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“Sober, sad, and important, *Funding the Enemy* peels back the layers of American engagement in Afghanistan to reveal its rotten core: that United States dollars meant for that country's future instead fund the insurgency and support the Taliban. Paying for both sides of the war ensures America's ultimate defeat, and Wissing's book tells the story.”

—Peter Van Buren, former State Department Foreign Service Officer and author of *We Meant Well: How I Helped Lose the Battle for the Hearts and Minds of the Iraqi People*

Funding the Enemy

How U.S. Taxpayers Bankroll the Taliban

Douglas A. Wissing

With the vague intention of winning hearts and minds in Afghanistan, the US government has mismanaged billions of development and logistics dollars, bolstered the drug trade, and dumped untold millions into Taliban hands. That is the sobering message of investigative journalist Douglas A. Wissing's **Funding the Enemy: How U.S. Taxpayers Bankroll the Taliban** (Prometheus Books, March 2012; \$25), a scathing critique of our war effort in Afghanistan. According to Wissing, America has already lost the war.

During Wissing's research and fieldwork in Afghanistan's war zones, a drumbeat of off-the-record and offhand remarks pointed him to one conclusion: “We blew it.” The sentiment was even blazoned across the US military's fortifications, as Wissing saw at Forward Operating Base Mehtar Lam in insurgency-wracked Laghman Province: “I glanced over at a concrete blast barrier while waiting for a helicopter,” Wissing says. “Someone had spray-painted in jagged letters: ‘The GAME. You Lost It.’”

Wissing's vivid narrative takes the reader down to ground level in frontline Afghanistan. It draws on the voices of hundreds of combat soldiers, ordinary Afghans, private contractors, aid workers, international consultants, and government officials. From these contacts it became very clear, as the author details, that US taxpayer dollars have been flowing into Taliban coffers, courtesy of scandalously mismanaged US development and counterinsurgency programs, to calamitous military and social effect.

This is the first book to detail the toxic embrace between American policymakers and careerists, Afghan kleptocrats and opportunistic Taliban. The result? US taxpayers have been funding both sides of the disastrous Afghanistan War.

About the Author

Donald A. Wissing (Bloomington, IN) is an award-winning independent journalist, who has reported widely on the war in Afghanistan for print, radio, and the web. He has contributed hundreds of stories to media outlets that include

the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *Asia Times*, *Forbes Life*, the *Independent on Sunday* (UK), *Salon*, and *National Geographic Traveler*, as well as the BBC, VOA News, and NPR networks. He is the author of six books, including *Pioneer in Tibet: The Life and Perils of Dr. Albert Shelton*. More info on the author and *Funding the Enemy* at www.douglaswissing.com.

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How U.S. Taxpayers Bankroll the Taliban

By Douglas A. Wissing

Prometheus Books

\$25.00 Hardcover; 347 pages, photos

978-1-61614-603-0

March 2012