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Exit Afghanistan and Dismantle the Empire

by Jacob G. Hornberger

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One of the U.S. Empire's big arguments for continuing to occupy Afghanistan is the fear that the Taliban might regain control over the country. The idea is that the Taliban might harbor al Qaeda or other terrorist groups who would use the country to plan terrorist attacks in the United States.

Is that a valid argument for continuing a brutal 10-year occupation of the country, one that continues killing and maiming people?

Absolutely not.

For one thing, there are plenty of regimes around the world that are antagonistic toward the U.S. Empire. Consider: Cuba. North Korea. Venezuela. Burma. Syria. Iran.

What difference does it make that such regimes don't like the Empire? Are any of them invading and occupying the United States? Sure, the citizens living under such countries are living under brutal tyrannical regimes but that is obviously something completely different from such regimes' invading and occupying the United States.

Is the fact that a foreign regime is antagonistic toward the U.S. Empire sufficient justification for the Empire to invade that country, oust the regime, and install a new, pro-U.S. regime?

Absolutely not. That makes the U.S. Empire the aggressor power in the conflict — the power waging what the Nuremberg Tribunal called a “war of aggression,” a war crime.

But, it is said, the Taliban participated in the 9/11 attacks by harboring Osama bin Laden and the al Qaeda terrorists.

Actually, the Taliban did not participate in the 9/11 attacks. If the U.S. Empire had even one iota of evidence supporting that thesis, does anyone honestly believe that President George H.W. Bush would have gone to the United Nations to seek permission to invade Afghanistan? Of course not. When another nation-state attacks the United States, like Japan did in 1941, you can rest assured that the United States is going to defend itself without seeking permission of the United Nations.

Don't forget, also, that the U.S. government furnished millions of dollars in [foreign aid to Afghanistan](#) prior to the 9/11 attacks.

So, what is the Empire's complain about the Taliban? No, not that it was and would be a tyrannical regime. After all, don't forget that the U.S. Empire loves tyrannical regimes, so long as they are loyal to the Empire. Consider: Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Iran (under the Shah), Iraq (under Saddam Hussein in the 1980s), Bahrain, Yemen, Chile (under Pinochet), Argentina (under military rule), and Pakistan (under Musharraf), to name a few.

The Empire's beef with the Taliban is that it refused to comply with President Bush's unconditional surrender demand for Osama bin Laden. Even though there was no extradition treaty with Afghanistan, Bush demanded bin Laden's extradition anyway ... or else. The Taliban was willing to deliver bin Laden to an independent tribunal upon the presentation of evidence indicating bin Laden's participation in the 9/11 attacks.

But Bush made it clear that his demand was unconditional. He refused to show any evidence showing bin Laden's complicity in the attacks and refused to permit bin Laden to be tried by an independent tribunal.

That's why Bush's forces invaded Afghanistan.

Yet, today, bin Laden is dead. Thus, there is obviously no possibility that the Taliban, if it regains power, could continue to refuse to extradite bin Laden to the United States for trial.

Don't forget also that the root of anti-American terrorism is the U.s. Empire's presence in the Middle East. End the presence, and the terrorist threat dissipates, as does the harboring rationale.

Is there a possibility that the Taliban could conspire with terrorists to attack the United States. Of course, just as there is the possibility that the regimes in Cuba, North Korea, Syria, Iran, Burma, and others, even China and Vietnam, could do the same thing.

But such a possibility does not warrant the continuation of the 10-year occupation of Afghanistan, an occupation that produces more anger and hatred with each new bombing and

killing, all in support of a brutal U.S.-supported dictator who owes his power to U.S. military forces and fraudulent “elections.”

Is the possibility that suspected terrorists could live in Afghanistan if the Taliban were to regain power a sufficient reason to continue the occupation?

Consider the fact that a man named Luis Posada Carriles lives here in the United States. He’s the man that Venezuela accuses of masterminding the terrorist bombing of a Cuban civilian airliner over Venezuelan skies, killing dozens of innocent people. Even though there is an extradition agreement between the United States and Venezuela, the U.S. government continues to refuse to grant Venezuela’s extradition demand.

Does the U.S. government’s harboring of Carriles justify a military attack on the United States? Of course not. I think most Americans would say that if Venezuela started bombing sites where Carriles was supposedly located, they would consider Venezuela to have started a war of aggression against the United States.

It is obviously in the interests of the U.S. Empire, especially the Pentagon, CIA, and the military-industrial complex, to fill Americans with fear and dread. When the citizenry are afraid, they think less rationally and are more inclined to go along with the warfare-state’s lies and deceptions to maintain their grip on power and taxpayer money.

No nation on earth has even the remotest military capability or even the interest to invade and occupy the United States. The terrorist threat against the United States is rooted in what the U.S. Empire is doing overseas, including its decade-old deadly occupation of Afghanistan. The Empire is bankrupting our nation with spending and debt.

This would be an opportune time to bring all the troops home and discharge them, close all the foreign military bases, and terminate all foreign aid to everyone. This would be a great time to dismantle the Empire and restore a limited-government republic to our land.