

Fake Elections Won't Bring Peace to Afghanistan

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Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

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This week's presidential election in Afghanistan will be an elaborate piece of political theater designed to show increasingly uneasy Western voters that progress is being made in the war-torn nation after seven years of US-led occupation.

Most Afghans already believe they know who will win the vote: the candidate chosen by the United States and its NATO allies.

Voting will mostly be held in urban areas, under the guns of US and NATO troops. The countryside, ruled by Taliban, who are often local farmers moonlighting as fighters, is too dangerous for this electoral charade. Over half of Afghanistan is under Taliban influence by day, 75% at night.

The entire election and vote-counting election commission are financed and run by the US. So are leading candidates. Ten thousand Afghan mercenaries hired by the US will police the polls and intimidate voters. US-financed Afghan media are busy promoting Washington's candidates.

The Pashtun Taliban, a fiercely anti-Communist, religious movement, is banned from the election. Pashtun tribesmen form over half of Afghanistan's population but have been largely excluded from power by the Western occupation.

Taliban vows to fight the sham election, which it calls a tool of foreign occupation. Other nationalist and tribal groups battling Western occupation, notably Gulbadin Hekmatyar's Hisbi Islami and forces of Jalaladin Hakkani, are also excluded from the election.

In fact, all parties are banned; only individuals are allowed to run. This is a favorite tactic of non-democratic regimes, particularly the US-backed dictatorships of the Arab world.

Real power is held by the US-installed Afghan leader, Hamid Karzai, whose administration is being undermined by charges of corruption and involvement in drug dealing. Behind him are two powerful warlords: former Communist secret police chief Mohammed Fahim, a Tajik, and the recently returned from exile Uzbek warlord, Rashid Dostam. These two pillars of the old Afghan Communist regime were arch henchmen of the former Soviet occupiers and notorious war criminals.

President Hamid Karzai's main "rival," Abdullah Abdullah, fronts for the Russian and Iranian-backed Tajik Northern Alliance. Technocrat Ashraf Gani is another supposedly leading candidate. Both men are expected to get high positions in any new government formed by Karzai. Their primary role is to give the impression of an electoral contest.

The northern Tajiks and Uzbeks, traditional foes of the majority Pashtun, are in cahoots with Russia, Iran and India, all of whom have designs on Afghanistan. They continue to dominate Karzai's faltering regime. The majority Pashtun are largely excluded from power.

When the Soviets occupied Afghanistan from 1979-1989, they held fairer elections than the US-run votes. Of course, the Soviet's man, Najibullah, won, but at least dissension was voiced. In Washington's stage-managed Afghan votes, real opposition is excluded. The US used the same trick in Iraq's rigged elections.

Ironically, the US and its NATO allies have been blasting Iran for lapses in its recent presidential election while stage-managing far more questionable elections in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The UN, which, in the words of a senior American diplomat, has become "a leading tool of US foreign policy," is being used to validate the US-run election. The feeble current UN chief, Ban-Ki moon, was put into his job by Washington.

Meanwhile, the party-line North American media keeps lauding the vote. It has long-term memory loss.

In 1967, the New York Times, a vocal supporter of the war in Afghanistan, wrote of US-supervised elections in war-torn Vietnam, "83% of voters cast ballots...in a remarkably successful election...the keystone of President Johnson's policy of encouraging the growth of the constitutional process in Vietnam."

The vote may be close, since so many Afghans dislike Karzai, forcing a runoff. Washington may impose a CIA-World Bank approved "CEO" on poor Karzai, making him a double figurehead.

Whoever wins, President Barack Obama will end up the real power of Afghanistan.

Ravaged Afghanistan needs genuine, honest elections, and patient national reconciliation, free of foreign manipulation. That's the only true road to peace.

America has a great deal to teach Afghanistan about how to run clean elections and build the essential institutions of democracy. As I underline in my latest book, *American Raj - American and the Muslim World*, this is what America should be exporting to the non-democratic world, not B-1 bombers and Predators.

Running phony elections is unworthy of the United States and demeans its values and traditions. The way to real peace and stability in Afghanistan can only be through a national consensus and negotiated settlement that includes Taliban and its allies.

But President Obama is desperate for some sort of victory, though he cannot even properly define the term. Senior US generals warn of defeat in Afghanistan if the US garrison is not doubled. The conflict continues to spread into neighboring Pakistan. Americans are being prepared for a widening of the war "to defend Afghan democracy."

The US and NATO watch in horror as their casualties sharply mount and they have nothing to show voters for the latest Afghan imperial misadventure but body bags and tantalizing mirages of Central Asia's fabled oil and gas.

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