



## **US Defeat In Afghanistan Signals an Irrational, Declining Empire - Global Capitalism**

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**Richard Wolff:** Eight trillion dollars were spent to move hundreds of thousands of US troops through Afghanistan to unload uncountable bombs and bullets and missiles and tanks on this already poorest country in the world. You know what this is? This is the classic example of societies overreaching abroad to hold on to their empire, not understanding that the neglect at home does more damage to that empire's foundations than if they hadn't made the effort to hold on to the furthest reaches of the empire. Afghanistan and Iraq are about as far as you can get. You keep going in that direction, you come back on the other side of the globe. It's an extraordinary example of a system-self-destructing. Early in December, the Republican Party, with the support of a sizable number of Democrats, decided and voted to increase the defence budget. Let me make sure you understand it. President Biden had asked to continue last year's appropriation of about 715 billion dollars for this year, even though the major war we were involved in was brought to an end. Obviously, meaning we don't need to spend as much. President Biden to keep everybody from freaking out that we might be getting that thing we used to call a peace dividend from a war that Mr. Biden told us was long overdue to be ended. Mr. Biden asked for level funding: 715 billion last year, 715. But the Congress overruled him and they added 24 billion more. So we're going to be spending more on defence after the war is over than we were spending when the war was going on. Here's the lesson. In this society, we don't have war for the reasons the government gives. We have war to take care of the one group that wins no matter what else happens in a war. And that group is called the military-industrial complex. The Taliban didn't win. They suffered enormously. They came out on top at the end, but call what they had to go through for 20 years a win? That's a stretch. The United States clearly lost. The cost was enormous, dead Americans, dead Afghani citizens, innocent ones, civilians, militant, horrible. But the company's here at home who sold the guns, the bullets, the drones, the tanks, who shipped the soldiers, who clothed them, who equipped them, they made out like bandits. Look at the prices of their stocks over the 20 years of the Afghanistan war and you can see who won the war and who's making sure that whatever happens to the war, the spending on them keeps going up. This is a system that has

lost even the little bit of rationality it once had. It is driven by specific, particular what we used to call special interests who are doing it at the expense of the society as a whole. The defeat in Afghanistan has been a powerful signal around the world that the American empire is in decline.

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