

I'm collecting alternatives to the Obama plan for Afghanistan.

Firstly, am I the only one who thinks [Jeffrey Feldman's reading of Senator Russ Feingold's recommendations on Afghanistan](#), only without the troop increase and the time span? I mean, can you see where Obama is trying to placate Feingold and the 10-year hardcore COIN crowd?

With [all respect to Keith Olbermann](#), though, Cato Institute's Christopher Preble has thrown down [the second "absurd on its face"](#) I can recall, in what might just become his signature catchphrase.

But we shouldn't just commit still more troops. Obama should have recognized that the goals he set forth in March went too far. A better strategic review would have revisited our core objectives and assumptions. It would have focused on a narrower set of achievable objectives that are directly connected to vital U.S. security interests — chiefly, disrupting al Qaeda's ability to do harm — and that would have left the rebuilding of Afghanistan to Afghans, not Americans. President Obama's national security team seems not to have even considered this course. Instead, the administration focused on repackaging the same grandiose strategy.

Defense Secretary Gates fixed on the dilemma several weeks ago when he pondered aloud: "How do we signal resolve and at the same time signal to the Afghans and the American people that this is not open-ended?"

It turns out you can't. **The president's decision to deepen our commitment to Afghanistan, while simultaneously promising an exit, is ultimately absurd on its face.**

So, yes, it's not just about the numbers. And, the speech really wasn't even a tub-thumper, or a work of literature.