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## The U.S. blocked "Afghan Massacre: Convoy of Death"?

Al Jazeera Magazine | December 1 2005

A documentary that has been broadcast on national television in several countries all over the world revealed the truth about the heinous crimes committed by the American troops in Afghanistan. The film "Afghan Massacre: The Convoy of Death" presented a massacre held by the American troops where they put "Taliban prisoners in containers and shot them dead".

The Irish filmmaker, Jamie Doran, was able to show this documentary film about the massacres carried out against Taliban prisoners in many countries like Britain, Germany, Italy and Australia. The film was also screened in the European parliament.

Not surprising, all American channels refused to broadcast the film, which provides eyewitness testimony that U.S. troops were complicit in the massacre of thousands of Taliban prisoners during the Afghan War.

Doran was successful in getting "eyewitnesses" who have watched the massacre and asserted that the massacre happened under the supervision of the American troops in Afghanistan.

Eyewitnesses said that the prisoners were forced to enter the containers, where they stayed for a long time in the truck heading to "Sheberghan prison" when they started calling for air. Responding to their calls, the American soldiers shot many of them dead.

Other prisoners who didn't ask for air were deprived of water for four days that they started drinking their dead fellow prisoners' blood.

Later when the containers were opened, most of the prisoners inside were found dead; the survivors were then shot dead in the desert and all the bodies were buried in a mass grave, according to eyewitnesses.

In October 2005, a videotape showed American soldiers burning the bodies of two Muslim Taliban fighters. The Islamic religion prohibits burning the bodies of dead people, but the American soldiers chose to ignore this aspect.

"Attention Taliban you are cowardly dogs," read the first soldier, identified as psychological operations specialist Sergeant Jim Baker.

"You allowed your fighters to be laid down facing west and burnt. You are too scared to retrieve their bodies. This just proves you are the lady boys we always believed you to be."

Several Human rights organizations and international human rights lawyers condemned the incident, which received little attention from the U.S. government.

Human Rights organisations worldwide asked for an investigation to check whether the U.S. soldiers carried out such massacres or not and whether America is engaged in war crimes.

Only four soldiers faced disciplinary action over the burning of the Muslim bodies.

The video was first aired on Australian television, sparking anger among Afghans and the Muslim world

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Numerous news reports and analysts spoke against the massacres carried out by the American troops whether in Afghanistan, Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo, or elsewhere in the world- and that they aren't just mistakes made by soldiers, but they are policies set by the U.S. government.

What is happening now is weakening the position of the Bush administration and fueling the anger towards its actions. The Bush administration wants to get support for the presence of the American occupying forces in Afghanistan and Iraq, but actions and crimes committed by the troops –who are actually following the administration's orders- make people question why they are doing these actions if they are liberating force as they always want to emphasize.

If the U.S. government were to put itself on trial today for crimes it carried out in Afghanistan and Iraq, on the same basis it employed to try the Nazis long ago at Nuremberg, it might have to convict itself—if only for the sake of consistency, a report published last year in The Independent said.

Members of the Bush's admin knew that there is a possibility that crimes committed in Afghanistan might lead to an indictment for war crimes, which led them take legal measures to minimize their exposure to such prosecution.

In a January 25, 2002, memorandum obtained and publicized later by Newsweek, Alberto R. Gonzales, counsel to the president, outlined the pros and cons of the administration policy regarding detainees' treatment. Gonzales agreed that "the war against terrorism is a new kind of war," the Geneva Convention III on the Treatment of Prisoners of War need not be heeded. As Gonzales wrote, "this new paradigm renders obsolete Geneva's strict limitations on questioning of enemy prisoners and renders quaint some of its provisions . . . [It] eliminates any argument regarding the need for case-by-case determinations of POW status." An official presidential determination that the Geneva Convention "does not apply to Al Qaeda and the Taliban," Gonzales opined, "substantially reduces the threat of domestic criminal prosecution under the War Crimes Act (18 U.S.C. 2441)." That statute, he added pointedly, "prohibits the commission of a 'war crime' by or against a U.S. person, including U.S. officials. . . . Adhering to your determination that [the Geneva Convention] does not apply would guard effectively against misconstruction or misapplication of [the War Crimes Act]. . ." and thus would serve as "a solid defense to any future prosecution."



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