

CRIBB<S> NOTE – NOVEMBER 1, 2009

It is time for the United States to get out of Afghanistan. Just as many Americans took to the streets to end the war in Iraq, now more attention is needed to stop our military aggression throughout that region.

When President Obama campaigned to move into the White House and lead the nation, he promised to get us out of Iraq. Unfortunately, he also indicated he would shift our military priorities and focus more weapons, personnel, and resources on Afghanistan. Trading one wrong war decision for another is not a perfect solution. Entering the United States into both wars was flawed from the beginning.

Afghanistan offered a public appeal to gain support for a war there because of the terrorists' attacks on 9/11. Initial despondency among the American people provoked enough emotional investment to seek revenge that allowed the previous federal administration to bolster its plans to "round up and smoke out" those who were responsible for the tragic events in New York, Pennsylvania, and Virginia.

The resignation of Mathew Hoh, a senior advisor in Afghanistan, signaled a crack in the circle of military intelligence that led us to war. The former Marine Corps captain witnessed enough carnage and destruction to come to another conclusion. He questioned what the United States hopes to gain by prosecuting what is becoming a strategy of perpetual war. In his four page letter to the State Department, Captain Hoh urged American citizens to stand and call up their Congressional representatives to stop the war in Afghanistan before it becomes a bloodbath.

In truth, it is already a bloodbath and has been for more than three decades. When the United States launched its attack on October 7, 2001, as part of Operation Enduring Freedom, the people of Afghanistan were deep in the throes of a protracted deadly battlefield. The country had long become a killing field under the ruthless Taliban and warlords that dictated the terms of life and human suffering. Captain Hoh made his appeal to prevent more American lives from being lost in the river of blood that flows toward an endless cauldron of brutal combat.

Lest we forget, the war in Iraq is not over. A single suicide bombing that killed more than 150 people is a gross reminder that the ill-advised invasion of that nation continues to put more lives in peril; more American troops are at risk; more American dollars are wasted to fight for something that is not clear.

What is clear is the reduction in resources to address the critical issues that continue to plague families and individuals here at home. Worse, more men and women are returning from Iraq and Afghanistan with post-traumatic stress disorders. They are bringing with them the nightmarish hell of war that can shatter into countless episodes of domestic violence. And, so far, we have not demonstrated our willingness as a nation to allocate sufficient funds and resources to meet their medical, mental, or personal needs after they have served their country with honor.

We must get out of Afghanistan as quickly as possible. Instead of fighting wars that have some elusive purpose, it is more prudent to train our attention on the extensive problems that force Americans out of their homes due to foreclosures; leave skilled, professional, and trained workers on the streets without jobs; and our children crammed in over-crowded classrooms or locked out of colleges several days a week because government budgets have gone bust.

If America wants to go to war, let's start fighting the causes of poverty and despair that are wreaking havoc in homes and communities across this country. Perhaps then we will find new ways to put our best and brightest on a course to recover America.

-Pastor Art Cribbs