

Ten Reasons to Get the Troops Out of Afghanistan

1 The death rate is rising on both sides. The number of British troops who have died is now higher than those killed in 6 years in Iraq. Fifteen soldiers died in the first two weeks of July alone. No one keeps track of the number of Afghan dead but it numbers tens of thousands since 2001. In May more than 140 Afghans, mainly women and children, were killed in one air strike.

2 This is an unwinnable war. The Taliban was defeated in 2001 but is now growing in strength. Osama bin Laden has not been captured. The war is supposedly about defending the Karzai government. But his government is one of the most corrupt in the world. Neither he nor the occupation forces have brought any real improvements for the Afghan people.

3 Gordon Brown claims the war is about combating terrorism. But there was no terrorist threat to Britain before the war in Afghanistan, or before the war in Iraq in 2003. It is those wars and their consequences that have made Britain a target. Even MI5 told the government the Iraq occupation was likely to increase not decrease terrorism.

4 We are told this may have to be our '30 years war'. We have fought for eight years and the situation is getting worse. Children as yet unborn will be dying if this war is not stopped.

5 The war is spreading to Pakistan, which is a nuclear state, opening up the prospect of an even more terrible conflict.

6 Life is getting worse for most Afghans under occupation. There is a huge refugee problem. Corruption is rife. While Tony Blair promised in 2001 'we will not walk away' Afghanistan remains one of the poorest countries in the world. According to the United Nations life expectancy has fallen for Afghans since 2003. Far more is spent on the war and the military than is spent on reconstruction. Aid meant to help the Afghans is not getting through to those who need it.

7 Britain has spent £4.6 billion on the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq every year – enough money to create 200,000 graduate jobs annually. We should be funding these jobs, not wasting more money on war. Unemployment must not become a recruiting sergeant for the army.

8 More troops or helicopters won't help. The NATO forces are not losing because they don't have the equipment but because they are in Afghanistan.

9 We were told that the war in Afghanistan was to liberate women. But women's lives have not improved. Death in childbirth is rising. The Karzai government even tried to pass a law allowing rape in marriage. Despite all the talk about troops helping girls to go to school, less than a third of Afghan girls are in school and less than 10% can read and write, 7 years after the fall of the Taliban.

10 The majority of Afghans do not want the war and occupation. The majority of British people think the troops should come home by Xmas at the latest. In two recent polls 56% (BBC and Guardian) and 59% (ITN) want the troops out.

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Stop the War Coalition
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