

- **Why has Obama declared Afghanistan “the good war?”**
- **Why are so many Western troops, including Irish military, involved in this war?**
- **Why is the anti-war movement calling for all troops to be withdrawn?**

Afghanistan is descending into a hell-hole of chaos, corruption, crime and death. Estimates of civilian deaths caused by the 2001 invasion vary from 6,300 to 23,600. In May this year, U.S. planes dropped 2,000-pound bombs on three mud-brick villages in Western Afghanistan, killing up to 140 people. Over 1100 coalition soldiers have also been killed.

The effects of the occupation have swelled support for the Taliban. The war is escalating and has spilled over into neighbouring Pakistan where attacks by US drone planes and the US-backed Pakistani army assault on villages in the Swat Valley has left hundreds dead. and, Trócaire says that up to two million people have been displaced.

Western forces are rowing ever further in behind the invasion. U.S. troop reinforcements, some 30,000 soldiers are beginning to arrive in southern Afghanistan. added to the 32,000 already there. The White House also wants to give Pakistan nearly \$1.5 billion a year development aid and \$400 million in fresh military assistance.

Europe is deeply involved. ISAF troops (International Security Assistance Force) working under an expanded NATO command number 61,000 from 42 different countries, **including at least ten officers from Ireland**. Since October 2006 This is truly a war waged by western powers against a small poor country that has the misfortune to have a prized strategic position.

Yet the west’s war is not popular with Afghanis. Opinion polls show Afghan confidence in the U.S. and the Afghan government plummeting, with now only 32% - down from 68% in 2005 – supporting the US performance. Yet this is the war that Obama wants to make his own. The stakes are very high but what is the war all about? Representatives from both the US Embassy (confirmed) and the Irish Dept. of Foreign Affairs have been invited to debate American and Afghani anti war activists. Come along and find out about this horrific situation.