

Jamie

Evaluating the Costs of War

Division 4 Humanities

I am so torn. I don't know what I believe. So I'll start with what I think I believe. I think I believe that war and violence should only be incited by the oppressed, and only as a last resort. Which, in essence, means that violence is only acceptable as self defense by the masses. And going by that logic one should argue that the U.S. has no right to be in Afghanistan in such a violent way. But I also think I believe that those in power should always help those not in power. And by that logic the U.S. should be aiding the citizens of Afghanistan in any way they can. And the pacifist side of me thinks that I believe that the only way forward is peaceful negotiations between the citizens of Afghanistan and the Taliban. And immediately after the pacifist side of me says that, the realist side of me starts to list off all of the reasons that cannot happen – government corruption being the main one. So given all of the barriers that need to be broken down before what I think I believe to be the most ethical solution can be implemented, any military presence seems to be the wrong route to be taken. But I don't know what the right one would be. Maybe diplomatic reasoning would be a better way to dismantle a corrupt government. Maybe leaving some troops in Afghanistan to train local law enforcement so that they are better equipped to deal with the problem at hand by themselves would be best. But the Taliban's whole ideology prohibits foreign intervention, and as long as there are troops they will resist. Haroon Chakhansuri, the

spokesman for Afghan President Ashraf Ghani said “We welcome U.S. efforts in the Afghan peace process. We hope to witness a long-term comprehensive cease-fire with the Taliban, and hope that direct negotiations of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Taliban begin soon.” But is that the best course of action if peace is the long term goal? Or should we listen to the voice of the oppressed (the Afghan citizens) who know best what is needed?

I think that the costs of the war in Afghanistan have been far greater than what little gains we have made. The cost of a human life is incalculable, not to mention the death and destruction that has occurred in the name of this war. And innocents have been the one to bear that cost for the most part. In short, I have no idea what I can do and I have no idea what I believe is the best path forward.