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Besieged in their own fortress

by Manlio Dinucci

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The only distinguishing feature remaining of a U.S. embassy as such is its diplomatic status. In reality, they are a nest of spies and military command centers. Washington has been aware that it is in breach of the Vienna Convention ever since the siege of its "embassy" in Tehran and the arrest of its personnel for spying. The State Department has therefore transformed its "embassies" into "fortresses", which nevertheless constitute an open target in view of their illegal activities.

U.S. espionage and military command center in Kabul, misleadingly named "embassy."

By continually starting new wars, the U.S. has created more and more enemies. It is thus concerned about the security of its embassies which are not only permanent diplomatic missions but also centers of operations for intelligence services and military commands. Considering that 85% of its embassies are vulnerable, the State Department spent \$ 6 billion to strengthen them with anti-explosion material and insurmountable barriers. At the same time, it is building new ones the likes of a real fortress. The largest one, and overall the world's largest, is located in Kabul and houses NATO's ISAF Headquarters under U.S. military command. It has so far cost more than \$ 700 million and was inaugurated on 14 February 2011, but more buildings will be added inside the citadel by 2014, while in Herat and Mazar-i-Sharif two fortified consulates are being built. Proof, if still required, that the U.S. has no intention of loosening its grip on Afghanistan.

During the inauguration, the Vice-Ambassador Anthony Wayne assured that the finished building, pending the construction of three multi-story larger ones, would provide "a safe and comfortable facility for 432 diplomats and staff members."

Seven months later, on 13 September, the embassy was nevertheless attacked by insurgents. And, even worse, Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (the highest military authority), blamed the ISI, the Pakistani secret service, for being behind the attack. A blow for the strategy announced in March 2009 by President Obama, i.e. after pledging that the United States is not in Afghanistan to control and decide on its future, but to confront a common enemy, Obama emphasized that the future of Afghanistan is inextricably linked to that of Pakistan. In Nobel Peace Prize language, this means that the United States eyes both countries as a single theater of war.

In Pakistan, however, one encounters increasing resistance even at the seat of government, notwithstanding Washington's \$ 2 billion military aid package to Islamabad. The Pakistani government rejected Mullen's accusation as well as his request to sever all ties with the group allegedly responsible for the attack on the embassy. It also refused to allow U.S. troops into the tribal area straddling the border between the two countries, ostensibly to hunt down the perpetrators.

On 23 September, the same day the Pakistani government denied the request, a CIA drone slammed two missiles into a house in a Pakistani border village, killing several people.

Since last May, when the Navy Seals purportedly stormed the Pakistani home of Osama Bin Laden, whose alleged corpse was then dumped into the sea, drone attacks have intensified. This has fueled a mounting public outrage, so much so that the U.S. embassy in Islamabad put its compatriots on alert against "frequent anti-American (Editor's note: anti-U.S.) and anti-Western demonstrations." As for those living in Kabul, they were warned "to avoid unnecessary travel and going to places frequented by Westerners." And at the first sign of danger, to run for cover inside the fortress-embassy. Itself not very secure, alas!