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## A Bitter Defeat in Afghanistan Fails to Satisfy Washington's Desire for Greatness

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There's absolutely no point in arguing that the US invaded Afghanistan with the sole purpose of exploiting its geographic positions and natural resources.

Back in 2006, the Bush administration would have conducted a detailed geological study of Afghan subsoils to establish what minerals can be extracted in this war-torn country, which was followed by a series of consultations held by Bush's successor President Obama with big names in the US mining sector that would try to explain him how the minerals of the occupied country could have been transformed into real profits. Although it is true that one can produce oil and gas in Afghanistan, the most profitable niche in Afghanistan is copper extraction, with Chinese and

Indian companies already being heavily engaged in this area. In 2010, an official US estimate showed that Afghanistan had untapped mineral deposits worth nearly 1 trillion dollars.

However, the actual steps aimed at the consolidation of US military and industrial circles around the exploitation of this booming niche of Afghan economy were carried out under Donald Trump. Trump is tempted to start developing American mining capabilities in this Islamic Republic in order to somehow compensate the mind boggling amount of money and resources Washington wasted on the attempts to “pacify” the country that it so boldly invaded. To pursue this idea, at least three members of the presidential administration have had meeting with the CEO of a massive American Elements company that provides raw material to a number of major manufacturers to discuss the opportunities of its future operations in Afghanistan. In particular, an acute interest towards the idea of getting American Elements on board was displayed by Stephen A. Feinberg, who has been informally advising Donald Trump on Afghanistan. The New York Times would inform us that Mr. Feinberg owns a large military contracting firm, DynCorp International, which is eager to play a role in guarding US mines in Afghanistan, since security remains a major concern to this date in that country, especially in a situation when Afghanistan’s richest deposits are to be found in the areas controlled by the Taliban.

However, the tempting prospects of a new “copper bonanza” are hampered by a long list of problems which the US has failed to address in spite of its continuous military presence in Afghanistan since 2001.

Since pretty much nobody can argue that the occupation of Afghanistan is an ongoing disaster, Trump, it seems, is getting increasingly frustrated with his advisers, who were tasked with elaborating a new US strategy for Afghanistan. Just recently, Trump have had a rather tense meeting with US military brass, where he would announce that Washington has put itself on the losers’ side of the war in Afghanistan. In a bid to somehow address this situation, Trump has repeatedly demanded that the Pentagon replaces General John Nicholson, the commander of US forces in Afghanistan.

Donald Trump has been grappling with the question of what the US should do in Afghanistan to salvage a worsening security and political situation. Mind you, he’s not completely clueless so he’s aware that the Pentagon is out of options aside from sending thousands upon thousands of American servicemen to “fight for democracy” some more. However, as the American military contingent in Afghanistan is going to grow larger it is going to suffer heavier casualties, which is hardly going to be taken lightly at home.

Over the last sixteen years of continuous warfare Washington would pour over 714 billion dollars into the Afghan war, according to a report drafted by the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR). On top of that, over 4,200 American citizens have lost their lives in this conflict. However, at this point, when the war in Afghanistan has reached a dead end, the number of attacks against pro-government forces continue to grow, while they are plagued by mass desertion, Cabul is pretty much broke and out of options. As for the US servicemen deployed in the country, they are imprisoned behind the massive walls of US military installations. This results in the Taliban and ISIS gaining even more leverage, while all

hands are raised against the Afghan government. The NATO-trained Afghan forces won't dare to try to secure a single province from the Taliban.

A brief summary of the situation has been recently presented by the Al-Jazeera:

*From March 1 through May 31, 2017, the UN recorded 6,252 security incidents, a 21 percent increase from last quarter.*

*January 1, 2017, through May 8, 2017, there were 2,531 [Afghan forces] service members killed in action and an additional 4,238 wounded in action.*

*Also, the estimated value of opium and its by-products produced in Afghanistan increased to 3.02 billion dollars in 2016 from 1.56 billion dollars in 2015.*

*Although the... programs provided some assistance to the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces, it is almost impossible to assess whether this assistance was worth the 457.7 million dollars spent on these programs.*

As Trump craves for greatness, all Afghanistan has in store for him is bitter defeat. He wants advice, but then he seems dissatisfied with the voices around him. How can one claim to be victorious when there's no plan good enough to allow Washington to get out of the longest war in the US history without a loss of face.