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AWG: April 2010

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A Peace & Solidarity Agenda for Afghanistan

Why have America and its allies failed to bring stability and progress to Afghanistan after 8+ years of war?

The US has never really tried peace. *Afghans still lack jobs, clean water, food, health care, schools, revived agriculture, electricity, and basic rights. A country ravaged by 30 years of war and oppression cannot be rebuilt, and its social fabric re-knit, under a foreign military occupation.*

This whole approach must be scrapped.

US and NATO forces must leave Afghanistan without delay

We also recognize that the many Afghan organizations and civil society leaders working for an equitable society and their country's recovery deserve and need our support.

**Standing firmly with the Afghan people,
what else should we advocate?**



**we advocate taking the
following 8 steps:**

**Call President Obama
& your Congressperson today**

**Tell them NO to any more funding for the war in
Afghanistan
but YES to reparations and Afghan-led reconstruction.**

CONGRESS Switchboard: 202-224-3121

WHITE HOUSE Comments: 202-456-1111

Switchboard: 202-456-1414





8. Back vigorous multi-lateral regional diplomacy

that respects all parties' interests and guarantees Afghanistan's sovereignty, neutrality and stability. What happens there is critically important to its neighbors, including Iran, China, and Russia. Pakistan and India's rivalry shouldn't be allowed to hold up other diplomatic efforts, nor should US/NATO military and commercial objectives be allowed to dominate them.

Honest diplomacy needs no occupation.



If we want US troops home, America's failed approach in Afghanistan must be transformed with bold, peaceful solutions that haven't yet been given a chance.

1. Recognize our responsibility for reparations.

From 1979-1991 in Afghanistan, the CIA exploited religious extremists and built up new Afghan strongmen to fight the Soviets in a war that destroyed a developing country. After the USSR's collapse, the US abandoned its former Afghan proxies to a savage civil war that brought the Taliban to power. After ignoring this regime's brutality, post-9/11 the US re-empowered former mujahidin allies to topple it, bombed the country, installed Hamid Karzai as a puppet President with a warlord-infested government, and let Afghan poppy bloom into the world's #1 heroin supply. Afghans' hopes for their country's recovery have been cruelly betrayed again and again. They don't forget. The US has a responsibility to withdraw its troops and to provide non-military aid as a down payment on its longstanding debts

2. De-militarize foreign assistance.

Humanitarian work, reconstruction, "nation-building", "human rights" and the "civilian surge" are being militarized by increased reliance on US & NATO Provincial Reconstruction Teams, whose mission is thinly disguised counter-insurgency. PRTs demand intel from villagers needing medicine, undermine the work of neutral NGOs, don't empower Afghans, can't deliver large-scale assistance, and require the continued presence of US troops.



3. Prioritize development projects and let Afghans lead.

Since 2002 only a fraction of promised aid ever arrived. Most was wasted on Western contractors and ill-designed projects in which the Afghan government and its people have had no say. Now the Pentagon wants to focus on rewarding local strongmen, cooperative tribes, and pacified villages with projects. This classic imperialist strategy won't work.

Instead, support Afghanistan's popular but underfunded **National Solidarity Programme**, a reliable aid vehicle awarding grants for community-defined needs with women as equal decision-makers. Funds should also go to experienced educational, community-building, and anti-poverty **organizations directed by Afghans**, who know what's needed and how to deliver it.





Shukria Barakzai, MP from Kabul

-Afghan-style efforts to advance women's rights have never been on the West's agenda

Their Afghan champions, male and female, haven't given up and deserve our support. Poverty reduction will also enable women's empowerment and participation. *Without them, Afghanistan cannot move forward.*

4. Let Afghans define "democracy."

Donor nations that also contribute troops mouth platitudes about "state-building" while pursuing military and political advantage. While traditionally legitimate power is rooted in the countryside rather than in a strong government, Afghans need rule of law, protection of rights, and institutions linking citizens to decision-making at every level. Many distrust Western notions of "individual freedom" without moral or communal obligations, and see the "free market" capitalism introduced after 2001 as anti-democratic. Instead, they associate democracy with a state-regulated, social-democratic system more in line with Islamic ideals of social justice, ethnic equality, and the needs of the poor. *The US must get out of the way.*

5. Back "governance reform" that roots out our corruption.

Afghans rate corruption-ridden government their #1 problem. US and NATO forces turn a blind eye to criminal behavior by crony officials, work with warlords who "get things done" or "protect our troops," and let contractors bribe local Taliban to secure convoy routes. A major suspected drug lord is on the CIA payroll. *Without these unsavory relationships, our military mission wouldn't survive long. Pull the rug out! Demand Congress investigate these scandals, then swiftly enact laws to criminalize giving bribes or cover to corrupt officials abroad and bar funding.*

-US support for warlord rule is intolerable.

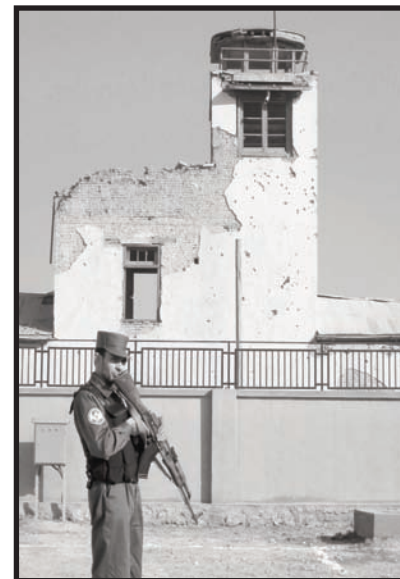
Afghans hate it. Known criminals must be barred from running for office, and women candidates and officials be given the protection they ask for, in order to advance democratic participation and legitimate political power. *This process will take time and Afghans must lead.*

Gul Agha Shirzai: warlord, accused drug lord, ex-presidential candidate & US crony



6. After the US announces it will leave, replace US/NATO control of security operations and training with a temporary and neutral peacekeeping collaboration acceptable to the Afghan government, with a Muslim country in a lead role. Their mission: to protect the people, enable development projects to proceed, train the army Afghans want and the honest community police they still don't have.

Bases must be turned over to Afghanistan as US/NATO troops exit. Claims that America's security requires troops to fight Al Qaeda in Afghanistan are bogus. *The US/NATO monopoly on security and training efforts only justifies extending the occupation. If military contractors and clandestine US Special Forces stay behind, the US intervention in Afghanistan won't be over.*



7. Peace negotiations must not sell out Afghans' interests to political or military expediency, like the temporary illusion of stability for a face-saving troop exit. Although the US can't control a political settlement, we should advocate principles in Afghans' best interests, such as:

- Transparent peace talks that are ethnically balanced and include women. *Broad pledges to "protect women and girls" fall far short of bringing women's ideas and ardor for peace directly into decision-making about the future of their country. Marginalized groups must be at the table.*

- Peace with justice. *A majority of Afghans endorsed Afghanistan's 2005 peace, reconciliation and transitional justice plan as the way forward. Men widely accused of egregious crimes and abuses should be called to account and victims vindicated. Afghans will not trust the US and NATO unless they, too, answer for their crimes against the people. "Peace" without justice will guarantee continued instability.*

- De-couple negotiations from US/NATO military goals. Defense Secretary Gates thinks "squeezing the Taliban" will produce a better political outcome: but for whom? NATO also has agendas in Central Asia. How many more will die to extract some foreign advantage?