

# No Troop Withdrawal in Afghanistan

By [Sherwood Ross](#)

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Four cheers for the U.S. Conference of Mayors! It has just voted up a resolution calling on Washington to transfer \$126-billion in annual spending from its Middle East wars to America's cities! This vote represents an historic, antiwar breakthrough, one perhaps analogous to CBS anchor Walter Cronkite's commentary on February 27, 1968, that the U.S. could get no better than a stalemate in Viet Nam. As Cronkite put it, "...it is increasingly clear to this reporter that the only rational way out then will be to negotiate, not as victors, but as an honorable people who lived up to their pledge to defend democracy, and did the best they could."

We might hope Americans today will not have to endure further long years of losses in blood and treasure as did this nation in the Sixties and into the Seventies because Presidents Johnson and Nixon refused to withdraw even though the objective Cronkite rightly diagnosed the conflict as win-less and futile. Unfortunately, President Obama is not apt to listen to the mayors, either.

He is expected to deliver a speech tomorrow (June 22nd) calling for a mere token withdrawal from Afghanistan, where the cruel war drags on into its tenth year, making it the longest contest in U.S. history. That's despite a Bloomberg poll, one of many, that shows the American public by an overwhelming margin of 63% to 30% want "complete withdrawal." U.S. taxpayers are not only funding about 100,000 uniformed troops in Afghanistan but a like figure of civilian "contractors," who may be considered irregular regulars.

According to the *Agence France-Presse* dispatch of June 20, Obama "has to weigh rising popular discontent over the war with military and strategic considerations and may want to showcase faster withdrawals when he runs for a second term next year."

And Monday's *Washington Post* reported, "Senior Democrats in Congress, and many Republicans, have questioned the major troop deployments, called the costs unsustainable and urged a rapid withdrawal. Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman [Carl M. Levin](#) (D-Mich.) has suggested that Obama withdraw 15,000 troops by the end of the year."

Support for the war is ebbing fast on Capitol Hill, even among Republicans. As the *Post* remarked, "In a debate last week, seven Republicans contesting the party's 2012 presidential primaries were divided about how to proceed, *with most calling for the troops to come home.*" (*Italics added.*)

However, 200,000 take away 10,000 or 15,000 is not exactly what the American public is hoping for—particularly those who have loved ones stationed in Afghanistan. Mr. Obama will get to meet some of those who have served there on Thursday when he visits the Tenth Mountain Division at Fort Drum, N.Y. Many of these troops have done two or more tours in the Middle East and maybe the President should do less talking and more listening. These are men and women who have seen the ghastly face of war.

Obama—a president whose background check reveals he was a CIA employee and who follows the CIA's hawkish line in foreign policy—is not apt to listen to Senator Levin, the nation's mayors or the American people. The polls have long shown the American public is disgusted with the wars in the Middle East and is beginning to make the connection between the slowdown in the economy, and the terrible nation-wide cuts in public services on one hand with Pentagon spending on the other, spending that tops \$1-trillion a year, sucking up 52 cents out of every tax dollar and leaving the civilian sector to fight over the scraps.

Outside of the White House, is it possible to find an American anywhere who believes that the presence of U.S. troops on the ground in Afghanistan is essential to our national security—particularly when we have some 800 bases around the world ready to deploy troops at the drop of a bomb?#

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