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NATO Touts Afghan War ‘End,’ With Transition to New, US-Led War

By Jason Ditz

December 28, 2014

NATO flags were lowered today in Afghanistan, marking what is nominally the “end” of the NATO-led occupation which has lasted over 13 years. Yet the war as such is far from over, despite officials trying to spin it as such.

What is actually happening now is much less significant, a transition from the NATO-led war to a more US-dominated one, with the US planning significant troops to remain through 2024 and beyond, and already agreeing to extend combat missions beyond the “end” of the war.

European NATO members have been trying to spin the conflict as over, in hopes of avoiding its continued status as an unpopular war and political issue. President Obama has been trying to do the same, insisting the “longest war in US history is ending.”

Yet the US involvement in the Afghan War is far from over, and not even all that changed between today and the first of 2015. The change is mostly on paper, with the shift from a UN mandate that the US and NATO ignored when it suited them to an Afghan status of forces agreement which they will similarly ignore as it suits them.

President Obama’s desire to get the focus off Afghanistan is part of an effort to portray the disastrous occupation as a “success,” and to get the bad taste of failed wars out of Americans’ mouths as the ISIS war picks up pace.

The approximately 10,000 US troops remaining in Afghanistan likely will not notice the difference in the war, and for them, official pronouncements of the war being over must seem awfully puzzling.