

# DEAR MR. PRESIDENT – THE CHANGE WE HOPED FOR WAS NOT SUPPOSED TO BE YOU

Your decision to expand the war in Afghanistan is neither “just” nor “necessary”, and this is why:

9/11 was an attack not by Afghanistan but by Saudis plotting in Germany and funded by a loose international alliance capable of operating out of a back room almost anywhere in the world. Yes, the Taliban controlled Afghan government had hosted training camps, but most were closed soon after the attack and the government offered to turn over Osama bin Laden if presented with evidence of his involvement with 9/11. Killing Muslims in a land war where invading armies have failed for centuries will never defeat al Qaeda, but sap our strength and build their cause.

Your goal of defeating the Taliban is neither wise nor possible. The Taliban is an indigenous highly motivated expression of some 50 million Pashtun people who have seen their land cut in half by colonial powers. Their primary goal is removing foreigners from their land, not attacking the United States. We may deplore the Taliban’s treatment of women, but war is not the path to changing traditional beliefs. Building schools is.

Should there be a pyrrhic “victory” over the Taliban, the alternative you offer is not feasible. Even if the U.S. were to reform what is one of the world’s most corrupt governments in Kabul, and train a largely mercenary army, that army would be made up of remnants of the Northern Alliance militia who are Tajik and bitter rivals of the Pashtun – a formula for disaster if they were put into control.

Security in nuclear power Pakistan will never be attained by attempting to bribe its government into attacking the Taliban, when Pakistan considers the Taliban an ally in its ongoing bitter conflict with India.

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