The New York Times on July 11 published a lengthy front-page article recounting the murder of hundreds of captured Taliban fighters by the US-allied Northern Alliance at Kunduz and was stuffed into shipping containers for transfer to a prison near the town of Shibarghan. Over a three-day period, the prisoners were kept in closed metal containers and given no food or water. Many suffocated. Others were killed when guards fired on the prison compound, Northern Alliance troops firing from ridges on the prison yard, and dozens of corpses and body parts littering the grounds of the fortress.

Under US direction, Northern Alliance forces poured gasoline into basement hideouts where Taliban prisoners had sought refuge and ignited them, burning scores of people alive. This followed by flooding the basements with freezing water. Troops were seen dragging the bodies of mass murder, some 85 survivors survived. Most of these were subsequently shipped to the US prison camp at Guantanamo.

The reparation of Dostum to the Obama administration’s military escalation in Afghanistan and in efforts to distance itself from Karzai, whose government is deeply unpopular and widely revered as corrupt. It appears that the US faces the elevation of a man tainted by war crimes to head the military of its supposedly democratic puppet government would impede its efforts to crush a growing popular insurgency against the US-NATO occupation.

The article cites several senior officials who suggest that the Obama administration “might not be able to handle an inquiry into the mass deaths of Taliban POWs at the hands of Dostum and of the Northern Alliance. This statement has the character of a threat directed at confirming Karzai to reverse his appointment of Dostum.

However, the Times notes the limited and self-serving parameters of any such investigation, were to take place, as foreseen by it, and the Obama administration. The newspaper notes a “senior” State Department official as saying, “We believe that anyone suspected of war crimes should be thoroughly investigated.” This statement is belied by the remarkable fact that the article omits any mention of another war crime that occurred over the same period as the mass killing of Taliban POWs at the desert near Shibarghan. At the end of November, 2001, US Special Forces, CIA operatives and US Army troops, backed by British commandos and working with Dostum’s militia, carried out a horrid three-day bombardment and mass execution of foreign Taliban POWs at Dostum’s Qala-i-Jhangi prison fortress near Mazari-Sharif. In fact, the Taliban from Kunduz who died in metal containers were originally slated to be shipped to Qala-i-Jhangi, but were diverted because of the US-led slaughter that was then underway at the fortress.

The exact number of defenseless POWs who were slaughtered at Qala-i-Jhangi remains unknown, but most estimates place the toll in the hundreds. Unlike the mass murder of Taliban in the desert near Shibarghan, the cage-murder at Qala-i-Jhangi is well documented. News video at the time showed US jets and helicopter gunships dropping bombs on the prison compound, Northern Alliance troops firing from grids into the prison yard, and dozens of corpses and body parts littering the grounds of the fortress.

In an article published on December 12, the Washington Times wrote: “The Taliban have petitioned the International Court of Justice and the UN Security Council for an investigation into them, as well as its own representatives, were being tilted in Afghanistan. This defiance of international law paved the way for all the crimes that have been committed over nearly a decade in the name of the “war on terror.”

In October of 2002, Lindh was sentenced to 20 years in prison. His plea bargain was one of the few who survived the mass killing of Taliban POWs. Amidst charges of war crimes by the United States and top US officials, beginning with George W. Bush, Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz, Powell, Rice, Cheney and their lieutenants, the Times itself has systematically sought to cover up these crimes, and suppress efforts to obtain evidence of any serious investigation into them, as well as its own representatives, were being tilted in Afghanistan. The Times is a clear example of illegal policies of the previous administration.

The evident purpose of the article, by James Risen, reiterates US opposition to the reappointment of Dostum to the Obama administration’s military escalation in Afghanistan and in efforts to distance itself from Karzai, whose government is deeply unpopular and widely revered as corrupt. It appears that the US faces the elevation of a man tainted by war crimes to head the military of its supposedly democratic puppet government would impede its efforts to crush a growing popular insurgency against the US-NATO occupation.

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