stop the war! stop the occupations!

U.S. & DEMOCRACY BUILDING FAILURE AFTER FAILURE

By Nita Palmer

After the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Centre, the US and their allies launched a ‘global war on terror’. Alongside this guns-blazing military campaign, though, there was also a softer, more idealistic goal: to “create a more secure, democratic, and prosperous world for the benefit of the American people and the international community” (Mission statement, US State Department, 2004).

Since then, the US, NATO members, and other allied countries have spent billions not only on their military campaigns but also on programs to build and promote democracy in the countries which they have invaded and occupied. In Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, and elsewhere, old governments have been overthrown by the military might of these imperialist countries, but has this ushered in a new era of democracy? Let’s examine the evidence.

Afghanistan

When the United States and NATO invaded and occupied Afghanistan in 2001, building a ‘stable and democratic Afghanistan’ was identified as one of their main goals in the Bonn Agreement, which set up a new government and state structure in Afghanistan under heavy US and NATO funding and influence.

Before the invasion of Afghanistan, stories emerged in the Western media detailing the villainy of the Taliban, who held power in the country at the time. While the Taliban certainly were not a beacon of progress and human rights, the situation in Afghanistan has improved little to date.

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Although the US and their allies were truly trying to build democracy in Afghanistan, they have by all accounts failed miserably. However, beyond the failures of these projects, we must also ask one critical question: how is it possible to build democracy in Afghanistan when the country is still occupied by 10,000 US troops and more than 100,000 military contractors? The ultimate power for any and all decisions in Afghanistan lies in the hands of the US and their allies who control these armed forces. It is truly impossible to have any legitimate, democratic government in Afghanistan (or anywhere else) when a foreign government holds the military and economic control in the land.

Iraq

The US and UK invaded Iraq in 2003, promising to rid the country of the ‘dictator’, then-President Saddam Hussein. This goal was indeed achieved. But rather than ushering in a new era of democracy and prosperity, Iraq has over the past fourteen years plunged into chaos, instability, and sectarian violence. By 2016, 22.5% of Iraqis were living in poverty, according to the Iraqi Ministry of Planning. An Iraqi parliamentary committee estimated last year that unemployment might be as high as 40%, with youth unemployment sitting...
The Trump Administration announced it has given Defense Secretary Jim Mattis the authority to direct troop levels in Afghanistan. It is widely believed that Mattis favors sending several thousand more US troops to Afghanistan. Why? Perhaps to break the “stalemate” as described by the Commander of U.S. Forces in Afghanistan, Army General John Nicholson when he was briefing the Senate Armed Services Committee. In his June 13th testimony, Secretary Mattis told the same committee, “We’re not winning in Afghanistan right now.”

Veterans For Peace calls for a different direction than more war. We call on Congress to stop funding war and demand a plan for a peaceful solution. We call on the President to immediately begin withdraw U.S. troops and take a new direction towards diplomacy and peace. And we call on the people of the US to resist war and demand policies that foster peace and prosperity at home and in Afghanistan.

It should be clear after 16 years and the death of tens of thousands of people that no one is a winner in Afghanistan. There is no clear indication of what will eventually be the outcome. In fact, it is no longer clear why the US continues to keep troops in Afghanistan and now is on the brink of increasing the number of men and women in harm’s way. The US has claimed to be at war in Afghanistan to deny “terrorists’” training and staging areas to attack the United States and to protect the people of Afghanistan. After this long period of war, what does the US have to show for its military efforts? Since the overthrow of S?ad?d D? Novali in 2001, the US has been on a path of war, wreaking harrors on millions of people around the globe. Because of displacement, death and maiming of loved ones by U.S. wars, antiwar movements have increased and the US has not been able to act. The antiwar movement by the wars has created a larger pool of people willing to fight the US. In 2001 at Q?ad?a had limited influence when compared to the Bush Presidency. Now Q?ad?a and ISIL have affiliated groups and sympathetic supporters around the globe. The war on drugs has been a total failure. It has been widely reported that the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan found that there were more than 100,000 internal displaced civilians (948 deaths and 7,920 injured) between January and December 2016, an overall increase of 3 percent. An appauling number of those casualties were children – 923 deaths, and 2,589 injured – a 24 percent increase over record-high numbers from 2015. In addition, 3,335 coalition forces have died, three of which were recently killed as a result of an insider attack fire from an Afghan soldier. We must add to these losses all the people who have been killed during the war – physically broken and families torn apart. The human cost is immeasurable. But there is also a dollar cost to war. The US has spent over $1 trillion in this failed and depleted effort in Afghanistan. These dollar represent lost opportunities to repair U.S. infrastructure, pay for repairs to our nation’s airports, create jobs and address a host of human needs.

It is not too late for a different direction. War was always the wrong option. Perhaps it is time for a new path now. It should be clear now more than ever before.

MOBILIZATION AGAINST WAR AND OCCUPATION - MAWO April 6, 2017, Vancouver, Canada

Hands Off Syria!

Resist Imperialist War Mongering!
Oppose and Condemn US Missile Attack on Syria!
Organize Against New US Direct War Drive in Syria!
US Stop Bombing Syria Now!
US Hands Off Syria!

It is very obvious that the US and ISIS have embarked on a plan to destroy the legitimate and elected government of President Bashar Al-Assad. This criminal and ugly front of the US and ISIS/Islamist should be exposed and condemned.

All observations and the course of the events are clear indications that the US claim that President Bashar Al-Assad’s government used chemical weapons against civilians is a lie. The US and ISIS is allying to destroy the Al-Assad government.

1. The Syrian government has no chemical weapons. Syria completed the elimination of all chemical weapons material and equipment in November 2013 under an agreement that was ratified and observed by Russia, US, EU and the UN, and is still monitored by International organizations.

2. On April 5, 2017, one day before US cruise missile attack against Syria, at the UN Security Council, the UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Mr. Kim Won-Soo, clearly stated, “However, the means of delivery of the alleged attack cannot be definitively confirmed at this stage.”

3. One must think, why would the US be in the middle of a UN investigation about this incident and the complete denial by the Syrian government of this act? Why not launch a cruise missile attack against Syria? Why would they do this when all indications from political and military facts are that the US plans to launch a new war on Syria?

The US government is afraid that the result would be the opposite of what they claim.

We call up all progressive, antiwar and human loving organizations and people to take an active hand forward and unite to resist and fight back against this new bloody and criminal war drive by US and their imperialist allies.

Syrian People Will Win!
US All Troops Out of Syria!
Stop Bombing, Sabotage and Sanctions Against Syria!

There was only one candidate, Mustafa Harat supported by Saudi Arabia. After Hadi’s term ended in 2012 the country in 2015, Saudi Arabia began bombing Yemen under the pretext of bringing back ‘stability’ and ‘democracy’ to Yemen (restoring Hadi to power). Nearly 13,000 people have been killed in the bombing campaign, and more are killed every day. Seventeen million people are on the verge of famine, according to the UN, and Saudi Arabia has forcibly displaced at least two million people. Saudi Arabia is carrying out the dirty work of the US with this war. But how will bombing and starving people bring democracy? The Yemenis have been forced to flee as a result of a call for a government which would represent their interests and stand up to the US and Saudi Arabia.

Imperialism: Incompatible with Democracy

All available evidence points to a complete and utter failure by imperialist countries to export a sort of democracy to those countries which they have invaded and occupied.

But we must ask: was ‘building democracy’ truly the goal in the first place? While Iraq, Libya, Syria, Libya and Yemen have been attacked for their lack of democracy, the US and Canadian governments have no concern about allaying themselves closely with Saudi Arabia - a country which has never held national elections and is ruled by a ruthless monarchy with an atrocious record on human rights and women’s rights.

The problem imperialist countries had with the governments of Afghanistan, Iran, Libya, Yemen, Iraq and Syria was precisely this: that they did not want to impose on any country a sort of democracy to those countries which the US has invaded and occupied.

It seems ‘building democracy’ is in fact nothing more than a euphemism for ‘regime change’. The ‘war on terror’ is nothing more than a justification for this. Imperialist countries are attempting to take back control of independent nations which have dared to claim control over their own resources, their own foreign policy, and their own future. As the capitalist system faces a falling average rate of profit and is battling against severe economic crisis, imperialist countries are racing to control global markets and resources ahead of rising strong competitors such as Russia and China. In this mad race, it is the people of the world who are paying the ultimate price. In just the past few years war and occupation, imperialist countries have razed cities in Syria, Yemen, Libya and Ukraine, and killed and maimed millions. They have tried to destroy entire countries. Wars bring many consequences, but democracy surely isn’t one of them.

True Democracy: Self-Determination for Oppressed Nations

Every oppressed nation must be granted the right to self-determination – to choose its own government and its own foreign policy without influence or meddling from foreign powers. Imperialism is a fundamental part of democracy – yet this is exactly what the US and other imperialist countries are attempting to bring to the countries they have invaded. True democracy cannot be brought to a country at gunpoint, or through a war which deprives people of their most basic rights of food, shelter and security. True democracy cannot exist when the only schools, hospitals and jobs available are paid for by foreign power. True democracy cannot exist under war and occupation, when the ultimate power for any decision lies with the occupying forces.

Democracy must come from within the country, it cannot be imposed from outside. Only from the现出 democracy is sometimes imperfect. The governments that arise from this system are not perfect, but at least they are not run by the US and the imperialist countries. But if we are to change the system that brought this upon us, we must change the system that gave rise to it. And that requires neither the right nor the responsibility of imperialist countries to intervene.