

## Headlines:

- **Washington Post: Top US Officials Repeatedly Misled Public about Afghanistan War**
- **Ukraine Talks**
- **For NATO, China is the New Russia**

## Details:

### Washington Post: Top US Officials Repeatedly Misled Public about Afghanistan War

On Monday, December 9<sup>th</sup>, the *Washington Post* published a series of articles based upon a tranche of thousands of documents obtained by litigation on America's Afghan war. The report shows that for nearly two decades, America's leaders - Democrat and Republican; civilian and military; elected, appointed, and career civil servant - have lied about how the war in Afghanistan was going. The newspaper showed in detail, former Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama, their Cabinet officials, and military commanders told Americans that the U.S. had a clear strategy and was effectively executing it - even though, in private, they said that the U.S. had no idea what it was doing, and no idea how to do it. The leaks contained memos. Reports and interviews which contained numerous admissions that the government routinely touted statistics that officials knew were distorted, spurious or downright false. One individual identified as a senior National Security Council official said, "Even when casualty counts and other figures looked bad ... the White House and Pentagon would spin them to the point of absurdity."

### Ukraine Talks

Ukraine, France, Germany and Russia met this week in the Normandy 4 talks, which was set up to address the Ukraine issue which has reached its 5<sup>th</sup> year. The leaders of all four nations met to discuss a political settlement to the conflict between Ukraine and Russia in Donbass. The meeting is the first of its kind since 2016. The government in Kyiv has said it wants nothing less than a "full and constant" cease-fire with complete control over the Donbass. Although the participating nations agreed on prisoner exchange and troop withdrawals that could de-escalate the conflict in eastern Ukraine, the agreements didn't reflect tangible progress toward implementing the Minsk Agreement to definitively end the conflict. Russia has successfully frozen the conflict after the removal of the pro-Russia regime in 2015.

### For NATO, China is the New Russia

NATO has spent most of the past 70 years focusing on how to defend the Continent against Russia. To survive the decades ahead, it's beginning to think more about China as a threat. As leaders met in the UK on its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary. "China is set to become the subject of the 21st century on both sides of the Atlantic," German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said. "China is a challenge on almost every topic. It is important to gain a better understanding of what that implies for NATO."