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## Let Them Eat Patty Cake

Posted By [Jeff Huber](#) On November 27, 2009 @ 11:00 pm In [Uncategorized](#) | [4 Comments](#)

Are we going to escalate the war in Afghanistan for the sake of saving face? Defense Secretary [Robert Gates](#) says we have to stay the course in Afghanistan to deny al-Qaeda a "propaganda win."

A propaganda win, as best I can tell, is a condition where someone can say "nyah, nyah" to us and we can't say "nyah, nyah" back. Except that wouldn't be the case if we left Afghanistan. They could say they ran us off. We could say *so what, we live in the richest country in the world and you live in Afghanistan.*

Gates has proven himself to be a bureaucratic survivalist who knows how to work the system but very little else. He calls Afghanistan the "modern epicenter of jihad." A place "where the Mujahedeen defeated the other superpower," and in his estimation of the Taliban's thinking, "they now have the opportunity to defeat a second superpower."

One senses that Gates doesn't exactly understand the difference between al-Qaeda, which by some estimates is down to fewer than a dozen core dudes, and the Taliban, who just want us to quit occupying their country, and the mujahedeen, whom we created to help defeat the Soviets, and the variety pack of other militant outfits that roam around in that part of the globe.

Gates has a narrow perspective on the concept of "defeat." The Taliban — or whoever he perceives to be the "enemy" — can't defeat us if we leave. They can only defeat us if we stay. Despite what you've heard for years, they can't follow us home. The oceans are too big to swim or jump across.

As the Cato Institute's [Justin Logan](#) says, "There will always be somebody to declare victory for al-Qaeda, whether we leave Afghanistan next year or 20 years from now. Staying until you feel comfortable no one can claim a moral victory as we depart is a recipe for staying forever."

Of course, a recipe for staying in Afghanistan forever is just what America's [Long War](#) mafia is looking for, and Gates is in their camp.

Make no mistake, fellow citizens, the Pentagon we have now is not interested in defending America because the head dudes there know there's nothing they can defend us from. Our far-flung forays overseas are disasters. Our missile defense systems don't work. Our \$2 billion strategic stealth bombers can be shot down by [moisture](#). No, the brass hats just want a never-ending war against opponents they can never defeat but will never lose to, per se, so they can continue to justify soaking up half or more of our [national budget](#).

That's the corner Gates and his four-stars and their supporters in Congress and the media are trying to box Obama and the rest of us into: an eternal state of Orwellian conflict. We have to keep fighting stupid wars against vastly inferior opponents who we can't defeat or we'll look like wimps. Never mind that we look stupid in doing so; it's much better to be a stupid sole superpower than a wimpy sole superpower.

Our NATO pals are tired of the Afghanistan game, which is rich because [David Kilcullen](#), a key adviser to David Petraeus and Stanley McChrystal, says the major justification for staying the course in that country is to give NATO a reason to exist, something it hasn't had for 20 years. Obama's national security team wants NATO to pony up 10,000 more troops to Afghanistan. NATO is saying [no](#).

The war is so unpopular in Germany and France that those two countries can barely maintain the troop levels they're contributing now. The Netherlands and Canada are talking tall about pulling out altogether.

The premise of McChrystal's proposed counterinsurgency strategy is fundamentally flawed. Our counterinsurgency doctrine calls for good governance from a legitimate government of the host nation. Afghan President Hamid Karzai just stole two elections. He's knee deep in relatives and cronies who are warlords and drug lords who we're paying off to provide us with security, and he's an old pal of the Taliban, who are raking off a piece of the foreign aid we send to Karzai.

If we send more troops, and we bribe NATO into sending more troops, we'll be spending more money

(about a million USD per troop per year) that we can't really afford (our national debt is at \$12 trillion) so they can fight an enemy that we'll wind up bribing not to fight us, just like we've bribed our enemies in Iraq.

When will it occur to our foreign policy wonks just how counterproductive our foreign policy practices are? The only things our military interventions overseas accomplish are to provide our enemies with targets and give them superb reasons to hate us.

The neocon cabal warns us of all the horrible things that will happen if we withdraw our troops from the Middle East and Central Asia. The worst of their campfire ghost stories describes how a regional war will break out if we don't stay around. Heh. These people can't do anything to each other worse than what we're doing to them. Let a regional war break out. Let them fight among themselves. We don't need to be in the middle of it.

Sages from the ancient stoics to our parents have admonished us time and again not to worry about what other people think of us. To continue to pour blood and treasure into AfPak is a mindless shame, and it's a shame we're going to keep doing it. Let them have their propaganda victory. It's high time we all learned that propaganda is nothing more than cleverly blown hot air.

Let the Afghans and Pakistanis play patty cake among themselves if they care to. Bring our troops home.

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