

The Council on Foreign Relations Uses Afghan Women's Rights as an Imperial Propaganda Tool

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In its June 7, 2015 newsletter, the Council of Foreign Relations (CFR) is once again repeating a lie that has been perpetuated ever since the U.S. invaded Afghanistan 14 years ago: Afghan women need the military presence of the U.S. It is "creating security for Afghan women", according to the CFR.

The foreign policy think tank invites us to read a discussion with its female researchers, Catherine Powell, Gayle Tzemach Lemmon and Hannah Chartoff, published in a so-called feminist magazine, Ms. Magazine. Here is the short summary from the newsletter:

[Creating Security for Afghan Women](#)

In Ms. magazine, Powell, Lemmon, and Research Associate Hannah Chartoff discuss the effect of the U.S. government's decision to delay troop drawdown in Afghanistan. The extended U.S. military presence is particularly critical for Afghan women: without security and stability, women will have more trouble participating in the public sphere, such as attending school or working outside the home. As Secretary of State John Kerry said at a March dinner at the U.S. State Department in honor of Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, "The United States stands with the women of Afghanistan today. We will stand with you tomorrow and we will stand with you for years to come, not simply because you merit our support, but because without women's participation and talent, Afghanistan simply will not be able to build the future that its citizens urgently desire and deserve." [See the spring issue of Ms. magazine »](#) (CFR Women and Foreign Policy, CFR Newsletter, June 7, 2015, emphasis added)

We may recall that Afghan women used to live in a liberal, socialist country before the U.S. started supporting and financing the Afghan mujahedeen in the late 70's and 80's, a move that gave rise to the Taliban and Al Qaeda, and which completely obliterated Afghan women's rights. (See Julie Lévesque, [From Afghanistan to Syria: Women's Rights, War Propaganda and the CIA](#), RT Op-Edge and Global Research 4 April 2013)



Kabul University in the 1980's

John Kerry is thus adding insult to injury when he says that the U.S. “stands with Afghan women” because they “merit” his country’s support. The U.S. has been destroying Afghanistan for almost 40 years, it is therefore responsible for the insecurity and instability that reigns over the country. Claiming that “extended U.S. military presence is particularly critical for Afghan women”, and that that presence is necessary to peace and security, is beyond preposterous.

It begs the question, does the U.S. merit Afghan women’s support? What do Afghan women think about the U.S. military presence in their country? They probably know better than three Western women working for a U.S. think tank, don’t they?

Last year the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA) published a statement on the 13th anniversary of the U.S. invasion and occupation of Afghanistan: “Let us drive away the US and NATO occupiers with our unity!” The title alone shows how delusional or good propagandists the above policy “experts” are. It is worth quoting at length, as it portrays Afghanistan the way Afghan women see it and it is light years away from the fantasy Western leaders and pundits are creating to serve America’s imperial aspirations:

October 7th, coincides with the 13th anniversary of the US occupation of Afghanistan which was staged under the banner of ‘war against terror’, defending human rights, women’s rights, and democracy. For securing these false and deceptive purposes, the US leaned on fundamentalist misogynist terrorists and war criminals, and technocrat agents [...]

First they used their fundamentalist Jehadi and Taliban lackeys to drag the country to crisis and chaos [...] and then used its propaganda machine to paint the Al Qaeda and Taliban – its own creations – as global threats. The people

behind the 9/11 incident were the creations of CIA, but this served as a context to cunningly convince the world, and 'officially' invade Afghanistan after the UN 'authorization'. This way the US 'legally' occupied Afghanistan along with NATO countries [...]

In the past thirteen years, the US and its allies have wasted tens of billions of Dollars, and turned this country into the center of global surveillance and mafia gangs; and left it poor, corrupt, insecure, hungry, and crippled with tribal, linguistic, and sectarian divisions. There is no security... our women are not only recognized as second sex people but treated like animals and subjected to violence and trading without accountability [...]

The US army along with forty other countries only killed our innocent compatriots. They had no intention of uprooting the Taliban that enjoy no support among our people, and this ominous and mercenary force is still recognized by the US as useful for its strategic purposes in the region. As a result of the foreign invasion, our country is the most corrupt country and biggest producer of drugs in the world...

The most recent example of the US's sham democracy in Afghanistan is the ridiculous elections. The candidates supported by the US were loyal spies, mafia heads, and professional criminals. The rigging and fraud of this mockery distressed the whole world. John Kerry ordered the formation of a government under the name of 'national unity'. The government is composed of the most infamous enemies of our people and has been imposed upon our people, once more, with Ashraf Ghani, a professional spy, installed as the president [...]

How is it possible that the US, that has a history filled with treachery to nations and whose claws are still dripping with the blood of the poor people of world, will bring peace and prosperity to Afghanistan? If we ignore the bloody past of the US, did it not unleash mayhem in Libya and Iraq recently and is now out to destroy Ukraine? Has it not brought hell upon the people of Syria by supporting ISIS and Al Qaeda? With its open support for Israel, is it not responsible for the bloodbath in Palestine? Has the US ever shown restraint in partnering with fundamentalists? Rather, it sees them as its obedient dogs and best tools to combat socialism, nationalism, and revolutionary and progressive movements in the region.

In the past thirteen years, our people have suffered immensely from the brutality, plunder, bullying and crimes of the stooges of CIA, ISI, VEVAK, and others. Our ill-fated women have been the prime victims of all this oppression...

The Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA) which is fighting against occupation and fundamentalism with all its might, has full belief that our people will find the will to annihilate these two notorious enemies, if not today, certainly tomorrow, and this destructive storm of the people will uproot these elements. Freedom, democracy, and justice are attainable by the people and not superpowers and foreign countries. Only democracy based on secularism can save Afghanistan from this limbo and direct it on the path of progress and prosperity. (Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan, [Let us drive away the US and NATO occupiers with our unity!](#), Rawa.org, October 7, 2014)

Regarding the drawdown of U.S. troops, which is the topic discussed in the "feminist" magazine, Reena, a spokeswoman for RAWA said last year:

[...] the U.S. is leaving Afghanistan worse off than when the Taliban was in

power. This should come as no surprise, given that for decades the U.S. has refused to back anyone other than corrupt and criminal elements. (Sonali Kolhatkar, [Entirely Predictable: The U.S. Is Leaving Afghanistan Worse Off Than Before](#), Rawa.org, November 6, 2014)

For Reena, the security agreement between Afghanistan and the U.S., ensuring the indefinite presence of 10,000 U.S. troops on Afghan soil, shows the U.S. is in Afghanistan to stay and “use this region very strategically for its military purposes.” (Ibid.)

A genuinely feminist magazine would give a voice to Afghan women when discussing their fate would it not? Maybe they have, but to be honest, this author has not read the article, for which you have to pay around \$15. One can easily tell from the CFR summary though, that if they did give Afghan women a voice, the CFR research associates did not listen to what they had to say. Indeed, the subtitle to their article *Safe Enough To Thrive* reads: “As the U.S. slows down its troop withdrawal, the women of Afghanistan have more time to solidify their social and political gains.”

“Social and political gains”? Which gains? Afghan women have lost pretty much everything thanks to America. In conclusion, it bears repeating RAWA’s statements:

- The US occupation of Afghanistan was staged under the banner of ‘war against terror’, defending human rights, women’s rights, and democracy. For securing these false and deceptive purposes, the US leaned on fundamentalist misogynist terrorists and war criminals, and technocrat agents;
- Afghan women have been the prime victims of all this oppression;
- There is no security;
- The U.S. is leaving Afghanistan worse off than when the Taliban was in power;
- How is it possible that the US, that has a history filled with treachery to nations and whose claws are still dripping with the blood of the poor people of world, will bring peace and prosperity to Afghanistan?

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