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Obama in Afghanistan – 12 and a Half Years of War that Left Millions Dead

By Stephen Lendman

May 27, 2014

He left Washington Saturday. He arrived in Afghanistan Sunday. It was his fourth visit. He stayed less than four hours.

Earlier trips were in March 2010, December 2010 and May 2012.

Obama addressed US troops. He did so at Bagram Air Base. It houses one of America's notorious torture prisons.

Dozens of others operate globally. Guantanamo is the tip of the iceberg.

Bagram is called the Parwan Detention Facility (aka Bagram Theater Internment Facility).

It's next to Bagram's air field. It was formerly called the Bagram Collection Point.

In mid-2011, it held 1,100 political prisoners. Maximum during Bush years was 600. None have POW status. All are political prisoners. They're illegally held.

Abuse continues. It's notorious. It's not reported. It's out of sight and mind. Former detainees describe horrendous treatment. Not far from where Obama spoke. It includes:

- painful extended period shackling;
- exposure to extreme heat and cold;
- abusive treatment while naked, hooded or blindfolded;
- waterboarding numerous times;
- isolation in tiny cells;
- other times in overcrowded ones forcing detainees to sleep in shifts;
- permanent trauma-creating torture and ill-treatment;
- severe beatings;
- continuous blaring noises or music;
- 24-hour bright light or total darkness;
- extended sleep deprivation periods;
- painful stress positions for long periods;
- being sodomized;
- denied food, too little, or inedible kinds;
- painful force-feeding for hunger strikers;
- prisoners experiencing it call it torture;
- denied medical care;
- forced confessions for crimes not committed;
- hung from steel bars in cells or metal hooks in interrogation rooms for extended periods;
- kept in tubs of ice water creating hypothermia;
- threatened with or attacked by dogs;
- electro-shocking; and

- other physical and psychological cruel, abusive and degrading treatment.

Investigative Journal Andy Worthington does extensive research on US torture prisons. He co-directed a documentary titled “Outside the Law: Stories from Guantanamo.”

One of his many articles is titled “Dark Revelations in the Bagram Prisoner List.” He discussed foreign prisoners held.

He explained secret Bagram CIA operations. A subsequent “UN Secret Detention Report Ask(ed) ‘Where Are The CIA Ghost Prisoners?’ ”

Obama could end prisoner abuse by executive order. He could free every prisoner illegally held the same way.

He could order torture prison closures. He could do it straightaway. He ignored Bagram international law violations during his stay.

He addressed about 3,000 US troops. He lied saying “Americans stand in awe of you.”

“For many of you, this will be your last tour in Afghanistan. America’s war in Afghanistan will come to a responsible end.”

“That progress is because of you, and the more than half a million Americans – military and civilian – who’ve served here in Afghanistan.”

(Y)ou are completing our mission...(Y)ou’ve helped prevent attacks and save American lives back home.”

“Al Qaeda is on its heels in this part of the world, and that’s because of you.”

“We said that we were going to reverse the Taliban’s momentum. And so you went on the offensive, driving the Taliban out of its strongholds.”

“(J)ust look at the progress that you’ve made possible. Afghans reclaiming their communities, and more girls returning to school, dramatic improvements in public health and life expectancy and literacy. That’s your legacy.”

Obama called horrific Afghanistan conditions “progress.”

“Tomorrow (Monday) is Memorial Day,” he said. “(W)e’ll pay tribute to all those who’ve laid down their lives for our freedom.”

“And that includes nearly 2,200 American patriots who made the ultimate sacrifice...We will honor every single one of them – not just (Monday), but forever.”

Memorial Day is commemorated on the last Monday in May. It honors America's war dead. They fought and died in vain.

To benefit America's privileged. To advance its imperium. To make it safe for bankers, war profiteers and other corporate favorites.

Crimes of war, against humanity and genocides are small prices to pay. So is ravaging and destroying one country after another.

Conquering, colonizing, and plundering them. Exploiting their people.

Claiming humanitarian intervention. Responsibility to protect. Democracy building rubbish.

One Big Lie follows others. Memorial Day warrants special condemnation. It reflects Washington's permanent war policy.

It discards peace as a viable option. It's an American tradition. Notably since WW II. Lincoln's words long ago went unheeded, saying:

“(W)e here resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain, that this nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth.”

On Wednesday, he'll address West Point cadets. He'll lay out what deputy national security advisor Ben Rhodes calls his broad vision “interventionist and internationalist” agenda.