



## **CATO Analyst Doug Bandow Argues, ‘It Is Time To Just Leave’ Afghanistan**

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Feb. 6, 2019 (EIRNS)—CATO Institute analyst Doug Bandow, who was also a former Special Assistant to President Ronald Reagan, forcefully argues that President Donald Trump is absolutely correct in withdrawing U.S. troops from Afghanistan.

In an article published Feb. 4 in the *American Spectator*, “The President Understands Afghanistan: It Is Time To Just Leave,” Bandow points to the absurdity of the 17-year U.S. presence in Afghanistan, pointing out that after two years of being thwarted by “conventional thinkers,” the President is now pushing for troop cuts. It couldn’t come soon enough, he emphasizes.

After the initial goal of punishing the Taliban for hosting al-Qaeda was accomplished, Bandow argues, everything that followed was nation-building—an unsuccessful attempt to impose a liberal, Western-oriented democracy, which he calls “a fool’s errand.” Detailing the current chaotic situation in the country, in which the central government has no control over large swaths of the national territory, instability is increasing, etc., Bandow asserts that, “victory, whatever that means, is well beyond reach.” Yet “patriotic young Americans are dying” to maintain this untenable situation.

Bandow argues that if efforts to forge some agreement with the Taliban doesn’t hold, it doesn’t matter. The troops should come home anyway, “quickly and permanently.” Afghanistan is the longest war in U.S. history—why are we there? he asks, adding, sarcastically, “after 17 years of war, how about another 17, or 17 after that? With every metric seemingly moving in the wrong direction, an increased effort seems necessary merely to sustain today’s unsatisfactory status quo.” In this situation, nothing, Bandow insists, “justifies the continuing commitment of lives and resources.”

He suggests that since Russia, China, India and Pakistan are all very concerned about Afghanistan’s future, Washington should invite them “to begin planning for a post-U.S. future.” Afghanistan, he concludes, offers a powerful reminder:

“Do not make commitments out of proportion to the interests involved. Better to learn the lesson and not make the same mistake next time, than to expect Americans to keep dying in an attempt to hide the obvious today.”