

It's past time for us to get out of Afghanistan

By: Guy W. Farmer – December 15, 2013

President Obama could give the American people a huge Christmas present by bringing our troops home from Afghanistan, where a corrupt and scheming president, Hamid Karzai, wants us to go home. Let's accept his offer and wish him well as his country falls apart and descends into chaos.

When he took office nearly four years ago, Iraq was Obama's "bad" war and Afghanistan was his "good" war, where we were chasing the terrorists who bombed the World Trade Center on 9/11. Since, however, we've achieved many of our objectives, including the death of al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden, and done what we could to help President Karzai rebuild his nation. He has "thanked" us for our costly sacrifices in blood and treasure by telling us to go home. OK, Hamid, see you later.

In a recent column titled "Time to Leave Afghanistan," Doug Bandow, a senior fellow at the libertarian Cato Institute, put it succinctly. "The longest war in American history drags on, with Washington a captive of purposeless inertia," he wrote. "The Obama administration should bring all U.S. forces home from Afghanistan and turn the conflict over to the Afghans." Amen!

Former President George W. Bush decided to invade Afghanistan in 2001, shortly after the Trade Center bombings, to send a strong message to al-Qaida and the Taliban. I supported his decision, but 12 years later the situation in Afghanistan has deteriorated and it is no longer in our best interest to keep American troops on the ground there. More than 2,000 Americans have been killed in Afghanistan, and we've spent billions of taxpayer dollars to prop-up a corrupt and divisive regime.

Although President Obama promised to withdraw American ground forces from Afghanistan during his 2012 re-election campaign, it now appears as if he wants to keep at least 10,000 U.S. troops in that miserable country, according to a bilateral "status of forces" agreement that Karzai refuses to sign. Obviously, that's way more troops than would be necessary to provide security for American diplomats and contractors remaining in Afghanistan.

Roger Simon, chief political columnist for the nonpartisan Politico website, wrote that "the zero option (removing all combat troops from Afghanistan) should be a zero brainer." He said the other, unnamed option should be called the "let's break our promise to the American people and keep 10,000 to 16,000 troops in Afghanistan until at least 2024 at a cost of \$80 billion or so" option. Simon said Obama should keep his campaign promise to remove all American combat troops from that country by the end of next year.

My question is whether this will be yet another campaign promise that our “hope and change” president breaks, similar to his Obamacare pledge: “If you like your health insurance, you can keep it. Period.” Remember that whopper? No wonder Obama’s popularity ratings are at an all-time low with less than half of the American people trusting him.

President Obama should keep his original promise to remove all U.S. combat troops from Afghanistan by the end of next year. If he doesn’t, what started as a good war could come to a very bad end.