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"The CIA continues trafficking drugs from Afghanistan"

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This is the second part of the interview granted by Friba, RAWA's representative. Interview by Edu Montesanti, Pravda.Ru Portuguese version

Years ago, former parliamentary, writer and activist for human rights Malalai Joya pointed out that the CIA continues trafficking drugs from Afghanistan. In an interview by e-mail (censored) to the Brazilian newspaper *O Tempo*, later sent to me in full also by e-

mail, she stated that, "the Afghan narcotics economy is a designed project of the CIA, supported by US foreign policy. There are reports in Afghanistan that even US army is engaged in the drugs trafficking: drug mafia is in the hold of power and supported by the West." What can you say about it?

We strongly support this statement of Malalai Joya which is based on facts.

The CIA has a long history of being involved in global drug trade in all parts of the world under the control of the US or where it has considerable influence. While a few cases have been investigated and exposed by journalists, the issue continues to remain in the shadows.

The CIA's history began in the 1980s. Drugs were seen as the quickest and easiest way to earn money to fund CIA proxies and paramilitary forces that served them, in different countries. Gary Webb, the brave journalist who exposed the Nicaraguan Contra drug trafficking scandal and was eventually driven to suicide by an extensive smear campaign by the mainstream media, described the process like this:

"We (CIA) need money for a covert operation, the quickest way to raise it is sell cocaine, you guys go sell it somewhere, we don't want to know anything about it."

This tactic worked very successfully in Afghanistan during the Cold War when the Mujahideen forces serving the US were funded through drugs.

Before the US invasion in 2001, the poppy fields were eradicated by the Taliban. Right after the US invasion, drug production began increasing drastically, and today Afghanistan produces 90% of the world's opium, and on the verge of becoming a narco-state. There are reports of US forces admitting that drugs are flown out of Afghanistan in US planes.

Ahmad Wali Karzai (brother of US puppet Hamid Karzai), the now dead governor of Kandahar province, was at one time the biggest drug dealer of not just Afghanistan, but the region. The whole time, he was on the payroll of the CIA.

There have even been claims from US officers directly involved in drug operations in Afghanistan about the CIA's involvement. A DEA agent, Edwrad Follis, stated that the CIA "turned a blind eye" to the drug trade in Afghanistan. Most recently, John Abbottsford an ex-CIA analyst and war veteran who fought in Afghanistan confessed that CIA had a role in drug smuggling operations.

Even if we exclude these claims and reports, it is hard to believe that a superpower that boasts the most modern technology in surveillance and intelligence-gathering cannot find opium fields and track supply routes within a country it occupies. The fact that 8 billion dollars have been spent in drug eradication efforts for the past decade but opium production has only soared, is itself an indication that the drug business serves some US interest in Afghanistan, or it would have been finished a long time ago.

Other players in this so-called 'counter-narcotics' efforts are private US contractors who earn millions of dollars through counter-narcotic contracts. One of the biggest beneficiaries is the notorious military company, Blackwater (now known as Academi) which according to RT earned 569 million dollars from these contracts. Private contractor companies have a huge share of the profits of the war in Afghanistan, and this failed drug war results in huge profits for them.

In fact, one of the reason for invasion of Afghanistan by the US was to hold its grip on the narcotics business which is the 3rd important trade commodity in terms of income after weapon and oil business.

How sincere is the US in liberating Afghanistan? Do you think the US wish an instable Afghanistan?

US/NATO claims for "liberating" Afghanistan are only cheap slogans and in fact they are invaders and destroyers of "liberation". The US has no interest in Afghanistan's prosperity. In fact, instability, insecurity, poverty, illiteracy and other deeply-entrenched social and economic problems help the US and its puppet government to remain in power without any opposition from the people.

In fact, the US government has a bloody hand in the events of the past 4 decades of Afghanistan. They supported and armed blood-thirsty elements in our country and turned Afghanistan to its current disastrous condition. If the US had wanted stability and prosperity, it would have given the billions of dollars of aid to be invested in basic infrastructure, not to fill the pockets of warlords and corrupt NGOs that thrived under US occupation. This gold rush has led Afghanistan to become the most corrupt country in the world, which means not even cents of this aid reaches our people.

The US/NATO try to turn not only Afghanistan but the whole Asia to an instable region in the world. While world economy turns toward Asia with big powers like Russia, China, India etc., the US rely on terrorism as a weapon to block the progress of especially Russia and China and make problems for these countries. Afghanistan has become a center of this power game between the big powers once again. (...)

If I have well understood, you mean that Afghanistan is worse now than before the US-led invasion.

Yes, absolutely. Apart from what I mentioned above, if we only consider the deterioration of the security situation, which is vital for people, more than food and water, all over Afghanistan, we can understand how the situation is worse than before.

Opium is another deadly virus which infects our new generation and is dangerous than Taliban and al-Qaeda. The number of civilians killed in suicide attacks by Taliban, the night raids and airstrikes of US forces, and the crimes of the militias of local warlords in different parts of Afghanistan, increases with every passing year.

The economy of the country is in ruins, controlled by mafia who draw support from powerful Afghan government officials. The US and NATO invaded Afghanistan with tall claims of "reconstruction of Afghanistan", but we do not see any growth in any fundamental sector of Afghanistan.

Only the mafia and NGOs have grown in numbers and size. Afghans are the second largest group of migrants in the world, as the youth take up dangerous journeys to escape the misery at home. Many youngsters are drug addicts today.

In the more isolated areas, poverty and unemployment has driven young people to join the Taliban and ISIS as they provide basic necessities and sometimes even gives them salaries. Afghan women are as suppressed and under attack as they were under the medieval rule of the Taliban.

Neighboring governments like Iran and Pakistan never has such big and bloody hands in Afghanistan affairs like today.

This is only a brief summary of the disastrous situation of the country but is enough to show the devastation the US has brought upon our country and people.

As you've said, both history and current events show that occupation is never successful. What alternatives does RAWA defend to definitely change Afghanistan? Do you see foreign help as productive to really liberate the Afghan people from such too violent characters and groups? If so, who and how could provide a positive help to Afghanistan?

We have always said that the independence of a country is the first condition for democracy, freedom, and justice in a country. There are few, to no examples in history where foreign intervention has liberated or helped a nation, and the past 14 years of the US occupation of Afghanistan is proof of that.

The US not only did not liberate Afghanistan, but imposed on our people their biggest enemies, the fundamentalist criminals. The US is the creator and nurturer of these violent groups. It is a conscious policy of the US government to partner with Islamic fundamentalists wherever it steps in. We saw this in Libya and Syria as well. The US claims to be fighting terror, but the biggest terrorists, the Northern Alliance criminals, were brought to power by the US itself.

This did not come as a surprise though. Right at the beginning of the US invasion of Afghanistan, RAWA declared that the purpose of this aggression is to serve the imperialist aims of the US, and in this ordeal they will partner with the worst enemies of our country. What is of least importance to the US is the wellbeing of Afghanistan and its people. The current situation of our country is proof of that.

The key to freedom and democracy is in a united, organized struggle of our people. An arduous struggle it may be, but there is no other way out of this quagmire either. Only the people of a country can decide their fate and build a system that serves them.

The solidarity of the freedom and peace loving people of the world is very important in strengthening our people's struggle as well. This will be a long and hard process, but Afghans have no other alternative but to unite and fight for freedom, democracy, justice and liberation.

Does RAWA defend a laic or an Islamic Afghanistan, based on the sharia law?

Secularism has been RAWA's slogan since it was found. We believe that democracy is meaningless without secularism. Religion has historically been misused as means to maintain the power of those that ruled, and in a society where the people are deeply religious, the combination of state and religion is a particularly dangerous one.

Today in Afghanistan, the biggest tool the current fundamentalists in power use to defend their acts and protect themselves, is Islam. All the fundamentalist criminals in power whitewash their crimes using Islam. It has been used to quench the people's anger and their desire to rise up and struggle for their rights.

The Taliban have been able to transform innocent young men to deadly suicide bombers by brainwashing them with religious ideas. Unfortunately this misuse of religion has served them quite well.

This is why secularism is vital for our country today, to uproot fundamentalism and build a society free of this deadly virus. Only then can Afghanistan step towards progress and prosperity.

Is misogyny a general sense in Afghanistan, or reduced to the warlords and Taliban?

There is no doubt that Afghanistan is plagued by backwardness, culturally and economically. For centuries, reactionary monarchs injected and used reactionary ideas to maintain their power. However, the past three decades when Islamic fundamentalists dominated Afghanistan, this backwardness has become more common and extreme than ever before.

One of the aspects of Islam widely propagated by Islamic hardliners is the degradation and oppression of women who are seen more like animals than humans. Women are only to be seen as servants who work at home, give birth to children, and satisfy the sexual needs of men.

Family violence is one of the most wearing and most painful problems for women in Afghanistan and most other Muslim countries and it is mostly supported by the hard-liners. This problem partly fed on the Islamic teachings that are given to the men (and women) from their childhood. There are Quranic verses in this respect that:

"Your women are a tilth for you (to cultivate) so go to your tilth as ye will" (2:223)

"Men are in charge of women... As for those from whom ye fear rebellion, admonish them and banish them to beds apart." (4:34)

There are a lot of such verses in the Quran.

Men justify their mastery and inhuman treatment of women based on these verses. And of course a number of sayings by Prophet Muhammad or other religious sources and large amount of poems and stories incidentally by popular poets reinforce these verses and all together they affect men so badly that if they treat a women with slight humanity and kindness, they feel as if they are committing the biggest sin of their lives! In the mentioned books and sources there are some words of compassion and kindness toward women but they have failed to shield women from the flood of those against them.

In those Muslim countries where secularist principles have found some space within the society the depth of these violence is not as bad as those infested with fundamentalism.

How do you evaluate the mainstream media coverage of Afghanistan? How does RAWA evaluate the international human rights organizations' and the so-called international community position and acts concerning to the Afghan Cause?

It is no more a secret that mainstream media is used as a weapon in the modern wars. The mainstream media in the world, and especially the US, has served the imperialist purposes inside their countries better than any other tool.

The people of these countries do not have the true picture from the US wars to make proper, informed decisions on them. Afghanistan barely gets any coverage and if it does, it is systematically in line with a general policy of the US.

The crimes of the US forces such as killings and torture and night raids will never be shown, as will the insecurity and instability of our country and the devastating situation of women and people not get any attention. What will be shown is the horrors of the Taliban's crimes to justify the US's war, or isolated "success stories" to paint a rosy picture of the situation of Afghanistan.

How often are people encouraged to discuss the US's involvement in wars abroad by giving them true facts? The same goes for other countries where the crimes of dictators such as Saddam Hussein, Muammar Gaddafi, and Bashar Assad are continuously streamed, but the absolute devastation of Iraq and Libya by the US forces and their puppet governments, and the unconditional support of the US for ISIS elements (rebranded under names such as Al Nusra and Al Qaeda) in Syria is never shown. In fact, they find ways to whitewash and cover such actions of the US.

While some international human rights organizations have played an important part in Afghanistan's four decades of war by documenting crimes, publishing reports and calling the world's attention to these matters, the same cannot be said for the entire international community.

The international community and their partners in Afghanistan have been only involved in superficial issues that have no relevance for the Afghan people such as short-term projects and establishing useless NGOs. They have not thrown light on any fundamental issues of Afghanistan such as the US occupation, presence of fundamentalists in power, and their crimes. They in fact give a helping hand to the mainstream media of the world to portray the situation in Afghanistan as "better" than it was 15 years ago.

But of course alternative media like *Democracy Now!* etc. reflect realities, but their reporting is buried under the tones of propaganda pieces aired by big media outlets like *CNN, BBC, AP, Fox News* etc. who have large coverage and resources to make fool of people.

Who are the greatest Afghans' enemies?

Afghans are crushed between four enemies today: the US and NATO forces, the Northern Alliance criminals and warlords in the government, the Taliban, and an emerging ISIS.

The US has mothered all of these criminal fundamentalist elements and still has them on a leash for its purposes in the region. This means it is The Northern Alliance criminals enjoy the bulk of Western support, both financial and political which makes them more dangerous than other bands. The viciousness of the Taliban and ISIS is well-known to the world and they get military and financial support through the US, Pakistan and even Iran.

All these enemies are mighty powerful and control different parts of the country. In the battles between these forces, in the gruesome airstrikes, suicide and rocket attacks carried out by them, it is only our people who suffer.

What are RAWA prospects to Afghanistan, before the current reality? What would you like to say to the world and to the West, especially to Americans and their government?

If the political situation of Afghanistan is unchanged, the current situation is only going to become bleaker. The people of Afghanistan will continue to suffer from insecurity, poverty, corruption, unemployment, and other devastating issues. Our people will continue to be victim of the crimes of the US forces, Taliban, and Jehadi warlords. There is only one way the current situation can change and that is for the people themselves to struggle for their rights and a better country, against their prime enemies (US, Taliban, Jehadi warlords).

We have nothing to say to the Western governments who have the blood of our innocent people on their hands. Our message for the peace-loving people of these countries is that they have to see the reality of Afghanistan and all the other countries the US has invaded. What they see as rare news of the catastrophic situation in these countries, is the everyday reality for the people.

They need to pressurize their governments to change this invasions and occupation policy, and stand in solidarity with the people who are the victims of these wars. This international solidarity will strengthen the fight for freedom and democracy in these countries.

They should know that the tax they pay is used by their governments to make Afghanistan and other war-torn countries as hell which will directly impact their lives and make Western countries unsafe, like what we witness today in European cities.