqbodycount.org). That's more than 30 times the number killed on 9/11. While many were killed directly by bombs and gunfire, others died as a result of damage that US bombings caused to civilian infrastructure, including damage to hospitals and water filtration plants.

The infrastructure in Iraq, devastated by the US' 1991 war and 13 years of economic sanctions, has not improved despite billions pumped in by American taxpayers. A 2011 bipartisan report found "the US government has wasted more than \$30 billion on private contractors and grants in Iraq and Afghanistan over the past decade" (The *Guardian*, 8/30).

The Status of Forces Agreement signed by George Bush in 2008 calls for all US troops to be out by December 31, 2011. President Obama seems to be tempting Iraqi militia leader Moqtada Al Sadr to make good a threat to start fighting again if the troops don't leave. Alternatively, over 25 members of Congress have signed onto HR 2757, which would prohibit the use of any funds to support US military personnel, contractors, permanent bases or control of Iraq's oil after the end of the year.

****PAKISTAN**** Under GW Bush, American unarmed aircraft (drones) dropped bombs on Pakistan's northwestern region (near Afghanistan) 45 times in 5 years. President Obama has overseen 219 drone strikes as of August 22, in just 3 years (longwarjournal.org). At minimum, 128 civilians have been killed, though the US continues to deny this (*Guardian*, 7/17). There was a brief reprieve in the drone strikes after a CIA contractor killed two Pakistanis in January, and again after a US Navy Seal

(more, over)



