



Written by [John F. McManus](#) on October 21, 2016

Afghan War Now 15 Years Old

In a [recent posting by the Ron Paul Institute](#), Dr. Paul pointed out that 15 years have now passed since American forces were first sent to Afghanistan. The operation has become “the longest war in U.S. history,” the former Texas congressman noted. He concluded that there were no victory parades because there is no victory.

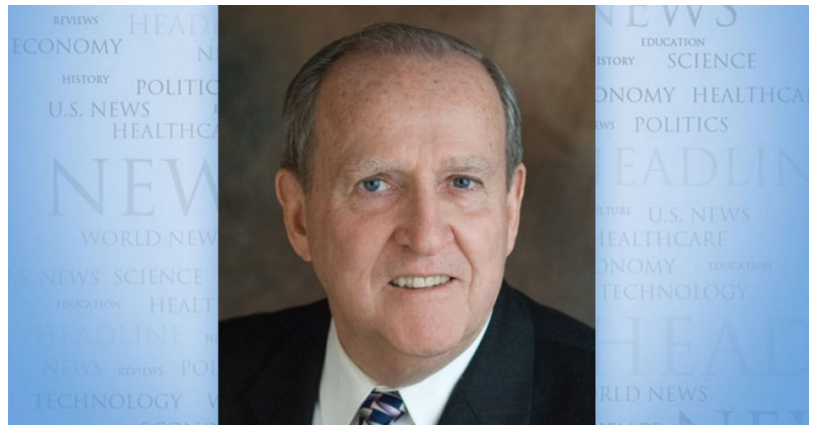
Troops were first sent to Afghanistan a few weeks after the devastating 9/11 attacks on our nation. Their original mission called for apprehending [Osama bin Laden](#). Thought to be hiding in Afghanistan, bin Laden was discovered years later in Pakistan where he was killed during a Navy Seal team raid. The main target of the U.S. forces from the beginning, however, was the Taliban, the militant Islamic group that had actually been supplied by the U.S. during the 1979-1989 Soviet invasion of the war-torn nation.

Once in Afghanistan, U.S. troops found themselves battling against an enemy using left over U.S.-supplied weaponry. The casualty totals show that our nation has suffered the loss of more than 2,300 killed and almost 23,000 wounded in the 15-year struggle. And the Taliban now controls more of the country than it did when the U.S. forces arrived in 2001 under the label “Operation Enduring Freedom.”

The U.S. media never discusses the little-publicized influence of the United Nations in this ongoing debacle. That is key to understanding the disappointing results of this lengthy mission. In December 2001, the UN Security Council created the International Security Assistance Force to aid the Afghan government. The U.S. [supplied most of the troops](#) to carry out this mission. So, from the very beginning of the operation, the UN has had a major role in the effort. Fewer than two years later (September 2003), the task of aiding the Afghan government was formally turned over to NATO. But NATO is a UN “Regional Alliance” formed under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter. America’s participation in this skirmish has been directed by the UN throughout the entire 15 years.

The Taliban now controls more of Afghanistan than it did when U.S. forces entered the country 15 years ago. The various tasks given to U.S. troops have included destroying the country’s opium production, engaging in reconstruction of war-torn infrastructure, and training local forces. Some of those local forces have turned their guns on their U.S. trainers with deadly consequences.

If the UN’s NATO weren’t managing this curious war, America’s forces would likely have cleared the country of Taliban dominance years ago. Obviously that’s not what the UN wants. Governments, even the UN, always grow and become more influential during a war. America’s leaders, both political and military, who put up with this are betraying their oaths and putting good men (and some good women)





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in impossible circumstances.

There are many solid reasons why the U.S. should withdraw completely from the United Nations. The experience already suffered in Afghanistan certainly provides one. Members of Congress should be proclaiming loudly and clearly the slogan, "Get US out! of the United Nations." Members of the House should be persuaded to co-sponsor [H.R. 1205, the bill calling for U.S. withdrawal from the world body](#). U.S. forces should never be sent into a battle without victory being the goal. Anything less is a betrayal of the troops and even of the nation.

John F. McManus is president emeritus of [The John Birch Society](#). This column appeared originally at the [insideJBS](#) blog and is reprinted here with permission.





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