

Mineral Riches Behind Trump's Backtracking on Afghanistan?

Mariane Kulick

President Trump's decision to continue, actually increase, the number of Americans fighting in Afghanistan, goes against everything he said in his campaign. He is going to do what presidents before him have done, and that is to send more troops to produce the same sad results.

It was in the late 1970s that we armed the Mujahedeen 'freedom fighters' to fight the Russians in Afghanistan. Afghanistan became Russia's "Vietnam" and they finally left. The freedom fighters became Al-Queda and the Taliban, fighting with Soviet and U.S. weapons. This is a short and simplified history of how we got there in the first place.

The people of Afghanistan are caught between the Taliban and the warloads and have not had a moment of peace in all these years. The U.S. military at its highest had over 100,000 troops fighting on Afghan soil, supposedly teaching the Afghan troops to fight for their country and institute a stable government. If 100,000 could not do it, what makes it reasonable to expect that 4,000 more can succeed. In recent years, we have dropped tons of bombs, making a wasteland and killing Afghans, and yet that elusive, stable government is not in sight.

So what changed Trump's mind? Repeating the same mistakes gets the same results – the devastation of a poor war-torn country. What would Trump consider important enough to send more troops to a hopeless cause? Possibly the only thing that would move him is the major interest in his life – business opportunities. Afghanistan has extensive mineral sources (as pointed out by the New York Times), and he is, above all, according to his own estimate, the consummate businessman, and there is a lot under those rocks. In fact, the headline of the article in the New York Times reads "Trump Finds Reason for the U.S. to Remain in Afghanistan: Minerals" written by Mark Lander and James Risen on July 25th. The President has already had advisors looking into it.

For the sake of the Afghan people and the welfare of our own people, we should stop wasting money and lives trying to prop up a corrupted government, and an army not willing to fight for that government. We should leave them to solve the problem as best they can. The money that goes into the armaments can be better spent on our infrastructure, building bridges and roads and creating more jobs in the process.