

Afghanistan: Fatal Military Quagmire

Occupation Forces unable to defeat armed opposition militarily

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Global Research, November 24, 2007

24 November 2007

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

In-depth Report: [AFGHANISTAN](#)

The American led western adventure in Afghanistan seems to be stumbling towards failure.

With every passing day it appears that the Americans and their allies are stuck in a fatal military quagmire; their political and military weaknesses and limitations have been exposed by their inability to defeat an armed resistance which is intensifying daily.

The western alliance has serious difficulty in harmonizing their military actions and unifying their political purpose.

And the opposition to the war amongst the people of western countries involved in Afghanistan has been growing. All signs indicate that not only are the occupying powers unable to resolve the crises in their favour, but that their troubles are going to intensify in the coming years.

The continuous brutalities of war and occupation, the broken promises, the corruption of the puppet regime, and people's mounting miseries under the occupation have increased resentment towards the occupying forces and their puppet government in the country.

This constant unrest and turbulence is spreading across the land, in cities and villages.

Both the occupying authorities and the puppet regime realize the direness of the situation and have recognized that they are now unable to defeat their armed opposition militarily. This is why they are appealing to the insurgents for a negotiated end to the armed resistance.

Some circles in the West-and also within Afghanistan-have shown interest and hope in current rumors of ongoing negotiations between the Taliban and the Karzai government.

These negotiations however, lead nowhere. The Taliban have already rejected the possibility of negotiations and accommodations with the government unless there is a withdrawal of occupation forces.

Furthermore, even if Karzai were to utilize his relations with certain elements within the Taliban and bring them under the umbrella of the puppet government, this would not end the conflict.

There are already many ex-Taliban members and leaders in the puppet government. First and foremost the head of the current puppet regime, Karzai himself, was a former Taliban member. Mullah Salaam Rocketi a renowned Taliban military commander is in the

parliament of the puppet government. Maulawi Ahmad Mutawakil, a senior leader in the Taliban movement and its minister of foreign affairs is living in Kabul under Karzai's auspices. Maulana Zaeef, the senior Taliban member and their ambassador to Pakistan, is also living in Kabul. The case of Maulawi Ahmad Mutawakil is the most interesting of these, since he always gives pro-Taliban interviews to TV and radio channels. Due to these official interviews one might possibly doubt that he is the Taliban's unofficial representative in Kabul.

Increasing the list of the above-mentioned Taliban members within the puppet regime, or as respected guests in the affluent Kabul neighborhoods is not going to change things much. We can even imagine ailing Taliban commanders taking advantage of Karzai's "kindness" and arriving for physical checkups and treatments under the guise of a peace process.

But the war itself will continue.

There is mounting opposition in the West to the war in Afghanistan. The increasing death toll among occupying troops has heightened the campaign against the war in Western countries. The populations' antipathy for war efforts may make it significantly difficult for the western governments to continue their mission in Afghanistan. Already several NATO countries are shying away from taking their troops to the battlegrounds of southern Afghanistan.

It is possible that, if the armed resistance spreads further across Afghanistan, the alliance of western countries will crumble and many of the thirty-six countries with troops will withdraw their troops. Even now the popular opposition to the war is on the rise in all countries with troops in Afghanistan.

The imperialists are trying to change this situation in their favour by arguing that their presence in Afghanistan benefits the native population. They have just celebrated a public opinion poll in Afghanistan that shows that a majority of people in Afghanistan is supporting the presence of western troops in their country.

The Afghan "Opinion Poll"

There are numerous reasons to doubt this poll as a dubious attempt to convince the people in western countries of the justness of the war in Afghanistan, one being that this poll was conducted by an organization (Afghanistan Centre for Social and Opinion Research) that receives its funding from the USAID. Thus, due to the ideology of this funding source, it is entirely possible the poll would produce results that support the interests of the donor institutions. Additionally, anyone familiar with the situation in Afghanistan will know that it is very difficult to conduct public opinion polls in the appropriate fashion. Afghanistan is a semi-feudal country in which a majority of people lives in the countryside. The system of communication and transportation is very limited or non-existent in many parts of the country. Therefore, it would be very difficult to reach a significant portion of the population. Afghanistan is also in a war situation, where armed insurgency and opposition to the government and the occupying powers has ended the control of government and occupying forces in many places. Thus, it would be impossible for pro-government pollsters to travel to those places.

It is most likely that the organization funded for manufacturing the poll has largely conducted their activities in urban areas, where only 20 percent of the country's population reside. Most probably, the pollsters have also not bothered to pay a trip to poor

neighborhoods, preferring to ask questions in the safe environment of the unofficial 'greenzones' in some cities and thus meeting their quota of 1600 people. In such a circumstances, the polls would indeed produce a result that would be sweet on the ears of General Rick Hillier, Stephen Harper, George W. Bush, and their likes. Or if the results were not really appealing, one could simply adjust a few statistics, as is usually being done.

The polls were an attempt to boost support for the war. With the intensification of the war, the governments who have joined George W. Bush's war on Afghanistan are finding themselves in serious trouble. The coming winter might slow down the insurgency and the war, but the start of the spring might bring even a deadlier year for the occupying troops. A possible failure for the mission is clearly in sight. This is question now: will the policy makers in the west come to their senses and withdraw in a way where limited harm is done to the people in Afghanistan? Or will they escalate their atrocities within Afghanistan and spread their war beyond this country's borders and pushing the world towards even more hazardous disasters. We should not take the ruling classes of the western imperialist countries very lightly; they can always increase repression and use coercion instead of convincing—even against their own people—and commit mass murders abroad. Only strong and dynamic social movements in opposition to war, occupation and imperialism can change things for the better in Afghanistan and elsewhere.

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