

# Obama Never Considered Diplomacy in Afghanistan

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After initially injecting 21,000 troops into Afghanistan allegedly to stave off imminent defeat, President Obama Tuesday will tell war-weary Americans why he seeks 35,000 more. If he gets them, the U.S. force there will exceed 100,000.

Washington has been pressuring its NATO allies to pour in more fighters even though Europeans don't want any part of it. The New York Times reported Nov. 25th the U.S. is asking NATO for 10,000 more troops above the 45,000 already in place. That could bring total Allied forces to about 150,000. Toss in 70,000 private contractors and the total force soars to over 200,000. Yes, Afghanistan is shaping up as another Viet Nam.

Obama apparently never seriously considered ending the war diplomatically. Recall his blustering campaign rhetoric about defeating the Taliban; recall the public commitment last December of Defense Secretary Robert Gates to strengthen military bases in Afghanistan. Gates was the Bush official Obama continued in office.

Even as polls show a majority of Americans want U.S. forces out of Afghanistan and that Americans do not believe the war is worth fighting, President Obama—a former editor at the CIA front Business International Corporation in 1983-84—embraces a position in line with the long-held CIA view the U.S. must control the Middle East's energy resources. It was the CIA that overthrew Iran in 1953 after Tehran nationalized its oil production, depriving British Petroleum of its lucrative swindle. Afghanistan is valued today for the oil and gas pipelines the U.S. wants built there, no matter what other reasons Obama gives.

"In the late 1990s," writes Washington reporter Bill Blum in his "Anti-Empire Report," "the American oil company, Unocal, met with Taliban officials in Texas to discuss the pipelines... Unocal's talks with the Taliban, conducted with the full knowledge of the Clinton administration...continued as late as 2000 or 2001." Adds Paul Craig Roberts writing in the December Rock Creek Free Press of Washington, D.C., the U.S./U.K. military aggression in Afghanistan "had to do with the natural gas deposits in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan." Roberts explains:

"The Americans wanted a pipeline that bypassed Russia and Iran and went through Afghanistan. To insure this, an invasion was necessary. The idiot American public could be told that the invasion was necessary because of 9/11 and to save them from 'terrorism,' and the utter fools would believe the lie." The war, Roberts continued, is to guard the pipeline route. "It's about money, it's about energy, it's not about democracy."

According to an AP dispatch of November 26th, "The president promised this week to 'finish the job' begun eight years ago...but liberal Democrats already are lining up against it (escalation), in part because of the also-surging cost—up to \$75 billion a year." Describing

the war in workplace terminology makes it sound as if Obama is running a personnel agency that was dispatching workers to build some public works, not as though he is continuing President George Bush's illegal war.

Apparently, only escalation in Afghanistan was considered by Obama. As The Washington Post reported last December, "standing at Kandahar Air Field in Afghanistan, Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates said the United States is making a 'sustained commitment' to that country, one that will last 'some protracted period of time.'" The story goes on to discuss \$300 million in new construction at just one base, including a new power plant, electrical and water distribution systems, and housing for 1,500 personnel. Gates hardly would have made a "sustained commitment" if Obama planned to withdraw. And every day the war goes on while Obama mulls his options is a day of victory for the hawks.

In January, a Defense Department report stated "building a fully competent and independent Afghan government will be a lengthy process that will last, at a minimum, decades," The Nation magazine's Jonathan Schell reports (Nov. 30). So far from defeating the Taliban are Allied forces that US military contractors "are forced to pay suspected insurgents to protect American supply routes," Aram Roston writes in the same issue. "It is an accepted fact of the military logistics operation in Afghanistan that the US government funds the very forces American troops are fighting." In fact, an American executive there told Roston, "The Army is basically paying the Taliban not to shoot at them. It is Department of Defense money."

Nevertheless, the slick orator from Illinois continues U.S. aggression in the energy-rich Middle East. Obama clearly is no liberal, much less a progressive. He is a reactionary. He is advancing the militarist policies of the Bush-Cheney regime. He is defending the CIA. He is increasing the total Pentagon budget. He is expanding an illegal war into Pakistan. Once this is understood, the other pieces of Obama policy fall into place. Obama is continuing the illegal "extraordinary rendition" kidnappings authorized by President Bush. Obama rejects prosecuting CIA torture goons who broke the law and refuses to release photos of their grisly handiwork. Obama balks at signing a treaty to ban land mines that has been affirmed by 150 nations. Obama expands the Predator assassination attacks claiming hundreds of civilian lives. And so on, ad nauseam.

The military-industrial complex will support Obama's escalation of these wars in order to cash in on those lucrative defense contracts valued at \$700 billion a year while good jobs in other sectors of the U.S. economy, starved for investment capital, continue to shrink; while cities continue to decline; while handgun massacres become commonplace in our schools and offices; while homeowners are forced into the streets; while start-ups can't get loans; and while Wall Street loots the Treasury. In short, Obama is propelling the once great USA toward Third World status.

What's more, in all the recent debate in Washington, who has heard a word of concern for the impact of escalation on the suffering civilian populations of Afghanistan and Pakistan?

"Our military demands ever more troops," Veterans Speaker Alliance's founder Paul Cox said at an Oakland, Calif., rally, last week with Barbara Lee, the only member of Congress to vote against the initial Afghan aggression. "Meanwhile, our economy is in the toilet, health care costs are out of control, and we can't afford to educate our children. But somehow, there's always money for war." Rep. Lee called for putting "this stage of American history—a stage characterized by open-ended war—to a close."

Europeans—who are supporting a NATO organization that has no real purpose since the end of the Cold War—would agree with Lee. As the New York Times reported Nov. 25th: “America’s European allies have remained noncommittal about sending additional troops to Afghanistan. France and Germany in particular have continued to limit their combat role, with both countries refusing to deploy troops in the south of the country, where Taliban forces are strongest.”

If the majority Democrats won’t end it, Americans could embrace the Green Party, which has consistently called for pulling U.S. forces out of the Middle East, sharply reducing the Pentagon budget, and shifting spending to respond to true public needs. Right now, voting Green appears to be the only way to let the peace dove out of its cage. #

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