

Melanie Smith

Instructor's Name

English 1013

Date

The Education Turmoil in Afghanistan

In a world as technologically advanced as ours is today, it is difficult to imagine a country that would not feel the need to secure its future by encouraging its youth to accumulate as much knowledge as possible. Sadly enough, countries still exist which prefer to establish themselves through violence and terrorism instead of education. In places such as Afghanistan, violence is an everyday affair. The constant wars within this country have left shambles for schoolhouses, a shortage of teachers, and textbooks that read more like military training manuals. There is little hope of ever changing the violent atmosphere in Afghanistan without first completely reforming the educational system.

Before any type of structured educational system can begin, schools must be restored to an operational status. "Some two thousand schools nationwide were damaged during the two decades of civil war" (Whitelaw 27). As a result of the deluge of bombings, the schools are dilapidated. Basic necessities such as water, electricity, and heat are lacking. Most schools that are able to open are filthy. Schools should be repaired or rebuilt in order to accommodate as many students as possible, as well as provide for their basic educational needs. Without schools to attend, children are left at the mercy of learning only what they see happening around them—war.

There is an immense shortage of teachers in Afghanistan. According to Whitelaw, under the Taliban rule, women, who made up three-quarters of the teaching profession, were barred

from teaching (Whitelaw 27). This has made adequately educating children impossible. The few male teachers are burdened with the daunting task of educating too many students. Under these conditions, children are unable to get any individual training or help with problem areas.

Without a sufficient number of teachers to ensure a proper education, children are left to learn only what they are exposed to daily—violence, poverty, and hate.

Textbooks are in dire need of being re-written. “The promotion of violence for the sake of Islam is the predominate theme throughout the Mujahidin textbook series in both mathematics and language arts for grades one through six” (Davis 90). When children are constantly exposed to militant ideas, they will eventually begin believing that violence is the answer to any problems they encounter. This is especially true for children of young and impressionable ages such as primary school students. Under the pretense of education, Afghanistan is actually training and producing new generations of terrorists daily.

Steps must be taken immediately to interrupt this vicious cycle. Otherwise, the hate and violence will continue to spread like a contagious disease, slowly seeping into other areas—one terrorist at a time—until it eventually engulfs nations, entire continents, and the world as we know it. It seems the only hope in breaking the pattern of terrorism is to halt it where it begins. In Afghanistan, that beginning is the educational system. The entire system must be reformed to ensure the safety of everyone. If knowledge is power, then education is the key to peace.

Works Cited

Davis, Craig. "'A' is for Allah, 'J' is for Jihad." *World Policy Journal*, vol. 19, no. 1, Spring 2002, pp. 90-94.

Whitelaw, Kevin. "Giving Afghan Girls a Chance." *U. S. News & World Report*, 21 Jan. 2002, pp. 26-28.