

Trump's Betrayals, Military Escalation in Afghanistan

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Global Research, August 23, 2017

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In early August, 2017, Donald Trump expressed outrage that Afghanistan had entered into an agreement with China to develop Afghanistan's rare minerals. Given the years of "blood and treasure" that the U.S. had spent in fighting the Taliban, he fumed, how could the U.S. allow other countries to make valuable development deals with the Afghan government? The problem was that Afghanistan was supposed to be sovereign, and not under U.S. control.

Trump's response was his August 21st announcement that the US would reenter Afghanistan to eliminate international terrorism and finish the job it started in 2001.

Citing the disproven implication of Afghan responsibility for 9/11 (*which he had earlier derided, claiming that if he were elected "you will find out who really knocked down the World Trade Center"*), Trump's address on Afghanistan signaled massive betrayals of human rights, including:

Explicit rejection of international laws on warfare:

"I have already lifted restrictions the previous administration placed on our war fighters that prevented [us] from fully and swiftly waging battle against the enemy. ... we will also expand authority for American armed forces to target the terrorists and criminal networks";

An expansion of the war on Afghan nationalism into neighbouring Pakistan:

"In Afghanistan and Pakistan, America ... must stop the resurgence of safe havens that enable terrorists to threaten America."; and

An end to the U.S. Constitution's First Amendment right of dissent:

"We must restore the bonds of loyalty among our citizens"

In order to help "the people of Afghanistan ... achieve an everlasting peace" — one that would implicitly be defined as such by the U.S.— the Afghans are to help pay American military costs by allowing the U.S. "to participate in [Afghanistan's] economic development".

This would presumably give the U.S. the control it wants of Afghanistan's rich resources.

The United States and other NATO countries must not resume their illegal attacks in Afghanistan. The original American excuse for involving NATO countries in 2001 was the claim that Afghanistan had been involved in the events of Sept. 11, 2001, and that the U.S. evidence would be forthcoming. That evidence turned out to be non-existent: the FBI admitted on June 5, 2006 that it had not charged Osama bin Laden for the 9/11 attacks *because it had no evidence*. The real American motive had been to gain control of a gas pipeline route that the Taliban had refused to give to U.S. energy interests the previous August, 2001.

The U.S. and NATO have no legal right to attack Afghanistan or Pakistan. Afghans do not threaten Americans. The Taliban, the former government of Afghanistan, does not threaten the U.S. Pakistan does not threaten the U.S. If ISIS threatened the U.S., one has to ask why injured ISIS fighters go to Israel to be treated. Those described as terrorists would have no motive to hurt Americans if the U.S. would end its destruction of peaceful, non-threatening countries.

The worst of Trump's betrayals is to American soldiers, who have no hope of returning home with any more honour than Vietnam veterans did — unless, of course, they return in body bags. Trump extolled the *"hundreds of thousands of America's greatest patriots [that] lay in eternal rest at Arlington National Cemetery. There's more courage, sacrifice and love in those hallowed grounds than at any other spot on the face of the Earth."*

Trump is not afraid.

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