

**Sixteen** years after their armed invasion of Afghanistan the US President Donald Trump raised a big question: Why America has not won after 16 year of fighting in Afghanistan?

September 11, 2001 remains an unforgettable day in the lives of American as well as world people. On this day, the WTC Head Quarters as well as the Pentagon installations in US had come under devastating aerial attacks and suffered colossal human and material losses. More than this, the credibility of US imperialism as a world power faced a rude shock. Who really had engineered this action still remains a mystery. Yet, the US imperialists lost no time to blame the 'terrorists' based in Afghanistan for the attack and use it as a pretext to declare a so called global war against terrorism. George W. Bush, the then US President, had proclaimed that the US has every right to attack any country or territory which is considered to be sheltering or helping the terrorists who may pose a threat or suspected to be posing a threat to the US interests. On October 7, 2001, the US had marched its troops together with the NATO forces into Afghanistan as part of its global war against terrorism. However, this so called war against terrorism was nothing but an armed invasion and occupation of Afghanistan.

Donald Trump is the third US President since the US had begun its war of invasion against Afghanistan. Astonishingly for the US imperialists, the war became tougher and tougher with each year. The Afghan people rose in resistance against the invaders. The imperialists went on increasing the invading forces in Afghanistan from 7425 in 2002 to 23300 by 2006. Before taking over power in 2009, Obama talked much about ending the war. But, once in the cradle of power, he began asserting that it was a "war of necessity". He went on increasing the strength of the troops in Afghanistan from 69000 in December 2009 to 100,000 by May 2011. A conservative estimate says that the invading forces had killed 175,000 Afghan people. US is said to have spent \$800 billion in the war. The US imperialists also invaded Iraq in March, 2003, of course, on a different false plea. But there too a powerful people's resistance was waiting for them.

The worst financial crisis of 2008, the powerful resistance from people, worldwide protest against the US invasions and in solidarity with the people of Afghanistan and Iraq had necessitated some changes in the tactics of US. In 2014, Obama came with a declaration of so called end of 'operation enduring freedom.' On Dec'28, 2014, the so called withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan was announced. The US had intensified its attempts to wean away the sections of Taliban to its side through the process of dialogue. Yet the US (8400) and NATO (5000) had left behind a cream of armed forces in Afghanistan in the name of 'operation resolute support' to 'advise, train and assist' the Afghan security forces in the suppression of Afghan people.

As part of his campaign in presidential elections, Donald Trump was vociferous in his criticism of war on Afghanistan. He said the US was wasting billions in this war and the US armed men are dying in the hands of Afghans. So, he called for an end of this war. Once in power, Trump had changed his tune. His admission that the US was not winning in Afghanistan was not at all aimed at pondering over the questions like, was not the US invasion totally unjustified? Why the US must win this war? What steps it needed to take to pack off from Afghanistan? But Trump came out with the assurance that 'we will win.' So like his predecessors, Trump too had pretended to be in favour of ending the war when pouring cold water on the growing people's opposition to US policy of war and invasion and sowing illusions among the people was needed. Once their short term purpose was served, Trump, as the true representative of big business and arms industry, did not hesitate to show the ugly face of imperialism.

On August 21, 2017, Trump had announced a 'new' policy called the "South Asia Strategy" to deal with the Afghan crisis. This crisis can be seen in:

1. There exists a regime in Afghanistan protected and propped up by the imperialists, but thoroughly isolated from the Afghan people;
2. Presently, the Taliban are believed to be in control of more than half of the Afghan territories and people and are engaged in the attempts to enlarge the areas of control and finally to overthrow the regime. The regime protected by the US is proving too weak and shaky in the face of Taliban attacks apart from being torn apart from within by ever growing power squabbles;
3. The US imperialists seems to have arrived at the conclusion that the Taliban cannot be wiped out by force alone and the process of dialogue and negotiation must be combined with it;
4. For several decades, the Pakistan rulers had been serving the US imperialists as their most trusted and dependable ally in pushing through their strategic goals in Asia and in fighting the Taliban in Afghanistan. However, Pakistan's growing economic, political and military ties with China had become a cause of worry for the US. For some time, the US is thinking and even had expressed its concern that the Pakistan rulers are not showing enough firmness against the Taliban based in or operating from the Pakistan territories. The US rulers feel that it is putting them in a disadvantageous position in dealing with the Taliban.

The so called new South Asia Strategy of US aims at further intensifying the military operations with direct and enhanced US participation. It seeks to hit hard the Taliban to wipe out their fighting or leading core or reduce it into an ineffective force. It seeks to intensify the pressure on Pakistani rulers to compel them to act firmly against Taliban based in Pakistan and use their own influence to impress upon the Taliban give up the path of resistance against the US and the Afghan regime propped up by it. The warnings from the US leaders like, the “ US can no longer be silent about Pakistan providing safe havens for terrorist organisations “ and “ We are going to attack terrorists wherever they live” and the statements like the new US strategy is to bear enough pressure on Pakistan to change its behaviour are only a part of this attempt.

As explained by the US leaders, the new US strategy is to bear enough pressure on the Taliban to come to negotiating table. The US Secretary of State has put the line of US argument on these lines: “You will not win a battlefield victory. We may not win one, neither will you. And so at some point we have to come to the negotiating table and find a way to bring this to an end.” Here, in one way, the US rulers are admitting in what a precarious position they had placed themselves at the end of 16 years of unjust war against Afghanistan. At the same time, their attempt is to bring the Taliban to a negotiating table putting a sword over their necks and make them sign a deal as dictated by the US imperialists.

The new strategy seeks to involve India more deeply in Afghanistan. The Pentagon has recently hailed India as a “most reliable regional partner” of Afghanistan. Perhaps, it is so because India is a partner in the strategic alliance of US, Japan and Australia headed by US. This alliance ties India to the US strategy of domination over the Asia, Asia-Pacific region. So, any role the US imperialists may entrust to the Indian rulers in Afghanistan, doubtlessly, further antagonises the Afghan people and also other Countries in the Asia, Asia-Pacific region. The increasing role of India in Afghanistan can also further exasperate the contradictions and tensions between India and Pakistan. So the new US strategy is wrought with dangerous consequences.

The new US strategy cannot achieve what the earlier policy could not achieve. It is bound to further prolong and intensify the Afghan crisis. A lasting and dependable resolution of Afghan problem is possible only when the right of Afghan people to independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity is fully restored and the Afghan people are free to shape their own future in accordance with their own wishes and without interference.

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