

The BLACK C o M M e n t a t o r

An independent weekly internet magazine
dedicated to the movement for economic justice,
social justice and peace - Providing commentary,
analysis and investigations on issues affecting
African Americans and the African world.

www.BlackCommentator.com

[Contents of Issue](#)

[Click here](#)

October 22, 2009 - Issue 347

[Home](#)

Afghanistan African American Leadership By Dr. Ron Walters, PhD BlackCommentator.com Editorial Board

Click on the back button of your browser to return to non printer friendly page of this article

[Click here](#) to get helpful hints for viewing and printing this printer friendly plain text page

I am opposed to the war in Afghanistan because it will continue to cost the United States – and the least well-off communities within the country – people and material resources that we cannot afford. I believe Vice President Joe Biden has a point that President Barack Obama should not send tens of thousands more American troops into that sink hole to die. Obama has the right angle on this, in that he wants to design the right strategy for our presence in Afghanistan, then commit the resources to the strategy: I don't think it should be done any other way. One of the big problems with George Bush was that generals ran the war, not the civilian authority because the key civilian, Vice President Chaney gave them free reign to do whatever they wanted. This is a civilian responsibility according to the Constitution and the military should follow the policy of the Commander-in-Chief, President Barack Hussein Obama.

Biden's problem and mine is that Obama is likely to give too much credence to the generals and to the Republicans who say they will support him in sending more troops. In crafting a new strategy, I worry that it is one that will look very much like that in Iraq where fought a wide-spread counter-insurgency war supported by an expensive nation-building strategy. Obama suggested that this is a "war of necessity" meaning that the intension is to find and met out justice to Osama bin Laden and break the back of Al Queda in return for 9/11. The problem I and others have is whether this can be

done indirectly by fighting the Taliban and building up Afghanistan's military and socio-economic capability. That is a long and costly route and the Republicans who say they support the long-term military effort are not asking what it cost; compare this to their approach to health care and other social programs where cost is the main consideration.

Over 3,000 people were killed on 9/11 at the World Trade Center twin towers in New York City; but over 3,000 have died in the Iraq war and casualties are moving up now in Afghanistan. How many more should die; how many more trillions should be spent in the project of retaliatory violence? The polls show that the American people are not ready for another long war, especially when they are losing their houses, jobs, and opportunities for education and financial upward mobility. So, I think that we should use much less costlier assets to track Osama bin Laden to his lair over time using intelligence, gained from electronic screening, infiltration of the Taliban and Al Queda, smaller and focused military operations, all of which suggests that at some point they will make a fatal mistake and we will be there to exact justice.

I fear that this is another instance where President Obama wants to appear bi-partisan and stoke the favor of the military-industrial complex that benefits from such wars, just as Chaney and his cronies extracted untold financial benefits from the Iraq war. But Obama is setting up historic another scenario where many of his social objectives will be put under unrelenting financial pressure by the military project he is pursuing in the Middle East. What the country needs at this moment in history is a serious counter-insurgency strategy aimed at the discrete objective of neutralizing Osama bin Laden and keeping Al Queda off balance, not propping up an entire country to do that job.

Don't get me wrong, patriotism is a legitimate objective in this case, but that too must be subject to realistic limits and this country is in such a crisis that fixing it will cost a lot of money. George Bush hid the cost of these wars by putting them off-budget and paid for them by not investing in things the country needed. Now that Obama has pledged to affect transparency by putting the cost of the wars on budget, he will get Congressional majorities for war spending by Democrats who are nervous about seeming to be unpatriotic and Republicans who are gung-ho warriors. So, in the additional pressure Republicans and Blue-dog Democrats will put on Obama to balance the budget, whose interests will suffer in the competition for resources? I know and so do you.

There should be a serious anti-war movement started now by the very folks, college aged youths, who love Obama and who show up by the thousands for his events. Yes, they should love and support him, but they should also make it clear that they don't want their future jeopardized by a long-term policy in the Middle East that harnesses domestic resources to a never-ending military operation that could be fought with a smart strategy and die a natural death.

BlackCommentator.com Editorial Board member Dr. Ron Walters is the Distinguished Leadership Scholar, Director of the African American Leadership Center and Professor of Government and Politics at the University of Maryland College Park. His latest book is: [The Price of Racial Reconciliation \(The Politics of Race and Ethnicity\)](#) (University of Michigan Press). Click [here](#) to contact Dr. Walters.



Let your voice be heard
The call is free


Powered By
Google voice 


[Click Here](#)

Contents of Issue

[Click here](#)

[Home](#)

Click Here To
CONTRIBUTE TO  NOW

Click Here To
CONTACT 

Your comments are always welcome.

e-Mail re-print notice

If you send us an e-Mail message we may publish all or part of it, unless you tell us it is not for publication. You may also request that we withhold your name.

Thank you very much for your readership.

Website Design and Hosting provided by



Copyright © 2002-2009
www.BlackCommentator.com
All Rights Reserved