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British DM Report: Afghanistan an ‘Unwinnable War’

By Jason Ditz

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An internal report from the British Defense Ministry has concluded that the ongoing occupation of Afghanistan is “unwinnable in military terms,” ruling that the NATO goals have largely failed and the survival of the Karzai government cannot be guaranteed.

The report says that whenever international troops leave, they will be leaving Afghanistan with a “very weak economic base,” and NATO will be on the hook for “large-scale support” of the government for many years.

It goes on to compare the NATO occupation for Afghanistan to the previous attempt by the Soviet Union, saying there are “an extraordinary number of similar factors” surrounding the two wars, and that commanders should learn the lessons of the Soviet war.

Elaborating, they say both wars aimed at imposing “an ideology foreign to the Afghan people” and that both eventually abandoned it in favor trying to secure relative support for their respective propped-up governments as the only alternative to the mujahedin, adding that the historical estimate of the NATO war would be, as with the Soviets’, linked entirely to how long the government survived after they leave.

The Defense Ministry downplayed the importance of the research report, insisting that the determination that the war is unwinnable does not change the official government position, which is that continuing the war is vital to British national security.