**How America failed America in Afghanistan?**

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Reportedly, the Pentagon is transferring around $1.5 billion in funds originally reserved for the Afghan security forces to help pay for the building of the wall at the US-Mexico border. Roughly $604 millions of the total $1.5 billion is from the Afghan security forces fund, which makes sure that the Afghan security forces do not collapse due to the inaccessibility of funds.

The development comes in the wake of some other decisions made in Washington that suggest a worrying prospect when it comes to America’s commitment to stabilize Afghanistan. Reportedly, the US has accelerated plans to reduce its embassy staff in Kabul to half. Already, a number of positions in the US’s embassy in Kabul remain vacant. The State Department is already short on people that deal with Afghanistan. Put together, this has raised questions on the Trump administration long term commitment towards Kabul.

Moreover, one of the most maddening development is the lack of transparency from the Pentagon. The Pentagon has decided to shut down the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) project in Afghanistan. For years, the U.S. military in Afghanistan has quoted the SIGAR’s reports on the control of territory as a prime metric of the war effort. Unfortunately, metrics once available for the public to assess the US’s war efforts and outcomes are now redacted or suddenly rendered inept to the broader U.S. mission in Afghanistan. If the SIGAR’s metrics are impractical, what does that say about America’s policy in Afghanistan?

One of the primary reasons behind the shutting of SIGAR in Afghanistan is the project’s periodical disclosures about the US’s military and bureaucracy blunders in Afghanistan. According to the US Department of Justice and SIGAR “A former U.S. government contractor was charged in an indictment for allegedly selling falsified resumes and counterfeit US government training certificates to individuals seeking employment on US government contracts in Afghanistan between 2012 and 2015.” SIGAR in its findings recently reported that “More than $100bn in aid after 2001 helped enrich patronage networks and powerbrokers, discrediting international donors in the eyes of the Afghan population.” It’s expected that the US’s withdrawal can set back humanitarian and development programs, undermine Afghan government support or even lay the grounds for new or resumed conflict in the country.

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The US’s all efforts to make peace or force the Taliban into declaring a ceasefire have failed. The fact that the Taliban have refused to announce a ceasefire or make even a small concession to the Americans or the Afghan government shows that the group doesn’t stand to gain anything by making an agreement with the U.S. or the Afghan government. A previous ceasefire which the Taliban made last year with the Americans divided the group internally: The U.S. was seen as widely portraying the ceasefire as an outcome that was popular within the Taliban leadership and fighters on the ground. The Taliban do not want to repeat that scenario. If the Taliban announced a ceasefire at this point, the group would offer the U.S. and the Afghan government a much-needed breathing space when it comes to the latter’s narrative and bargaining position which have been a failure against the Taliban’s military and diplomatic gains over the last few months.

Reportedly, the Taliban “has around 150,000 fighters, of which 60,000 are full-time fighters and the rest part-time local militia.” The group likely size exceeds 200,000, making it the world largest insurgency. The nature of Washington’s commitment towards Afghanistan underscores that the approaching U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan is not going to be a praiseworthy withdrawal. It’s going to be a surrender.

At this point, “the best the Americans can hope for in exit talks with the Taliban is a promise that coalition troops will not depart under fire when Washington withdraws from the country,” notes Simon Tisdall while writing in The Guardian.

Apparently, the US’ policy community is not exactly sure about the country’s goals in Afghanistan. While the Trump’s administration follows one policy at the political level, the military community engaged in Afghanistan have followed an altogether different approach. This is one of the reasons which continues to create apprehensions among the stakeholders involved in the peace process, particularly Pakistan, China, Russia, the Taliban, and others. Moreover, the US has failed to take into account the interests of other regional states, particularly Pakistan, China and Russia when the country changes its policy in Afghanistan. This has engendered a perception that Washington cannot be trusted in Afghanistan.

The consequences, once the U.S. forces have withdrawn look disturbing: a civil war, involving militant groups, warlords, government forces and regional states, is a likely possibility. And the U.S.’s fading commitment towards Afghanistan and the mounting confusion on the future of its military presence in the country has only accelerated the process.

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