



## CIA Stories: Death Squads in Afghanistan

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**Speaker 1 from Video:** From the organization that brought you, oops, no more Kennedys and Topple Me Elmo, it's the Central Intelligence Agency Special Activities Division in Afghanistan action figure. They may look American, but if they do anything bad, they never existed. Complete with realistic features based off the real American heroes like Smug Grin, Bulletproof Mumu, Special Guatemala Edition Radio, guaranteed to make whoever's listening think they are being cool, Regular Pants. But most importantly, its a backpack full of American taxpayer dollars to pay some other guys to do shit that makes you a seasoned CIA professional, wanna fucking hurl? Use the backpack cash to raise an army of foreign fighters, foreign fighter accessories come with these death squad actions, summary executions of whole families, raiding medical clinics of Western NGOs, giving aspirin to the wrong Piece of shit! Find eight year olds profiled as potential future Taliban and kill them before they are old enough to hold a gun. Get to kill baby Hitler, wouldn't you? And add another layer of secrecy so that no matter what they do, the US government can deny all knowledge. This limited release won't come again until the next war in Afghanistan. So get yours now at The Empire Files.tv! Warning foreign fighters, may cause imposter syndrome, PTSD, anxiety and 9/11.

**Abby Martin:** Perhaps the most notorious piece of Central Intelligence Agency history is its creation and management of death squads. It is most known for doing so in Latin America. This record is long, consistent and quite disturbing. It's an irrefutable story of CIA directed mass murder of civilians for no other reason than to protect the rule of the rich from social movements of the poor.

**Speaker 1 in Video 2:** The CIA will secretly organize among the scattered groups attempting to unify them into one opposition force...

**Speaker 2 in native language:** The army asked who are guerillas? We said there are no guerrillas. So the army grabbed these people and with machetes they chopped off their heads...

**Speaker 2 in Video 2:** But meanwhile, General, we are financing at least a modest level, a proxy war, against the Nicaraguan government.

**Wallace Nutting in Video 2:** That's what I read in the newspapers. I do not...

**Speaker 2 in Video 2:** You do not know that when you were in the government?!

**WN in Video 2:** I do not find that illogical or morally repugnant.

**AM:** But key to the CIA's rebranding exercise today is the idea that their era of running death squads is a thing of the past. That was the old CIA, a different time, a complicated history. But this narrative couldn't be more false. In this episode we'll be talking about just one place the CIA has been running them for the last 20 years in Afghanistan, the case study and U.S. imperial disaster. While the CIA sponsored Afghan militias through the 80s they never really left and had already been preparing to overthrow the Taliban government, using them prior to 9/11.

**Robert Grenier in Video 3:** About 18 months before 9/11 I and the others in my station were working very hard to try to organize an anti-Taliban tribal rebellion in the south. But we were reaching out and establishing relationships that we hoped would enable us to lead that sort of a rebellion if and when the order came to go forward. And obviously that order came to go forward in the immediate days after 9/11.

**Robert Byer in Video 4:** Right behind me is the Jawbreaker 9/11 01 Mi 17 helicopter. This helicopter was used just 15 days after the attacks on 9/11. And seven men and three million dollars from CIA made its way from Uzbekistan into Afghanistan in the middle of the night and paved the way for the coming invasion.

**AM:** Handing out millions in cash. The CIA quickly had its own army in Afghanistan, which immediately played a leading role in the war. Using them to do most of the dirty work outside of the legal boundaries of the U.S. Military made them very valuable to the American occupation. It has always been a highly controversial policy. Even Afghan President Hamid Karzai, who himself had been on the CIA payroll, opposed allowing these CIA militias to exist under his new government. But a puppet president has no real power in a neo colony of the U.S. empire.

**Robert Grenier in Video 3:** Look, at the end of the day, unless we're going to colonize Afghanistan, we need to have some sort of a political dispensation in that country. And so

initially, we were hoping that the Taliban would be that force.

**AM:** The CIA created a secretive web of militias under various names, but basically established two main units. The first called the Coast Protection Force in northeast Afghanistan, which is fully under CIA command and is headquartered at a major CIA base. The second is the special forces of Afghanistan's own intelligence agency, the National Directorate of Security. They run operations in the rest of Afghanistan. While the NDS Special Forces are technically part of the Afghan military, they are trained, funded and actually under the control of the CIA. Because of the secretive nature of these militia fighters the exact size is unknown, but it's estimated to be around 10000.

**AM:** Their primary function is to conduct raids of villages where people are suspected of opposing the U.S. occupation or being pro Taliban, but often it's based on totally bogus rationale. For example, if the Taliban enter a village one night demanding food and villagers provide food and fear of crossing the Taliban, they're subject to CIA raids for the crime of aiding terrorism. Now, raids of villages are pretty standard for all U.S. and Afghan military forces. So what do they actually do that would qualify them as death squads?

**AM:** Because even in comparison to conventional forces, the havoc and death they unleash is stunningly higher. According to the United Nations Mission in Afghanistan report in twenty eighteen, which was a year of record civilian deaths by conventional Afghan security forces, the CIA teams killed about the same number of civilians. That means as many as the Afghan local police, the Afghan National Police, the Afghan army and the Afghan Air Force combined. The UN report also found a much higher ratio of civilian deaths to injuries, which led them to conclude, quote, The high number of fatalities compared to the number of injured suggests that force was employed indiscriminately, in particular summary executions.

**AM:** To put that into context, if the CIA militias number around 10000, the combined Afghan security forces outnumber that by over three hundred thousand personnel. Basically, the Central Intelligence Agency manages to kill as many civilians as a force more than 30 times larger than it, which is itself known for widespread civilian deaths. Listen to Mike Pompeo when he was director of the CIA, explain their strategy.

**Mike Pompeo in Video 4:** We can't perform our mission if we're not aggressive, vicious, unforgiving, relentless... You pick the word. Every minute we have to be focused on crushing our enemies.

**AM:** Here's what aggressive, unforgiving and relentless translates to on the ground. In Paktia, CIA forces raided the home of a village patriarch who was also a member of the provincial peace council. He, alongside of five of his family members, were shot one by one in the head. One witness testified: A wolf from the mountains doesn't carry out such actions. They shot them in the eyes and mouths where the women were sitting. I can't explain... Then those

young people. They were the future of Afghanistan. Students at university. In Chost they raided a home and took one man for interrogation. While they were torturing him outside, CIA forces executed his two brothers and sister before setting the house on fire. Inside, they left a three year old girl trapped in the house who burned alive in the blaze. In a Kandahar town, they took 20 men from their homes and summarily executed all of them in front of the village. In August 2019 in Kulago village, they, quote, blew open the doors of the house and shot four men in front of the rest of the family. In another house, they fatally shot three shopkeepers and one of their guests, all of whom were home for Eid celebrations. In the third incident, they killed a religious teacher and two construction workers. One witness said the residents complied, there was no resistance. They were separated from other family members and taken to separate rooms and shot dead. In October, twenty eighteen in the Rodat district of Nangarhar, 13 civilians were executed, including a nine year old boy, with CIA forces shooting children as they ran to the bodies of their loved ones.

**AM:** Executing children is not just collateral damage in attacks on suspected militants. As part of the Trump Pompeo relentless and unforgiving escalation, the CIA started directly targeting children who might one day grow up to be supporters of the Taliban.

**Speaker 1 in Video 5:** A shocking exposé out today in The Intercept reveals CIA backed death squads in Afghanistan have killed children as young as eight years old in a series of night raids, many targeting Madrasas, Islamic religious schools. In December, 2018, one of the death squads attacked a Madrasa in Wardak province, killing 12 boys, the youngest nine years old.

**Andrew Quilty in Video 6:** Those 12 boys that have been taken out of the several dormitories had been massacred in a room.

**AM:** There are several accounts of this exact scenario playing out in raids on medical clinics, adding yet another war crime to the paramilitaries rap sheet. In one example, on July eight, 2019, CIA militia attacked a medical clinic run by a Swedish NGO because they supposedly gave treatment to someone in the Taliban. CIA forces tied up all the clinic staff; they took four of the men, including the head doctor who ran the clinic into a separate room. In that room three of the men were executed. The lead doctor was disappeared.

**AM:** Now, some CIA defenders might say they can't control what these Afghan fighters do. It's the same defense they used for their death squads in Central America. We just trusted our allies and they turned out to do some heinous stuff. We didn't know what they were actually doing. Well, they can't use that excuse in Afghanistan. That's because when the coast protection forces or NDS special forces launch these murder raids, they aren't just dropped off by American pilots and given American air support. The CIA commandos are actually on the ground with them giving the orders.

**AM:** In one CIA raid in Toragar, one survivor recounted: When my father opened the gate, they shot him dead. Then they tossed a grenade, killing my mother. While watching both his parents murdered, Khan stated he heard men yelling in English. Even in the mass murder of children at religious schools, multiple survivors reported there were Americans present. In 2015, The Washington Post interviewed witnesses from six different massacres by the CIA paramilitary forces. In every instance, they recounted hearing English being spoken by armed men who had interpreters with them. The same report also interviewed former Afghan commanders in the CIA paramilitary. One said, the orders came from the Americans. They were the real bosses.

**AM:** This pattern shows that these paramilitaries, under direct command and supervision of the CIA carry out summary executions of civilians as a matter of routine policy, without a doubt, earning the label of a death squad.

**AM:** Sadly, it doesn't end there, the Afghan people don't just have to worry about being shot to death by the CIA troops, but the airstrikes that come before and after the notorious raids. U.S. forces are well-known for reckless massacres by air, especially in the past few years when air strikes increased to pave their retreat and blood. But the CIA has a different level of impunity and freedom to rain hellfire on civilians with their own aerial arsenal. In March 2019, CIA militia was searching the village of Nasir Khel, calling in airstrikes on civilian homes. One survivor told Human Rights Watch, the airstrikes hit two houses, a soldier of the Afghan National Army, his wife and four children were in one of those houses. All were killed. The village doctor, his wife and their five daughters were in the other house that was hit. And all of them died. A total of 13 civilians were killed. There are countless other stories like this. Masih Mubarez in Mullah Hafiz, lost his entire family in a CIA airstrike on their home. His wife, his seven children and four of his young nieces. The youngest was his four year old son. Mubarez told investigators: I have lost everyone, I am alone now.

**AM:** There's no hope for accountability for past crimes or stopping future ones, because the CIA and its militia forces operate in the dark under no official chain of command, off limits to the kind of scrutiny that can be leveled against conventional American led forces. And while journalists and human rights organizations have uncovered many of the horror stories I've shared in this episode, we can only assume that most of what they've done remains hidden away in the shadows. How many incidents have no survivors left to tell the tale?! As the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan begins to take shape, it's clear the U.S. will not really fully leave. But perhaps the biggest remaining footprint of the U.S. empire will be the CIA's death squads, which were hatched long before the U.S. occupation. And they'll surely outlive it.

**END**