

MAP, OF AFGHANISTAN POST-USSR



Issues to Consider:

- Map outline pre-1989
- U.S. military bases in the region
- Oil/gas pipelines built post-9/11

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- **Veterans For Peace** Statement on Withdraw from Afghanistan
- **Democracy Now!** Interviews with Vet. Matthew Ho, Ret. Col. Ann Wright
- **Podcast:** Brian Becker and vet. Mike Prysner, "Why the Pentagon Lost in Afghanistan"
- **Financial Times:** "China offers Taliban road network in exchange for Peace." Sept. 8, 2020
- **"The Afghanistan Papers"**
- **Film and Project:** Arlington West, Santa Monica
- **Foreign Policy.com** (Journal): "Death by Drone. America's vicious legacy in Afghanistan."
- **Film:** Hijacking Catastrophe: 9/11, Fear & The Selling of American Empire - 2004
- **The Guardian:** "Bush Rejects Taliban Offer to Hand Bin Laden Over" Oct. 14, 2001
- **The Nation:** "A Just Response" by Editor Katrina vanden Heuvel
- **Insider:** "What Recruiters did to Enlist Teens after 9/11" April 4, 2012

AFGHAN WOMEN SAY "NO" TO WAR

- **INDEPENDENT:** 'WE CANNOT HAVE LONG-TERM PEACE WHILE AMERICAN TROOPS ARE HERE,' SAYS CELEBRATED AFGHAN ACTIVIST MALALAI JOYA AUG 6, 2021.
- **RAWA:** REVOLUTIONARY ASSOCIATION OF THE WOMEN OF AFGHANISTAN "STATEMENT ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF 9/11".
- **UNITED NATIONS NEWS:** "AFGHANISTAN: RECORD NUMBER OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN KILLED OR WOUNDED." JULY 26, 2021.
- **CODEPINK.ORG**

AFGHANISTAN AND THE U.S.

Breaking down complex historical and current issues for young people

BACKGROUND AND RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS

CULTURE, HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY

Population: 37.5 million

Languages: Pashto, Dari (Persian).

Terrain: Mountainous (24K Ft.)

and rugged, 3 regions: Central Highlands, Northern Plains, Southwestern Plateau. Landlocked.

Climate: Dry climate, limited rainfall. Water comes from Mts. Currently in drought.

Bordering countries: Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Pakistan, China, and Iran.

Main cities: Kabul, Kandahar, Herat, Mazar-i-Sharif, Kunduz, Jalalabad, although over 70% of the population are rural.

Main occupations: Farmers, miners

Main exports: Fruits, nuts, gums and resins, tea, spices, gems, precious metals.

Foods: Stuffed flatbread, rice and meat, fried eggplant w/ tomatoes, kabobs.

Music: Ethnic Pashtuns, Tajiks and Hazaras

Pre-modern History: Gateway to India on the ancient silkroad. Central Asian roundabout. State founded 1880 after last Anglo-Afghan war.



WHEN DID THE U.S. FIRST BECOME INVOLVED WITH AFGHANISTAN?

- As a Cold War ally, Vice President Richard Nixon visits the strategically important Afghanistan in 1953, and President Eisenhower visits in 1959.
- From the 1950's-70's, the U.S. extends economic development assistance to Afghanistan to assure its allegiance vis-à-vis the USSR.
- After a **coup in 1973** brings in a moderate, secular government **friendly to the Soviets**, U.S. Secretary of State Henry **Kissinger begins support for Muslim extremists** to attack in Afghanistan via Pakistan and Iran, who under the Shah, was an ally of the U.S. America sells weapons systems to Iran.
- July **1979 President Carter** signs the first directive for secret, non-lethal **aid to the opponents** of the pro-Soviet regime in Kabul. (The USSR invades Afghanistan to aid the regime in Dec. 1980).
- 1980's under **Ronald Reagan, CIA's "Operation Cyclone"** arms, trains and **builds the Mujahideen** with the military of Pakistan, in order to fight the government and Soviet forces.

WHO ARE THE TALIBAN?

Taliban means "students" in Pashto.

They are an **ethnic group** that makes up 40 percent of the country, mainly in SE Afghanistan.

During the 1990s, the Taliban were **orphans** of the Russian war and had grown up in mudras that bred **Islamic Fundamentalists**.

Today, those who join the Taliban are **poor famers and herders**. Many join for **money and to avenge** loved ones killed in the war.

Sharia law, similar in Saudi Arabia, requires obedience to **fundamentalist Islam**. Females cannot get an education, are made to cover their entire bodies, bans music and TV. Harshly punishes disobedience.

WHAT HAPPENED AFTER 9/11?

- **Osama bin Laden is radicalized** after U.S. puts military base in Saudi Arabia in 1st Iraq War „91. Trains in Afghanistan. 9/11/2001 attacks occur.
- Sept. 18, **Congress passes the AUMF**, Authorizing Use of Military Force against a wide range of countries and groups. Only 1 member of Congress, Barbara Lee, votes against it.
- Oct. 7 **U.S. begins bombing** Afghanistan.
- Oct. 14, President George Bush and VP Dick Cheney **reject Taliban's offer to turn over Osama Bin Laden** if the U.S. provides evidence of his involvement.
- U.S. war continues for 20 more years.

THE COST OF 20 YEARS OF WAR

- Over 150,000 Afghans killed
- 6 million Afghans displaced or made refugee
- 2,448 U.S. service members killed
- 3,846 U.S. contractors killed
- 1, 144 allies, 458 aid workers, and 74 journalists killed
- \$2 Trillion debt to pay for wars in Afghanistan and Iraq (\$ generally combined in stats)
- \$6.5 Trillion cost with interest by 2050. Future U.S. generations will pay.
- \$2 Trillion Post-war veteran care costs.

WE MUST SEE A SHIFT TOWARDS A FUTURE THAT HOLDS THE MILITARY AND OUR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS ACCOUNTABLE. WE MUST REDUCE THE MILITARY BUDGET AND REALLOCATE THOSE FUNDS TOWARDS SOCIAL PROGRAMS THAT PRIORITIZE MEETING PEOPLE'S NEEDS AND TO SUPPORT THE MASSES OF REFUGEES THAT SEEK SAFETY FOR THEIR FAMILIES. VETERANS FOR PEACE STATEMENT.