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Imperial Cartography and National Mapping in Afghanistan

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Afghanistan assumed its modern cartographic form in piecemeal fashion between the late 1860s and early 1890s in the context of British imperial boundary-making projects in South Asia and the Middle East. The bordering of Afghanistan was contextualized by the global British empire and multiple boundary conflicts and frontier anxieties involving the British and the French, German, Russian, and other imperial powers as well as local rulers. The fundamental point here is that the map of Afghanistan is a product of imperial and interimperial concerns, and it has not benefited the Afghan people. The map of Afghanistan may or may not have served the imperial purposes for which it was created, but more importantly, by uncritically accepting it and its imperial heritage, we Afghans have become victims of an imperial map of ourselves. Afghans and non-Afghans will benefit from directly confronting the coercive impact of imperial mapping agendas on the largely invisible people "on the map" of Afghanistan. This essay historicizes the production of maps of modern Afghanistan, exposing imperial and crypto-colonial influences upon our national cartography. In so doing, it critically reimagines our spatial politics and reconfigures our intellectual infrastructure. It is an exercise in historical recentering designed to instill Afghan humanity and agency onto the map of Afghanistan.

Well before and long after the global "War on Terror" began in 2001, the US produced a wide array of maps of Afghanistan. Some of these American maps, most notably the ethnic map, represent an epistemological inheritance of British imperial cartography. Others, particularly maps produced after 2001, take on entirely new forms based on emergent technologies that became normalized in US military and civil society through the "War on Terror." The GIS or geographic information system–coordinated, digitally pixelated cartography used by drone, helicopter, blimp, and bomber pilots operating in and over Afghanistan most dramatically illustrates the immensely adverse impact of maps on the Afghan people during the twenty-year American imperium. Simultaneously, during this period Google Maps and similar platforms have become incorporated into the daily lives of hundreds of millions of Americans, Afghans, and other global citizens. As such, maps represent both the promise and problems of modernity.

British Cartographic Precedents

The British produced a series of complex, elaborate, and interrelated maps during their colonization of India. The British Indian colonial cartographic regime was expensive, extensive, and effectual. At the same time it was incomplete, fragile, contentious, alienating, and ultimately both inherited and rejected insofar as new entities emerged out of the imperial map template, and conflicts between the new polities involved borders and cross-border traffic.

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The British imperial mapping of the Kingdom of Kabul into Afghanistan has produced considerable hardship for Afghans, who were incompletely and imprecisely mapped in comparison to more formally colonized South Asian populations who were much more intensively mapped. The asymmetrical imperial cartographies of Afghans and British Indians inflicted economic, political, and military coercion and epistemological violence upon both populations by imposing political divisions upon a landscape of culturally and economically connected communities and shared histories.

The British cartographic regime in India began with James Rennell's maps of Bengal and Hindustan in the late 18th century. Rennell's work became institutionalized in the early 19th century through the Great Trigonometrical Survey (GTS) of India. The GTS was embedded within the global imperial science of geodesy that was designed to account for planetary curvature and thus involved charting the highest point on earth, Mount Everest. Named after the then leader of the GTS, George Everest, it represented a pinnacle of colonial knowledge of India and global scientific conquest.[1]

The British began their mapping of proto-Afghanistan with the 1808 appointment of Mountstuart Elphinstone as head of a colonial embassy to the Kingdom of Kabul, which was designed to secure a local alliance against a prospective French imperial invasion of India through the Hindu Kush. Elphinstone never made it to Kabul, but the record of his mission was enshrined in the 1815 publication *An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul*. Elphinstone included a map of the Kabul Kingdom in his publication, and his discussion of this foundational cartographic artifact draws attention to a number of issues that collectively destabilize the map and the six-hundred-page narrative that contextualizes it.[2] Elphinstone was a diplomat, not a mapmaker, but his embassy included an official cartographer, Lt. John Macartney, who was summoned from China for the purpose of scientifically extending the scope of the GTS to Kabul. The map produced by the master mapper Macartney was heavily utilized by Elphinstone to construct his own map. However, the two maps and the lengthy narratives accompanying each are structurally opposed in both form and content, unsettling the epistemological foundation for how proto-Afghanistan was understood and acted upon in the context of British colonialism. Nevertheless, Elphinstone's colonial methods of knowing and engaging the country through Kabul and Pashtuns were adopted by both Afghan rulers and international actors in the 20th and 21st centuries.

Between Elphinstone's embassy and the First Anglo-Afghan War (1839–42), the British produced a number of maps of the Indus River that envisioned the river as a conduit of commercial traffic to Kabul. The British named their occupation force the Army of the Indus, and there are many contemporary maps of its celebrated march to Kabul, and many postmortem maps of the route of its failed retreat and demise. The First Anglo-Afghan War generated a number of other maps, notable among which is a map of locations in the Hindu Kush where plant samples were collected by the imperial botanist William Griffith.[3] The British imperial bordering of the Kabul Kingdom that was becoming known as Afghanistan began before the Second Anglo-Afghan War (1878–80). The bordering of Afghanistan continued and was

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[1] For British cartography in colonial India, see Matthew H. Edney, *Mapping an Empire: The Geographical Construction of British India, 1765–1843* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

[2] Mountstuart Elphinstone, *An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul* (London: John Murray, 1815), map facing p. 83; Shah Mahmoud Hanifi, "A Book History of an Account of the Kingdom of Caubul," in Shah Mahmoud Hanifi, ed., *Mountstuart Elphinstone in South Asia: Pioneer of British Colonial Rule* (London: Hurst, 2019), 17–39.

[3] For the march to Kabul in the summer of 1839, see Sir Keith Alexander Jackson, *Views in Affghaunistaun, &c. &c. &c. from Sketches Taken during the Campaign of the Army of the Indus* (London: W. H. Allen, 1840), map at front of volume. For a retreat and extermination map, see Louis Dupree, "The Retreat of the British Army from Kabul to Jalalabad in 1842: History and Folklore," *Journal of the Folklore Institute* 4, no. 1 (1967): 50–74, map p. 56. The Hindu Kush botanical map is a portion of a larger map of routes and locations throughout North and East India and Southeast Asia where plant samples were collected by William Griffiths, for which see his *Journal of Travels in Assam, Burma, Bootan, Afghanistan and the Neighbouring Countries*, posthumous papers arranged by John McClelland (Calcutta: Bishop's College Press, 1847), map at front of volume.

completed during the reign of ʿAbd al-Rahman (r. 1880–1901), who was appointed by the British during the concluding phase of the Second Anglo-Afghan War. With each stage of bordering progress, ʿAbd al-Rahman's colonial subsidy increased, being substantially raised by 50 percent for the final eastern border with British India known as the Durand Line, named for the colonial official who completed the imperial deal with ʿAbd al-Rahman in 1893.[4]

The British produced a wide range of topographic, cultural, and political maps of territories they controlled in India. These cartographic endeavors involved Afghanistan even though British influence in Afghanistan was indirect and routed through their appointee in Kabul, an arrangement that resembled an Indian princely state structure of local autonomy and fiscal perks in return for diplomatic-political quarantine. The 1894–1928 *Linguistic Survey of India* directed by George Grierson is particularly relevant for producing maps and narrative descriptions of languages (including language families and dialects) found in Afghanistan and British India, such as Baluchi, Dardic languages, and Pashto.[5] Grierson's map of Afghanistan–British Indian border languages fed into colonial administrative maps of these frontier communities, arguably the most widely recognized being the ethnographic map of tribal populations produced by the last governor of the North-West Frontier Province of British India bordering Afghanistan, Olaf Caroe.[6]

World War I destabilized the global imperial system, and the demise of the Ottoman empire was the primary consequence for the Muslim world. A further outcome was the reorganization and re-prioritization within the British empire, which carried regional and local ramifications in the Middle East and South Asia that directly impacted Afghanistan. In the Middle East, the aerial bombing and surveillance of Iraq launched a new era of warfare and statecraft.[7] In British India, by the war's end, the Rowlatt Acts allowed for indefinite detentions on political grounds. The Jallianwala Bagh massacre of protesters mobilized against the Rowlatt Acts underscored how colonial rule had grown increasingly arbitrary, punitive, and violent. For Afghanistan, World War I created the conditions for a declaration of independence from the colonial yoke. It precipitated the Third Anglo-Afghan War in 1919, which, although a very small-scale military affair, significantly did involve the first aerial bombardment of Kabul. Afghanistan's national independence neither altered the imperial map of the country nor reconfigured the colonial epistemology that was its intellectual infrastructure. Far from eliminating British influence, Afghanistan's independence amplified the British presence and inaugurated a wide assortment of crypto-colonial international influences.[8] Many of the new relations between Afghanistan and European powers included cartographic components, such as the numerous maps of routes, regions, and historic sites produced in the 1930s by the French Archaeological Delegation and the German Hindu Kush Expedition.[9]

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[4] Shah Mahmoud Hanifi, "Capital Concentrations and Coordinations: Peshawar Subsidies and Kabul Workshops," in *Connecting Histories in Afghanistan: Market Relations and State Formation on a Colonial Frontier* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011), 97–120, http://www.gutenberg-e.org/hanifi.

[5] George Abraham Grierson, *Linguistic Survey of India*, vol. 10, *Specimens of Languages of the Eranian Family* (Calcutta: Superintendent of Government Printing, 1921), map facing p. 5.

[6] Sir Olaf Caroe, *The Pathans 550 B.C.– A.D. 1957* (New York: Macmillan, 1958), maps at end of volume. Caroe refers to Pashto-speakers in British India as *Pathans* that are cartographically equated with Afghans. The analytical imprecision and political manipulation of the relationship between Afghans, Pashtuns, and Pathans is an enduring problematic discursive legacy of British colonialism.

[7] Priya Satia, *Spies in Arabia: The Great War and the Cultural Foundations of Britain's Covert Empire in the Middle East* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2008).

[8] M. Jamil Hanifi and Shah Mahmoud Hanifi, "Crypto-Colonial Independence Rituals in Afghanistan," *Afghanistan* 4, no. 1 (2021): 70–78. For expansion of the British presence in Afghanistan after 1919, see Maximilian Drephal, *Afghanistan and the Coloniality of Diplomacy: The British Legation in Kabul, 1922-1948* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).

[9] For examples of these European cartographic expressions in Afghanistan see, for example, Jules Barthoux, *Les Fouilles de Hadda, I: Stupas et Sites, Texte et Dessins* (Paris: Memoires de le Delegation Archeologique Francaise en

US Cartography in Afghanistan during the Cold War

The imperial map of Afghanistan was destabilized in 1947 by the partition of British India that resulted in the creation of Pakistan. Pakistan's presence transformed Afghanistan's geostrategic profile and gave rise to the Afghan state's advocacy for a plebiscite over the prospective state of Pashtunistan among Pashto-speaking communities in the tribal areas of Pakistan. Pashtunistan was a cartographic threat to the territorial integrity of Pakistan that permanently strained relations between these neighboring states and led to Afghanistan's international profile as a neutral yet volatile space of ambiguity and exception in an otherwise largely rigidified bipolar Cold War world.

During the Cold War, the US engagement of Afghanistan was organized around the Helmand Valley Development Project (HVDP) that was funded by USAID and contractually outsourced primarily to the Morrison-Knudsen Company. The HVDP generated a substantial amount of terrestrial, subterranean, and aerial cartography of southern Afghanistan in particular. The American firm Fairchild Aerial Surveys was contracted to conduct the first aerial topographic survey of the entire country.[10] To perform the task of precision location triangulation, Fairchild utilized the land-based Shoran Radar System that was developed in World War II for the purpose of guiding the aerial bombardment of Germany. The local, provincial, and countrywide maps Fairchild produced for the HVDP were fully absorbed into the national maps produced by the Afghanistan Cartographic Institute (ACI), which was itself an institutional artifact of the wide-ranging relationship between the US and Afghanistan during the Cold War.[11] Not only was the British imperial map of Afghanistan reified in the Afghan national mapping context, it also was amplified by new aerial mapping technologies that were institutionally inscribed in Afghanistan via USAID and the HVDP, which resulted in a greatly elaborated crypto-colonial cartographic epistemology.

The most important cartographic development during the Cold War was the appearance of the ethnic map that rapidly became the hegemonic intellectual and political tool for the US engagement of Afghanistan as well as the Afghan state's understanding of itself and Afghan society. The ethnic map of Afghanistan was the product of the American University Field Staff (AUFS) Representative in Afghanistan, Louis Dupree. Dupree was well aware of colonial writings and cartography; indeed, he lauded Elphinstone and admired Caroe. As he developed and refined it during the 1960s and 1970s based upon new information and intelligence, various iterations of the ethnic map appeared among Dupree's multitudinous AUFS reports.[12] Dupree's 1973 book, *Afghanistan,* contained the final AUFS version of the ethnic map, and the wide circulation of this oft-termed "bible for Afghanistan Studies" greatly expanded the map's traction among academics and policymakers prior to the Saur

Afghanistan, 1933); and Arnold Scheibe, *Deutsche im Hindukusch: Bericht der Deutschen Hindukusch-Expedition 1935 der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft* (Berlin: Siegismund, 1937). For photographs of the German mission, see Phototheca Afghanica, DHE: Deutsche Hindukusch-Expedition 1935, accessed 27 April 1922, https://www.photo-theca-afghanica.ch/index.php?id=501&tx_browser_pi1%5Btx_phototheca_domain_model_collections.title%5D=14&cHash=c64ce41be759224c00fef376d8a8c9a9.

[10] Fairchild Aerial Surveys, "Making a Map of Afghanistan," *American Society of Photogrammetry* 3 (1960): 1–6.

[11] For a brief treatment of US information management strategies and practices in Afghanistan during this period, see Shah Mahmoud Hanifi, "The Battle for Minds in Cold War Afghanistan," *Iran and the Caucuses* 25, no. 2 (2021): 194–207.

[12] For the archetypal Cold War ethnic map of Afghanistan, see Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1973), 58. The ethnic map introduces Part II of the book, "The People," which begins with ethnicity as the primary population categorization criterion and closes with a discussion of Afghans of all ethnicities as preponderantly nonliterate, immobile, "inward looking" peasants sheltering from the world behind village mud walls (250). For the evolution of the ethnic map of Afghanistan, see the following American University field staff reports by Louis Dupree: "A Note on Afghanistan," *American University Field Staff Reports* South Asia Series 4, no. 8 (August 1960): 12; "Aq Kupruq: A Town in North Afghanistan," *American University Field Staff Reports* South Asia Series 10, no. 10 (December 1966): 18; and "Nuristan: 'The Land of Light' Seen Darkly," *American University Field Staff Reports* South Asia Series 15, no. 6 (December 1971): 2.

Revolution of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan and Soviet invasion in the late 1970s.

The "War on Terror" and Covert Mapping

Dupree's academic authority and Afghanistan's geostrategic positioning in US Cold War priorities afforded him primary gatekeeping authority within the rapidly expanding international educational exchange networks organized around programs such as Fulbright and the Peace Corps. At the same time, Dupree's intelligence work instrumentalized ethnicity as a covert policy framework for the CIA and Pakistani ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence) engagement of Afghan mujahidin in the 1980s, which involved a thick layer of cartographic elements. Similarly, the Soviets intensified the mapping of Afghanistan during their military occupation, signaling the intertextuality of imperial cartographies. During the 1980s and 1990s a wide range of international humanitarian organizations and a global assortment of covert agents worked in Afghanistan and engaged Afghan refugees in Pakistan. Shortly after the Taliban gained control of Kabul in 1996, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) that oversaw the complex international aid industry initiated the Project Management Information System (PMIS) as a cartographic clearinghouse in Islamabad for the humanitarian agencies working with Afghan refugees and in Afghanistan itself. After 11 September 2001, Dupree's ethnic map was militarily operationalized, and PMIS was transferred to Kabul where it was renamed the Afghanistan Information Management Service (AIMS).[13] AIMS functioned for many years as a monopolizing international NGO provisioner of maps on a contracted payment basis to the international military occupation forces, legions of subcontracted military and security personnel, and roughly a thousand humanitarian NGOs that appeared and disappeared in Afghanistan. Importantly, AIMS maps incorporated GIS technology and could be provided in digital form.

NGOs relied upon the well-established but highly limiting ethnicized reading of the social and political landscape of Afghanistan, a problematic point of departure that was compounded as they worked on a variety of issues in the context of and in some form of conjunction with international military occupation forces. Many of these humanitarian efforts produced GIS-based maps that could interface with military digital cartography, which also was contextualized by racialized logics of ethnic exclusivity. International warfare and the humanitarianism that engaged war's social debris cartographically combined to further entrench the circular reasoning of ethnicity as the singular way of understanding all people, places, events, and sociopolitical contexts in the country.[14]

The US military and intelligence agencies, which became increasingly paramilitarized during the global "War on Terror," used GIS-based maps to conduct public record and covert paralegal kinetic operations in Afghanistan, greatly expanding the coercive range and impact of imperial maps on the Afghan people. New kinds of coercive technologies and cartographies were incorporated into revised military doctrines such as the 2007 *Counterinsurgency Field Manual*, as well as experimental military institutions, such as the Human Terrain System and its constituent Provincial Reconstruction Teams.[15] Af-Pak emerged in about 2008–9 as an imagined military space that took cartographic shape as a

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[13] Royce Wiles, "Mapping Afghanistan," *Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, Afghanistan Research Newsletter*, 13 (2007): 2–6.

[14] For critiques of the Pashtun domination theory of Afghanistan, see Shah Mahmoud Hanifi, "Quandaries of the Afghan Nation," in Shahzad Bashir and Robert D. Crews, eds., *Under the Drones: Modern Lives in the Afghanistan-Pakistan Borderlands* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 83–101; Shah Mahmoud Hanifi, "Shuja's Hidden History and Its Implications for the Historiography of Afghanistan," *SAMAJ: South Asia Multidisciplinary Academic Journal* (2012), https://journals.openedition.org/samaj/3384; and Shah Mahmoud Hanifi, "The Pashtun Counter-Narrative," *Middle East Critique* 25, no. 4 (2016): 385–400.

[15] United States Army and Marine Corps, *Counterinsurgency Field Manual* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007). For critical perspectives on counterinsurgency, see Network of Concerned Anthropologists, *The*

specialized and experimental kill zone much like the Sunni Triangle of Death in Iraq. From 2009 to 2020 the Af-Pak Hands Program was celebrated for providing advanced culture-based counterinsurgency training to about one thousand soldiers from across the US military services, while during the same period the American covert drone war terrorized hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of innocent people in the preponderantly Pashto-speaking borderland communities in both countries.[16] Historically, this reflects Grierson's colonial linguistic science and the Frontier Crimes Regulations that established the legal basis of imperial violence in the Pashto-speaking tribal areas of British India.[17] Under the coercive veil of Af-Pak, Pashtun communities in the east of Afghanistan and Pashto-speaking populations in Pakistan experienced more intense covert imperial violence by drone bombing, night raiding, and renditioning than any other subregion of the "War." The cartography of the American stealth imperium extended from Af-Pak to Bagram and other known locations in Afghanistan, through hundreds of unknown CIA black sites and other clandestine lily pads for "special operation" paralegal military activities in Asia, Africa, and Europe, all the way to Guantanamo Bay: a global network of torture and terror ultimately mappable back to Washington, DC.

Reframing the Imperial Map of Afghanistan

The imperial-cum-national map of Afghanistan is historically contextualized first by British imperial boundary obsessions and then by the international community's increasing access to and manipulation of the human and natural resources of the country. As such, the map is a composite artifact of colonial knowledge, imperial political economy, and a local Kabuli political culture of dependency on the global system that has resulted in structural exploitation, rampant poverty, epidemic illiteracy and ill-health, and highly militarized limits on the ability of ordinary Afghan people to move within and beyond those imperial borders.[18] The coercive, immobilizing, and impoverishing impact the map has had on ordinary Afghans generates a need to reimagine, restructure, and repurpose the imperial map of Afghanistan. An anti-imperialist cartographic insurgency designed to counter-code the crypto-colonial map against the political expediency of Kabul-centrism and ethnic compartmentalization entails a number possibilities and responsibilities.[19] Such a project must strive to creatively inscribe the *longue durée* historical reality of multiculturalism, alternating regional fluorescence, and connectivity to neighboring societies, while also indicating the interimperial manufacture dates of the various border segments. To account for the serial injustices perpetrated by the modern global system, an insurgent cartography of Afghanistan must plot and narrate the litany of direct and indirect, overt and covert imperial crimes against the Afghan people and the country's natural resources committed during the British, Soviet, and American occupations.

Counter-Counterinsurgency Field Manual (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2009); and Roberto J. Gonzalez, *American Counterinsurgency: Human Science and the Human Terrain* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2009).

[16] J. P. Lawrence, "US ends Afghanistan-Pakistan Hands Military Adviser Program," *Stars and Stripes*, 1 October 2020, https://www.stripes.com/theaters/middle_east/us-ends-afghanistan-pakistan-hands-military-adviser-program-1.647033.

[17] For a treatment of the Frontier Crimes Regulations and similar mechanisms in a global comparative context, see Benjamin H. Hopkins, *Ruling the Savage Periphery: Frontier Governance and the Making of the Modern State* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2020).

[18] For long-term historical surveys of mobility through the Hindu Kush, see David Ludden, "The Centrality of Indo-Persia in Global Asia and Historical Formation of Afghanistan," *Afghanistan* 4, no. 1 (2021): 57–59; and Shah Mahmoud Hanifi, "Colonialism, War and Governance in Afghanistan," *Islamic Human Rights Commission: The Long View* 4, no. 2 (2022), https://www.ihrc.org.uk/colonialism-war-and-governance-in-afghanistan.

[19] For a critical analysis of Kabul, Pashtuns, and war as primary but limiting spatial, cultural, and conceptual categories of historical analysis, respectively, for modern Afghanistan, see Shah Mahmoud Hanifi, "Deciphering the History of Modern Afghanistan," *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Asian History*, Forthcoming (July 2022), https://oxfordre.com/asianhistory.

The exponentially greater intensity and impact of the US occupation merits special cartographic notice on anti-imperial maps of Afghanistan. Beyond the well-known initial December 2001 human and environmental crimes in Dasht-e Laili and Tora Bora, respectively, the residual carcinogenic crime scene where the Mother-of-All-Bombs struck in Achin, Nangarhar, in April 2017, and the drone incineration of a family with seven children and three other innocent people near the Kabul airport as a final imperial memory token for the Afghan people in August 2021, it is not possible to map the full scope of the covert US imperial crime spree in Afghanistan due to data sequestration under the legal veil of national intelligence and security. However, given the substantive and sustained financial irregularities associated with the public aspects of the US imperial enterprise in Afghanistan according to the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, it can be confidently inferred that the covert dimensions of the US imperial operation in Afghanistan were equally and most likely more fiscally and legally corrupt to the incalculable detriment of the physical, material, and emotional welfare of the Afghan people.[20] These crimes against the Afghan people originate with fundamentally unfettered unilateral executive presidential decisions regarding covert projections of US power. The covert projections of the global "War on Terror" include drone assassinations, special operations night-raid murders, and renditions that feed into a global regime of torture predicated upon black sites and legal obfuscation across multiple jurisdictions and subcontract outsourcing of links in the chain of detention from sites of abduction to locations of torture. The ever-increasing black budgets for US covert operations, which are not transparent to US taxpayers who are the principal account holders of those funds, sustain a growing clandestine imperial world of illegal killing, human rights violations, property destruction, and displacement of innocent people in and beyond Afghanistan.

One unintended consequence of the intense coercive mapping infrastructure of the "War on Terror" is that it has spawned grassroots advocacy for an anti-imperial People's Map of Afghanistan that carries intellectually and politically liberating potential for Afghans at home and abroad.[21] Maps lead the mind somewhere, sometimes somehow to an imagined future of betterment for greater proportions of humanity, and a People's Map of Afghanistan will lay the groundwork for a Global Citizen's Map of Empire designed to cartographically expose the violence and criminality of imperial power and the shared histories of inequality, injustice, exclusion, and suffering empires have produced and continue to sustain for "people without history" throughout the world, and generate cross-cultural alliances and solidarities of resistance to imperialism.[22]

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[20] For a public record of US fiscal malfeasance in Afghanistan see SIGAR: Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, accessed 27 April 2022, https://www.sigar.mil. For an outline of the environmental impact of the US war in Afghanistan, see Shah Mahmoud Hanifi, "Environmental War Crimes in Afghanistan," *South Asia Avante-Garde: A Dissident Literary Anthology*, http://saaganthology.com/environmental-war-crimes-in-afghanistan. For attention to some of the scarce Afghan victims' impact statements available, see the testimonials delivered in the context of the Bezna activist theatre production *A People's Tribunal on Crimes of Aggression: The Afghanistan Sessions; A Durational Artistic Tribunal Built and Run by Impacted Communities*, 9–11 September 2021, https://howlround.com/happenings/peoples-tribunal-crimes-aggression-afghanistan-sessions.

[21] The formulation of a People's Map of Afghanistan is inspired by Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States* (New York: Harper and Row, 1980).

[22] The quoted phrase is derived from Eric Wolf, *Europe and the People without History* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1982.)