

An Italian Viewpoint

The US Plan for a New Catastrophe

by Manlio Dinucci*



Manlio Dinucci
(Photo ma)

General Scott Miller, US and allied forces commander in Afghanistan, announced on April 25 the beginning of foreign troops withdrawal that should be completed by September 11, according to President Biden's decision. Is the US ending the war waged

for almost twenty years? In order to understand this communication, it is first of all necessary to consider the results of the war.

The toll in human lives is largely unquantifiable: the "direct deaths" among the US military would amount to about 2,500, and the seriously injured soldiers are over 20,000. The contractors (US mercenaries) killed would be about 4,000, plus an unknown number of wounded men. Losses among the Afghan military would amount to around 60,000. Civilian deaths are in fact incalculable: according to the United Nations, they would have been around 100,000 in just ten years. It is impossible to determine the "indirect deaths" from poverty and disease, caused by the social and economic consequences of the war.

The economic balance is relatively quantifiable. For the war – the *New York Times* documented on the basis of data compiled by Brown University – the US spent over 2,000 billion dollars, plus over 500 billion for medical assistance to veterans. The war operations cost 1,500 billion dollars, but the exact amount remains "opaque". Training and arming the Afghan gov-



US Army soldiers patrol near the town of Baraki Barak in Logar province, Afghanistan, on 23 November 2009. "The toll in human lives during the 20-year occupation of Afghanistan is hard to quantify". (Picture keystone/AP Photo/Dario Lopez-Mills)

ernment forces (over 300,000 men) cost 87 billion. 54 billion dollars were spent on "economic aid and reconstruction", largely wasted because of corruption and inefficiency, to "build hospitals that never treated patients and schools that did not educate any student, and sometimes they didn't even exist". 10 billion dollars have been spent on drug fight with the following result: the opium cultivated acreage has quadrupled, so much so that it has become the main economic activity in Afghanistan, and today supplies 80% of opium illegally produced in the world.

The United States has become heavily in debt to finance the war in Afghanistan: so far, it had to pay 500 billion dollars, again with public money and it will rise to over 600 billion dollars in 2023. Furthermore, 350 billion have been spent so far for the US military who have suffered serious injuries and disabilities in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and it will rise to 1,000 billion in the next decades, more than half of this expense due to the consequences of the war in Afghanistan.

The political-military balance of the war, that shed rivers of blood and burned enormous resources, is catastrophic for the United States, except for the military-industrial complex which made enormous profits with it. "The Taliban, who have grown stronger, control or contend much of

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the country," wrote the *New York Times*. At this point, Secretary of State *Blinken* and others propose that the United States officially recognize and finance the Taliban, since thus "they might govern less harshly than feared after taking partial or full power – in order to win recognition and financial support from world powers".

At the same time, the *New York Times* reported, "the Pentagon, American spy agencies and Western allies are refining plans to deploy a less visible but still potent force in the region, including drones, long-range bombers, and spy networks." According to Biden's order the US is withdrawing its 2,500 soldiers, the *New York Times* reported, "but the Pentagon actually has about 1,000 more troops on the ground there than it has publicly acknowledged, belonging to special forces under both Pentagon and CIA", in addition

to over 16,000 US contractors that could be used to train Afghan government forces.

The official purpose of the new strategic plan is "to prevent Afghanistan from re-emerging as a terrorist base to threaten the United States". The real purpose remains the same as twenty years ago: to have a strong military presence in this area at the crossroads among the Middle East, Central, Southern and Eastern Asia. It is an area of primary strategic importance especially towards Russia and China.

Source: <https://ilmanifesto.it/afghanistan-il-piano-usa-di-una-nuova-catastrofe/>, 27 April 2021

(Translation Global Research)

In view of the current situation, "Swiss Standpoint" publishes a choice of analyses from various regions of the world on the developments in Afghanistan.