

Obama Counterterrorism Strategy Lies and Fails

Posted By [John Glaser](#) On July 5, 2011 @ 6:17 am In [News](#) | [3 Comments](#)

When the Obama administration last week released their [new National Strategy for Counterterrorism](#) [1] I naively expected some honest iteration of policy of the kind that slip through in declassified NSC reports. That wasn't the case. Rather, the report was similar to a vague and lofty Obama speech that avoided all actual explanation of US policy, especially towards the Middle East and Central Asia.

But then I realized that the true story coming out of that report was what it didn't say; what was in between the lines. [Tom Parker at Amnesty](#) [2]:

Having read all the fine words in the new strategy document, and digested Brennan's thoughtful speech, you compare the administration's rhetoric with the actual reality of its actions on the ground and you would be hard pressed to find a single core American value that the Obama administration hasn't violated in the security arena.

This is a government that has hidden behind the state secrets privilege to avoid to compensating exonerated Canadian national Maher Arar and others abused and broken in illegal black sites and foreign jails; That has institutionalized indefinite detention and welched on its promise to close Guantanamo; That has stepped up targeted killing operations in Pakistan, Somalia and Yemen, revitalized Military Commissions and failed to fulfill its promise to put KSM and other alleged 9/11 co-conspirators on trial in federal court in New York.

In the past week alone the administration's new nominee for Director of Central Intelligence, [General David Petraeus, suggested during his confirmation hearing](#) [3] before the Senate that there might be a role for torture if the US was confronted with that old canard the ticking bomb scenario. And Special Prosecutor John Durham took the opportunity presented by the holiday weekend to announce discretely that he had decided that only [2 of the 101 cases of alleged CIA detainee abuse](#) [4] referred for his consideration merited any further investigation.

Not only is the strategy filled with broken promises and papered-over iterations of actual policy, but its missing a very large piece of the puzzle. It's similar to a question I asked recently at a Cato Institute forum on Obama's military strategy in Afghanistan (watch it [here](#) [5], around 72:20). Essentially, the terrorism problem facing the United States is primarily a reaction to U.S. imperialism. Yet, every policy or strategy we see suggested or implemented involves getting more entrenched militarily in the Arab/Muslim world. In this sense, the United States government is working overtime to bolster the chief threat to the safety of ordinary Americans (sometimes even [directly arming the enemy](#) [6]). So, when it's not lying through its teeth, the Obama National Strategy for Counterterrorism entirely misses the point which is that unwelcome intervention fuels the fire they're trying to extinguish.

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URLs in this post:

[1] new National Strategy for Counterterrorism: http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/counterterrorism_strategy.pdf

[2] Tom Parker at Amnesty: <http://blog.amnestyusa.org/waronterror/what-the-fourth-of-july-is-all-about/>

[3] General David Petraeus, suggested during his confirmation hearing: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/national-security/cia-nominee-petraeus-urges-lawmakers-to-set-standards-for-ticking-time-bomb-interrogation/2011/06>

/23/AG4CarhH_story.html

[4] 2 of the 101 cases of alleged CIA detainee abuse: <http://www.navytimes.com/news/2011/06/ap-justice-to-probe-death-of-cia-detainees-063011/>

[5] here: <http://www.cato.org/multimedia/events/turning-page-afghanistan>

[6] directly arming the enemy: <http://www.eubusiness.com/news-eu/libya-conflict-us.b0s/>

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