



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on March 1, 2021

## U.S. Blew \$787 Million in Tax Money on “Gender Equality Projects” in Afghanistan

When your policy proposal starts to sound like a Babylon Bee headline, you should probably check yourself. Then again, this requires a sense of the ridiculous. Bringing this to mind is news that Uncle Sam spent \$787 million on “gender equality projects” in the land of burkas, bombings, and boy play (*bacha bāzī*).

As Robert Spencer [reports](#) at PJ Media:

According to [Bongino.com](#), “a [report](#) issued by Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction noted that even though the United States spent more than \$787 million dollars on ‘gender equality projects’ in Afghanistan since 2002, ‘harmful socio-cultural norms’ kept them [from] making major progress.” There have been a lot of people around since 2002 who could have told the political elites that spending \$787 million [*sic*], or even \$1, on “gender equality projects” in Afghanistan would be a fruitless waste of money, but they have not been heeded, and indeed have been dismissed as “Islamophobes.” And now, despite the persistence of those “harmful socio-cultural norms,” those millions are almost certainly going to continue to flow into the “graveyard of empires.”

The Bongino report noted mildly that “restrictive sociocultural norms and insecurity ... continue to impede progress for Afghan women and girls.” Among these are [*sic*] the fact that “girls’ access to education is constrained by the lack of female teachers and infrastructure, and



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pressures on girls to withdraw from school at puberty”; there is “a lack of female healthcare providers”; and “gender disparity is still a persistent characteristic of the Afghan labor force.”

I suppose \$787 billion is chump change in Washington’s universe (the federal budget is now almost \$5 trillion). But this Afghan endeavor was as predictably doomed to fail as a high-priced sobriety program for Cheech and Chong.

Spencer [makes this point](#); he also outlines sections of the Islamic canon that he believes influence the Muslim world’s treatment of women. He cites a hadith, for example, that states that most of Hell’s inhabitants are female.

But if Hell is a place where there is no reason, as the saying goes, our establishment halls of government and academia approximate it well. Their pseudo-elite inhabitants are awash in cultural relativism and thus can’t understand that certain cultures (and their formative faiths) preclude Western values’ acceptance.

But stealing my thunder, John Hawkins at Bongino.com put it well, if a bit bluntly, [writing](#) that we’re dealing with in the Afghans,

tribesmen who believe women are property that exist [sic] to be bred and serve men and we want them to conclude those women are now their equals? Just because we told them so? It’s moronic. Moreover, how is it our business? Go look at our divorce rate, the number of women working on OnlyFans and as sugar babies, and the guys identifying as female walking around in women’s bathrooms and tell me we have anything to teach another country about gender. If Afghanistan is the backward land that time forgot when it comes to women, we’re just the extreme on the other side. We can say that our situation is better than their situation, but that’s like saying a bad case of COVID-19 is better than having Ebola.

For sure. I’ll add that the “gender”-project liberals are the same type of people who, at different times, would warn against “ethnocentrism” and “imposing your values on others.” “Who’s to say what’s right or wrong, better or worse, good or bad,” they’d oh-so sagely say. “Everything is shades of gray.”

Actually, it’s shades of hypocrisy, as leftists impose away when their priorities are at issue. They then will bear the new “white man’s burden” and show benighted backwater Bedouins what are “proper” sex-role norms. As philosopher C.S. Lewis said about such hypocrites, “Their scepticism about values is on the surface: it is for use on other people’s values; about the values current in their own set they are not nearly sceptical enough.”

Oh, don’t misunderstand me: Women are mistreated in Afghanistan. So are many young boys. So are some men. All sorts of people are mistreated terribly in North Korea, China, and many other places, too. It’s a rough-hewn world.

This doesn’t mean you don’t do good where you can. But wisdom must be applied, as opposed to



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wasting billions (of other people's money) on feel-good, value-signaling policy.

Moreover, I often warn about projecting our own mindsets onto alien cultures. But we should also realize that when we go to an Afghanistan with our "strange" ways, libertine ideas, and military replete with female soldiers, the locals view us as morally debased, ungodly, sex-switching, swine-eating aliens. I'm not endorsing their assessment (hey, I love pork) and do much prefer our culture, though their criticisms sometimes have merit (they're not telling their kids they can be the opposite sex).

The point, however, is that it's silly to think they want anything from us — except our money and weapons.

As far as our "gender project" leftists go, they need to clean up their act as much as the Afghans do. A pox on both their houses.



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