

The Press & Dakotan

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OPINION

The US And A 'Flypaper' War

Last week's announcement that the U.S. would not be withdrawing the remainder of its troops from Afghanistan by the end of next year, as President Barack Obama had long envisioned and the public had long hoped, may well mean that this nation will have a presence in Afghanistan for many years to come.

Unfortunately, it may be time to change our view of the mission in Afghanistan.

Obama's decision came about as the Taliban have in recent months made significant inroads against Afghan forces — particularly the brief fall of the strategic provincial capital of Kunduz, which has since been retaken. These gains have imperiled the fragile governmental structure that has been established in the country since the war started there a little more than a month after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

The decision also promises to extend what is now the longest war in our nation's history. In 14 years, it has seen 2,300 American dead and more than 20,000 wounded, and has cost approximately \$110 billion.

Obama announced that, instead of drawing down to about 1,000 troops serving as advisors, the U.S. would keep nearly 10,000 troops in place this year and reduce the number down to 5,500 next year. Whatever comes after that will be up to the next person to occupy the White House.

This decision was not made lightly by a president who yearned to make good on his promise to end this war before he left office. Most military analysts praise the decision to change direction in light of the new facts on the ground. But those facts belie the portrait both the White House and the Pentagon have labored to portray about Afghanistan, indicating Obama and company wanted the narrative to fit their goals and not the realities. On Thursday, that was forced to change.

One cannot escape the lessons that could be drawn from history, when the former Soviet Union went into Afghanistan and got bogged down in a draining 10-year war, which has often been referred to as "Russia's Vietnam."

What we are left with is the real prospect of the U.S. maintaining troops in this region for the foreseeable future.

This is looking like a different outcome than Iraq, where we effectively pulled out five years ago. One big difference — and this cannot be overstated — is that Afghans generally support keeping a U.S. presence in place to stabilize the nation. That attitude has merit, coming as it does during a hard year in which Afghan forces have shown themselves to not be up to the task of defending their nation effectively. The civilian death toll has climbed, and fears the nation will slip back into chaos are growing.

This doesn't mean the U.S. needs to send in more troops and take over combat operations. An op-ed piece in the *Washington Post* last Friday said more advisors are needed as well as reliable air support to help Afghan commanders strike back at the Taliban.

Was Obama naive to believe he could withdraw U.S. troops before his second term ended? Perhaps.

Were we naive to hope that such a withdrawal could take place? Probably.

Do we have any hope of seeing the U.S. ever leave Afghanistan and effectively close this long chapter of our history? The best guess is, probably not anytime soon.

And that is a sobering consequence of our longest war — it keeps getting longer, and doing anything else might turn it into an utter disaster and a futile mission.

This, it seems, is a flypaper war, and the U.S. is stuck for the time being.

kmh

IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press

Today is Tuesday, October 20, the 293rd day of 2015. There are 72 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On October 20, 1965, in one of the more colorful moments of his presidency, Lyndon B. Johnson, recovering from gall bladder surgery at Bethesda Naval Medical Center, pulled up his shirt and jacket to show off his abdominal scar to reporters and photographers. (Although critics were appalled by the display, Johnson later said he was trying to dispel rumors that he'd actually been operated on for cancer.)

On this date: In 1714, the coronation of Britain's King George I took place in Westminster Abbey.

In 1803, the U.S. Senate ratified the Louisiana Purchase.

In 1914, "Stay Down Here Where You Belong," an antiwar song by Irving Berlin, was published by Waterson, Berlin & Snyder Co. in New York.

In 1936, Helen Keller's teacher, Anne Sullivan Macy, died in Forest Hills, New York, at age 70.

In 1944, during World War II, Gen. Douglas MacArthur stepped ashore at Leyte in the Philippines, 2 1/2 years after saying, "I shall return." A series of gas storage tank explosions and fires in Cleveland killed 130 people.

In 1947, the House Un-American Activities Committee opened hearings into alleged Communist influence and infiltration in the U.S. motion picture industry.

In 1964, the 31st president of the United States, Herbert C. Hoover, died in New York at age 90.

In 1968, former first lady Jacqueline Kennedy married Greek shipping magnate Aristotle Onassis.

In 1973, in the so-called "Saturday Night Massacre," special Watergate prosecutor Archibald Cox was dismissed and Attorney General Elliot L. Richardson and Deputy Attorney General William B. Ruckelshaus resigned.

In 1981, a bungled armored truck robbery carried out by members of radical groups in Nanuet, New York, left a guard and two police officers dead.

In 1990, three members of the rap group 2 Live Crew were acquitted by a jury in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, of violating obscenity laws with an adults-only concert in nearby Hollywood the previous June.

In 2011, Moammar Gadhafi, 69, Libya's dictator for 42 years, was killed as revolutionary fighters overwhelmed his hometown of Sirte and captured the last major bastion of resistance two months after his regime fell.

Ten years ago: U.S. Rep. Tom DeLay turned himself in at the sheriff's office in Travis County, Texas, where he was fingerprinted, photographed and released on \$10,000 bail on conspiracy and money-laundering charges. (DeLay was convicted in 2010, but had his convictions

overturned on appeal.) A defense lawyer in Saddam Hussein's mass murder trial was abducted from his office and found murdered hours later. Jazz pianist and vocalist Shirley Horn died in Washington, D.C. at age 71.

Five years ago: Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and visiting Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez hailed what they called their strong strategic relationship, saying they were united in efforts to establish a "new world order" that would eliminate Western dominance over global affairs. NPR fired news analyst Juan Williams after he talked about feeling nervous on airline flights with people in Muslim attire during an interview on Fox News Channel. Bob Guccione, 79, founder of Penthouse magazine, died in Plano, Texas.

One year ago: The White House said former Nazis should not have been collecting Social Security benefits as they aged overseas as it responded to an Associated Press investigation that revealed millions of dollars had been paid to war-crimes suspects and former SS guards forced out of the U.S. Police investigating the slayings of seven northwestern Indiana women said they believed it was the work of a serial killer. (Suspect Darren Vann has been charged with two deaths; police said he has confessed to all seven slayings.) New York's Metropolitan Opera opened "The Death of Klinghoffer" amid protests that the work glorified Palestinian terrorists. Fashion designer Oscar de la Renta, 82, died in Kent, Connecticut. Rene Burri, 81, a Swiss photographer best known for his black-and-white portraits of Communist revolutionary Ernesto "Che" Guevara and painter Pablo Picasso, died in Zurich.

Today's Birthdays: Actor William Christopher is 83. Japan's Empress Michiko is 81. Rockabilly singer Wanda Jackson is 78. Former actress Rev. Mother Dolores Hart is 77. Singer Tom Petty is 65. Actor William "Rusty" Russ is 65. Actress Melanie Mayron is 63. Actor Bill Nunn is 63. Retired MLB All-Star Keith Hernandez is 62. Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse, D-R.I., is 60. Movie director Danny Boyle is 59. Former Labor Secretary Hilda Solis is 58. Actor Viggo Mortensen is 57. Rock musician Jim Sonefeld (Hootie & The Blowfish) is 51. Rock musician David Ryan is 51. Rock musician Doug Eldridge (Oleander) is 48. Political commentator and blogger Michelle Malkin is 45. Actor Kenneth Choi is 44. Rapper Snoop Lion (formerly Snoop Dogg) is 44. Singer Dannii Minogue is 44. Singer Jimi Westbrock (country group Little Big Town) is 44. Country musician Jeff Loberg is 39. Actor Sam Witwer is 38. Actor John Krasinski is 36. Rock musician Daniel Tichenor (Cage the Elephant) is 36. Actress Katie Featherston is 33. Actress Jennifer Nicole Freeman is 30.

Thought for Today: "Successful people keep moving. They make mistakes, but they don't quit." Conrad Hilton, American hotelier (1887-1979).

FROM THE BIBLE

As for ... the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience. Luke 8:15. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis.



The Rez of the Story

What Is Trump's Idea Of 'Greatness'?

BY VINCE TWO EAGLES

Hau Mitakuepi (Greetings My Relatives),

The French writer, economist and publisher Pierre Samuel Du Pont — who according to historians immigrated to the U.S. along with his two sons and their families during the French Revolution — once wrote a letter to Thomas Jefferson in 1801: "The inhabitants of your country districts regard — wrongfully, it is true — Indians and forests as natural enemies which must be exterminated by fire and sword and brandy, in order that they may seize their territory. They regard themselves and their posterity, as collateral heirs to all the magnificent portion of land which God has created from Cumberland to Ohio to the Pacific Ocean."

Theodore Roosevelt wrote in "The Strenuous Life" in 1901: "Of course our whole national history has been one of expansion. ... That the barbarians recede or are conquered, with the attendant fact that peace follows their retrogression or conquest, is due solely to the power of the mighty civilized races which have not lost their fighting instinct, and which by their expansion are gradually bringing peace into the wastes where the barbarian peoples of the world hold sway."

One hears a lot of talk these days (as we approach still another presidential election) about immigration and how this country was founded and created by immigrants. "The U.S. is a nation of immigrants," is the political battle cry of pundits and candidates for president alike. Donald Trump in particular keeps iterating his "I will make America great again" mantra.

When would that be, Mr. Trump? Would it be when the indigenous populations were targeted with genocide to serve the interests of "Great American Expansionists" policies and colonization aspirations?

Ward Churchill, the Cherokee activist and author, puts it like this: "Since the inception of the U.S. republic, and before, control of the land and the resources within it has been the essential source of conflict between the Euroamerican settler [immigration] population and indigenous nations. In effect, contentions over land usage and ownership have served to define the totality of U.S.-Indian relation-



Vince
TWO EAGLES

ships from the first moment to the present day, shaping not only the historical flow of interactions between invader and invaded, but the nature of ongoing domination of native peoples in areas such as governance and jurisdiction, identification, recognition and education."

Was it during the vast historical expropriation of Native lands and indigenous resources, Mr. Trump? Was America's greatness you are so keen to "return America to" when millions of Native people were exterminated as if their lives meant no more than a prairie dog infestation to be disposed of? Perhaps you are referring to the time when millions didn't suffer from poverty in this "Great Country" and when the only difference between the poor and the wealthy was that the poor washed their own Cadillacs. Was it during that great mythological era?

Greatness is measured by many things but I know that excessive wealth building, like Donald Trump and others work hard to protect, is not one of them. What is prosperity anyway? Is it building political power based upon the size of one's bank account? Is it creating and buying "things" we don't really need so we can "grow" the economy?

I think "greatness" is about how resources are equitably shared where no one gets more than their fair share, where everyone is truly equal whether they happen to look like I do, talk like I do, believe like I do, or not. Greatness is not about hoarding money or pretending to be superior when in fact that superiority is based upon false pretenses and hidden agendas. If deception is what Trump includes in his definition of "greatness," we better all take a second look around at the mess we need to clean up before we make any such claims to "greatness" which so far remain only empty and withered promises.

Get involved in making your community a great place to live where everyone is included in its development and where everyone is encouraged to participate in spite of their differences. As for Trump, my only hope is that people tire of his pointless ranting and raving, and let him know at the voting booth what they really think.

And now you know the rez of the story. Doksha (later) ...

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Banquet Talk

Laverta Mauch, Yankton

I want to especially thank all the groups who have served the Banquet in the second quarter of 2015. First United Methodist Church, Community of Tyndall, Sacred Heart Monastery, The Rotary, UCC/Baptist (Alcester), Faith United church from Irene along with First Presbyterian Church of Avon, Zion Reform, The Center, Gayville Lutheran/Methodist, Sacred Heart Parish, St. George Catholic Church of Scotland, Wakonda/Viborg/Irene (Methodist), Hutherthal Mennonite, Trinity Lutheran, Calvary Lutheran, Salem Mennonite Church, Avera Corporate, Church Women United, Sigel, St. John the Baptist Church of Lesterville, St. Ben's, Scotland UCC, Willcockson Eye Associates, Salem Reform Church and Christ Episcopal.

It is a neat experience to serve our people with good food and fellowship every Thursday at 6 p.m. and the first and third Tuesdays of each month at UCC church basement. In addition to meals and fellowship we fund school supplies and summer recreation activities program for each child.

We are looking for a group to serve on Dec. 29. If you are interested in accepting this

Poll Results

The results of the most recent Internet poll on the Press & Dakotan's Web site are as follows:

LATEST RESULTS:

Do you think alcohol sales should be allowed on college campuses?

No66%
Yes.....30%
Not sure.....4%
TOTAL VOTES CAST277

The Press & Dakotan Internet poll is not a scientific survey and reflects the opinions only of those who choose to participate. The results should not be construed as an accurate representation or scientific measurement of public opinion.

CURRENT QUESTION:

Would you support a proposal to increase the federal fuel tax to pay for road construction and repair? To cast your vote in the **PRESS & DAKOTAN'S** Internet poll, log on to our website at www.yankton.net.

opportunity to serve, you may contact Laura Heimes Brown at 605-665-7199. If you feel you are not equipped to serve the meal, donations are welcomed to fund our programs.

P&D LETTER POLICY

The **PRESS & DAKOTAN** invites its readers to write letters to the editor. We ask that a few simple guidelines be followed:

- Please limit letters to 300 words or less. Letters should deal with a single subject, be of general interest and state a specific point of view. Letters are edited with brevity, clarity and newspaper style in mind.

- In the sense of fairness and professionalism, the **PRESS & DAKOTAN** will accept no letters attacking private individuals or businesses.

- Specific individuals or entities addressed in letters may be given the opportunity to read the letter prior to publication and be allowed to answer the letter in the same issue.

- Only signed letters with writer's full name, address and daytime phone number for verification will be accepted. Please mail to: Letters, 319 Walnut, Yankton, SD 57078, drop off at 319 Walnut in Yankton, fax to 665-1721 or email us at kelly.hertz@yankton.net/.