

Afghanistan - Trump to Announce Four More One-Year Wars

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This evening Trump will announce a new “[path forward](#)” in the occupation of Afghanistan. According to the usual leaks it will be the very same path the U.S. has taken for 16 years.

Several thousands soldiers from the U.S. and various NATO countries will (in vain) train the Afghan army. Special Forces and CIA goons will raid this or that family compound on someone’s say-so. Bombs will be dropped on whatever is considered a target.

Trump will announce that 1,000 or so troops will be added to the current contingent. About 15,000 foreign troops will be in Afghanistan. About three contractors per each soldier will be additionally deployed.

Trump knows that this “path forward” is nonsense that leads nowhere, that the best option for all foreign troops in Afghanistan is to simply leave:

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump – [21 Nov 2013](#) We have wasted an enormous amount of blood and treasure in Afghanistan. Their government has zero appreciation. Let’s get out!

But neither the military nor the CIA nor the local Afghan government will let the U.S. leave. Fear mongering is abound: “What happens if Afghanistan becomes a hotbed for international terrorists?” But few if any international terrorist incident in the “west” were ever organized in Afghanistan. In all recent incidents the culprits were locals.

For the military it is all about optics. The generals do not want to concede that they lost another war. The CIA wants to keep its militarized forces and drones which it justifies through its engagement in Afghanistan. The drug production in Afghanistan, which the U.S. never really tried to suppress, is rumored to finance “black” CIA operations just like it did during the Vietnam war and throughout various South American conflicts. The members of the Afghan government all live off U.S. largess. [The war in Afghanistan is a racket](#) paid for with the lives of countless Afghans and U.S. taxpayer money.

Now tightly under control of neo-conservative leaning generals Trump had little chance to make a different decision. He had asked his team for alternatives but [none were given](#) to him:

The president told McMaster “to go back to the drawing board,” the official

said. "But he just kept coming back with the same thing."

Trump's former strategic advisor Steve Bannon promoted an idea of Eric Prince, a shady provider of international mercenaries. Afghanistan would be given to a private for-profit entity comparable to the British East-India Company. That company, with its own large army, robbed India of all possible valuables and nearly became a state of its own. But Prince and Bannon forgot to tell [the end](#) of that company's story. It came down after a large mutiny in India defeated its armed forces and had to be bailed out by the government. The end state of an East India Company like entity in Afghanistan would be the same as it is now.

Then there is the fairy tale of the mineral rich Afghanistan. \$1 trillion of iron, copper, rare-metals and other nice stuff could be picked out of the ground. But in reality the costs of picking minerals in Afghanistan is, for various reasons, prohibitive.

The Bannon/Prince plan was lunatic but it was at least somewhat different than the [never changing](#) ideas of the military:

The Defense Secretary [Mattis] has been using this line in meetings: "Mr. President, we haven't fought a 16-year war so much as we have fought a one-year war, 16 times."

That line has already been used [five years ago](#) to describe the war on Afghanistan. (It originally describes the 10 year war in Vietnam.) Mattis did not explain why or how that repetitive one year rhythm would now change.

A "new" part of the plan is to put pressure on Pakistan to stop the financing and supplying of Taliban groups. That is not in Pakistan's interest and is not going to happen. The Trump administration wants to hold back the yearly cash payment to the Pakistani military. This has been tried before and the Pakistani response was to close down the U.S. supply route to Afghanistan. An alternative supply route through Russia had been developed but has now been shut down over U.S. hostilities towards that country. The U.S. can not sustain a deployment in Afghanistan without a sea-land route into the country.

The Afghan army is, like the government, utterly corrupt and filled with people who do not want to engage in fighting. More "training" will not change that. The U.S. proxy government is limited to a few larger cities. It claims to control many districts but its forces are often constricted to central compounds while the Taliban rule the countryside. In total the Taliban and associated local war lords hold [more than half](#) of the country and continue to gain support. The alleged ISIS derivative in Afghanistan was originally formed out of Pakistani Taliban [by the Afghan National Directorate of Security](#) which is under the control of the CIA:

In Nangarhar, over a year ago, the vanguard of the movement was a group of Pakistani militants who had lived there for years as 'guests' of the Afghan government and local people. While initially avoiding attacks on Afghan forces, they made their new allegiances known by attacking the Taleban and taking their territory.

ISIS in Afghanistan, founded as an anti-Taliban force, is just another form of the usual Afghan warlordism.

During 16 years the U.S. failed to set a realistic strategic aim for the occupation of Afghanistan. It still has none. Without political aim the military is deployed in tactical engagements that make no long lasting differences. Any attempts to negotiate some peace in Afghanistan requires extensive engagement with the Taliban, Pakistan, China, Russia and Iran. No one in Washington is willing to commit to that.

Trump's likely decision means that the story of the U.S. occupation of Afghanistan will continue throughout the next years exactly as it happened during the last 16 years. The decision, once made, is unlikely to change until the next presidential election. The 16 one-year-wars in Afghanistan will become 20 one-year-wars for no perceivable gain.

The only conceivable event that could change the situation is an incident with a large number of U.S. military casualties. That could lead to a groundswell of anti-war sentiment which could press Congress into legislating an end of the war. But are the Taliban interested in achieving that?

Update (Aug 22 2017):

Trump announced exactly what we predicted above. The military [dictated the plan](#) to him just like it did to Obama. Here is the [transcript](#) of Trump's speech. It is no different from the one Obama held in 2009: Undefined aims, undefined troop numbers, undefined time limits - bashing Pakistan (which will bash back) and no new idea at all. As long as the U.S. does not pull out the war will continue without any end in sight:

TOLOnews @TOLOnews - [4:43 AM - 22 Aug 2017](#) Taliban respond to US President #Trump's announcement, claim to continue fighting "as long as US troops remain in #Afghanistan".

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