

Obama's Af-Pak is as Whack as Bush's Iraq

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Global Research, December 03, 2009

[Black Agenda Report](#) 2 December 2009

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President Obama has reached a watershed in his presidency: he has devolved to the intellectual level of George Bush, while retaining his world class powers of speech. History may remember Obama as just another vapid but predatory imperialist president who happens to be...superficially eloquent. Unfortunately, the clarity of Obama's diction is not matched by coherence of policy. Af-Pak is at least as whack as Bush's Iraq.

"More occupation means less occupation."

Barack Obama's oratorical skills have turned on him, revealing, as George Bush's low-grade delivery never could, the perfect incoherence of the current American imperial project in South Asia. Bush's verbal eccentricities served to muddy his entire message, leaving the observer wondering what was more ridiculous, the speechmaker or the speech. There is no such confusion when Obama is on the mic. His flawless delivery of superbly structured sentences provides no distractions, requiring the brain to examine the content – the policy in question – on its actual merits. The conclusion comes quickly: the U.S. imperial enterprise in Afghanistan and Pakistan is doomed, as well as evil.

The president's speech to West Point cadets was a stream of non sequiturs so devoid of logic as to cast doubt on the sanity of the authors. "[T]hese additional American and international troops," said the president, "will allow us to accelerate handing over responsibility to Afghan forces, and allow us to begin the transfer of our forces out of Afghanistan in July of 2011."

Obama claims that, the faster an additional 30,000 Americans pour into Afghanistan, the quicker will come the time when they will leave. More occupation means less occupation, you see? This breakneck intensification of the U.S. occupation is necessary, Obama explains, because "We have no interest in occupying your country."

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If the Americans were truly interested in occupying Afghanistan, the logic goes, they would slow down and stretch out the process over many years, rather than mount an 18-month surge of Taliban-hunting. The Afghans are advised to hold still – the pulsating surge will be over before they know it.

At present, of course, the Americans have assumed all "responsibility" for Afghanistan – so much so that President Hamid Karzai only learned about Obama's plans earlier on Tuesday during a one-hour tele-briefing. This is consistent with Obama's detailed plans for Afghan liberation, under U.S. tutelage. The president is as wedded to high stakes testing of occupied peoples as he is for American public school children. "This effort must be based on

performance. The days of providing a blank check are over,” said the Occupier-in-Chief. He continued:

“And going forward, we will be clear about what we expect from those who receive our assistance. We will support Afghan Ministries, Governors, and local leaders that combat corruption and deliver for the people. We expect those who are ineffective or corrupt to be held accountable.”

Such rigorous oversight of their country’s affairs should keep Afghan minds off the fact that they have been fighting to remain independent of foreign rule for centuries, if not millennia. If Obama is right, Afghans might also be distracted from dwelling on the question of who their “Ministries, Governors, and local leaders” are answerable to – the Afghan people or the Americans?

“Obama advises Afghans to be patient and trusting regarding their sovereignty.”

Although President Obama is anxious to bring U.S. troop levels above 100,000 as quickly as possible, he advises Afghans to be patient and trusting regarding their sovereignty. “It will be clear to the Afghan government, and, more importantly, to the Afghan people, that they will ultimately be responsible for their own country.” That is, it will become clear in the fullness of time, but hopefully no later than 18 months after the planned surge begins. If all goes well, the Taliban will be dead or nearly so, and the non-Taliban Afghans will be prepared to begin assuming “responsibility for their own country.” If not, then the Americans will be forced to continue as occupiers – reluctantly, of course, since, as the whole world and the more intelligent class of Afghans know, the Americans “have no interest in occupying your country” – unless they have to.

Should the Afghans become confused about American intentions, they might consult with their Pakistani neighbors, for whom President Obama also has plans.

“[We] have made it clear that we cannot tolerate a safe-haven for terrorists whose location is known, and whose intentions are clear,” the president declared. “America is also providing substantial resources to support Pakistan’s democracy and development. We are the largest international supporter for those Pakistanis displaced by the fighting.”

Obama did not mention that it was the Americans that coerced and bribed the Pakistani military into launching the attacks that displaced over a million people in the Swat region and hundreds of thousands more in border areas. How nice of them to join in humanitarian assistance to the homeless.

The Pakistanis, like the Afghans, were assured the Americans will not abandon them to their own, independent devices. Said Obama: “And going forward, the Pakistani people must know: America will remain a strong supporter of Pakistan’s security and prosperity long after the guns have fallen silent, so that the great potential of its people can be unleashed.”

Some Pakistanis might consider that a threat. According to polling by the [Pew Global Attitudes Project](#), only 16 percent of Pakistanis held a favorable view of the United States in 2009. Actually, that’s a point or two higher than U.S. popularity in Occupied Palestine (15 percent) and Turkey (14 percent), the only other Muslim countries on the Pew list.

Not to worry. Obama knows things that escape the rest of us. For example, the fact that “we

have forged a new beginning between America and the Muslim World – one that recognizes our mutual interest in breaking a cycle of conflict, and that promises a future in which those who kill innocents are isolated by those who stand up for peace and prosperity and human dignity.”

Which means, we can expect those polling numbers to start going up, soon.

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When Obama isn’t launching bold initiatives and “new beginnings,” he’s busy taking care of U.S. imperial business as usual. Obama is most proud that the U.S. spends more on its military than all the rest of the nations of the planet, combined.

“[T]he United States of America has underwritten global security for over six decades,” he told the cadets, “a time that, for all its problems, has seen walls come down, markets open, billions lifted from poverty, unparalleled scientific progress, and advancing frontiers of human liberty.” Others might not view the rise of U.S. hegemony in such a positive light. But they are wrong, said the president. “For unlike the great powers of old, we have not sought world domination. Our union was founded in resistance to oppression. We do not seek to occupy other nations. We will not claim another nation’s resources or target other peoples because their faith or ethnicity is different from ours.”

In Obama’s worldview, it’s the thought that counts. Americans don’t seek world domination; it just comes to them. “We do not seek to occupy other nations,” they leave us no choice. If it were not for American concern for the welfare of all the world’s people, the U.S. would not maintain 780 military bases in other people’s countries.

Obama has certainly matured as an American-style statesman in his nine and a half months in office. As a TV Native American might say, “Black man in white house speak like forked tongued white man.” Only better.

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