

Afghan resistance ends U.S. occupation

written by Scott Scheffer
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Members of the Solidarity Party of Afghanistan protest against the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan ahead of its 16th anniversary in Kabul on Oct. 6, 2017.

The long and brutal U.S. imperialist war in Afghanistan is coming to a chaotic, inglorious end. For 20 years, the people of Afghanistan resisted the U.S. occupation and today the puppet government and its phony army has completely collapsed and practically disappeared.

The Kabul airport is packed with up to 6,000 U.S. officials and expats, Afghan people who collaborated with the occupation, and presumably some of the thousands of mercenaries that the U.S. hired while privatizing the war.

The Taliban, which claimed the victory, has announced that it will allow safe passage for those departing the country until Aug. 31. U.S. aircraft have begun ferrying people out. U.S. journalists are fretting that it's not enough time, lecturing the Taliban to respect human rights and hypocritically predicting all manner of brutality.

The Biden White House announced in the spring that the remaining 2,500-to-3,500 U.S. troops would be withdrawn (no mention at the time of the some 6,000 so-called NATO troops or the thousands of mercenaries the big media call "contractors").

As the withdrawal began, Biden kept sending more troops — 6,000 as of August 19 — to the airport. Presidents Obama and Trump had each announced a withdrawal. They both delayed and went along with an over-optimistic Pentagon fabrication of the prospects for an imperialistic victory.

Collapse of the puppet army, government

As the drawdown of troops began last week, by August 14, the Taliban had 21 of 34 provincial capitals under their control. Only three of the bigger cities — Kabul, Jalalabad and Mazar-i-Sharif — were not yet in Taliban hands. When they ultimately took control of Kabul, the U.S. media feigned shock at the speed of the Taliban's

return to Kabul.

But an [Aug. 15 article in the Washington Post](#) revealed that in the ruling circles of imperialism, they were aware that they had a “morale problem.” Afghan government soldiers could not be relied on to fight the Taliban on behalf of U.S. imperialism.

More than a year ago, Taliban representatives began offering amnesty-for-surrender deals to Afghan puppet government troops, officers, and village officials throughout the country. Repeatedly, Afghan government troops were handing over U.S.-provided weapons and equipment – no shots fired. The Taliban let the soldiers trained and armed by the U.S. simply walk away.

The transition happened first in rural villages, then districts, then provincial capitals. In April of this year, when Biden announced that the withdrawal deadline was being sped up from Sept. 11 to Aug. 31, the pace of the surrenders quickened.

Then, on Aug. 15, a few days after Afghan President Ghani gave a speech brimming with confidence about his government’s prospects for fending off any Taliban assault, reports surfaced that he had fled the country. Video of Taliban figures sitting at his desk in the presidential palace appeared. There had been no resistance by the Afghan military.

This year-long process of surrender by Afghan troops couldn’t have been investigated in so much detail by the Washington Post in the last couple of days. Imperialists and savvy journalists have known that a pro-imperialist government could not survive on its own. The choice was between continuing an unpopular war and occupation (getting little in return), or ending it.

For twenty years, the imperialist U.S. military installed successive puppet governments, headed by U.S. cronies such as CIA asset Hamid Karzai, or Columbia University educated Ghani (who, ironically, wrote a book titled “Fixing Failed

States.”) None of them had anything to offer that could improve the lives of impoverished people, rebuild infrastructure, or provide health care, education or housing. None of them had a base of support among the Afghan people.

A long history of Afghan resistance

There is a long history of Afghan independence and determination. In the middle of the 19th century, the Afghan people annihilated the formidable private army of the British East India Company and held off imperialist domination.

The example of the 1917 revolution lifting the impoverished Central Asian nations formerly oppressed by the Czars of Russia influenced neighboring Afghanistan. Between 1921 and 1929 the two countries signed a Friendship Treaty and embarked on projects to help develop Afghanistan with power generation, water resources, transportation and communications. The projects were later abandoned with a government change.

Even during the four decades of the last King of Afghanistan who was overthrown in 1973, there was a respectful relationship between the USSR and Afghanistan. The 1978 Saur Revolution that brought socialist leaders to power was an expression of growing sentiment among youth and students in Kabul and other cities for socialism.

The People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) took over with support from a substantial part of the Afghan military. Immediately they worked to eliminate the crushing debt agricultural workers owed to feudal landlords, build up womens’ rights and workers’ rights, along with other progressive initiatives.

The CIA’s Operation Cyclone cut their progress short. The spy agency recruited among the most reactionary fundamentalists from the region to build the mercenary mujahedeen army to overthrow the April Revolution. Later, in the 1990s, the Taliban

emerged from among the mujahedeen forces that dominated Afghanistan.

From the time that the CIA launched Operation Cyclone in 1979, until the current retreat of U.S., NATO, and mercenary troops, the U.S. imperialists have been trying to impose a pro-imperialist government on an anti-imperialist population.

The U.S. war leaves in its wake cities crowded with internal refugees — families who lost homes or fled the warfare to save their lives. Officially, [nearly 71,334 Afghan civilians and nearly 70,000 Afghan police and military](#) were killed directly by the war. About 7,500 U.S. soldiers, NATO troops and mercenaries died. More than 50,000 Taliban were killed. Nearly 500 journalists and aid workers perished.

U.S. banks, military contractors made a fortune

Military contractors and big U.S. banks, though, made a fortune during the war. In the past, taxing the rich to pay for war expenditures wasn't out of the question. An Aug. 17 [Associated Press article](#) noted that U.S. President Harry Truman temporarily raised top tax rates by 92% and President Lyndon Johnson by 77% to pay for the horrors of the U.S. wars against the Korean people and the Vietnamese people.

Today's billionaires are bigger and more privileged than ever. Lawmakers no longer even hint that U.S. corporations should pay for the wars that bolster the fortunes of the capitalists as a class. Instead, the U.S. has debt-financed the \$2 trillion used for the mayhem and murder in Afghanistan.

Taxes on the rich have been practically eliminated. The U.S. Treasury will be paying the banks for the war on Afghanistan at least until 2050. With interest added, the Treasury will have shelled out some \$6.5 trillion in costs. This amount doesn't even include a portion of the \$2 trillion the U.S. has committed to pay in health care, disability or burial costs for the millions of veterans that were hoodwinked into

taking part in the dirty imperialist wars against Iraq or Afghanistan.

The U.S. war on Afghanistan was another tragic setback for humanity. The task for anti-imperialist organizers — especially in the United States — is to make it the last.

