

Military Resistance 7L5

Set 'em up, Again...



**“What I’m Looking For Is
A Surge,” Mr. Obama
Said. “This Has To Be A
Surge”**

**How Barack Obama Demanded A
Surge In Afghanistan And Got
Exactly What He Wanted**

[This Article Is Dedicated, With Contempt And Loathing, To The Assorted Fools, Liars And Often Racists Pretending He Is Not In Command And/Or That He Is A Helpless But Well-Meaning Ineffective Taken Political Captive By The Military]

December 6, 2009 By PETER BAKER, The New York Times

WASHINGTON — On the afternoon he held the eighth meeting of his Afghanistan review, President Obama arrived in the White House Situation Room ruminating about war.

He had come from Arlington National Cemetery, where he had wandered among the chalky white tombstones of those who had fallen in the rugged mountains of Central Asia.

How much their sacrifice weighed on him that Veterans Day last month, he did not say. But his advisers say he was haunted by the human toll as he wrestled with what to do about the eight-year-old war. Just a month earlier, he had mentioned to them his visits to wounded soldiers at the Army hospital in Washington. “I don’t want to be going to Walter Reed for another eight years,” he said then.

The economic cost was troubling him as well after he received a private budget memo estimating that an expanded presence would cost \$1 trillion over 10 years, roughly the same as his health care plan.

Now as his top military adviser ran through a slide show of options, Mr. Obama expressed frustration. He held up a chart showing how reinforcements would flow into Afghanistan over 18 months and eventually begin to pull out, a bell curve that meant American forces would be there for years to come.

“I want this pushed to the left,” he told advisers, pointing to the bell curve. In other words, the troops should be in sooner, then out sooner.

When the history of the Obama presidency is written, that day with the chart may prove to be a turning point, the moment a young commander in chief set in motion a high-stakes gamble to turn around a losing war. By moving the bell curve to the left, Mr. Obama decided to send 30,000 troops mostly in the next six months and then begin pulling them out a year after that, betting that a quick jolt of extra forces could knock the enemy back on its heels enough for the Afghans to take over the fight.

The three-month review that led to the escalate-then-exit strategy is a case study in decision making in the Obama White House — intense, methodical, rigorous, earnest and at times deeply frustrating for nearly all involved. It was a virtual seminar in

Afghanistan and Pakistan, led by a president described by one participant as something “between a college professor and a gentle cross-examiner.”

Mr. Obama peppered advisers with questions and showed an insatiable demand for information, taxing analysts who prepared three dozen intelligence reports for him and Pentagon staff members who churned out thousands of pages of documents.

This account of how the president reached his decision is based on dozens of interviews with participants as well as a review of notes some of them took during Mr. Obama’s 10 meetings with his national security team.

Most of those interviewed spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations, but their accounts have been matched against those of other participants wherever possible.

Mr. Obama devoted so much time to the Afghan issue — nearly 11 hours on the day after Thanksgiving alone — that he joked, “I’ve got more deeply in the weeds than a president should, and now you guys need to solve this.” He invited competing voices to debate in front of him, while guarding his own thoughts.

Even David Axelrod, arguably his closest adviser, did not know where Mr. Obama would come out until just before Thanksgiving.

With the result uncertain, the outsize personalities on his team vied for his favor, sometimes sharply disagreeing as they made their arguments.

The White House suspected the military of leaking details of the review to put pressure on the president.

The military and the State Department suspected the White House of leaking to undercut the case for more troops.

The president erupted at the leaks with an anger advisers had rarely seen, but he did little to shut down the public clash within his own government.

“The president welcomed a full range of opinions and invited contrary points of view,” Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said in an interview last month. “And I thought it was a very healthy experience because people took him up on it. And one thing we didn’t want — to have a decision made and then have somebody say, ‘Oh, by the way.’ No, come forward now or forever hold your peace.”

The decision represents a complicated evolution in Mr. Obama’s thinking.

He began the process clearly skeptical of Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal’s request for 40,000 more troops, but the more he learned about the consequences of failure, and the more he narrowed the mission, the more he gravitated toward a robust if temporary buildup, guided in particular by Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates.

Yet even now, he appears ambivalent about what some call “Obama’s war.” Just two weeks before General McChrystal warned of failure at the end of August, Mr. Obama described Afghanistan as a “war of necessity.” When he announced his new strategy

last week, those words were nowhere to be found. Instead, while recommitting to the war on Al Qaeda, he made clear that the larger struggle for Afghanistan had to be balanced against the cost in blood and treasure and brought to an end.

Aides, though, said the arduous review gave Mr. Obama comfort that he had found the best course he could. "The process was exhaustive, but any time you get the president of the United States to devote 25 hours, anytime you get that kind of commitment, you know it was serious business," said Gen. James L. Jones, the president's national security adviser. "From the very first meeting, everyone started with set opinions. And no opinion was the same by the end of the process."

Taking Control of a War

Mr. Obama ran for president supportive of the so-called good war in Afghanistan and vowing to send more troops, but he talked about it primarily as a way of attacking Republicans for diverting resources to Iraq, which he described as a war of choice. Only after taking office, as casualties mounted and the Taliban gained momentum, did Mr. Obama really begin to confront what to do.

Even before completing a review of the war, he ordered the military to send 21,000 more troops there, bringing the force to 68,000.

But tension between the White House and the military soon emerged when General Jones, a retired Marine four-star general, traveled to Afghanistan in the summer and was surprised to hear officers already talking about more troops. He made it clear that no more troops were in the offing.

With the approach of Afghanistan's presidential election in August, Mr. Obama's two new envoys — Richard C. Holbrooke, the president's special representative to the region, and Lt. Gen. Karl W. Eikenberry, a retired commander of troops in Afghanistan now serving as ambassador — warned of trouble, including the possibility of angry Afghans marching on the American Embassy or outright civil war.

"There are 10 ways this can turn out," one administration official said, summing up the envoys' presentation, "and 9 of them are messy."

The worst did not happen, but widespread fraud tainted the election and shocked some in the White House as they realized that their partner in Kabul, President Hamid Karzai, was hopelessly compromised in terms of public credibility.

At the same time, the Taliban kept making gains. The Central Intelligence Agency drew up detailed maps in August charting the steady progression of the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan, maps that would later be used extensively during the president's review. General McChrystal submitted his own dire assessment of the situation, warning of "mission failure" without a fresh infusion of troops.

While General McChrystal did not submit a specific troop request at that point, the White House knew it was coming and set out to figure out what to do. General Jones organized a series of meetings that he envisioned lasting a few weeks.

Before each one, he convened a rehearsal session to impose discipline — “get rid of the chaff,” one official put it — that included Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr., Mrs. Clinton, Mr. Gates and other cabinet-level officials. Mr. Biden made a practice of writing a separate private memo to Mr. Obama before each meeting, outlining his thoughts.

The first meeting with the president took place on Sept. 13, a Sunday, and was not disclosed to the public that day. For hours, Mr. Obama and his top advisers pored through intelligence reports.

Unsatisfied, the president posed a series of questions: Does America need to defeat the Taliban to defeat Al Qaeda? Can a counterinsurgency strategy work in Afghanistan given the problems with its government?

If the Taliban regained control of Afghanistan, would nuclear-armed Pakistan be next?

The deep skepticism he expressed at that opening session was reinforced by Mr. Biden, who rushed back overnight from a California trip to participate. Just as he had done in the spring, Mr. Biden expressed opposition to an expansive strategy requiring a big troop influx. Instead, he put an alternative on the table — rather than focus on nation building and population protection, do more to disrupt the Taliban, improve the quality of the training of Afghan forces and expand reconciliation efforts to peel off some Taliban fighters.

Mr. Biden quickly became the most outspoken critic of the expected McChrystal troop request, arguing that Pakistan was the bigger priority, since that is where Al Qaeda is mainly based. “He was the bull in the china shop,” said one admiring administration official.

But others were nodding their heads at some of what he was saying, too, including General Jones and Rahm Emanuel, the White House chief of staff.

A Review Becomes News

The quiet review burst into public view when General McChrystal’s secret report was leaked to Bob Woodward of The Washington Post a week after the first meeting. The general’s grim assessment jolted Washington and lent urgency to the question of what to do to avoid defeat in Afghanistan.

Adm. Mike Mullen, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Gen. David H. Petraeus, the regional commander, secretly flew to an American air base in Germany for a four-hour meeting with General McChrystal on Sept. 25. He handed them his troop request on paper — there were no electronic versions and barely 20 copies in all.

The request outlined three options for different missions: sending 80,000 more troops to conduct a robust counterinsurgency campaign throughout the country; 40,000 troops to reinforce the southern and eastern areas where the Taliban are strongest; or 10,000 to 15,000 troops mainly to train Afghan forces.

General Petraeus took one copy, while Admiral Mullen took two back to Washington and dropped one off at Mr. Gates's home next to his in a small military compound in Washington.

But no one sent the document to the White House, intending to process it through the Pentagon review first.

Mr. Obama was focused on another report. At 10 p.m. on Sept. 29, he called over from the White House residence to the West Wing to ask for a copy of the first Afghanistan strategy he approved in March to ramp up the fight against Al Qaeda and the Taliban while increasing civilian assistance.

A deputy national security adviser, Denis McDonough, brought him a copy to reread overnight. When his national security team met the next day, Mr. Obama complained that elements of that plan had never been enacted.

The group went over the McChrystal assessment and drilled in on what the core goal should be.

Some thought that General McChrystal interpreted the March strategy more ambitiously than it was intended to be. Mr. Biden asked tough questions about whether there was any intelligence showing that the Taliban posed a threat to American territory.

But Mr. Obama also firmly closed the door on any withdrawal.

"I just want to say right now, I want to take off the table that we're leaving Afghanistan," he told his advisers.

Tension with the military had been simmering since the leak of the McChrystal report, which some in the White House took as an attempt to box in the president. The friction intensified on Oct. 1 when the general was asked after a speech in London whether a narrower mission, like the one Mr. Biden proposed, would succeed. "The short answer is no," he said.

White House officials were furious, and Mr. Gates publicly scolded advisers who did not keep their advice to the president private.

The furor rattled General McChrystal, who, unlike General Petraeus, was not a savvy Washington operator. And it stunned others in the military, who were at first "bewildered by how over the top the reaction was from the White House," as one military official put it.

It also proved to be what one review participant called a "head-snapping" moment of revelation for the military. The president, they suddenly realized, was not simply updating his previous strategy but essentially starting over from scratch.

The episode underscored the uneasy relationship between the military and a new president who, aides said, was determined not to be as deferential as he believed his predecessor, George W. Bush, was for years in Iraq.

And the military needed to adjust to a less experienced but more skeptical commander in chief.

“We’d been chugging along for eight years under an administration that had become very adept at managing war in a certain way,” said another military official.

Moreover, Mr. Obama had read “Lessons in Disaster,” Gordon M. Goldstein’s book on the Vietnam War. The book had become a must read in the West Wing after Mr. Emanuel had dinner over the summer at the house of another deputy national security adviser, Thomas E. Donilon, and wandered into his library to ask what he should be reading.

Among the conclusions that Mr. Donilon and the White House team drew from the book was that both President John F. Kennedy and President Lyndon B. Johnson failed to question the underlying assumption about monolithic Communism and the domino theory — clearly driving the Obama advisers to rethink the nature of Al Qaeda and the Taliban.

The Pakistan Question

While public attention focused on Afghanistan, some of the most intensive discussion focused on the country where Mr. Obama could send no troops — Pakistan. Pushed in particular by Mrs. Clinton, the president’s team explored the links between the Afghan Taliban, the Pakistani Taliban and Al Qaeda, and Mr. Obama told aides that it did not matter how many troops were sent to Afghanistan if Pakistan remained a haven.

Many of the intelligence reports ordered by the White House during the review dealt with Pakistan’s stability and whether its military and intelligence services were now committed to the fight or secretly still supporting Taliban factions.

According to two officials, there was a study of the potential vulnerability of Pakistan’s nuclear weapons, posing questions about potential insider threats and control of the warheads if the Pakistani government fell.

Mr. Obama and his advisers also considered options for stepping up the pursuit of extremists in Pakistan’s border areas.

He eventually approved a C.I.A. request to expand the areas where remotely piloted aircraft could strike, and other covert action.

The trick would be getting Pakistani consent, which still has not been granted.

On Oct. 9, Mr. Obama and his team reviewed General McChrystal’s troop proposals for the first time. Some in the White House were surprised by the numbers, assuming there would be a middle ground between 10,000 and 40,000.

“Why wasn’t there a 25 number?” one senior administration official asked in an interview. He then answered his own question: “It would have been too tempting.”

Mr. Gates and others talked about the limits of the American ability to actually defeat the Taliban; they were an indigenous force in Afghan society, part of the political fabric. This was a view shared by others around the table, including Leon E. Panetta, the director of the C.I.A., who argued that the Taliban could not be defeated as such and so the goal should be to drive wedges between those who could be reconciled with the Afghan government and those who could not be.

With Mr. Biden leading the skeptics, Mrs. Clinton, Mr. Gates and Admiral Mullen increasingly aligned behind a more robust force.

Mrs. Clinton wanted to make sure she was a formidable player in the process. "She was determined that her briefing books would be just as thick and just as meticulous as those of the Pentagon," said one senior adviser. She asked hard questions about Afghan troop training, unafraid of wading into Pentagon territory.

After a meeting where the Pentagon made a presentation with impressive color-coded maps, Mrs. Clinton returned to the State Department and told her aides, "We need maps," as one recalled.

She was overseas during the next meeting on Oct. 14, when aides used her new maps to show civilian efforts but she participated with headphones on from her government plane flying back from Russia.

Mr. Gates was a seasoned hand at such reviews, having served eight presidents and cycled in and out of the Situation Room since the days when it was served by a battery of fax machines.

Like Mrs. Clinton, he was sympathetic to General McChrystal's request, having resolved his initial concern that a buildup would fuel resentment the way the disastrous Soviet occupation of Afghanistan did in the 1980s.

But Mr. Gates's low-wattage exterior masks a wily inside player, and he knew enough to keep his counsel early in the process to let it play out more first. "When to speak is important to him; when to signal is important to him," said a senior Defense Department official.

On Oct. 22, the National Security Council produced what one official called a "consensus memo," much of which originated out of the defense secretary's office, concluding that the United States should focus on diminishing the Taliban insurgency but not destroying it; building up certain critical ministries; and transferring authority to Afghan security forces.

There was no consensus yet on troop numbers, however, so Mr. Obama called a smaller group of advisers together on Oct. 26 to finally press Mrs. Clinton and Mr. Gates. Mrs. Clinton made it clear that she was comfortable with General McChrystal's request for 40,000 troops or something close to it; Mr. Gates also favored a big force.

Mr. Obama was leery. He had received a memo the day before from the Office of Management and Budget projecting that General McChrystal's full 40,000-troop request on top of the existing deployment and reconstruction efforts would cost \$1 trillion from 2010 to 2020, an adviser said. The president seemed in sticker shock, watching his

domestic agenda vanishing in front of him. "This is a 10-year, trillion-dollar effort and does not match up with our interests," he said.

Still, for the first time, he made it clear that he was ready to send more troops if a strategy could be found to ensure that it was not an endless war. He indicated that the Taliban had to be beaten back. "What do we need to break their momentum?" he asked.

Four days later, at a meeting with the Joint Chiefs of Staff on Oct. 30, he emphasized the need for speed. "Why can't I get the troops in faster?" he asked.

If they were going to do this, he concluded, it only made sense to do this quickly, to have impact and keep the war from dragging on forever. "This is America's war," he said. "But I don't want to make an open-ended commitment."

Bridging the Differences

Now that he had a sense of where Mr. Obama was heading, Mr. Gates began shaping a plan that would bridge the differences. He developed a 30,000-troop option that would give General McChrystal the bulk of his request, reasoning that NATO could make up most of the difference.

"If people are having trouble swallowing 40, let's see if we can make this smaller and easier to swallow and still give the commander what he needs," a senior Defense official said, summarizing the secretary's thinking.

The plan, called Option 2A, was presented to the president on Nov. 11. Mr. Obama complained that the bell curve would take 18 months to get all the troops in place.

He turned to General Petraeus and asked him how long it took to get the so-called surge troops he commanded in Iraq in 2007. That was six months.

"What I'm looking for is a surge," Mr. Obama said. "This has to be a surge."

That represented a contrast from when Mr. Obama, as a presidential candidate, staunchly opposed President Bush's buildup in Iraq. But unlike Mr. Bush, Mr. Obama wanted from the start to speed up a withdrawal as well. The military was told to come up with a plan to send troops quickly and then begin bringing them home quickly.

And in another twist, Mr. Obama, who campaigned as an apostle of transparency and had been announcing each Situation Room meeting publicly and even releasing pictures, was livid that details of the discussions were leaking out.

"What I'm not going to tolerate is you talking to the press outside of this room," he scolded his advisers. "It's a disservice to the process, to the country and to the men and women of the military."

His advisers sat in uncomfortable silence. That very afternoon, someone leaked word of a cable sent by Ambassador Eikenberry from Kabul expressing reservations about a large buildup of forces as long as the Karzai government remained unreformed. At one

of their meetings, General Petraeus had told Mr. Obama to think of elements of the Karzai government like “a crime syndicate.”

Ambassador Eikenberry was suggesting, in effect, that America could not get in bed with the mob.

The leak of Ambassador Eikenberry’s Nov. 6 cable stirred another storm within the administration because the cable had been requested by the White House. The National Security Council had told the ambassador to put his views in writing. But someone else then passed word of the cable to reporters in what some in the process took to be a calculated attempt to head off a big troop buildup.

The cable stunned some in the military. The reaction at the Pentagon, said one official, was “Whiskey Tango Foxtrot” — military slang for an expression of shock. Among the officers caught off guard were General McChrystal and his staff, for whom the cable was “a complete surprise,” said another official, even though the commander and the ambassador meet three times a week.

A Presidential Order

By this point, the idea of some sort of time frame was taking on momentum. Mrs. Clinton talked to Mr. Karzai before the Afghan leader’s inauguration to a second term. She suggested that he use his speech to outline a schedule for taking over security of the country.

Mr. Karzai did just that, declaring that Afghan forces directed by Kabul would take charge of securing population centers in three years and the whole country in five.

His pronouncement, orchestrated partly by Mrs. Clinton and diplomats in Kabul, provided a predicate for Mr. Obama to set out his own time frame.

The president gathered his team in the Situation Room at 8:15 p.m. on Nov. 23, the unusual nighttime hour adding to what one participant called a momentous wartime feeling. The room was strewn with coffee cups and soda cans.

Mr. Obama presented a revised version of Option 2A, this one titled “Max Leverage,” pushing 30,000 troops into Afghanistan by mid-2010 and beginning to pull them out by July 2011.

Admiral Mullen came up with the date at the direction of Mr. Obama, despite some misgivings from the Pentagon about setting a time frame for a withdrawal.

The date was two years from the arrival of the first reinforcements Mr. Obama sent shortly after taking office. Mr. Biden had written a memo before the meeting talking about the need for “proof of concept” — in other words, two years ought to be enough for extra troops to demonstrate whether a buildup would work.

The president went around the room asking for opinions. Mr. Biden again expressed skepticism, even at this late hour when the tide had turned against him in terms of the

troop number. But he had succeeded in narrowing the scope of the mission to protect population centers and setting the date to begin withdrawal.

Others around the table concurred with the plan.

Mr. Obama spoke last, but still somewhat elliptically.

Some advisers said they walked out into the night after 10 p.m., uncertain whether the president had actually endorsed the Max Leverage option or was just testing for reaction.

Two days later, Mr. Obama met with Nancy Pelosi, the House speaker and a critic of the Afghan war. The president outlined his plans for the buildup without disclosing specific numbers. Ms. Pelosi was unenthusiastic and pointedly told the president that he could not rely on Democrats alone to pass financing for the war.

The White House had spent little time courting Congress to this point. Even though it would need Republican support, the White House had made no overtures to the party leaders.

But there was back-channel contact. Mr. Emanuel was talking with Senator Lindsey Graham, Republican of South Carolina, who urged him to settle on a troop number “that began with 3” to win Republican support. “I said as long as the generals are O.K. and there is a meaningful number, you will be O.K.,” Mr. Graham recalled.

The day after Thanksgiving, Mr. Obama huddled with aides from 10:30 a.m. to 9:15 p.m. refining parameters for the plan and mapping out his announcement.

He told his speechwriter, Ben Rhodes, that he wanted to directly rebut the comparison with Vietnam.

On the following Sunday, Nov. 29, he summoned his national security team to the Oval Office.

He had made his decision.

He would send 30,000 troops as quickly as possible, then begin the withdrawal in July 2011. In deference to Mr. Gates’s concerns, the pace and endpoint of the withdrawal would be determined by conditions at the time.

“I’m not asking you to change what you believe,” the president told his advisers. “But if you do not agree with me, say so now.” There was a pause and no one said anything.

“Tell me now,” he repeated.

Mr. Biden asked only if this constituted a presidential order. Mr. Gates and others signaled agreement.

“Fully support, sir,” Admiral Mullen said.

“Ditto,” General Petraeus said.

Mr. Obama then went to the Situation Room to call General McChrystal and Ambassador Eikenberry. The president made it clear that in the next assessment in December 2010 he would not contemplate more troops. "It will only be about the flexibility in how we draw down, not if we draw down," he said.

Two days later, Mr. Obama flew to West Point to give his speech. After three months of agonizing review, he seemed surprisingly serene.

"He was," said one adviser, "totally at peace."

Reporting was contributed by Elisabeth Bumiller, Helene Cooper, Carlotta Gall, Carl Hulse, Mark Landler, Mark Mazzetti, David E. Sanger, Eric Schmitt, Scott Shane and Thom Shanker.

Comment: T

Have read that, check out this flawless example of the smokescreen of bullshit being puked out by assorted reformists who refuse to hold Obama responsible for what he is and what he does.

The source is unimportant: it's possible to find the same theme repeated in a dozen different ways by a dozen others.

The result is the same: to offer backhanded political cover for the Emperor while blaming Imperial war on everybody but him:

"You may not think so, but on Tuesday night from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, in his first prime-time presidential address to the nation, Barack Obama surrendered. It may not have looked like that: there were no surrender documents; he wasn't on the deck of the USS Missouri; he never bowed his head.

"Still, from today on, think of him not as the commander-in-chief, but as the commanded-in-chief."

"Like the policy brigands they were, they ambushed the president, held him up with their threats, brought to bear key media players and Republican honchos, and in the end made off with the loot."

It is hardly surprising they are silent about the necessity for a revolutionary change in American politics that will smash to pieces the Imperial government itself.

The Emperor's pets are too comfortable and too well fed for that, even as their racist idea of defending him is to portray him as a cowardly incompetent forced to do this, that, or whatever by forces that hold him prisoner.

Pathetic deceit by a whole layer of intellectuals who have nothing to offer but passivity and dead ends.

MORE:

Afghanistan Is The War Obama Always Wanted:

“In August 2007 He Made An Impassioned Promise To Wage What He Dubbed The War That Had To Be Won”

“He Spelled Out In Minute Detail His Plan Of Attack”

“It Was Virtually Identical To The Plan He Laid Out In His West Point Speech”

Some hopeful Afghan war critics blame the Pentagon, GOP war hawks, defense contractors, and oil interests, for arm twisting Obama to escalate. This helps to rationalize their bitter disappointment at the president's disastrous escalation decision.

December 1, 2009 By Earl Ofari Hutchinson, Huffington Post

Earl Ofari Hutchinson is a journalist, author and broadcaster. Hutchinson is also the author of nine books about the African American experience. He serves as the President of the National Alliance for Positive Action, and is a contributor to The Huffington Post, Blacknews.com and Blackamerica.web.com.

Only the most hopelessly naïve, star struck or a true believer could have ever thought that President Obama would not dump massive numbers of fresh troops into Afghanistan the first chance he got.

He said or strongly inferred that escalation of the Afghan war was in his cards on two occasions as a presidential candidate, and once before he became a presidential candidate.

He strongly inferred he'd fight in Afghanistan in his anti-Iraq war, Bush bashing speech at Chicago's Federal Plaza on October 2, 2002. The speech burnished his credentials as a war opponent and eventually established him as a political comer on the national scene.

Sporting a peace button on his right suit jacket lapel, Obama went on the attack.

He blasted the war, called it a drain on American resources, and a foreign policy nightmare. He repeatedly called it a dumb war. The "dumb war" characterization implied that there were wars that were worth waging. Earlier in the speech, he made it clear that he was not a reflexive opponent of all wars. The US was simply fighting the wrong war, in the wrong place.

He demanded that Bush fight an all out, no holds barred war against terrorism. Though he did not mention Afghanistan directly, in the speech it didn't take much to connect the terrorism to Afghanistan dots.

Six months after he announced his presidential candidacy, Obama was still among the pack of Democratic presidential candidates.

But in a speech in August 2007 at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars he left no doubt that Afghanistan would be his number one target for attack if he was elected.

He made an impassioned promise to wage what he dubbed the war that had to be won.

He spelled out in minute detail his plan of attack.

It was virtually identical to the plan he laid out in his West Point speech.

He vowed to drastically increase troop strength, ramp up spending on an array of military related programs such as mobile special forces, pacification teams, intelligence operations, and to beef up military aid to Pakistan.

He vowed to take the war to the Taliban in Northwest Pakistan.

Eleven months after his Wilson Center speech, Obama was still only the "presumptive" Democratic presidential candidate.

Yet, in a CBS Face the Nation interview, he promised to "finish the job" in Afghanistan.

These are the exact same words that he used to sell escalation in interviews in the build-up to his West Point speech.

In his pre-presidential speeches, interviews and comments on the war he massaged his war plan.

He promised to set a timetable for eventual withdrawal, get out of Iraq, corral America's European and Middle East allies in a partnership to wipe out the terrorists and their mass destructive weapons, end corruption, hold free elections, bolster Afghan security forces, boost intelligence gathering and monitoring, beef up Afghan security forces, and insure a stable government in Afghanistan.

This again is virtually identical in every detail to his West Point escalation speech.

Two years after he spelled out the plan, the US had shelled out more than \$200 billion dollars and suffered nearly 1,000 dead. Not one of these goals has been met.

By then however, Obama had hardened on the military option, and pledged that he'd redeploy troops as fast as he could from Iraq to Afghanistan.

Though he tossed out the figure of two brigades as the number of troops he planned to send, he hinted this was not fixed, and the number of troops might go much higher.

Obama has never cited Pentagon pressure as his reason for upping the military ante in Afghanistan.

The Pentagon has certainly hammered hard for troop escalation.

But the massive troop increase is clearly Obama's call. A call he made and firmly decided on long before he ever got to the White House.

Some hopeful Afghan war critics blame the Pentagon, GOP war hawks, defense contractors, and oil interests, for arm twisting Obama to escalate.

This helps to rationalize their bitter disappointment at the president's disastrous escalation decision.

The truth though is that Afghanistan is the war that Obama always wanted.

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Forward Military Resistance along, or send us the address if you wish and we'll send it regularly. Whether in Iraq or stuck on a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the wars, inside the armed services and at home. Send email requests to address up top or write to: The Military Resistance, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657. Phone: 888.711.2550

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Resistance Action

Dec 6 By HAMID AHMED (AP) & (Reuters)

BAGHDAD —Insurgents stormed the checkpoint in Abu Ghraib, on the outskirts of the Iraqi capital, at about 7 a.m. Sunday, killing one policeman on duty and three others on a

break, according to two police officials who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to give information to the media.

A roadside bomb killed a government-backed neighbourhood guard and wounded three others when it struck their vehicle in the town of Rashad, near Kirkuk, 250 km (150 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

KIRKUK - A roadside bomb wounded two policemen who were on patrol in their vehicle, police said.

KIRKUK - Insurgents travelling in a speeding car shot dead a soldier on his way to work in the city, police said.

Five Iraqi soldiers were wounded when a roadside bomb went off in the north-central Baghdad district of Bab al- Muadham late on Saturday, they said.

**NEED SOME MORE TRUTH?
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TRAVELING SOLDIER JUST POSTED:
More Letters From Soldiers**

Telling the truth - about the occupations or the criminals running the government in Washington - is the first reason for Traveling Soldier. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance to Imperial wars inside the armed forces.

Our goal is for Traveling Soldier to become the thread that ties working-class people inside the armed services together. We want this newsletter to be a weapon to help you organize resistance within the armed forces.

If you like what you've read, we hope that you'll join with us in building a network of active duty organizers. <http://www.traveling-soldier.org/>

And join with Iraq Veterans Against the War to end the occupations and bring all troops home now! (www.ivaw.org/)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

**U.S. "Service Member" Killed
Somewhere Or Other In Afghanistan**

Dec. 6 ISAF Joint Command - Afghanistan

A service member from the United States was killed when his unit encountered an IED in eastern Afghanistan yesterday.

FUTILE EXERCISE: ALL HOME NOW!



A U.S. Army soldier returns to vehicles after a dismounted patrol near the town of Baraki Barak, Logar province, Afghanistan, Nov. 23, 2009. (AP Photo/Dario Lopez-Mills)



U.S. soldiers during a patrol near the town of Zaqumkhel, Baraki Barak district, Logar province, Afghanistan Nov. 26, 2009. (AP Photo/Dario Lopez-Mills)



U.S. soldiers belonging to the 3-71 Cavalry Squadron and the South Carolina National Guard arrive into the town of Zaqumkhel, Baraki Barak district, Logar province, Afghanistan Nov. 26, 2009. (AP Photo/Dario Lopez-Mills)

TROOP NEWS

**THIS IS HOW OBAMA BRINGS THE TROOPS
HOME:
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW, ALIVE**



A U.S. Soldier wounded in Helmand province at a hospital bed on Thanksgiving at Bagram air base, north of Kabul, November 26, 2009. REUTERS/ Omar Sobhani

The Sec Def Leads By Example



[Thanks to Linda O, who sent this in.]

Dec 06, 2009 Bagnewsnotes.com

Sec Def Gates autographs a military vehicle at the factory just in time for the year nine Afghan ramp up. However, he has no plans to test the quality of the armor personally in Afghanistan.

**Magnificent News From Britain!
British Defence Chief Says
“Declining Public Support For The
Military Mission In Afghanistan Risks
Undermining The Whole Campaign”**

“Waning Support More Dangerous Than Taliban”

[Thanks to Mark Shapiro, Military Resistance, who sent this in.]

04 Dec 2009 TELEGRAPH.CO.UK

Air Chief Marshal Sir Jock Stirrup, the Chief of the Defence Staff, has warned that declining public support for the military mission in Afghanistan risks undermining the whole campaign.

He said the loss of support at home was more damaging to the morale of troops fighting on the frontline than IEDs - improvised explosive devices - or the Taliban.

"Our people in theatre know this. The greatest threat to their morale is not the Taliban or IEDs, but declining will at home."

Air Chief Marshal Stirrup's stark warning comes amid growing concern among ministers at ebbing public support for the campaign in the face of the lengthening casualty list of recent months.

Maine National Guard Soldiers Off To Obama's Imperial Slaughterhouse Monday



Bravo Company of the 3rd Battalion of the 172nd Infantry Regiment at the National Guard armory in Brewer, Maine, Dec. 5, 2009 are set to leave for Afghanistan on Dec. 7. (AP Photo/Michael C. York)

Thieving Filth Slapped Down: Service Members “Have The Right Not To Have Their Vehicles Sold At Auction Without A Court Order”

12.7.09 By Karen Jowers, Army Times [Excerpts]

The Justice Department has scored a victory for service members against a Norfolk, Va., towing company that sold off more than 20 service members' cars without court orders in recent years.

The civil case is not over; it will go to trial next year to determine damages owed to the service members whose vehicles were towed by B.C. Enterprises Inc., doing business as Aristocrat Towing.

But the decision clarifies protections for troops under the Service-members' Civil Relief Act and sends a clear message to industry, according to SCRA experts.

The decision affirms that service members “have the right not to have their vehicles sold at auction without a court order ... even if they did not notify the towing company of their military status in advance,” said Justice Department spokesman Alejandro Miyar.

The government alleged the company towed Navy Lt. Yahya Jaboori's car from his condominium lot in June 2007, put it in company-owned storage, placed a storage lien on the property — which Jaboori couldn't pay, since he was deployed and unaware of what had happened — and then sold the car at auction without a court order.

Jaboori could not be reached for comment, but the original complaint noted that his vehicle had a military base sticker on it.

Military officials said this ruling could have a favorable impact on future mortgage foreclosure cases under the SCRA.

“This will send up an industry-wide flare,” said Army Col. Shawn Shumake, director of legal policy for the undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness.

The key problem in this case, experts said, was the lack of a court order, a protection provided in the SCRA.

The company argued it is not always possible to determine whether a vehicle's owner is on active duty, making strict liability an “impractical standard.” Company attorneys also argued that some service members whose cars were towed knew about the storage lien

and potential sale of their vehicles, and have no legal claim because they took no action to redeem their vehicles.

But Doumar said requiring a service member to take such action would contradict the purpose of the law, "particularly since even a service member with notice of the lien might be unable to effectively defend" his interests.

Troops Invited:

Comments, arguments, articles, and letters from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657 or send email to contact@militaryproject.org: Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Same address to unsubscribe. Phone: 888.711.2550

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS



“At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. Oh had I the ability, and could reach the nation’s ear, I would, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke.

“For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder.

“We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake.”

Frederick Douglass, 1852

**“Hope for change doesn't cut it when you're still losing buddies.”
-- J.D. Englehart, Iraq Veterans Against The War**

**I say that when troops cannot be counted on to follow orders because they see the futility and immorality of them THAT is the real key to ending a war.
-- Al Jaccoma, Veterans For Peace**

**"The mighty are only mighty because we are on our knees. Let us rise!"
-- Camille Desmoulins**

One day while I was in a bunker in Vietnam, a sniper round went over my head. The person who fired that weapon was not a terrorist, a rebel, an extremist, or a so-called insurgent. The Vietnamese individual who tried to kill me was a citizen of Vietnam, who did not want me in his country. This truth escapes millions.

**Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71
December 13, 2004**

POINTLESS DISCRIMINATION: “I Don't Care About A Soldier's Sexual Orientation; I Care That He Or She Can Back Me Up In Combat”

**Army Times
Letters To The Editor
12.7.09**

Bravo to 2nd Lt. Shawn Goodin. This is the first time I have seen the don't ask, don't tell policy and its surrounding prejudices examined in light of Army values, and he is right:

Discrimination against homosexuals in the U.S. military is a violation of those values, and it has always been a violation.

I submit that discrimination against homosexuals is as pointless and ridiculous as the discrimination faced by black soldiers in World War II or the Vietnam era and, if we were all honest, continued discrimination against females.

To claim that homosexuals would destroy unit discipline is a cop-out. Discipline is the result of good training and leadership, not the sexual orientation of the guy next to you in the line. The unit will get over having homosexuals in it, just as it got over serving with blacks and females.

I don't care about a soldier's sexual orientation; I care that he or she can back me up in combat.

Sgt. Alexandra Grey
Fort Sam Houston, Texas

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

Elderly Palestinian Attacked By Israeli Soldiers, Left Bleeding



December 2, 2009 Ma'an News via Uruknet.info

Tulkarem – Ma'an – Israeli soldiers beat a 75-year-old Palestinian on Wednesday as he was trying to access his land adjacent to Israel's electric barrier west of Deir Al-Ghusun, in the northern West Bank the victim told Ma'an.

Ahmad Jaber Ghanem was left bleeding at the scene of the incident, after Israeli soldiers assaulted him and refused medical assistance.

An ambulance associated with the Palestinian Red Crescent was called by locals shortly after the incident and transferred Ghanem to the Thabit Thabit Hospital in Tulkarem, where Ghanem was treated for moderate injuries sustained to the head and face.

Ghanem told Ma'an that Israeli soldiers repeatedly deny him access to his land near Israel's electric barrier, despite having the necessary permit granting him entry.

The electric barrier forms part of Israel's internationally condemned separation wall which snakes through Palestinian villages inside the Green Line.

[To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation by foreign terrorists, go to: www.rafahtoday.org The occupied nation is Palestine. The foreign terrorists call themselves "Israeli."]

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

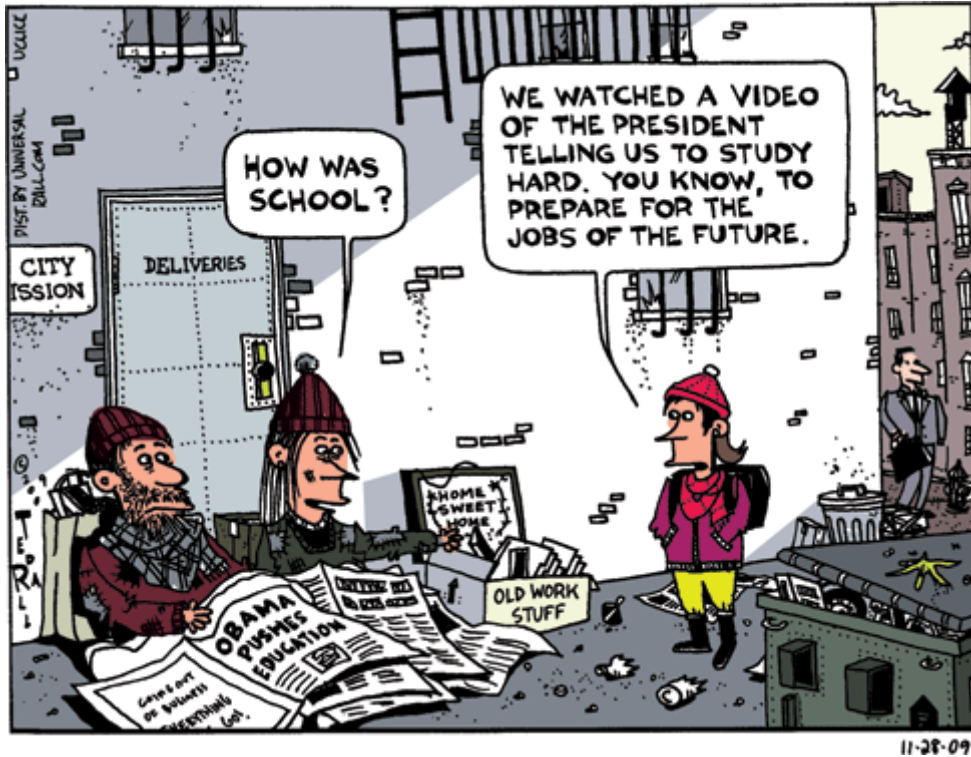


[Thanks to Mark Shapiro, Military Resistance, who sent this in.]

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If you prefer PDF to Word format, email contact@militaryproject.org

CLASS WAR REPORTS



Military Resistance www.militaryproject.org

*This is how Obama brings the troops home,
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW, ALIVE.*



*Military Resistance is a near-daily news bulletin for service members
www.militaryproject.org*

**POLITICIANS CAN'T BE COUNTED ON TO HALT
THE BLOODSHED**

**THE TROOPS HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THE
WARS**

**DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE
MILITARY?**

Forward Military Resistance along, or send us the address if you wish and we'll send it regularly. Whether in Iraq or stuck on a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the wars, inside the armed services and at home. Send email requests to address up top or write to: The Military Resistance, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657. Phone: 888.711.2550

**IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE
END THE OCCUPATIONS**

**OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION
ALL TROOPS HOME NOW!**

Military Resistance Looks Even Better Printed Out

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<http://www.militaryproject.org> .

The following have chosen to post issues; there may be others:

<http://williambowles.info/gispecial/index-2009.html>; news@uruknet.info;

http://www.traprockpeace.org/qi_special/

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