

Billions of dollars in U.S. funds and equipment lost to ‘out of control’ corruption in Afghanistan



Kabul, April 4 (RHC)-- According to a former Pentagon official, a lack of accountability breeds corruption in Afghanistan but money is still funneled into the country, as a fall of its government would become a geopolitical disaster for the United States. Michael Maloof, the former official, told RT that some seven billion dollars' worth of equipment was stolen from Camp Kearney base in Paktika province in the east of the country, after it was handed to the Afghan forces by the U.S. in 2014.

"It's been an ongoing problem for years, in which billions of dollars, not only in military but in foreign aid, have been lost due to corruption in Afghanistan," Maloof explained to RT. "It's out of control. There've been a lot of efforts to try and stem this corruption, but it's actually part of the culture [among the country's elites]."

The former Pentagon official said that “it started with money and now it came to the equipment,” which disappears without a trace and is then turned into cash by interested parties. In almost 100 percent of cases the U.S. hardware ends up on the ‘black market’ where it’s purchased by terrorists, whom the Afghan and American forces are supposed to be fighting, he pointed out.

According to Maloof, the problem is that “once the equipment gets into the field, then there’s no accountability for it. The Afghan forces may sell it off, even though sometimes it’s only on loan to them.” Once it’s lost, there’s no effort to try and retrieve it on the part of the U.S. side.

Billions in taxpayer money is lost every year, but “nobody does anything about it in the U.S. government or in the Congress... It’s a continuous endless cycle of corruption not only on [the Afghani] part, but on our part too,” he said.

Washington can’t withdraw its forces from Afghanistan or cut off the funding because “in the view of the U.S. that would be catastrophic from the geopolitical standpoint” if the Afghan government loses power to the Taliban. This is where “this level of tolerance to the corruption” comes from, he explained. However, despite all the money spent “the Taliban is only increasing its territory.”

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