

## Afghan War Revelations Reveal Lies and Deception

The Washington Post published its Afghanistan Papers, detailing the true history of America's longest war. The Post fought a legal battle for three years to obtain the documents from the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), a federal government watchdog agency that interviewed hundreds of officials about their honest assessments of the war. The interviews, through an extensive array of voices, bring into sharp relief the core failings of the war that persist to this day. The Afghanistan Papers confirm there was no clearly defined goal or endpoint to the war to help determine when to stop fighting and this was kept hidden from the public.

The documents contradicted a long chorus of public statements from US presidents, military commanders and diplomats who assured Americans year after year that they were making progress in Afghanistan and the war was worth fighting. Several of those interviewed described explicit and sustained efforts by the US government to deliberately mislead the public. They said it was common at military headquarters in Kabul — and at the White House — to distort statistics to make it appear the United States was winning the war when that was not the case. John Sopko, the head of the federal agency that conducted the interviews, acknowledged to The Post that the documents show *“the American people have constantly been lied to.”* The papers revealed that US officials manipulated every detail of the war, numbers, statistics and even hyped up small successes when the big picture was the opposite. Even suicide bombings were used as a sign of success.

The papers also revealed that US officials lied about having a plan, *“We found the stabilization strategy and the programs used to achieve it were not properly tailored to the Afghan context, and successes in stabilizing Afghan districts rarely lasted longer than the physical presence of coalition troops and civilians,”* read the introduction to one report released in May 2018. The interviews also reveal how US military commanders struggled to articulate who they were fighting, let alone why. Was al-Qaeda the enemy, or the Taliban? Was Pakistan a friend or an adversary? ISIS and the bewildering array of foreign jihadists, let alone the warlords on the CIA's payroll? According to the documents, the US government never settled on an answer.

Successive presidents justified the expenditure on the Afghan war by arguing victory was close and that future investment was necessary for victory. The papers revealed the huge amount of US taxpayers' money spent in the name of aid, which is reality just festering corruption. Aid workers, diplomats, military officers etc all were given more money than they needed to spend, which they complained was much more than they needed. In one example, millions were spent on a Soybeans project even though the Afghan people didn't eat or grow them. In another multi-million-dollar project, money was spent on forest camouflage uniforms for new Afghan security personnel when only 2% of Afghanistan has forests. US military trainers described the Afghan security forces as incompetent, unmotivated and rife with deserters. They also accused Afghan commanders of pocketing salaries — paid by US taxpayers — for tens of thousands of “ghost soldiers.”

The Washington Post reveals much more details of what really took place in Afghanistan and the lies even the US public have been given for nearly two decades. What this all shows is the US sent its own sons and daughters to death to hide the fact they were not really winning. The Afghan war has lasted this long in order to save the blushes of US officials. Just as it did in Vietnam, the strategy has been to lie to the US public to paint a rosy picture of things when in reality money and lives were being lost. These revelations really show that US power is really a mirage and that its clique who sit at the top are prepared to do anything to maintain a picture of strength even if it means sending its own children to a useless war.

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