

By Chris Floyd

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*"The winds in Chicago
Have torn me to shreds;*

Reality has always

Had too many heads."

-- Bob Dylan, "Cold Irons Bound"

So now we know the grand plan of the Peace Laureate (and his wag-tail pack of lapdogs in NATO) for the people of Afghanistan: civil war.

As many have observed, the NATO summiteers sent out an array of mixed messages at their meeting this week in Chicago: the Afghan war is over, the Afghan war is going forward, NATO forces are withdrawing from Afghanistan, NATO forces are staying in Afghanistan for years to come. This confusion of tongues led some cynics to believe that the gilded gaggle of brilliant statespersons nabobbing together in the locked-down Windy City actually had no earthly idea what they were doing in Afghanistan and were saying whatever they thought might satisfy their

paymasters and keep themselves perked and porked in power for as long as possible.

But in the end, the gaggle came up with a "unified vision" for [their "irreversible course" in Afghanistan](#) : facilitating an all-out, full-scale, never-ending, hydra-headed civil war to tear the country to shreds.

The "plan" (if one can dignify this stew of blind hormonal impulse, psychological wound seepage and wilful ignorance with that term) calls for the American-led NATO forces to hand over all "combat operations" to the Afghan Army in 2013 (except, of course, for the combat operations that US forces will continue to carry out, like night raids and drone strikes, [as Gareth Porter points out](#)). Then, we are told, the "bulk" of the 130,000 foreign troops now occupying Afghanistan will be withdrawn. Except, of course, for the unspecified number of foreign troops who will remain -- for more than a decade, at the very least -- to "train" and "assist" the "independent" Afghan forces. (John Glaser has [a good round-up of the "plan" here](#) .)

But here's a funny thing: The Afghan army has been given billions of dollars worth of American training and weaponry over the past decade; yet we're told that only 1 percent of these forces are now capable of undertaking operations on their own. But the opponents of the occupation -- without these billions, without a bristling international military alliance behind them -- have somehow managed to wield a military force that grows more effective with each passing year. Could it be possible -- just going way out on a limb here -- that people fighting to rid their native land of foreign invaders are more motivated, more dedicated and more effective than people who are being paid (usually a pittance) to fight for the foreign invaders?

It's obvious that the Afghan "national army" will not be able to stay in the field against the Taliban and its allies without the continuing and direct assistance of the American military. It is equally obvious that the Afghan army won't be able to defeat the Taliban in these conditions; indeed, the combined forces of NATO have been unable to defeat the Taliban in 10 years. So the upshot of Obama's "plan" will be an interminable civil war, with a weak and demoralized "national army" given just enough support to stave off total defeat, while the war profiteers on every side continue to gorge themselves sick.

Pretty much the status quo of the last decade, then, with some slight repackaging, and a lower profile for the American role.

However, it is unlikely that this "plan" will actually go according to, well, plan. At some point, the profit margins on corpse production in Afghanistan will fall too far due to the Taliban's intransigence, and the Potomac poobahs will finally pull the plug on the whole pointless endeavor. This will doubtless happen well before the 2024 mark bruted in the recent "agreement" (yes, we're running amok with quote marks here, but what else can you do when there's so much mendacity about?) between the kleptocracies in Washington and Kabul.

You remember that agreement, don't you? Signed a few weeks ago with much fanfare during Obama's furtive drop-in to the satapry, and pledging American support for Afghanistan for the next 12 years, with options to re-up. (In olden days, of course, these kinds of solemn pledges of alliance had to be affirmed by a treaty and ratified by the U.S. Senate, but in our bold new Commander-in-Chief state, the Leader can pledge America's blood and treasure wherever and for however long he or she sees fit.) The "agreement" was largely forgotten by the time of the Chicago summit, although its very notional, highly provisional time limit of 2024 still wafts faintly around the zeitgeist. But again, we will likely see American forces doing the old Saigon Roof

Dance long before that.

Meanwhile, the Afghan civil war which Nobel Peace Laureate Jimmy Carter helped facilitate by arming the uprising of jihadi extremists back in the 1970s will run on and on, given fresh impetus by the American invasion of 2001 and accelerated further by the "surge" of troops and brutal tactics by Nobel Peace Laureate Barack Obama. And further thousands upon thousands of Afghans will be slaughtered and ruined, their nation -- already cratered by the decades of Big Power gaming -- plunged deeper and deeper into suffering, for generations.

But our seepage-sodden NATO summiteers don't give a damn about any of that. Buried alive inside their security bubble, cut off from the world and common humanity, all they can see are their own reflections; all they can hear are their own lies.

UPDATE: [Dave Lindorff has an excellent article](#) laying out the inevitable end-game scenario in Afghanistan -- a debacle that will make the four-alarm FUBAR of the American exit from Vietnam look like an orderly and dignified retreat.