

Remarks of Joe Mosyjowski at Peacefare Not Warfare October 17 Rally Barberton, Ohio

Greetings. My name is Joe Mosyjowski and I'm a member of the Northeast Ohio American Friends Service Committee Economic Empowerment and Justice Committee.

Yet once again we are gathered together on a cold, miserable day to voice our disagreement with not 1 but 2 old miserable wars. Today, we mark the 8th anniversary of the invasion of Afghanistan, a war which has cost 877 American lives, an estimated 9260-12,057 Afghani lives, wounded over 4300 U.S. soldiers, injured tens of thousands of Afghans and created another refugee crisis both within Afghanistan and surrounding nations.

Over the ages Afghanistan has been no stranger to war. From 1979 to 1989 the Soviets occupied Afghanistan and left with over 14,000 casualties. During this time our country aided and supported the Mujahadeen, including Osama Bin Laden against the Soviets.

Now how is it that our country is bogged down in not 1 but 2 Middle East wars that have both gone on longer than World War II? Perhaps getting bogged down is the whole purpose. If the invasion of Iraq was about WMD, wasn't the invasion of Afghanistan supposed to be about bringing justice to the perpetrators of 9-11? Aren't the criminals responsible for that horrific day still walking free and still planning attacks on soft targets throughout the Western World? How did Osama Bin Laden somehow slip away when cornered at Tora Bora early on in the conflict?

Now if **Operation Iraqi Liberation** (the original over the top acronym for the war on Iraq) is about the second largest known oil reserves on the planet, then perhaps we can rename the Afghan war, the **Great Afghanistan Solution**, because it seems western oil and pipeline companies are licking their chops to find a way to deliver the massive Caspian area natural gas and oil reserves to markets throughout the Europe and Asian markets.

I'd like to read a few quotes from the February 12, 1998 Congressional Record made by Mr. John J. Maresca, VP of International Relations for the UNOCAL Corp. talking about a proposed natural gas pipeline across Afghanistan...

"From the outset, we have made it clear that construction of the pipeline we have proposed across Afghanistan could not begin until a recognized government is in place that has the confidence of governments, lenders and our company." (Now can one honestly state that the government of Hamad Karzai, often referred to as the Mayor of Kabul, is a stable recognized state government?) He further states..."Without peaceful settlements of the conflicts in the region, cross border oil and gas pipelines are not likely to be built." Now have any of you recognized ANY peaceful settlements of conflicts going on in this region? Peaceful, according to the American Friends Service Committee, means humanitarian assistance in place of the violence and hopelessness of war. It means rebuilding (not demolishing) roads and bridges, constructing schools, water plants, wastewater treatment plants, hospitals, providing healthcare to their population, teaching job skills for self sufficiency. These and these alone will provide stability and peace to the region. As a matter of fact, once we've accomplished these in Afghanistan I strongly suggest we try these in this country.

Sometimes next year, the cost of the Iraq/Afghan wars will top one trillion dollars, not counting countless more human lives. (Just imagine what we could have done

with that tax money here at home, including adequate care and reintegration of our returning veterans back into civilian life.) Before we hit that \$1 trillion mark, we at AFSC would like to see a cessation of the Iraq/Afghanistan occupations and a much needed refocus of the problems here at home. While we're at it, we'd like to suggest an end to the occupations of Japan, Germany, Greenland, Spain, Australia, France, England, Turkey, New Zealand, Kazakhstan, Finland, etc., etc., etc.