

“Liberals” and “Progressives” Resist Ending America’s Wars

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Liberal interventionists in the media want America’s wars to continue forever. Last Thursday I actually turned on “PBS Newshour” with Judy Woodruff, which I never watch, but the other offerings on television were dismal, and I was flipping channels. She had on as guests her regular commentator Mark Shields and Michael Gerson of The Washington Post. Shields is a hardcore liberal and Gerson is a neoconservative longtime critic of Donald Trump, presumably filling in for regular PBS “conservative” David Brooks. The discussion was about Syria and the resignation of Secretary of Defense James Mattis.

Woodruff had had the pathologically ambitious Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) on earlier, which was a bullet I quite happily dodged. He reportedly said that Trump was “about to make a major blunder on Syria,” aligning him with fellow Republican Sen. Lindsay Graham (S.C.), who said pretty much the same thing.

Given the fact that NPR has a bobo audience that it answers to, I fully expected that there would be a lot of tap dancing about the events of the week but was somewhat surprised to hear nothing but damnation from Shields and Gerson about how the Trump move would do grave if not fatal damage to U.S. national security and how the president, unlike seasoned patriot Mattis, cannot distinguish right from wrong. Gerson said, “You know, you look at his [Mattis’s] resignation letter, which coldly and rationally said to the president, you do not understand our friends, and you do not understand our enemies.”

As America’s self-defined friends in the Middle East might best be described as “frenemies,” I was wondering if either Shields or Gerson (or Rubio) ever venture past the comics pages of their daily newspapers. As they all spend their time in Washington, that newspaper would be *The Washington Post*, which perhaps explains things, as the paper’s vitriol against Trump and the Syria move has been astonishing by any measure.

In other words, the PBS coverage of a major story was all pure improvisation, straight out of the establishment playbook, and Woodruff wasn’t even canny enough to push back.

Getting out of Syria and hopefully eventually Afghanistan is the best thing that Trump has done for America so far, if he has the guts to actually do it. Both are wars that were unnecessary from day one and are now unwinnable in any real way. They largely keep going fueled by the lies coming from “friends” like Saudi Arabia and Israel aided and abetted by the defense contractor community and the quislings in Congress who are willing to sell out completely to the military-industrial complex because it creates “jobs” in their constituencies.

When I could take no more, I flipped channels and “Democracy Now!” came up, another

program I find nearly as loathsome for its unctuous goodliness as PBS news. Amy Goodman fortunately had history professor Andrew Bacevich on, and he explained, citing the general's letter of resignation, how Mattis "when he talked about his four decades of engagement with these matters, is very telling. He represents the establishment's perspective, that has evolved over the course of those four decades. And for anyone who says—who looks at U.S. policy over the past four decades, particularly in the Middle East, and says, 'Yeah, it's really gone well,' then I would think that they would view Mattis's resignation as a disappointment.

Now, when Trump ran for the presidency, he denounced our wars in the Middle East. He promised to withdraw militarily from the Middle East. Two years into his presidency, that hasn't happened. And in many respects, Mattis has been among those who have frustrated the president's efforts. Now, I'm in the camp who thinks that we ought to wind down these wars, that we've got more important things to do."

Bacevich also pointed out that the prevailing establishment foreign policy is both morally and practically wrong and unsustainable. He hoped that Trump would prevail against the tremendous pressure that is being exerted against him to recant. I said "bravo" and turned off the TV.

Here is my problem with liberals like Shields and neocons like Gerson: They hate Trump so much that they will do anything to bring him down, even when he is doing something that is manifestly good for the country. Gerson at least is consistent in that he hates Trump and likes America's wars, but what about Shields and Woodruff? You would think that ending a conflict in which most of the casualties are civilians would be praised by them and the broader social justice warrior community, but where are the liberals supporting Trump on this bold step to disengage from endless and pointless war in the Middle East, either in the media or among the politicians and punditry? MSNBC's resident progressive screamer Rachel Maddow has been practically foaming at the mouth about Trump since the announcement of the withdrawal was made.

There are indeed some exceptions among genuine liberals who actually have a conscience rather than just a bunch of grievances, to include Rep. Tulsi Gabbard (D-Hawaii), who tweeted, "The hysterical reaction to the decision to withdraw troops from Syria is astonishing and shows just how attached to war some are. Lindsey Graham and others want us to continue our regime change war in Syria and to go to war with Iran. That's why they're so upset."

But in general, reliable leftists have become invisible regarding withdrawing from Syria, a complete reversal to what they were saying some months ago when Trump seemed prepared to stay the course. As a completely unscientific survey of liberal opinion on the issue I cruised through the names of the many friends I have on Facebook that are of progressive persuasion and could not find a single one who was supporting the president. Hypocrisy? Obama's belligerency, including Syria, which he turned into a war and almost succeeded in escalating into something much bigger, is given a pass while anything Trump does is sheer unmitigated evil.

Trump is under intense pressure from all sides to reverse his decision on Syria and also regarding Afghanistan, which will see a 50% reduction in force. But it is up to all Americans who care about the future of this country to speak up in support of ending the wars that have bled us for the past 17 years. If liberals and neocons cannot bear the thought of supporting a president they loathe who is actually doing something right for a change, we

will all regret the failure to end the cycle of war and retribution that has roiled the Middle East since the United States invaded Iraq based on lies in 2003.

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