

# Afghanistan is not a Military Problem

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Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

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*To the jubilation of millions of his followers, Barack Obama [announced the withdrawal](#) of all US forces from Iraq by the end of 2011 when he addressed the Marines of Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. While Obama's statement provided a jolt of clarity about American involvement in Iraq, his policy for a surging escalation into Afghanistan leaves many haunting questions.*

Reasonable fears are growing about Obama's Afghanistan policy. Will this crucial decision make the increasingly unpopular war his very own in a tragic replication of Nixon's disastrous handling of the war he inherited from LBJ – Vietnam?

Late last year, the Iraq government enacted the US-Iraq Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) that calls for the withdrawal of all US forces by December 31, 2011. In Iraq and Afghanistan, the US occupations are deeply unpopular. In Washington's neoconservative circles the occupation of Iraq and the escalation of Afghanistan still receive standing ovations. With America under Obama's leadership now moving away from Iraq and leaving that tragic war to history, will a NATO surge into Afghanistan commit Obama to a war that he will live to regret?

In Brussels, Vice President Joe Biden [addressed the leadership of NATO](#) and declared that the situation in Afghanistan is deteriorating at an alarming rate. In Biden's view, a Taliban-led insurgency is spilling over into Pakistan that could threaten the security of all 27 nations in NATO.

Immediately after 9/11 the US invasion of Afghanistan was intended to bring Al-Qaida to justice, but the mission now emerging is to quell an anti-American insurgency that was triggered by the US invasion. How can a surge of troops reduce the growth of an antiwar insurgency in that war-torn region? Or, will a surging escalation be the equivalent of putting out fire with gasoline?

Much that was known unto other presidents is now lost for few remember the painful lessons they learned about the horrific costs of projecting American power by crude force. Lessons that must never be forgotten are being erased from the American narrative. From the global perspective, American power over humanity is now perceived as the conjunction of violence, cruelty and malice in a war of all against all. The hearts of all men – even presidents — are easily corrupted. Absolute power has a will of its own to enthrall all into its ruthless fist.

Along the Potomac, conspiracies and theories of threats from the Middle East become Chinese whispers of deeply submerged racial fears that strike terror into the hearts of people and their presidents. Power perceives when its time is ripe, but accidents and

randomness and unforeseeable events inevitably seep into the fabric of the world — and bad decisions are made to launch wars in Vietnam and Iraq.

In ideological think tanks, American history transforms into legend, and the legend morphs into myth in an endless cycle of forgetting that creates delusions in the minds of the Henry Kissingers and the Ann Coulters. Even popular and gifted presidents are, after all is said and done, mere mortal men. Ultimately, whispers of a nameless fear well up into the heart instilling false certainties that lead to mistakes in judgment, and power slips beyond the grasp of those who deign to wield it.

In this crucial phase of his journey, Obama must not allow the bright and hopeful promises of his presidency to fall into darkness under the shadows of power. At this very moment in time, Obama's presidency is poised on the edge of a knife. If he sways ever so slightly, he will fall into the abyss.

Two weeks from today, people will march on the Pentagon to oppose US military operations under Obama's command. The intensified grasping for power has already begun. Chaos will reign if Obama does not take firm steps to prevent deterioration that can swiftly transform into disintegration.

The American people assigned Obama the tasks of ending the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, repairing US foreign policy and restoring the broken and bankrupt economy to prosperity and equilibrium.

Afghanistan is not a military problem. It [cannot be resolved](#) by military strategy alone. Afghanistan is a cultural problem, and it can only be resolved by soft power.

Time is merciless, and it does not allow a misstep. Now is the time for the new President and Commander-in-Chief to act decisively.

The sands of time are trickling, and the twists of fate are tightening.

*[Michael Carmichael](#) is the founder of Planetary*

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