

NATO in Afghanistan: A Dagger Struck Into the Heart of Asia

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On April 27 the NATO secretary-general Jens Stoltenberg issued an ultimatum to the Taliban fighting the US and NATO allied forces that have invaded and occupied Afghanistan; negotiate-meaning surrender-or be destroyed. Taking his cue from the Nazi diktats in the countries they invaded and occupied across Europe in the Second World War, he acted like a Reinhardt Heydrich, the Nazi SS Security General, making threats against the resistance on behalf of the warlords in Washington and the other NATO capitals and like the German Nazis before him, repeated the same lies the Germans used; that NATO's presence "creates the conditions for peace and reconciliation." But a more severe war lurks under their guise of peace.

The threats did not stop with the Taliban. He also warned Pakistan to "take additional steps to close all "terrorist sanctuaries" and "encouraged Iran and Russia to contribute to regional stability," meaning that they should accept the American and NATO occupation of the country and abandon the joint Russian, Iranian, Chinese efforts at concluding a peaceful resolution of the war in Afghanistan so that the Americans will have no pretext to stay.

But what is NATO doing in Afghanistan in the first place? Afghanistan has not attacked any NATO nation. No Afghans have attacked a NATO nation. NATO claims to be a defensive military alliance yet it is engaged in supporting American aggression against a sovereign nation that did nothing whatsoever to justify its invasion by the US in 2001, except of course that it occupies a strategically important region of the world.

The NATO presence there is a violation of the NATO Treaty and a violation of the UN Charter. In fact the very creation of the NATO alliance is a violation of the UN Charter since NATO claims to be able to act outside the rules of the UN Charter that forbids any use of force by one nation against another without the approval of the Security Council. In the Soviet days this evasion or renunciation of the UN Charter was balanced by the answering response by the USSR and its European allies in the creation of the Warsaw Pact. But the counter-revolution in the USSR and consequent abandonment of the Warsaw Pact defensive wall against NATO resulted in the rapid movement of NATO forces from the western Atlantic right up to Russia's borders. The restoration in Russia of a sense of national sovereignty and pride and the replacement of quislings with those who understood what the big game was all about have saved the day so far. But the threat against Russia continues to mount and there appears to be disagreement within the Russian government on how to deal with it; between those who want to accommodate the US and its allies to, hopefully, end the economic warfare being conducted against Russia under the name of sanctions and those that realise that accommodation will only result in Russia being broken into pieces so that it

can never resist the west again; the tragic fate of Korea, Yugoslavia, Iraq, Libya and Syria.

But what is the war for? As I said in an earlier essay, one of the reasons has to do with gas pipelines and the Taliban not agreeing to the dictated terms put to them by the Bush regime in 2001, similar to the diktats put to Yugoslavia just two years before, "Do what we tell you, or we will bomb you." In the case of the Taliban, which the Americans helped to create, along with other reactionary groups, when they used those groups to attack and destroy the socialist government of Afghanistan and the Red Army that came to protect it, the diktat was to make sure that the proposed American gas pipeline projects to Pakistan and the Indian Ocean were secure.

The Americans demanded that the Taliban form a coalition government of all factions, a government of "national unity," in order to stop the ongoing civil war. The Taliban refused the offer. In Berlin, in July 2001, according to Jean Charles Brisard and Guillaume Dasquiein, the Americans insisted, "either you accept our offer of a carpet of gold, or we bury you under a carpet of bombs."

The war was never about Bin Laden. The hunt for Bin Laden was just an excuse for the invasion of Afghanistan, an invasion decided upon several months before the incident in New York City on September 11 of that year, the incident that was used as the cover, first for the invasion of Afghanistan, then for the invasion of Iraq.

Bin Laden himself was a long time American asset whose family had strong links to George Bush through interlocking companies such as the BCCI bank and Bush's Harken Energy, in which Bin Laden's half brother Salem Bin Laden was an investor. Osama Bin Laden helped the Americans set up Al Qaeda to fight the socialists in Afghanistan and was seen as recently as 1998-99 in Yugoslavia with his mujahidin, under American Army command, fighting to destroy the socialist government there.



Shafiq bin Laden with George H. W. Bush

Just a day before the September 11 incident, his brother Shafiq Bin Laden attended a meeting of the Carlyle Group, an American holding company, at the Ritz Carlton Hotel in Washington that was also attended by George Bush senior. Both were investors in the company. The claim that Bin Laden attacked the United States is absurd on the face of it to

anyone who knows his connections and his family's connections to the American leadership and intelligence and military services. They tried to make him a patsy but he refused to play the role and denied he was involved in the tragedy in New York. The American government has never presented any proof that he was.

Another primary reason for the American invasion of Afghanistan is its vast mineral wealth, from oil, gas and coal, to gem stones and rare earths such as lithium, to gold and iron ore; some of the richest deposits of minerals in the world. The Americans invaded to take those resources and to keep them. In the meantime, while the war continues and mineral extraction is inhibited, the Americans exploit the huge production of heroin and other opiates that has grown manifold since their invasion. Essentially Afghanistan has been reduced to an American mining and heroin extraction concession, and others can have access only in regard to their contribution to the invasion and occupation to secure that wealth. The Americans, like all the other colonial powers of the past and present, choose to call this racket "foreign policy."

But minerals are not the only reason. Afghanistan is strategically located between India, Pakistan, China, Iran as well as Russia, through Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan to the north, all of which have their own large mineral deposits. It is an important link for the Silk Road routes of the past and present and for China's development.

For years the war has spilled into Pakistan with the Afghan puppet regime routinely accusing Pakistan of supporting the groups labeled as Taliban while Pakistan states that it is trying to prevent "terrorist attacks from groups in Afghanistan. Everyone is tired of this endless war, everyone, except the Americans, who seem to lose all purpose if they are not at war. But today the Americans and their Afghan puppets are wondering what will transpire next after Russia began a major diplomatic initiative with a meeting held in Moscow in December 2016 between China, Pakistan and Russia to talk about Afghanistan's "security."

Russia knows the presence of ISIS fighters in Afghanistan is a threat to its security. The Taliban also have clashed with them so both have a common interest insofar as dealing with ISIS is concerned. Since there is good reason to believe that some elements of ISIS are supported by the United States these clashes are also skirmishes between Russia and the United States, just as they are in Syria.

The Chinese know that the Americans want to stay in Afghanistan to increase American economic and political power in central Asia as part of its unquenchable lust for world power and control and diminish Chinese development along its new Silk Road connecting Beijing to Berlin and beyond.

To the south lies India, further west Turkey. Whoever holds Afghanistan has an advantage in exerting its power in all these spheres. The Americans invaded to get that control and they care nothing for what the people of Afghanistan want. The reality behind the platitudes is that the US-NATO occupation of Afghanistan is a dagger struck into the heart of Asia.

The Americans intend to stay, they say, and "win." But the phrases they use to express their intent are the same meaningless propaganda that they used before they were defeated in Vietnam.

In August 2017 President Trump unveiled what he called his South East Asia Strategy, centred on Afghanistan. In a speech to members of the American forces in Virginia, Trump

played the role of Richard Nixon and repeated the same words Nixon used to justify the continuation of the war against Vietnam. He stated, as did Nixon, that the American strategy can have no timelines attached to it. As Nixon talked about “peace with honour.” Trump referred to an “honourable outcome.” As Nixon claimed that to hastily exit Vietnam would allow communism to flood Asia, Trump claimed that “a hasty exist from Afghanistan will allow terrorists to attack America.” As Nixon claimed Cambodia and Laos were providing safe havens to communist forces and then bombed, invaded and destroyed those countries, Trump claimed that, “Pakistan provides safe havens to terrorists that threaten America.” As Nixon claimed that it was up to the Vietnamese people to decide their own future as American troops killed any Vietnamese who thought they should, Trump claimed it is up to the Afghani people to “take ownership of their future”, as his forces plunder the country and kill anyone who resists them and, to justify their claims of “terrorists” existing there, import their ISIS mercenaries to blow up civilians on the streets so that the Americans can pretend to hunt them down.



On March 22, of this year the American general in charge of the US and NATO occupation forces, and the de facto head of state in Afghanistan, General Nicholson, stated that additional military forces are now in place, more are being sent and that “the main effort in the US Central Command area of operations has shifted from Iraq and Syria to Afghanistan and that these “additional capabilities will enable the Afghans to get on the offensive,” meaning that they and their puppet forces will go on the offensive.

In parallel with this offensive, Nicholson stated that the overall objective is to reconcile the Taliban with the “nation,” an attempt to undermine the negotiations already underway between Russia, China, Iran, Pakistan and the Taliban as part of the Russian initiative to bring about a peace deal that would then require the NATO and US forces to leave. The US has also arranged for “elections” to take place which they hope will give legitimacy to the puppets they control in Kabul and are even trying to put religious pressure on the Taliban through the Ulema Council in Indonesia that is expected to “delegitimise jihad in Afghanistan.

But just as Nixon was whistling Dixie as the USA was going down in defeat in Vietnam, President Trump and his generals are whistling the same tune in Afghanistan since they are unable to defeat the Afghan resistance after all these years and so seek to widen the war to try to win it, just as Nixon decided to widen the Vietnam War to win it and invaded Cambodia, with horrific results.

It is not the first time they have tried bringing Pakistan into the war. We remember that in 2009 Raymond Davis, a CIA officer in Pakistan, shot dead two Pakistani Intelligence officers

who were tailing him and when arrested was found to have in his car cameras with which he had been surveilling sensitive installations. He also had in his possession maps of Islamic schools and mosques where bombings had taken place, which had been blamed on Al Qaeda, linked groups, such as Tehreek-e-Taliban with which curiously he was in contact. The Pakistanis also found in his car multiple cell phones that could be used for triggering bombs, bomb making equipment and other paraphernalia. His arrest caused panic in Washington and a lot of pressure was exerted on Pakistan to release him. Pakistan's President Zardari stated that the US was arranging the "suicide" attacks inside Pakistan. The US denied it but since the arrest of Davis there have been no further bombings of mosques in Pakistan. Those who have read Graham Greene's essential novel, *The Quiet American*, will know what I am taking about.

Interestingly President Zardari said at the time the US was engaged in a plot to destabilise Pakistan so the US could justify an invasion and seize Pakistan's nuclear weapons and that the CIA linked terrorists assassinated his wife Benazir Bhutto. Eight years later President Trump stated, "We must prevent nuclear weapons", meaning Pakistani nuclear weapons, "from coming into the hand of terrorists and being used against us..."

The United States and NATO are not in Afghanistan to fight "terrorists" for they are the terrorists, creating conditions that give a pretext for their aggression and occupation and for a wider war; a war to save themselves from their endless folly, a strategy which will ultimately bring about, after much death and destruction, their own defeat, as it did in Vietnam.

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