

## Afghanistan: Ending a Failed Military Strategy

### A Briefing Paper by September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows

September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows is an organization founded by family members of 9/11 victims who have joined together to transform our grief into action for peace and justice. Twice nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, Peaceful Tomorrows opposed US military action in Afghanistan from its inception. We have sent delegations of 9/11 family members to Afghanistan to meet with Afghan civilians harmed by US military action and to educate the US public and policy makers about the true costs of war. By advocating nonviolent responses to terrorism and war, we work to break the cycles of violence that harm ordinary people in the US, Afghanistan, Iraq and around the world.

Peaceful Tomorrows present this primer as a resource to our colleagues in the US peace community. We hope this can be a starting point for discussion about how we can work together to end the war in Afghanistan.

Go to [www.peacefultomorrow.org](http://www.peacefultomorrow.org) and download the complete, 21 page report which includes a detailed analysis of the ten reasons to end the US occupation of Afghanistan. Along with:

- Recommendations for a Changed US Policy
- Afghanistan Resources
- Notes and Sources

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*Cover photo: Kabul home destroyed by US bomb, killing nine civilians. Photo by Kelly Campbell*

# Afghanistan: Ending a Failed Military Strategy

*A Primer for Peace Activists*



September Eleventh Families for  
**Peaceful Tomorrows**





Crater from a US bomb which destroyed a village in the Shomali Plain. Photo by Kelly Campbell

## Introduction

Following the tragic events of September 11, 2001, many in the US initially supported the war in Afghanistan because they believed that it would reduce the threat of another attack on US soil, and that it would enable the US to bring to justice Osama bin Laden and others responsible for the attacks. Once the Taliban fell, the war was touted as a success. However, while public attention shifted to the war in Iraq, the conflict in Afghanistan entered a new phase of violence and decay.

Concerns about the increased violence and lack of stability in Afghanistan have led many – including President-elect Obama – to call for an increased presence of US and NATO forces in Afghanistan. However, the idea that more US troops are the answer to Afghanistan's woes is misguided. Rather than a military escalation, what is needed is a shift away from militarism, toward diplomacy, aid and reconstruction.

Today, as calls grow louder for the US military to send more troops to Afghanistan, it is up to the US peace movement to address the realities and counter the misconceptions surrounding the war and occupation. We must educate our own communities about the true consequences of US foreign policy in Afghanistan, connect with Afghan peacemakers and grassroots movements that are calling for alternatives to military action, and devise strategies for joining together to build a lasting peace.

This primer outlines ten reasons the US should end the occupation in Afghanistan. We call instead for a drastically revamped US policy focused on diplomacy, negotiation, aid, reconstruction and international cooperation. We hope that this information will help our colleagues in the US peace movement unite to call for a new strategy in Afghanistan.

## Summary

### Ten Reasons to End the Occupation of Afghanistan

1. US and NATO occupation creates civilian casualties, angering Afghans.
2. Military occupation has hampered humanitarian aid and reconstruction efforts.
3. Afghan women continue to face violence and oppression under the occupation.
4. US policy has empowered warlords, drug lords and the Taliban.
5. The occupation contributes to violence and destabilization for ordinary Afghans, including refugees.
6. NATO allies and military leaders are questioning the occupation.
7. US troop casualties in Afghanistan are on the rise.
8. Afghans are calling for a negotiated end to the war.
9. Military escalation will only increase the violence, and potentially lead to a wider war involving nuclear-armed Pakistan.
10. Military occupation of Afghanistan does not curb terrorism.

### Recommendations for a Changed US Policy

1. Set a swift timetable for the withdrawal of US and NATO military forces, to be substituted by UN forces for short-term security.
2. Immediately cease air strikes on targets in Afghanistan and Pakistan.
3. Support negotiations between all parties involved in the conflict, including Afghan women leaders.
4. Reform humanitarian aid and reconstruction funding efforts to prioritize Afghan organizations over foreign contractors. Ensure that funded projects address the needs and requests of Afghans and are not simply pet projects of foreign donors.
5. Invest in long-term aid that increases self-reliance such as sustainable agriculture efforts.
6. Immediately discontinue the use of Provincial Reconstruction Teams, which are costly, inefficient, and have militarized the aid process.
7. Standardize, increase, and publicly document compensation to Afghan families and communities affected by US military actions.
8. Sign the treaty to ban cluster bombs, pay for cluster bomb and landmine clean up in Afghanistan, and pledge never to use these weapons again.