

# افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نیاشد تن من مباد بدین بوم ویر زنده یک تن مباد  
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

[www.afgazad.com](http://www.afgazad.com)

[afgazad@gmail.com](mailto:afgazad@gmail.com)

European Languages

زبان های اروپایی

The Frontier Post

## Dehumanizing acts of US forces in Afghanistan

S. Ishfaq

1/20/2012

During the 10 years of Afghan war US military atrocities have shown continued upward trend in Afghanistan. A video depicting four US Marines urinating on the corpses of Taliban fighters is the most shameful disclosure brought on scene lately.

The video, which runs for less than a minute, depicts four Marines in combat gear laughing and joking as they urinate on three male bodies. The caption refers to the corpses as “dead Taliban,” but it was unclear whether the men were civilians or Taliban killed after a battle. However, such callous desecration of the dead is loathsome, even in a war zone.

These acts are also sheer violation of Geneva Convention, to which US is also party. According to chapter II article 17 of Geneva Convention: Parties to the conflict shall ensure that burial or cremation of the dead, carried out individually as far as circumstances permit, are preceded by a careful examination. If possible by a medical examination of the bodies, with a view to confirming death, establishing identity and enabling a report to be made.

One half of the double identity disc, or the identity disc itself if it is a single disc, should remain on the body. Bodies shall not be cremated except for imperative reasons of hygiene or for motives based on the religion of the deceased. In case of cremation, the circumstances and reasons for cremation shall be stated in detail in the death certificate or on the authenticated list of dead.

They shall further ensure that the dead are honourably interred, if possible according to the rites of religion to which they belonged, and their graves are respected, grouped if possible according to the nationality of the deceased, properly maintained and marked so that they may always be found.

In order to prevent diplomatic damage and contain public disgust from the release of the video that spread quickly around the globe, the US Defence Secretary Leon E. Panetta has called the video “utterly deplorable” and personally promised Afghan President Hamid Karzai a full investigation in the matter.

Worth mentioning is the fact that prior to Mr. Panetta’s call, Karzai reacted sharply to the video, describing it as “completely inhumane and condemnable in the strongest possible terms”. Also his administration called on the US military to “apply the most severe punishment to anyone found guilty in this crime”.

This is not the first time such an incident has surfaced with respect to unveiling coalition forces’ egregious behaviour in Afghanistan. In 2010, five members from the 5th Stryker Combat Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division also photographed themselves posing with corpses of Afghan civilians who were gunned down by a self-proclaimed “kill team” of rogue soldiers.

This case represented the most serious prosecution of alleged US military atrocities during 10 years of war in Afghanistan. Those are not the only cases of utter humiliation inflicted by the US military upon war ravaged Afghans living and dead alike.

There is certain grim but obvious irony in the outrage of pundits and military officials to the recently released video. As is typical when the shameful actions of war are exposed to public scrutiny, every effort is being made to characterize the dehumanizing acts as entirely isolated as the deviance of a few rouge marines.

Previously, Haditha, Guantanamo, Bagram – each killing, acts of torture or incident of brutality on the part of American soldiers has been characterized as acts of lone soldiers straying from established military procedures.

Ironically, the explanation since then is accepted happily by the vigilant watchdogs in American media like the New York Times, The Washington Post and American cable news network.

Whereas, with every scandal involving American military actions abroad, the mainstream American media and press should have raised their voice to challenge the pervasive idea that American military is anything but well-intentioned and humane.

Unfortunately, it’s not all that surprising. Such atrocities have always been a part of the dehumanizing nature of warfare. Scalps were collected as the American west was settled.

During World War II, the teeth and skulls of Japanese soldiers were taken as trophies. It was the same in the Vietnam. John Kerry, a US senator and democratic candidate for president and a veteran of Vietnam War testified before the Senate in 1971 about fellow soldiers who cut the ears and heads from corpses of enemy fighters. Photos of the macabre keepsakes were disseminated then too, but without the immediacy and global reach of YouTube.

That’s the difference today. That is why this recent and many more uncivilized acts of US troops in Afghanistan have sparked anger, stained the reputation of US troops in the country and stoke anti-American sentiments at large.

These types of incidents occur 50 times more often as we read about them but the most surprising is the reaction of the mainstream punditry that bewildered sputtering of those who just cannot believe that their military forces could ever engage in such a shocking and craven act as urinating on a dead person. That’s a shame. Dehumanizing atrocity may be a fact of war, but its one the United States should work tirelessly to eliminate.