

US-Taliban Talks: Real or Illusory Progress?

Afghanistan's Multibillion Dollar Mineral Wealth

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US Afghan aggression and occupation of parts of the country remain largely unchanged after over 17 years.

Afghanistan reflects what CIA officials once called Vietnam – “the grand illusion of the American cause,” a conflict impossible to win. Yet it persists with no prospect for meaningful resolution.

US Lt. Colonel Daniel Davis earlier assessed conditions in the country after touring occupied areas for weeks, speaking to commanders, lower-ranking soldiers, Afghan security officials, civilians, and village elders.

He minced no words saying

“(h)ow many more men must die in support of a mission that is not succeeding,” adding:

“Senior ranking US military leaders have so distorted the truth when communicating with the US Congress and American people in regards to conditions on the ground in Afghanistan that the truth has become unrecognizable.”

“This deception has damaged America’s credibility among both our allies and enemies, severely limiting our ability to reach a political solution to the war in Afghanistan.”

Wherever he went,

“the tactical situation was bad to abysmal...witness(ing) the absence of success on virtually every level” – things perhaps worse now than earlier, the nation and its people devastated by endless US war.

The US came to stay, not leave, permanent occupation planned, wanting the country’s resources plundered.

They include barite, chromite, coal, cobalt, copper, gold, iron ore, lead, enormous amounts of highly-valued lithium and other rare earth metals vital for high tech products, natural gas, oil, precious and semi-precious stones, potash, salt, sulfur, talc, zinc, among other minerals.

They represent potentially trillions of dollars of economic value, a treasure Washington has no intention of relinquishing. US policymakers also aim to traverse the country with oil and gas pipelines.

Its territory is used as part of a greater plan to encircle Russia and China. Taliban forces control half or more of the country. US-controlled puppet rule was installed in Kabul – figures Taliban officials won't talk to because of their illegitimacy.

Afghanistan is the world's largest opium producer, used for heroin production. What the Taliban eradicated pre-9/11, the US restored.

It's a bonanza for money-laundering Western banks, the CIA relying on drugs trafficking as a revenue source, and other organized crime, tens of billions of dollars annually at stake – why the US is complicit in what's going on at the highest official levels.

Trump regime envoy for talks with Taliban officials Zalmay Khalilzad formerly was Bush/Cheney's ambassador to occupied Afghanistan and Iraq, later their UN envoy, a hardcore neocon extremist, supporting Washington's imperial agenda, hostile to peace, equity and justice.

On February 25, so-called peace talks between Taliban officials and Khalilzad began in Qatar. There's virtually no chance of anything from them benefitting long-suffering Afghans if any agreement is struck.

Nor is there any prospect for Washington admitting defeat and exiting the country altogether – similar to its humiliating April 1975 Vietnam withdrawal.

It was the longest US war in modern times until naked aggression in Afghanistan was launched in October 2001, weeks post-9/11, plans for attacking the nation prepared months in advance. All wars require extensive planning.

Whatever the US may agree on in the days and weeks ahead with the Taliban won't be worth the paper it's written on, a nation repeatedly breaching deals – most recently the JCPOA Iran nuclear agreement.

Two summits with North Korea failed over unacceptable demands made in return for hollow promises.

That said, here's where things stand on Wednesday, according to Khalilzad and the Taliban. Via Twitter, the Trump regime envoy said the following:

"Peace requires agreement on four issues: counter-terrorism assurances, troop withdrawal, intra-Afghan dialogue, and a comprehensive ceasefire.

We "agreed in principle on...four elements. We're now agreed in draft (form) on the first two."

A Taliban spokesman said progress was made on withdrawing all foreign forces from Afghanistan, short of setting a timeline, as well as agreeing on US-sought assurances on the future of security in the country if Pentagon and allied troops pull out.

The NYT published a Reuters report, saying the US wants assurances from the Taliban “not (to) allow militant groups (ISIS, al-Qaeda, etc.) to use Afghanistan to stage attacks.”

The Washington Post published an AP News report, saying both “sides have reached a draft agreement on the withdrawal of US troops,” along with the Taliban agreeing not to let territory it controls become “a haven for terrorists (ISIS, al-Qaeda, etc.).

NBC News said the US got a commitment from the Taliban “to cut all ties (sic) with al-Qaeda or other terrorist groups” its leadership opposes.

The US supports these jihadists, using them as proxy forces in its war theaters, including in Afghanistan against the Taliban. Its leadership wants them eliminated from the country.

Notably, no breakthroughs were achieved on any issues – nor is it likely in further talks whatever possible accommodations both sides may agree on in principle.

Republicans and undemocratic Dems intend permanent occupation of Afghanistan. Anything agreed to otherwise on paper is virtually certain to be breached by US officials.

Taliban authorities are savvy, knowing the hazards of dealing with imperial Washington. They likely hope for anything positive from talks – well aware that US officials can never be trusted.

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