

Afghanistan 12 Years Later: Bring All the Troops and “Contractors” Home!

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The United States invaded and occupied Afghanistan on October 7, 2001, just weeks after 9/11. Although the US has pledged to “withdraw” from the country by the end of 2014, the Afghan government has delayed signing an agreement about how many, if any, US troops will remain in the country. According to a September 14 article from Xinhua news service, a Pakistani official relates that there are currently “*over 100,000 U.S. contractors engaged in various security and other related responsibilities for both Afghanistan and Pakistan,*” and the US intends to keep 20,000 troops there in nine bases [1]. Although the war has faded from the headlines due to its longevity, there are ongoing U.S. airstrikes[2] (including drone strikes[3]), night raids [4], and firefights which kill both Afghan militants and civilians. Even while Iraq’s government expelled most US troops from the country in late 2011, thousands of contractors, diplomats and troops remain in that country guarding the world’s largest embassy. The US is building smaller “*diplomatic outposts*” in Afghanistan [5] and plans to change “Operation Enduring Freedom” into “Operation Resolute Support” come 2015 [6].

The extent of the US drone strikes in Afghanistan, which increased from under 300 in 2009-2011 to roughly 450 in 2012 [7], is currently unknown as the Pentagon stopped publishing the data in March of this year [8].

The Peace and Justice Works Iraq Affinity Group calls for all US troops and “contractors” (whom some would call “mercenaries”) to come home, and to allow Afghans to determine their own future without provoking the violence that comes from the perception of being occupied.



For more information, contact the Peace and Justice Works Iraq Affinity Group at 503-236-3065 or iraq@pjwt.info or check the website at <http://www.pjwt.info/Iraq.html>

[1] U.S. to keep 20,000 troops in Afghanistan: Pakistani senator (Xinhua 9/14)
http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2013-09/14/c_125386855.htm

[2] Ten civilians killed in NATO airstrike: Afghan officials (Agence France Presse 9/8)
<http://www.ndtv.com/article/world/ten-civilians-killed-in-nato-airstrike-afghan-officials-415919>

[3] US assassination drone raid kills 5 in northeast Afghanistan (Press TV 8/22)
<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2013/08/22/319912/us-drone-raid-kills-in-afghanistan/>

[4] Afghans protest against US night raids in Baghlan Province (Press TV 8/21)
<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2013/08/21/319836/afghans-protest-against-us-night-raids/>

[5] U.S. reducing plans for large civilian force in post-2014 Afghanistan (*Washington Post* 12/5/12)
http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2012-12-05/world/35625823_1_afghanistan-sarah-chayes-government-civilians

[6] U.S. ‘Air Combat Troops’ Expected to Stay Post-2014 (*Washington Times* 9/9)
<http://tolonews.com/en/afghanistan/11859-us-troops-expected-to-stay-afghanistan-post-2014>

[7] US sets records with number of drone strikes in Afghanistan this year (RT USA 12/24/12)
<http://rt.com/usa/us-drone-strikes-year-773>

[8] Air Force erases drone strike data amid criticisms (*Foreign Policy* 3/8)
http://blog.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2013/03/08/air_force_erases_drone_strike_data_amid_criticism