

افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نیاشد تن من مباد
بدین بوم ویر زنده یک تن مباد
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم
از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

European Languages

زبان های اروپایی

<http://www.alternet.org/blogs>

Spell "Quagmire" A-F-G-H-A-N-I-S-T-A-N

By Joshua Holland

October 19, 2009

There are few pundits quite as dishonest as the *WaPo*'s Jackson Diehl, so who knows if his concern-trolling on behalf of our European allies is even true:

As the president and his National Security Council privately debate whether to send tens of thousands of troops to war, America's European allies watch with a mixture of anxiety and anguish. They know that if the deployment goes forward, they will be asked to make their own difficult and politically costly contributions of soldiers or other personnel. But they are, if anything, even more worried that the American president will choose a feckless strategy for what they consider a critical mission. And they are frustrated that they must watch and wait -- and wait and wait -- for the president to make up his mind.

To back his contention, he cites Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt and NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, then fleshes it out with the words of a "senior commander in one European army," "the words of one ambassador" and "another ambassador." So there are two Europeans whose quotes are perfectly inline with Diehl's personal preference for more military force in Afghanistan. And apparently, they basically represent a continental consensus:

European governments bought in to Obama's ambitious plan to pacify Afghanistan when he presented it in March. Unlike the U.S. president, they mostly haven't had second thoughts. By and large they agree with the recommendations developed by the commander Obama appointed, Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal, who says that unless the momentum of the Taliban is broken in the next year, the war may be lost.

Even if we buy his story, it's worth noting that Diehl's never met a foreign war he didn't like and was naturally far less sympathetic to European sensibilities when most of those in the Old Country vehemently opposed the invasion of Iraq.

Now he's become so preoccupied with the idea that the Yur-peans may think us wobbly -- and perhaps less-than-manly -- if the Obama administration chooses not to escalate the conflict that he doesn't bother to argue why we should.

He doesn't articulate what success in Afghanistan might look like, and he takes it as a given that more troops would finally give NATO forces the upper hand.

But that is anything *but* a sure thing ...

Here are a few recent stories to consider when weighing the prospects of achieving "victory" in Afghanistan.

First, there is no clear definition of success. Is it the establishment of a functional democracy? In light of the very serious allegations of widespread vote-rigging in the recent elections, I doubt even the most deluded neocons still harbor the illusion that it's possible to impose democracy on a country like Afghanistan from without.

Maybe just a stable government? The problem is a common one, a central government seen as an agent of foreign powers and therefore utterly lacking in legitimacy. Here's Gareth Porter [writing for IPS](#):

A veteran Army officer who has served in both the Afghanistan and Iraq wars warns in an analysis now circulating in Washington that the counterinsurgency strategy urged by Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal is likely to strengthen the Afghan insurgency, and calls for withdrawal of the bulk of U.S. combat forces from the country over 18 months.

In a 63-page paper representing his personal views, but reflecting conversations with other officers who have served in Afghanistan, Lt. Col. Daniel L. Davis argues that it is already too late for U.S. forces to defeat the insurgency.

"Many experts in and from Afghanistan warn that our presence over the past eight years has already hardened a meaningful percentage of the population into viewing the United States as an army of occupation which should be opposed and resisted," writes Davis.

Providing the additional 40,000 troops that Gen. McChrystal has reportedly requested "is almost certain to further exacerbate" that problem, he warns.

And even if one rejects that view, there is no reason to take it for granted, as Diehl does, that the addition of 40,000 troops would have an impact on the course of the conflict. There is no small amount of self-deception in the idea that the World's Only Super-Power ® has the ability to influence events abroad that's limited only by its citizens' tolerance for a given conflict. That's evident from the *WaPo*'s own reporting; buried way down i close to the last

paragraph of an analysis of the debate over escalating in Afghanistan is this insight, which seems pretty valuable:

Still others believe that the United States and its allies have deceived themselves into thinking the Taliban and its allies -- the Haqqani and Hezb-e Islami groups -- can be broken into pieces by either carrots or sticks. "It's a nationally organized movement," said Gilles Dorronsoro of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. "The Taliban are not this kind of loosely organized group, doing whatever they want at the local level. It's wishful thinking. Not true. Dead wrong."

"Take the Taliban seriously," Dorronsoro advised. "Stop thinking that they are this kind of losers. These guys are really, really good. . . . They know why they are fighting."