



## Why Are We in Afghanistan?

The recent horrendous casualties suffered by our military forces in Afghanistan must lead the average American to ask the simple question: Why are we still there? Of course, we are told that we are there to prevent the Taliban from coming back into Afghanistan and imposing their radical Islamic dictatorship over that country's hapless population. But as we all know, the moment we leave Afghanistan, the Taliban will be back, and it will be up to the government in Kabul to prevent them from imposing their cruel and despotic rule.



We cannot be there much longer, nor is it the responsibility of the American people, at great sacrifice in lives and treasure, to see that Afghanistan is turned into a western-style democratic society. Not only is it not our responsibility to do so, but the simple truth is that we are incapable of turning a very large, backward, primitive country into a modern state. Nations are responsible for their own destinies, and the United States does not have the right or the means to remake other nations.

We are in Afghanistan only because the Taliban government that ruled that country in 2001 played host to Osama Bin Laden's al-Qaeda terrorist organization that planned and carried out the 9/11 attack on the United States. We were able to oust the Taliban government in a short war that drove the Taliban and al-Qaeda to seek refuge elsewhere. Meanwhile, it freed President Bush to turn his attention to a much larger war unrelated to 9-11: the invasion of Iraq.

Again, American lives and treasure were sacrificed to get rid of Saddam Hussein's despotic regime which, we were told, was on the brink of producing weapons of mass destruction. We had more or less contained Saddam with our no-fly zone, economic sanctions, and aid to the Kurds. So why was it necessary to invade Iraq? We were told that by creating a democratic government in an Islamic country, we would change the political dynamics in the Middle East.

Yes, most of the Iraqi people now have more freedom than ever in their history, if one does not consider Iraqi Christians, who are worse off today than under Saddam. They have a free press. They have a freely elected parliament, mainly because they are a developed country with a great natural resource: oil. But they are also persecuting Christians and have not made peace with Israel. In fact, they have been technically at war with Israel since 1948, and the U.S. government had done nothing to persuade the Iraqi government that it is time to end that state of war and become part of the new Middle East democratic dynamic.

In addition, Iraq is now governed by Shia Muslims who are allied in spirit with the Shia regime in Iran, its neighbor. The Irani mullahs would like to see the United States out of Iraq. But we have just built a billion-dollar embassy in Bagdad and are not about to quit that country. What are we getting from our presence in Iraq? Some military bases which someday we may use against Iran.

But with the Arab Spring still in a state of limbo, with the dictatorships of Libya and Syria being fought over by the local populations, there is no way of knowing how things will turn out in the months ahead.



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Meanwhile, there is no reason why the United States should send its men into wars they cannot win. We are also told that we are in Afghanistan to protect Pakistan from its own radical extremists. Pakistan has nuclear weapons and we must make sure that they never fall into the hands of terrorists. So we support the government of Pakistan with billions in foreign aid.

Our goal should be to minimize our battle casualties by not fighting where we know our influence will end the moment we leave the scene. We can continue to build and train the armed forces of Afghanistan so that they can protect their people against the Taliban. But do we need ground forces to do a job that the Afghans should be doing? Even after we leave, we will always have the means by missile strikes and aerial bombardment to make life difficult for the Taliban wherever they are.

Ever since the end of World War II, we've taken on the role of protector of the free world against communist aggression. That was the reason why we defended South Korea against invasion by North Korea at great cost in American lives. That is why we attempted to protect South Vietnam against North Vietnam, but fought that war not only with our hands tied behind our backs but by also aiding the enemy by trading with Moscow at the same time our men were dying "fighting communism." Giving aid and comfort to the enemy is pure, unadulterated treason, and yet the Johnson administration was doing just that.

We have also pledged to defend the island nation of Taiwan — the Republic of China — against the Red communist government on the mainland. But now that we owe Red China many billions of dollars, what do we do if the People's Republic attacks Taiwan?

Are we obliged to continue being the world's policeman? Will the United Nations assume that role? In the case of Libya, it was the United Nations that ordered the United States to aid the rebels by bombing Gadhafi. Apparently, the United Nations has replaced Congress as the authority that now moves America's military might.

We are now not only in a prolonged period of economic confusion, but we are now entering a period of military confusion. We are not sure who our enemies are or the kind of defense force we need to fight them. And that is because our nation is now involved in an ideological civil war that has turned the government in Washington into the most dysfunctional in our history.

The American people appear to be deeply divided in their understanding of what the purpose of government is. The socialist left believes that government must control every aspect of our lives while the individualist right believes in minimal government, individual responsibility, and low taxes. To put it in the simplest terms possible, the war is between collectivism and individualism and we shall not know which faction will dominate Washington until the elections of 2012.

Other nations have gone through similar ideological struggles. Russia suffered over 75 years of brutal communist collectivism and now has a quasi-authoritarian, free-market system. Cuba still languishes under one of the most terrible collectivist dictatorships in human history even though the United States could have gotten rid of that regime anytime it really wanted to.

Chile thwarted the attempt by Salvador Allende to impose a communist dictatorship on that country by the use of military force. Since then Chile has enjoyed one of the best free-market economies in South America.

Apparently, we in America are destined to go through the kind of agony, economic ruin, and social confusion that has afflicted other nations. We are not exempt from that kind of internal conflict that a vicious ideological war can impose on a nation. We have been betrayed by politicians who took the oath



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to defend and obey the Constitution of the United States knowing full well they intended to violate it.

As a result, the conservative movement, including the latest addition of the Tea Party, has gained more attention because it is finally being recognized by a sizable group of Americans that the time has come to fight back and get rid of these politicians who have betrayed the trust given them by their voters.

We have discovered that we are not immune from the evil that has brought ruin and suffering to other nations. A nation that has removed God from its public schools is destined to suffer its consequences. We tend to forget that the Southern states were reduced to disastrous ruin during the Civil War. Yet they recovered and are probably the most prosperous states in the Union today. We shall recover, but not without having suffered for our mindless evasion of reality.



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