

A year later, Washington continues torture of Afghanistan

written by Scott Scheffer
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The world witnessed images of desperation during U.S. troop withdrawal in 2021. Today Washington continues its decades-long sabotage of Afghanistan.

The U.S. occupation of Afghanistan ended a year ago. For a year leading up to the

U.S. troop pullout, Afghanistan's national army had been surrendering its weapons to the Taliban. The process was transactional – the Taliban paid the soldiers to walk away. Objectively though, it revealed that the U.S. puppet regime did not have the loyalty of their army and did not have any support at all from the Afghan population. The occupation had not in any way, shape or form improved the lives of the people.

But imperialist punishment and torture of the people of Afghanistan didn't end after the chaotic troop withdrawal. Economic starvation has simply replaced the expensive and pointless military presence.

The Biden administration seized \$7 billion in funds belonging to Afghanistan's central bank that had been held in British banks. They've already announced that half of the funds will be used to compensate families of those who died in the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center, and Biden's administration announced that there are no plans that the remainder will not be returned.

During the 20 years of U.S. occupation, Afghanistan relied on humanitarian aid and poverty was deep and wide. Under imperialist pressure, even this aid that had barely kept the government functioning was ended.

U.S. sabotaged progress

There was a moment in history when Afghanistan could have moved forward. The 1978 Saur Revolution that brought socialist leaders to power was an expression of a 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 owed by agricultural workers to feudal landlords, and build up women's rights and workers' rights, along with other progressive initiatives.

It was the CIA's Operation Cyclone that turned the attempts at progress back. The spy agency recruited among the most reactionary fundamentalists from the region to build the mercenary mujahideen army to overthrow the April Revolution. Later, in the 1990s, the Taliban emerged from among the mujahideen forces that had come to dominate Afghanistan.

From the time that Operation Cyclone was launched in 1979, until the retreat of U.S., NATO, and mercenary troops last year, direct warfare, sabotage and economic pressure have kept any reemergence of the ideals of the Saur Revolution from happening.

Desperation has replaced the hope of 1978. The consequences for the people of Afghanistan have been immense.

Officially, [at least 71,334 Afghan civilians](#) and nearly 70,000 Afghan police and military were killed directly by the 20-year war launched after 9/11. 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.

Today, after years of war and occupation and the imperialist theft of government funds after the withdrawal of troops, the country is in ruins. According to a United Nations report released in May, at least half of the Afghan population are facing acute hunger, and tens of thousands in Ghor province in the northeast of the country are "facing catastrophic levels of hunger."

The economic warfare has been exacerbated by a long period of drought that has wrecked what agricultural activity existed. Many people in Afghanistan have resorted to selling their organs to survive.

Execution of Al-Zawahiri

The troop withdrawal ordered by the Biden administration drew howls of

condemnation. As U.S. troops beat a hasty retreat, thousands of people packed the airport. Many had collaborated with the U.S. occupation. Some had been U.S.-employed mercenaries. Others were desperately looking for an opportunity to escape the deep poverty. Amid the chaos, a suicide bomb killed some 200 people, including 13 U.S. troops.

Right-wing opponents and the mainstream capitalist press bashed the Biden administration. Among the many betrayals of campaign promises and myriad failures, the Afghan withdrawal contributed to the unpopularity of the administration.

The administration has cited the presence of Ayman Al-Zawahiri (the alleged leader of Al Qaeda in Afghanistan) in a Kabul safe house as proof that the Taliban government has failed to live up to commitments to not “harbor terrorists” as part of the Doha agreement.

U.S. intelligence forces (now regularly carrying out military operations) executed Al-Zawahiri on July 31. The alleged breach of the Doha agreement is how the administration justifies its recent announcement that it will not release the Afghan government funds that were seized in spite of the widespread hunger.

[But CNN reported](#) that a U.S. intelligence assessment after the execution concluded that Al-Qaeda “has not reconstituted its presence in Afghanistan” since U.S. troops left the country last August.

Al-Qaeda has often been a proxy for the Pentagon in Syria and in West Asia. The execution of Al-Zawahiri was nothing more than a cynical ploy by the administration to justify the continued domination of Afghanistan, to blunt the criticism over the withdrawal, and try to establish some credibility among the most vociferous warhawks and right-wingers in the U.S.

