

US Will Have a Presence in Afghanistan for Another 50 Years. Retired Army Colonel

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Afghanistan is a geostrategic and economic prize that the West will not want to relinquish anytime soon.

In an [interview](#) at the end of 2015, the former chief of staff to Colin Powell and retired US Army Colonel, Lawrence Wilkerson [pictured left], outlined the realistic timescale he believes the US will be involved in Afghanistan, in addition to emphasizing the strategic importance of the country to the US. Speaking to Abby Martin on her show '[The Empire Files](#)' for Telesur, Wilkerson asserted that the "US presence in Afghanistan will not go away for another half-century" (from 20:05 into the [interview](#)):

"The war in Afghanistan has morphed; it's not about al-Qaeda anymore, and it's not about the Taliban anymore. It's about China; Russia - the soft underbelly which is mostly Muslim of Russia; about Pakistan; about Iran; about Syria; about Iraq; about whether a Kurdistan is stood up or not; and ultimately about oil, water and energy in general. And the US presence in Afghanistan, I'll predict right now, will not go away for another half-century... And it will grow, it will not decrease."

This revelation by Wilkerson is important as the majority of the Western public continues to believe that the war in Afghanistan is predominately to do with fighting terrorism. Realistically, the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan never really had anything to do with terrorism, but everything to do with geopolitics and the vast amount of economic riches the country possesses.

Similar to many other imperial wars we have seen in recent years, evidence suggests that the war in Afghanistan was pre-planned at least months prior to 9/11. The [BBC](#) reported on the 18th of September 2001 that Niaz Naik, a former Pakistani Foreign Secretary, was told by US officials in July that the US was planning to attack Afghanistan in the coming months. A report by a bipartisan commission of inquiry in 2004 also revealed that the Bush administration had agreed on a [plan](#) to attack Afghanistan the day before 9/11.

Then, perfectly on time, 9/11 (also dubbed by the neoconservatives the "new Pearl Harbour" event) happens, giving the West the ideal justification to invade and occupy the country in addition to launching the global war on terror.

A look at the map reveals the geostrategic importance of Afghanistan, as it sits between Iran, China, Pakistan and the Central Asian Republics. As Wilkerson emphasizes, US military presence in Afghanistan is about an array of factors, most notably "about China," "Iran" and

“Russia.” Similar to the great game in previous centuries, Afghanistan and Central Asia will be a place of fierce competition between major powers in the coming years.

Broken Promises

Withdrawing troops from Afghanistan has been one of the biggest pledges Obama has made since being elected President in 2008. Afghanistan is the most [unpopular war in history](#) according to some US polls, and Obama has repeatedly said he would pull all US troops out of the country. In [2012](#), he reiterated his position once again, stating that all US troops would be “out of there by 2014.”

Unsurprisingly, this was yet another broken promise by the [puppet](#) in chief. In October of last year, [Obama announced](#) that he would keep almost 10,000 troops in Afghanistan, and unless there is a dramatic shift in US foreign policy when the next President takes office, US troops will remain in the country for decades to come. Even if all US troops are withdrawn in the years to come, the legions of private armies comprised of mercenaries and contractors will continue to operate in the country.

An Abundance of Riches

As the New York Times reported in a 2010 article titled: [US Identifies Vast Mineral Resources in Afghanistan](#), the country is home to vast amounts of precious minerals. From copper to iron, gold to lithium, the mineral wealth of Afghanistan is estimated to worth approximately \$1 trillion. In the modern world, materials such as lithium are extremely valuable, with the light-weight metal being used in the majority of [laptops and smartphones](#).

The NYT article is filled with its usual spin and disinformation however, as it tries to argue that the mineral discovery is somehow a recent one. Contrary to this narrative, Afghanistan’s mineral wealth has been well-known since at least the [1970’s](#), and was clearly known by strategists in Washington for decades.

Add the dramatic [surge](#) in opium production since the 2001 invasion of the country to its geopolitical importance and mineral wealth, and it’s clear to see why the US will continue to have a presence in Afghanistan for “another half-century.”

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