

Critics Attack Absurd Obama Surge Speech

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Written by Alex Newman

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President Barack Obama drew fire from across the political spectrum — even from die-hard supporters — after he **announced** another “surge” on Tuesday. With a straight face, Obama told the nation and his audience at West Point military academy that sending 30,000 more United States troops to fight in the undeclared Afghanistan conflict was somehow in America’s “vital national interest.”

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Of course, that is nonsense. Obama himself knows that. And the people know too, judging by the **polls**. But much of the rest of the president’s speech was also a carefully concocted sham designed to dupe the public. In fact, upon examination, some of his comments and reasoning almost seem ridiculous. But nevertheless, the Commander-in-Chief has decided to send more

American soldiers and an unknown number of **“contractors”** to their deaths in central Asia’s infamous “graveyard of empires.”

He mentioned al-Qaeda more than 20 times throughout the speech, when it is now widely accepted that there are less than 100 men in all of Afghanistan who could be considered members. *The Washington Post* reported the **news** last month. Obama has obviously been briefed, and even his national security adviser Jim Jones admitted to CNN in October that the “maximum estimate” was “fewer than a hundred.” He also noted that the fighters had no ability to attack America or its allies.

ABC News did the calculations after Tuesday’s speech, concluding that “for every one al Qaeda fighter, the U.S. will commit 1,000 troops and \$300 million a year.” That doesn’t even count troops and resources from other countries. Based on these figures, an uninformed observer might very well conclude that these ragged and elusive men living in caves and clutching AK-47s were thought to have super-human abilities.

“I do not make this decision lightly,” Obama claimed during his speech. “I make this decision because I am convinced that our security is at stake in Afghanistan and Pakistan. This is the epicenter of the violent extremism practiced by al Qaeda.” Who could forget Pakistan? The president alluded several times to the nation, where the Central Intelligence Agency has been dropping bombs from unmanned drones on alleged militants for years. Presumably the bombings will **continue**.

Intelligence estimates put the number of supposed al-Qaeda in the region at around 300, though Pakistanis are becoming increasingly fed up with U.S. operations in the country (their parliament has already told the U.S. to cut it out). But since there is essentially no more “al Qaeda” in the Afghanistan-Pakistan region, President Obama announced that he would pursue them “elsewhere” as well, from Somalia to Yemen. In other words, endless war, anywhere.

“As your Commander-in-Chief, I owe you a mission that is clearly defined, and worthy of your service,” Obama acknowledged Tuesday. Of course, he never really defined the mission at all, let alone clearly. And aside from vague platitudes and various lies, he never explained why it was worthy of the sacrifice either.

Even people who used to believe in the mission, individuals who risked their lives for it, have since abandoned the Afghanistan debacle. "I have lost understanding of and confidence in the strategic purposes of the United States' presence in Afghanistan," wrote Matthew Hoh, the former Senior Civilian Representative for the U.S. government in Zabul province, in his resignation letter. "I have doubts and reservations about our current strategy and planned future strategy, but my resignation is based not upon how we are pursuing this war, but why and to what end."

Obama's loyal supporters have also been infuriated by his attitude towards the war, and especially by this latest announcement. MoveOn.org, traditionally one of the presidents staunchest allies, sent out a letter to supporters urging them to petition Congress to end the war, ASAP. Internal polls revealed that most of their left-wing, Obama-supporting members were opposed to this latest surge.

Even liberal MSNBC host Rachel Maddow **blasted** the announcement, comparing Obama's strategy to the infamous "Bush Doctrine" of pre-emptive warfare. Using a graph, Maddow charted American troop levels in Afghanistan since the beginning of the conflict, showing clearly that the Nobel peace prize-winning Commander-in-Chief was indeed the new "war president." Upon taking office, about 30,000 U.S. troops occupied Afghanistan. After Obama's newest "surge," that number will be close to 100,000.

Obama's strategy is also being condemned by warmongering Republicans as well, like Senator John McCain, who **criticized** the alleged time table for beginning a withdrawal. "Dates for withdrawal are dictated by conditions," said McCain. "The way that you win wars is to break the enemy's will, not to announce dates that you are leaving." He actually has a point: the announcement of a deadline seems rather stupid considering the supposed aims of the war, since now rebels know that they just need to hold out for one day longer than the foreign soldiers remain in their country.

Libertarians and constitutionalists also criticized the plan, obviously. Cato's director of foreign policy studies Christopher Preble **called** Obama's speech "full of internal contradictions." On Fox Business, Ron Paul **called** it "a bit misleading," noting that "Obama is actually preparing us for perpetual war." He pointed out that there is really no way America can continue paying for this, adding that it would "bring us down" if America does not stop. His proposal: coming home. "We're following this precept of perpetual war for perpetual peace, and to me it's perpetual bankruptcy," Paul said. "How many more people have to die for us to save face?"

A Taliban spokesman **cited** by the media, however, did not complain about Obama's "surge," he merely pointed out the obvious: "The extra 30,000 troops that will come to Afghanistan will provoke stronger resistance and fighting." As Matthew Hoh pointed out, the people of Afghanistan see themselves as battling a foreign occupier, so the more occupiers that arrive, the more death and destruction will ensue.

Obama is following with remarkable **similarity** the failed strategy pursued by the Soviet Union — surges and all. The irony of him receiving the now-discredited peace prize days after announcing the war escalation would be shocking if it were not for the incredible amounts of double speak Americans are subjected to every day. U.S. troops should come home immediately, and they should never again be forced to risk their lives anywhere without a constitutional Congressional declaration of war. And Obama voters should work especially hard at the next election to oust the man who lied to the nation, over and over and over again, along with all of his congressional enablers.

Alex Newman is an American freelance writer and the president of **Liberty Sentinel Media, Inc.**, a small media consulting firm. He is currently living in Sweden and has spent most of his life in Latin America, Europe and Africa. He has a degree in foreign languages and speaks Spanish, French, Portuguese, German, Italian and a little Swedish and Afrikaans. In addition, he earned a degree in journalism from the University of Florida, with emphasis on economics and international relations.

Our valuable member **Alex Newman** has been with us since Wednesday, 19 August 2009.

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