

In the wake of the attack in Kunduz

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Editor's note: The opinions expressed in this commentary are solely those of the author.

The US occupancy in Afghanistan started as a response to 9/11 attacks. The targets were announced as the "terrorists nested in the Afghan lands." The goal was to wipe out the terror that caused the death of three thousand people. During this occupancy the war has been quietly and continuously raging incessantly for 14 years where thousands of innocent civilians have lost their lives. These losses generally have been referred to as "civilian losses", "collateral damage" or "an inevitable side effect", by the Western media. The reports on the death of such innocent children, guiltless women and men, have been obscured with such phrases and descriptions.



U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan 2012. Photo: Courtesy US Central Command

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What would the attacks carried out with smart bombs in aerial bombardment and armed drones aimed at densely populated attacks give way to? They would definitely result in losses of innocent lives. That is not "side effect" or "collateral damage" but an expected outcome. Using "smart" fuses and bombs during these operations wouldn't change the end result.

In the beginning of October, a news report from Afghanistan once more reminded the whole world of this evident fact. The American fighter planes bombed a hospital operated by the NGO, Doctors Without Borders. 30 people lost their lives; some patients were burnt to death in their hospital beds, and 60 people were injured. During the days following this incidents some military officials stated that the hospital was shot by mistake and the US President Obama issued an apology.

Actually, civilian loss as a result of air strikes is something frequently experienced in Afghanistan. The majority of those losses do not even make the news. However, this time the stricken target was the hospital of a Nobel prize winning organization. That is why it took place among the top news headlines in the world. Comments were made, protests were held and condemnation messages were issued with the headings "a horrifying tragedy", "an unforgivable mistake."

Certainly carrying out detailed investigations about the subject and castigating the parties at fault is important. What is urgently important though, is to concentrate on solutions that should be well planned out and done to prevent such pains once and for all.

Bombing a hospital full of patients, doctors and health personnel is undoubtedly a grave mistake and injustice. Even if some Taliban militants were inside that health institution or were being treated in that institution, bombing such a building is unacceptable and would certainly be a crime of war according to the international laws. Let's assume that the American authorities did not know that the location they were bombing was a hospital and that they targeted that building allegedly to kill terrorists, but even then such killing can never be regarded as acceptable and used as a solution.

Furthermore such a reason should never be used to downplay the severity of this mistake. How is it acceptable to bomb a city center in which three thousand people reside, in the name of bombing a few Taliban militants? How could the lives of innocent people not be relevant or thought of? How could they expect useful results from an air operation conducted rapidly and without any regard to the lives of innocent people also in the area? No matter how "smart" the bombs used are, they certainly wouldn't bring salvation, only devastation and destruction to the people living in that city. Weaknesses in intelligence, incoordination, miscalculations and technical malfunctions and many other factors that contribute to a mission's failure render the loss of lives inevitable.

The American officials deployed in Afghanistan are very well aware of these facts in question as well. Under these circumstances, there is only one explanation: Some military officials do not highly regard the lives of innocent Afghans and categorize them as the "negligible price of war on terrorism". Undoubtedly no justification, no excuse could ever legitimize the murder, killing, and assassination of inoffensive people. Let it be in the 9/11 terror attacks or in any corner of Afghanistan that is bombed, it is outright murder to cause the death of inoffensive, guiltless people.

As a matter of fact, a recent MSF report dated 5th November, claims that the coordinates of the hospital had been given to the US officials long before the attack and therefore the incident was not due to a mistake, or negligence, but was a deliberate and intentional attack. We will see in due time if these claims are substantiated, but there is one clear truth that must be kept in mind: air bombardments are certainly ineffective as a strategy. The war the US is waging in

Afghanistan -which is the longest war in the history of US- is a clear example for that. The point they've come to after 14 years, despite the immense military and financial means they have spent is an ongoing war, without any strategic gain, resolution or peaceful outcome. Contrarily, the fact is that the Taliban is still there and is still gaining strength and able to launch ground campaigns to take over big cities such as Kunduz in a single night, despite the use of state of the art bombs and weapons used against them.

From time to time, some American officials confess their failure. One of those officials is Richard Clarke who is the architect of armed drone attacks and who served as the highest level anti-terrorism expert while Clinton and Bush were in the Office. Clarke states that the bombs had the exact opposite effect with the following words; "And, you know, when you do things like that, you cause enemies for the United States that will last for generations. All of these innocent people that you kill have brothers and sisters and tribe—tribal relations. Many of them were not opposed to the United States prior to some one of their friends or relatives being killed. And then, sometimes, they cross over, not only to being opposed to the United States, but by being willing to pick up arms and become a terrorist against the United States. So you may actually be creating terrorists, rather than eliminating them, by using this program in the wrong way."

For years it has been the poor, innocent, and inoffensive Afghan people who have been persecuted by various wars and fighting. Now once again, they are the ones who have suffered great pains during the US led operation of the NATO forces. Raining down bombs over the Afghan soil did not bring any solutions. Weapons, bombs, massacres brought much more blood and death. The most important point and reason that the Taliban are still united and rally together is because the ideology that they follow has been severely and mistakenly underestimated. As the leading US expert on Afghanistan, Barnett Rubin puts it; "the Taliban have been bound together by a coherent ideology that has so far prevented any splits".

In order for the Taliban militants to be deterred and convinced of changing their behavior, a massive campaign to educate them must be launched. The Taliban militants need education, not bombs, education, not violence. They need to be purified from that radical ideology poisoning their minds, from the superstitions fabricated in the name of religion, from baseless beliefs and perverted ideas. As that is the case, the only solution is an education based on real Islam, on the morality of the Qur'an; an education that will be given with love, with compassion and humility. For building a strong and lasting peace in the Afghan lands, the US should support such an emancipating, honorable, and most importantly effective model.

Adnan Oktar's piece on Ekurd Daily:

<http://ekurd.net/in-the-wake-attack-kunduz-2015-11-18>

<https://www.harunyahya.info/en/articles/in-the-wake-of-the-attack-in-kunduz>