More War Lies

By David Swanson
Global Research, September 01, 2010
warisacrime.org 1 September 2010

Lies aren't used just to start wars, but also to escalate them, continue them, and even reduce or end them. And we got a pile of war lies from the president Tuesday evening.

Obama claimed the war on Iraq was initially a war to disarm a state. Really? And then "terrorist" Iraqis attacked our troops in their country. Yet if they had done that in our country, I suspect they would still be the terrorists. And then it became a civil war which we were innocently caught up in. Uh huh.

U.S. participants in this crime are heroes, always and everywhere. That's sacred. The troops' mission has involved protecting the Iraqi people, and by golly they've done a superb job, as long as we don't mention the complete devastation of Iraq, the million dead, the millions of refugees, and the intense resentment of those remaining toward our country for what we've done to theirs.

The Iraqi people now (dead, in exile, in a ruined nation) have a chance that they supposedly didn't have before we destroyed their country, a country that was actually a better place to live in in every way in 2003 than it is now, and in 1989 than in 2003. To hear President Obama, this war has been for the benefit of the Iraqi people, and these wars have been about al Qaeda and 9-11.

Obama slid into nonsense about al Qaeda after discussing Iraq and before mentioning Afghanistan, a Bushian maneuver if ever I saw one:

"No challenge is more essential to our security than our fight against al Qaeda."

Never mind that al Qaeda barely existed before these wars became recruiting tools. "We will disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al Qaeda" in Afghanistan, the president promised, even though al Qaeda isn't there. Troop reductions in Afghanistan will begin next August, he said, although the prepared transcript said July, and will be determined by conditions on the ground, even though Afghanistan is not yet as bad as Iraq is.

Obama modeled the future bloodletting in Afghanistan on the myth of the successful escalation in Iraq, ignoring factors that have contributed to the reduction of violence in Iraq, including the promise of complete withdrawal, the beginning of withdrawal, and prior to those factors the incredible level of death and displacement, negotiations and bribes. The test for a "surge" in Afghanistan failed in Marja, and Obama simply behaves as if it succeeded.

And here at home "it is time to turn the page." Never mind the commission of the supreme international crime of aggression. Never mind the mass murder. Obama said he talked with George W. Bush earlier in the day. Obama lied that the two of them had never agreed on

the war, a war Obama voted to fund repeatedly in the Senate. And he lied that Bush was committed to U.S. security, knowing full well that this war has made us all less safe.

"There were patriots who supported this war, and patriots who opposed it. And all of us are united in appreciation for our servicemen and women, and our hope for Iraq's future."

Except for the majority of Americans who believe the war never should have begun, that it should be immediately ended, and that its architects — starting at the top with Bush, not the bottom with the troops — must be held criminally accountable. Participation in this crime is not a service to anyone.

The most honest part of the speech was this:

"We have spent over a trillion dollars at war, often financed by borrowing from overseas. This, in turn, has short-changed investments in our own people, and contributed to record deficits. For too long, we have put off tough decisions on everything from our manufacturing base to our energy policy to education reform. As a result, too many middle class families find themselves working harder for less, while our nation's long-term competitiveness is put at risk."

That's a remarkable point for the president to dare to make. But there was no mention of the hundreds of billions yet in the works to be wasted in Iraq and Afghanistan, not to mention Pakistan and numerous other countries deserving of our favors.

The big lie, of course, is that the combat mission is, once again, completed. The soldiers in Iraq and the mercenaries and contractors are there for combat. That there are fewer soldiers is movement very much in the right direction, and very much to be applauded, but pretending that those remaining are something else is not accurate. Many of them may see less combat, but I'll believe they're not there for combat when their weapons are taken away.

The big question, of course, is what will be done about the deadline of December 31, 2011. Here's what Obama said on this key point:

"Going forward, a transitional force of U.S. troops will remain in Iraq with a different mission: advising and assisting Iraq's Security Forces; supporting Iraqi troops in targeted counter-terrorism missions; and protecting our civilians. Consistent with our agreement with the Iraqi government, all U.S. troops will leave by the end of next year. As our military draws down, our dedicated civilians — diplomats, aid workers, and advisors — are moving into the lead to support Iraq as it strengthens its government, resolves political disputes, resettles those displaced by war, and builds ties with the region and the world. And that is a message that Vice President Biden is delivering to the Iraqi people through his visit there today. This new approach reflects our long-term partnership with Iraq — one based upon mutual interests, and mutual respect. Of course, violence will not end with our combat mission."

Violence will not end. We just won't call it combat. It'll be an overseas contingency. But what about all U.S. troops leaving by the end of next year? Obama doesn't seem to hedge on this the way he does later in the speech on a future withdrawal from Afghanistan, saying that will be "subject to conditions on the ground." And that's a good thing. The same day as this speech, the war-loving Washington Post printed a column by Ryan Crocker, U.S. ambassador to Iraq from 2007 to 2009, which pushed for a longer occupation with these words:

"And it may be that a new Iraqi government will request a U.S. military presence beyond the end of 2011. If so, I hope we will listen carefully."

Maybe we should start listening very careful right now. The president speaks of a long-term partnership with Iraq. How do you have that if you're gone? The answer may be that you aren't gone, that you maintain a significant military force in the country consisting of mercenaries employed by the State Department.

Here's what the Bush-Maliki Unconstitutional Treaty says:

"All U.S. forces are to withdraw from all Iraqi territory, water and airspace no later than the 31st of December of 2011."

However, the same document, as Raed Jarrar pointed out to me, carefully defines U.S. forces to allow exceptions:

"Definition of Terms . . .

'U.S. Forces' refers to the entity that includes all the personnel of the American Armed Forces, the civilian personnel connected to them and all their possessions, installations and equipment present on Iraqi territory.

'Member of the U.S. Forces' refers to any person that belongs to the army of the United States, its navy, air force, marine force or coast guard.

'Civilian element member' refers to any civilian working for the U.S. Department of Defense. And this term does not include the personnel usually resident in Iraq."

The trick is that not all imaginable U.S. forces have to work for the so-called Department of Defense. If they work for any other department, they're in the clear. But Iraqis are in their gun sights.

David Swanson is the author of "Daybreak: Undoing the Imperial Presidency and Forming a More Perfect Union"

http://davidswanson.org

http://warisacrime.org

http://facebook.com/pages/David-Swanson/297768373319

http://twitter.com/davidcnswanson

http://youtube.com/afterdowningstreet

The original source of this article is warisacrime.org
Copyright © David Swanson, warisacrime.org, 2010

Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page

[**Become a Member of Global Research**](#)

Articles by: **David Swanson**