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## Trump Advisers Want at Least 50,000 US Troops in Afghanistan

By Jason Ditz  
May 17, 2017

While publicly US strategy in the Afghan War has been based around the conceit that the conflict is in a “stalemate,” despite mounting losses by the Afghan government. Advisers have offered a classified assessment on the conflict recently, however, conceding that the Ghani government’s survival is at risk, and that the war is being “slowly” lost.

Their solution, as with everyone else, is even bigger escalation, with reports from those familiar with the plan saying that the US needs “more than 50,000” ground troops in Afghanistan to ensure Ghani’s survival, with an eye toward eventually defeating the Taliban.

That’s a big escalation, and a much bigger one than has been suggested in previous reports, which initially presented the proposed escalation as 3,000 to 5,000, and most recently made it a choice between 3,000 or keeping troop levels flat. The Pentagon is evasive about troop levels in recent months, but around 8,400 troops are believed to presently be in Afghanistan.

So 50,000 would be a massive escalation, resembling the one President Obama tried when he took office, and for mostly the same reason, that they think it might conceivably turn a long struggling war around. That it didn't lead to victory last time appears to be totally ignored in the latest assessment.