The latest round of negotiations between the United States and the Taliban reached their inglorious conclusion in the capital of Qatar (the city of Doha).

Nonetheless, Suhail Shaheen, the political spokesman for the Taliban (an organization banned in Russia), tweeted, somewhat tersely, that during the sixth round of peace negotiations "some progress" had been made, and that the sides (Note!) would meet again for the next set of talks.

This time around, the peace discussions encountered an obstacle in the form of a fundamental issue as to when foreign forces would leave Afghanistan. Before the United State can agree to withdraw its military, as part of a possible peace deal, they, as always, demand that the Taliban cease armed conflict, provide security guarantees and fulfill other obligations, including starting an internal Afghan dialogue with the government in Kabul and other parties in Afghanistan. But the leaders of the Taliban, who have grown wiser owing to their experience with prior refusals by Americans to take on any obligations or sign any international agreements (as was the case with Iran), firmly and rigidly insist that they are not prepared to do any of the above until the United States provides a schedule for withdrawing its forces.

There is a simple explanation for what, at first glance, appear to be Taliban's suspicions, which are more likely an unyielding defense of their positions. It was the leaders from Washington, enraged by the tragic events of September 2001, who began to "club" everyone in sight in their quest to find simpletons that they could blame for 9/11. To date, officials from the United States have failed to show the world any substantive evidence that proves their former elite agent, Osama bin Laden, had organized and orchestrated the attack on the World Trade Center in New York.

Instead, U.S. politicians have presented unsubstantiated declarations, which had little to do with the situation at hand, to the global community. Despite this, the CIA and the Pentagon made haste and, on securing funding (which
they would have been unable to receive at earlier times), they rushed to occupy Afghanistan, thereby condemning its people to 18 long years of poverty and hunger. Incidentally, it was then that the CIA advised Osama bin Laden to move to Pakistan, a more secure location, where he lived comfortably for a number of years, on funds received from Americans.

And during these years, the United States and NATO members completely destroyed Afghanistan, and demolished its government structures, industry and agriculture. Afghans have already forgotten what welfare payments are. The main achievement accomplished by American occupying forces was that cultivation of poppies increased by a factor of multiples of ten, and so did production of heroin from this crop, which the CIA completely took over. It is not surprising that out of all the CIA employees, there is an increasing number of millionaires among the organization's experts on Afghanistan.

So what have these "illustrious" American fighters and their NATO puppets accomplished over all these years? They were responsible for the longest war in the history of the United States, which claimed 2,400 American lives and cost almost a trillion dollars. And as a result, the Pentagon does not really know how to withdraw its strike forces from Afghanistan before they are completely defeated, as was the case in Vietnam where military personnel had to escape by helicopters from the roof of the U.S. embassy in Ho Chi Minh City (formerly, Saigon).

According to the website original.antiwar.com, 2018 became the first year when American forces and those of its Afghan allies had killed more civilians than the Taliban. It seems that Washington has taught Kabul how to fight as Americans do, i.e. by using air strikes as they are confident these could lead to a victory despite all the evidence from history to the contrary. Unfortunately for Americans, murdering innocent civilians is a sure way of encouraging revolutionary tendencies among the populace. It even looks as if Washington actually wishes to prolong the war for an indefinite period instead of ending it. The portal original.antiwar.com draws a conclusion that the political elite in the USA, i.e. the people who own the private military-industrial sector, are banking on the apathy felt by American citizens.

According to an article by Stephen B. Young in The Foreign Policy, currently, the USA is striving to reach an agreement on a peace deal, which may lead to a defeat of its allies in the long-term; to withdraw American military personnel from Afghanistan; to curtail military aid to this nation; and finally, to avoid re-engaging in military confrontation. In the meantime, the forces that had once fought against the USA are now trying to take over Afghanistan.

At the beginning of 2019, having condemned actions taken by James N. Mattis (who was leaving his post of Secretary of Defense), U.S. President Donald Trump then focused on the question "Why was the United States unable to win in Afghanistan?". The U.S. leader proceeded to summarize the issue as follows "I gave the generals all the money they wanted, and they didn't do such a great job in Afghanistan." He added that the USA had been fighting in Afghanistan for 19 years, and that he needed to see some results.

But Washington has been unable to achieve desired outcomes in the war-torn nation because it did not follow the right strategy there. The United States has never used an effective strategy to fight insurgents because it simply does not have such a strategy. Plus to make matters worse Washington, with its actions, has spawned an infinite number of insurgents and terrorists. In order to win, one cannot rely only on knowledge of how to kill people. After the war in Vietnam was over, the U.S. national security strategy mistakenly defined a path to victory as a straightforward process of eliminating armed insurgents from a zone under their control.

At present, the United States is not ready to withdraw all of its forces from Afghanistan since conditions necessary for such a move are not in place yet. This is the statement that Joseph Dunford, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the U.S. Department of Defense, made during hearings of the U.S. House Committee on Appropriations. According to the General, Washington is forced to apply pressure on terrorist units as, otherwise, they would pressure the United States. After thoroughly researching all the facts at hand, Joseph Dunford came to the correct conclusion that, in the end, there was no military solution for resolving the situation in Afghanistan.

Based on an assessment made by former U.S. President Barack Obama, in the current climate, Donald Trump and his hawks are forced to approach “their enemy, Russia” for advice and help. U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo gritted through his teeth that the Russian Federation and the USA were able to have a constructive discussion about Afghanistan, and to talk about possibilities as to how the situation in the nation might develop. During a conversation with journalists accompanying him, the U.S. Secretary of State made the statement above, after the meeting with Russia's President Vladimir Putin and its Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.
Yury Ushakov, the Aide to the Russian President, informed journalists that the meeting between Vladimir Putin and Mike Pompeo had not yielded a breakthrough, but the American side had shown its intentions were serious. And this is not surprising. To date, memories of the way politicians in Washington showed malice, as they supplied terrorists from Al-Qaeda and their favorite insurgent Osama bin Laden with the latest weapons, including Stingers (Man-Portable Air Defense Systems), which Afghan thugs then used to force Soviet planes down with the help from their American advisors, are still alive in Moscow. At any rate, Alexander Rutskoy, a former Vice President of Russia and a Hero of the Soviet Union, had his plane shot down by a Stinger missile and remembers the experience very well indeed. And now, by a curious twist of fate the current U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo is begging Russia for help.

Viktor Mikhin, corresponding member of RANS, exclusively for the online magazine “New Eastern Outlook.”