

Troop “Reduction” in Afghanistan!

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Trump was elected president in 2016 partly because he railed against America’s wasteful wars. So, what did his advisers talk him into? A [mini-surge of troops](#) to Afghanistan. I still recall the odd news of Trump being shown photos of Afghan women in skirts (vintage 1972) to convince him that westernization and modernization of Afghanistan was possible.

Several thousand additional U.S. troops [were sent](#) to Afghanistan in 2017, predictably achieving nothing of note. A little more than two years later, we have another item of “big” news today, according to CNN:

The Trump Administration is preparing to announce a long-awaited reduction of US troops in Afghanistan, a senior administration official confirmed to CNN. There are between 12,000 and 13,000 US troops in the country right now, and the US has maintained a solid presence throughout the 18-year war in the area. This drawdown would remove up to 4,000 troops, with more possible reductions in the future, the official said. That matches the claim Trump made on Fox News Radio in August that his administration would take the number “down to 8,600.” The reduction comes at the same time the US is restarting peace talks with the Taliban, and some worry the troop drawdown could be seen as a concession to the terrorist group.

Where to begin with this CNN snippet?

1. The “reduction” is not a reduction but a return to previous troop levels at the end of the Obama administration.
2. The U.S. “has maintained a solid presence”? Good god. You’d never know about all the bombing, droning, and killing the U.S. has done over the last 18+ years. Or is that the “solid presence” we’ve been maintaining?
3. The troop “drawdown” as a “concession” to the Taliban? Guess what: The Taliban aren’t going anywhere, and [they’re winning](#). A few thousand U.S. troops, either as a “plus-up” or “drawdown,” have had and will have no impact on the reality on the ground.

Sometimes I don’t know whether to laugh, cry, or do both. Perhaps my dad put it best: “We laugh to hide the tears.”

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