

Russia is telegraphing its plan for Afghanistan once the US withdraws. Hosting both the Afghan government and representatives from the Taliban, Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov began peace negotiations.

Russia hosted the landmark talks almost 30 years after it pulled out of Afghanistan in disgrace, ending a decade-long Soviet occupation that was seen as another chapter in what historians called the “great game” by world powers to hold away over Afghanistan and nearby areas.

Like the USSR in the late 80s, the US has no clear plan for any goals in Afghanistan. The failures were readily apparent while I was there; despite successful missions interdicting weapons and IED pipelines from Pakistan, the levels of corruption in the US backed government, general untrustworthiness and non-existent professionalism among our partners, and clear support channels to the Taliban from Pakistani Intelligence through weapons and captured Pakistani government official ID cards among dead Taliban, there was no path to any sort of measurable victory. And I was working with their so-called elite Border Police.

That said the Russians have some sort of interest there and it's not peace or a stable regional partner. My guess is their goal now is the same goal they had in 1979- control of Lithium and Opium futures. And my other guess is that they'll get sucked into another war there within a decade as the new Cold War ramps up.

Groups affiliated with the Islamic State have gained footholds in northern Afghanistan near countries with close Moscow ties, including Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Earlier this week, Islamic State militants claimed responsibility for a prison riot in Tajikistan's north, where 27 people were killed.

*The new adversary is...the same as the old adversary.*

*Both Russia and China are planning for our decline- and they're just as active on our shores as they are abroad at destabilization. Got training on the home front?*

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