

Taliban strikes Afghan parliament in Kabul

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Taliban gunmen nearly stormed the Afghan parliament on Monday, setting off suicide car bomb attack and engaging in an hours-long firefight before being shot by Afghan commandos.

In a video of the event, the initial massive explosion visibly shocked the parliamentary chamber, throwing up a huge cloud of smoke and debris which engulfed the MPs, who subsequently had to flee for their lives amidst a clatter of gunfire and continuing explosions.

At least 2 civilians were killed and some 30 wounded during the attack, as Afghan commandos battled and eventually killed the Taliban fighters.

“The war continues to gain intensity,” wrote Graeme Smith of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) think-tank. “The nature of the attacks is becoming more serious: rather than pot shots at convoys, we’re now talking about battles that last for days.”

Similarly, Afghan representative to the UN said on Monday that the attacks reflected “an unprecedented convergence” of Taliban and foreign militants that is developing in opposition to the regime.

Together with the attack on parliament, recent advances by the Taliban in the north underscore that despite the US-NATO military operations supposedly aimed at maintaining “stability,” the Afghan regime is still beset by a powerful insurgency and overwhelming popular hostility.

The Taliban has launched an escalating series of attacks on government targets since the beginning of the group’s yearly spring offensive. Taliban fighters nearly captured provincial capital of Kunduz during clashes in northern districts this weekend, marking the closest the insurgency has come to controlling such a large city since the 2001 US invasion.

The ranks of the insurgency against the US-backed government are swelling as thousands of fighters flood into Afghanistan, including militants affiliated with

ISIS. More 7,000 foreign fighters are active in operations against the government, including Uzbeks, Tajiks, Pakistanis and Chechens.

The ability of the Taliban to come within striking distance of an ongoing parliamentary session exposes the impotence of the government of thugs and hirelings the US occupation authorities in Afghanistan installed in power.

Afghanistan was occupied, at the high point of the occupation, by well over 100,000 uniformed US troops, as well as an even greater number of private military contractors. The US-NATO occupation spent some \$60 billion to develop the Afghan National Security Forces, which, nominally at least, is composed of several hundred thousand Afghan soldiers.

This vast army has been supported throughout by elite US Special Forces who have carried out a reign of terror against the civilian population that continues up to the present, murdering people all over the country to suppress popular opposition to try and stabilize the Kabul regime.

Six months after the official US “withdrawal” date, the Kabul government continues to rely on a presence of some 12,500 US-NATO forces in the country.

Nonetheless, it is incapable of providing a minimal level of security even to the Parliament, in the center of the capital city. The insurgents who struck parliament on Monday passed through several layers of security checkpoints to carry out the attack, all while driving a vehicle packed with explosives.

Since invading the country, US imperialism has sought to transform Afghanistan into a neocolonial staging ground for its broader military agenda of asserting US primacy over Central Asia and the Eurasian landmass as a whole.

During the lead-up to the official US “withdrawal” at the end of 2014, itself prompted by surging popular anger over the constant murder of innocent civilians

carried out by US forces, Washington made clear that the formal handover of power in no way altered its determination to maintain a firm foothold in the country.

In November 2014, one month prior to the official end of the US war, President Obama authorized US forces remaining in Afghanistan to continue combat operations, signing a Status of Force Agreement (SOFA) which granted US forces blanket legal immunity for atrocities committed against the population. It also empowered US forces to continue detaining Afghan POWs in a system of prisons and torture centers across the country.

Despite nearly 15 years of such bloody “counter-insurgency” operations, the corrupt puppet regime set up by the US remains isolated and hated by the Afghan masses, the imposition of a new figurehead in power in the President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani not withstanding.

US Special Forces have since continued waging covert warfare against the population. Just as they did under the official US occupation, teams of US Green Berets and Navy SEALs have carried out routine night raids and targeted killings against any and all suspected opponents of the Kabul government throughout the opening months of 2015.

More than 1,000 Afghan civilians have already become “collateral damage” of the renewed fighting that has raged inside the country since the beginning of the year, in addition to the tens of thousands of civilians already killed since 2001.



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