

# افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نباشد تن من مباد بدین بوم ویر زنده یک تن مباد  
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

[www.afgazad.com](http://www.afgazad.com)

[afgazad@gmail.com](mailto:afgazad@gmail.com)

European Languages

زبان های اروپایی

[Antiwar.com](http://Antiwar.com)

## The 'Long War' Will Be as Pointless and Bloody as Europe's

by William Pfaff  
April 03, 2009

PARIS — The Thirty Years' War occupies little space in the school texts of the English-speaking world, but its futility comes to mind when Richard Holbrooke, a civilian closer than most foreign policy appointees to realism, indicates that the war he is supposed to manage, now the Af-Pak war, is the entry passageway into another stage in the war.

George W. Bush's war on terror was the front door, and Barack Obama now has gone through the waiting room door into what the Pentagon has prepared for him, our very own thirty years' war: purposeless, neither winnable nor losable short of genocidal measures — or, as in the 17th century, by laying waste the lands and ruining nations.

The Long War, like the Thirty Years' War, began with dramatic but intrinsically unimportant events. In Bohemia, ruled by the Catholic Hapsburg empire, Bohemian nationalism had become identified with radical Protestant reformism, and the war began with the Catholic authorities closing one such church and destroying another. In May 1618, two Catholic governors were thrown from a window in the palace of Prague (they survived).

From that, one thing followed another. The first two stages were mainly Catholics against Protestants. The rest was a struggle between Protestant Sweden, with French Catholic Bourbon allies, for control of northern Germany and the Baltic region. It was very bloody, fought by mercenary armies that lived by pillage. It settled very little, and bankrupted nearly everyone involved.

America's Long War began with the destruction of two skyscrapers — temples of American commerce, as their Arab attackers identified them, plus an attack on the Pentagon, the closest the United States has to a temple honoring war.

The cause was intrinsically unimportant to anyone except the attackers and victims.

The former were "punishing" the United States for building "enduring" military bases in Saudi Arabia, the sacred land of Muslim prophesy, and punishing the Saud dynasty in Saudi Arabia for having permitted this sacrilege.

Only a few score, nearly all of them Saudi Arabians, were active in the attack, and the fatal casualties numbered some 3,000, a holiday weekend traffic toll.

As in the 17th century, one thing led to another, much of it having nothing directly to do with the attacks. Afghanistan was attacked, bombed, its government overthrown. Iraq was invaded because the Bush-Cheney government had a long-standing interest in controlling Iraqi oil and because the neoconservatives wished to destroy the Arab state thought most likely to threaten Israel.

The Taliban returned to Afghanistan while Washington's attention was on Iraq. European NATO became involved for no better reason than that the United States told it to do so.

This brought terrorist outrages in London and Madrid, as well as an attempt in Scotland, by disgruntled Muslim immigrants or students at Western universities. The United States remained untouched.

The extension of the war into southern Afghanistan and Pakistan means tripled economic aid to Pakistan during the next five years, augmented military aid, U.S. military expenditures and the costs (actually increasing) of Iraq withdrawal (if it does take place), and as many as six new U.S. bases in southern Afghanistan, plus the enlarged army and Marine Corps President Obama has promised. This adds to the commitment of funds made in the past six months to the cost of remaking the international economy.

I can add nothing to the financial estimations for Barack Obama's new war. I can only plead for an answer as to what it is for. Can anyone really believe that the United States and the NATO countries of Europe are in danger from the Taliban in Afghanistan?

If the people and government of Afghanistan are incapable of defending themselves against their own Taliban nationalists and religious extremists, as after the first American intervention in 2001, surely that is their problem.

The Afghan people have run off everybody else who tried to conquer them during the past two and a half thousand years, and it has not led to Afghanistan's domination of the world.

What if the Taliban convert all the other Muslims in the world to Islamic fundamentalism? What difference would it make to Barack Obama?

Are North and South Americans, Europeans, Chinese, Japanese and all the non-Muslim people of the world going to be overrun by bearded Taliban counter-Crusaders on motorbikes?

Suppose they stole a nuclear bomb? So what? There have been thousands of nuclear weapons around for more than half a century and nothing has happened; and suppose they did shoot one off? Everyone else is going to take a look at the consequences and be very impressed — just as last time.

The consequences of expanding this meaningless war will not be Taliban nuclear conquest of the world but, as in the case of the Thirty Years' War, involvement of one group or country after another for goals of their own, having nothing to do with the governments or the issues that started it all. The only things that will stop this before it gets worse is simply to stop, or go bankrupt.