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Assange Described A Decade Ago How 'Endless' Afghan War Was Engineered By "Transnational Security Elite"

by Tyler Durden

4-5 minutes

[*Authored by Jessica Corbett via Common Dreams & Consortium News,*](#)

As the hawks who have been [lying](#) about the US invasion and occupation of Afghanistan for two decades [continue](#) to [peddle fantasies](#) in the midst of a Taliban [takeover](#) and American [evacuation](#) of Kabul, progressive critics on Tuesday reminded the world who has benefited from the "endless war." "Entrenching U.S. forces in Afghanistan was the **military-industrial complex's business plan for 20+ years**," [declared](#) the Washington, D.C.-based advocacy group Public Citizen.

"Hawks and defense contractors co-opted the needs of the Afghan people in order to line their own pockets," the group added. "Never has it been more important to end war profiteering."

In a Tuesday morning tweet, Public Citizen highlighted returns on defense stocks over the past 20 years — as calculated in a "[jaw-dropping](#)" [analysis](#) by *The Intercept* — and asserted that "the

military-industrial complex got exactly what it wanted out of this war."

The Intercept's Jon Schwarz examined **returns on stocks of the five biggest defense contractors: Boeing, Raytheon, Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman, and General Dynamics.**

Schwarz found that a **\$10,000 investment** in stock evenly split across those five companies on the day in 2001 that then-President Georg W. Bush signed the authorization preceding the US invasion **would be worth \$97,295 this week**, not adjusted for inflation, taxes, or fees.



[U.S. Army photo](#)

According to *The Intercept*:

"This is a far greater return than was available in the overall stock market over the same period. \$10,000 invested in an S&P 500 index fund on September 18, 2001, would now be worth \$61,613. That is, defense stocks outperformed the stock market overall by 58% during the Afghanistan War."

"These numbers suggest that it is incorrect to conclude that the Taliban's immediate takeover of Afghanistan upon the U.S.'s departure means that the Afghanistan War was a failure," Schwarz added. "On the contrary, **from the perspective of some of the most powerful people in the U.S., it may have been an extraordinary success.** Notably, the boards of directors of all five defense contractors include retired top-level military officers."

"War profiteering isn't new," journalist [Dina Sayedahmed said](#) in response to the reporting, "but seeing the numbers on it is staggering." Progressive political commentator and podcast host Krystal Ball used Schwarz's findings to counter a key argument that's been widely used to justify nearly 20 years of war.

"This is what it was really all about people," she tweeted of the defense contractors' returns. "**Anyone who believes we were in Afghanistan to help women and girls is a liar or a fool.**"

Jack Mirkinson [wrote](#) Monday for *Discourse Blog* that "it is unquestionably heartbreaking to think about what the Taliban might inflict on women and girls, but let us dispense with this fantasy that the U.S. has been in Afghanistan to support women, or to build democracy, or to strengthen Afghan institutions, or any of the other lines that are deployed whenever someone has the temerity to suggest that endless war and occupation is a harmful thing."

"We did not go into Afghanistan to support its people, and we did not stay in Afghanistan to support its people," he added. "It is astonishing, given what we know about the [monsters](#) that the U.S. has [propped up time and time again around the world](#), that the myth persists that we do anything out of our love for human rights. We went in and we stayed in for the same reason: the American

empire is a force that must remain in perpetual motion."

As *Common Dreams* [reported](#) Monday, while the Taliban has retaken control, anti-war advocates have argued diplomacy is the only path to long-term peace, with Project South's Azadeh Shahshahani emphasizing that "the only ones who benefited from the U.S. war on Afghanistan were war-profiteering politicians and corporations while countless lives were destroyed."

Responding to Shahshahani's tweet about who has benefited from two decades of bloodshed, Zack Kopplin of the Government Accountability Project [wrote](#), "Adding war-profiteering generals to the mix too."

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