ASIAN SUPPORT FOR THE WAR IN AFGHANISTAN

An Asian Pacific Islander Coalition Against the War Factsheet

Governments throughout Asia are providing support for the United States war in Afghanistan and taking advantage of the situation in order to achieve local political goals such as the supression of local dissident groups. For example Central Asian countries like Uzbekistan, South Asian countries like Pakistan and West Asian countries like Saudi Arabia have provided air bases for United States troops. Most of these countries do not have democratic governments - Pakistan has a military dictatorship, Uzbekistan's government is only nominally democratic while Saudi Arabia is governed by a monarchy and all of them have cracked down on opposition groups.

* **Pakistan** has provided support for US troops at several isolated bases such as Jacobabad airport in center of the country. Meanwhile government riot police have shot dead a number of protestors against the war as well as Afghani refugees. Workers of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been particularly targeted in the last few days as these organizations were perceived by Islamist groups to advance "Western" interests. On October 9, 2001, in Takhtbhai, North West Frontier Province, the offices of the Women and Children Welfare Organization, the Saalik Welfare Organization and a community based hospital were set on fire and its workers fled to safety. In Quetta, United Nations buildings were attacked and the United Nations Children's Fund building was set on fire.[1]

* **Uzbekistan** has provided bases for upwards of 1,000 United States troops while authorities have been indiscriminately targeting members of independent Islamic congregations or followers of independent imams (Islamic leaders), who worship at mosques not under the direct control of the state-regulated Muslim Board of Uzbekistan. The Uzbek authorities are opposed to all but this official, controlled form of Islam.[2]

* **Saudi Arabia** has provided the Prince Sultan airbase at Al Kharj, about 70 miles outside the capital, Riyadh, as a logistical nerve center for Operation Enduring Freedom. Human Rights Watch reports that in Saudi Arabia freedom of expression and association are nonexistent rights, political parties and independent local media are not permitted, and even peaceful anti-government activities are virtually unthinkable. Infringements on privacy, institutionalized gender discrimination, harsh restrictions on the exercise of religious freedom, and the use of capital and corporal punishment are also major features of the kingdom's human rights record.[3]

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[1] *Amnesty International,* November 10, 2001

[2] Central Asia: No Excuse for Escalating Human Rights Violations, *Amnesty International,* November 10, 2001

[3] World Report 2001, *Human Rights Watch.*

* **Tajikistan** has offered three airbases for the use of the United States miltary which are currently under investigation. [4] Human Rights Watch has documented numerous cases of extortion, kidnapping, and beating of ordinary civilians by Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Defense, and Ministry of Emergency Situations personnel. Members of these units were also responsible for unlawful killings of civilians. [5]

* **Bahrain** currently hosts the United States Navy's Fifth Fleet headquarters.[6]

***Oman** has granted permission to the United States to use the facilities the U.S. has had access to since 1980, including airfields at Seeb, Thumrait, and Masirah Island.[7]

* **South Korea** has sent 320 noncombat troops to U.S.-controlled areas near Afghanistan.[8]

* **Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Kyrgyzstan and Sri Lanka** have also offered limited support for United States troops.

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[4] U.S. gets regional help in war, by Jonathan Weisman, *USA Today,* November 23, 2001

[5] World Report 2001, *Human Rights Watch.*

[6] Operation Enduring Freedom: Foreign Pledges of Military & Intelligence Support, by David J. Gerleman and Jennifer E. Stevens, *Congressional Research Service*, Updated October 17, 2001

[7] *Congressional Research Service*, Op. Cit.

[8] Government Reinforces Anti Terrorism Measures, *Chosun Ilbo,* October 10, 2001