

# Wikileaks reveals extent of Afghan "dirty war"

Marcus Halaby Fri, 30/07/2010 - 08:09

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The real threat posed to our governments, by the website Wikileaks' disclosure of around 93,000 documents about the war in Afghanistan, is not that it may put the imperialist war effort at risk.

Rather, it is that it will expose to an already critical public at home the true extent of the "dirty war" being fought against the Afghan civilian population, indiscriminately killing hundreds and making use of "special forces" in highly dubious "kill or capture" missions.

This, and not the alleged "sponsorship" of the Taliban insurgents by Iran and Pakistan, is what is fuelling the Taliban-led insurgency.

In fact, the content of the leaked documents, taken as a whole, will come as little surprise to most people who have opposed the war from the beginning. They record a total of 144 so-called "blue on white" incidents; civilians killings at the hands of the occupation forces. Many of these have involved air strikes on villages suspected of "harbouring" Taliban fighters, of the sort that have already forced even the puppet Afghan government of president Hamid Karzai to issue verbal protests in the past.

Details are also emerging of a policy of shooting unarmed drivers or motorcyclists suspected of being "suicide bombers". French and US troops have strafed and machine-gunned buses full of civilians, while Polish troops apparently bombarded a village in revenge for losses to the insurgency.

Around 380 civilians are estimate to have been killed or wounded in these 144 attacks. But this is just the tip of the iceberg. For example, after one such incident following an explosion in March 2007, marines raked a six-mile stretch of road with automatic fire, killing 19 civilians and wounding 50, only to report that the patrol merely "returned to base" after the explosion. Even where there has not been any deliberate concealment of civilian casualties, little priority has been given to providing a comprehensive picture of them that might result in the armed forces being held accountable for them.

The alarming conclusion, however, is that these incidents are not just a matter of bloody "mistakes", but part of a conscious strategy of battering the Afghan people into submission, by increasing the cost in blood to the civilian population of support for the insurgency "or even for a lack of practical support for the occupation.

That this has backfired on the occupiers, and that it could not have been otherwise, should be obvious to anyone not blinded by racist insanity, or by the need to defend an increasingly unpopular and unwinnable war.

But of course, our politicians and generals are so blinded. This is why they need to invent the fairy-tale that Iran, or Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence, are behind the Afghan resistance "a claim that many of the documents make on the basis of pure conjecture.

It is clear that what the purpose of these accusations is to build the case for a widening of the war, as the generals and politicians despair of being able to win it in Afghanistan by conventional means.

The 'war party' has even been assisted by the leaks, to the extent that they have provided president Karzai with a pretext for demanding that the international community 'deal with' Pakistan.

Rather as with the exposure of the Blair government's lies in the run-up to the war with Iraq, another thing that the leaked documents have done is to expose the ineptitude of the so-called 'intelligence community'. Our media normally surrounds this privileged caste with an aura of infallibility and disinterested 'expertise'. In fact, much of the information they rely on has been fed to them by clearly interested sources in the corruption-riddled Afghan government and its security services, with the clear intention of using the occupation forces' superior military potential to their advantage in their own intrigues, within Afghan politics and with foreign governments.

The booming opium trade forms the backdrop to this game, as does the violent struggle to divide up and control the illicit opium market between the various pro-government provincial warlords ' and the insurgency itself.

Last but not least, the documents demonstrate that our governments have tried to cover up evidence of the Taliban's growing strength, including its acquisition of surface-to-air missiles, and its escalation of a roadside bombing campaign that has killed more than 2,000 civilians. The US-led occupation forces may have the technological superiority to use unmanned Reaper drones to attack Taliban fighters by remote control from Nevada, but this inevitably involves more civilian deaths, and reflects badly on their own confidence in their troops' ability to keep 'order' on the ground.

The anti-war movement should ensure that these documents, and their revelations, are given maximum publicity, to build an unanswerable public case for the immediate withdrawal of all the occupying forces.

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