

Upon Leaving the Wild, Wild East in Afghanistan

by Phyllis Chesler



In the history of the world, no foreign power has ever occupied or been able to remain in this landlocked and remote country in central Asia. The Persians, the Mongols, the British, the Russians – all were unable to prevail. Even Alexander the Great departed, only leaving behind some blonde haired and green eyed Afghans.

I was once held captive in fairly posh purdah in Kabul. This dangerous but magnificent adventure became something of a [assassinated](#) by the Taliban. It did not stop other women from bravely taking their place. Fawzia Koofi, a former member

of the Afghan Parliament, was shot in her car. She lived – but she still does not know whether a member of the Taliban or of al-Qaida tried to [demonized](#), then [increased](#) “29 percent over the same period last year,” the *New York Times* reports. “The American withdrawal will undoubtedly be a massive blow to morale for the Afghan security forces...without American military support, Afghan government troops are up against a Taliban enemy who is frequently more experienced and better equipped than the average soldier.”

Here’s one of my concerns: The moment the last American soldier departs is the same moment that the barbarians will torch the shelters for battered women and the schools for girls – and begin publicly stoning women to death for alleged misdeeds. The hands of thieves will be cut off according to Sharia law. Women will again stumble around in chadaris, burqas – sensory deprivation isolation chambers on the move.

One Afghan woman, Basireh Heydari, a student at Herat University, was recently [wanted the world to know](#) that the Taliban “is fooling them, they are not changed.” She holds the Americans responsible for what will happen – not the Taliban – since “this is just the Taliban’s nature.”

Even with the American military presence, Afghanistan’s Ministry of Women’s Affairs [slit the throat](#) of three people working at a school in Nangarhar before lighting the building on fire. Video emerged last year of a woman [2,300 U.S. personnel](#) who were killed there since 2001. Currently, the Taliban, wealthy opium traffickers, surround 10 cities; their promises cannot be trusted.

Upon our withdrawal, [said](#), “but the risks of going completely to zero far outweigh the costs of keeping a small number of troops there. I think the question is this: Is the US willing to spend \$5 billion annually, which means a small US force presence of about 2,500? Is that worth it, as an insurance policy to prevent another 9/11-style attack?”

However, she [*Investigative Project on Terrorism*](#).