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September 25, 2009

David Brooks - Still clueless after all these years

Commentary By Ron Beasley

David Brooks is once again [pounding the drums of war from the comfort of his arm chair](#).

There is nothing in Brook's column worth quoting but there are plenty of take downs from both the right and the left that are.

First we have we have Justin Logan from CATO.

[David Brooks Is Confused about Counterinsurgency](#)

First, Brooks makes clear that he is not interested in merely managing the problem of terrorism, but rather in "prevailing" in the war in Afghanistan. He argues that "only the full counterinsurgency doctrine offers a chance of success," but then proceeds to absurdly define population-centric counterinsurgency doctrine as one in which "small groups of American men and women are outside the wire in dangerous places in remote valleys, providing security, gathering intelligence, helping to establish courts and building schools and roads."

Either Brooks is being cute here or demonstrating his ignorance. With one word — "small" — Brooks has utterly mischaracterized what counterinsurgency is all about.

Confused is what David Brooks is all about and as [Glenn Greenwald points out](#) that he was just as confused when he was pushing the war in Iraq from his arm chair at The Weekly Standard.

Needless to say, Brooks was writing all the same things in late 2002 and early 2003 about Iraq -- though, back then, he did so from the pages of Rupert Murdoch and Bill Kristol's The Weekly Standard. When I went back to read some of that this morning, I was -- as always -- struck by how extreme and noxious it all was: the snide, hubristic superiority combined with absolute wrongness about everything. What people like David Brooks were saying back then was so severe -- so severely wrong, pompous, blind, warmongering and, as it turns out, destructive -- that no matter how many times one reviews the record of the leading opinion-makers of that era, one will never be inured to how poisonous they are.

Greenwald then gives some examples of Brooks' "wisdom" before the invasion of Iraq. That worked out really well didn't it?

But there is some good news - the left may finally be waking up.

[MoveOn To Call On Obama To Develop Exit Strategy For Afghanistan](#)

In its first direct pressure on [President Obama](#) over a major war-and-peace issue, MoveOn will call on the president today to develop an exit strategy for Afghanistan, a MoveOn official confirms to me.

MoveOn will blast an email to its massive list later today calling for members to write to the White House and demand "a clear exit strategy," the official confirms.

The move is significant, because the major liberal groups had, until now,

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largely refrained from pressuring Obama on Afghanistan, partly to give the new president breathing room to tackle major domestic challenges, partly to preserve good relations with the new administration, and partly because public opinion wasn't exercised about the war.

But a host of new factors — the sudden media focus on Afghanistan, the public's swing against the war, the administration's internal debate over a troop increase, and pressure from conservatives for an escalation — means MoveOn must now engage the issue, even if it means exerting direct pressure on the President.

"U.S. policy in Afghanistan has reached a pivotal moment," MoveOn's email will say. "President Obama is poised to make a critical decision about the Afghanistan war in the next few weeks. And there's a big debate happening right now about what to do."

"Pro-war advocates both inside and outside the administration — including John McCain and Joe Lieberman — are calling for a big escalation," the email will continue. "Can you write to the White House and tell them we need a clear exit strategy—not tens of thousands more US troops stuck in a quagmire?"

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Pakistan also has the world's fifth largest army, and it just recently kicked the crap out of the Taliban, rendering it militarily impotent in Pakistan.

Posted by: [Bill H](#) | [September 26, 2009 at 01:33 AM](#)

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