

Obama's Dangerous Escalations

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Obama's decision to radically escalate the wars he was ostensibly elected to terminate is a measure of U.S. imperialism's desperation. It's not just that our erstwhile peace candidate and future Nobel peace laureate is withdrawing exhausted U.S. troops from the frying pan of Iraq only to transfer them into the fire of Afghanistan, although that itself was an act of desperation. Many of these "volunteer" soldiers and reservists, shattered after several devastating tours of duty in Iraq, are being forced to remain in the service years beyond their contracts. Blackwater and other mercenaries now outnumber U.S. troops in Afghanistan with more escalation in sight. A new and highly dangerous stage was reached in January 2009 when Mr. Obama officially extended the "anti-terror" oil-war into unstable, corrupt, nuclear-armed Pakistan. And if that weren't enough, as our 2009 Xmas present from the CIA, we have received a new war in Yemen. Thus our new President rounds out his first year in office, which began last January with the drone attacks on Pakistani civilians. Obama's radical escalation into Pakistan's nuclear danger-zone is arguably even more irrational than Bush II's Iraq occupation or Johnson's Vietnam escalations. Yet this new folly was accepted as a matter of course, without any serious discussion, by the U.S. mainstream media and politicians of both parties – the same way they accepted Bush's Saddam=Osama and WMDs lies and Lyndon Johnson's "Bay of Tonkin Incidents." Today, after these gross deceptions, dangerously aggressive irrational policies can no longer be sold on rational political grounds to the wary, anti-war silent majorities in the U.S and Britain. The enemy must be demonized and the threat must be magnified in an atmosphere of a hysterical, irrational Islamophobic and anti-Arab propaganda. Under Bush II, we had an explicit Clash of Fundamentalisms, Judeo-Christian versus Islamic. Yet paradoxically it was born-again Bush who finally signed off on U.S. withdrawal from Iraq just before slinking out of office, leaving his successor a free hand – one hoped to make peace, but in the event to escalate ! Was a deal with the Pentagon made quietly behind the scenes during Obama's "seamless transition ?" In any case, we quickly learned the truth when Obama launched a Predator attack on Pakistan during his first week in office, "blooding" himself as Commander-in Chief and setting a hawkish precedent for his Administration. Thanks to this "seamless transition" Obama gave new political legitimacy to the hawks in the CIA and the Pentagon – the very people who got Iraq wrong in the first place. And now, in the wake of the botched Xmas Day bomb attack, another "secret" U.S. war has come to the surface in Yemen, a strategic country divided by decades of civil war, with rival factions armed by Saudi Arabia, Russia and the United States. On January 7, Yemen's Deputy Prime Minister Rashad al-Alami reported declared, "If there is direct intervention by the United States, it will strengthen al-Qaeda. We cannot accept any foreign troops on Yemeni territory." Time for "regime change" in Yemen? Yet how many Vietnamese puppet presidents did the U.S. remove or assassinate before finally withdrawing, humiliated by defeat, abandoning its Vietnamese allies to their fates? The Obama Administration's fuite en avant Afghan offensive — escalating a losing Mideast campaign into dangerous new territory — makes about as much sense as sticking one's member into a beehive. Yet Mr. Obama is no gross fool, unlike his predecessor. The President is socially aware enough to know that every time he orders another CIA-Blackwater Predator drone to drop out of the sky over Pakistan and blow up a village or family of traditionally warlike Pashtuns, ten or a hundred new dedicated "enemy combatants" rise from the ashes swearing (by Allah, who else?) eternal vengeance on the West. The President has enough imagination to visualize the consequences, yet like King Cadmus in the Greek myth, Obama is "sowing dragons' teeth" and "reaping armed warriors" – myriads of whom spring up from the soil for each cluster-bomb sown. Militant Islamic groups like the Taliban stand ready and eager to inspire and direct such potential martyrs. Angry poor men, particularly warriors from "honor cultures," are always eager to listen to ministers of religions that sanctify Holy War. In any case, the fierce tribes who inhabit Afghanistan

and West Pakistan have never been conquered, having defeated invasions by Darius the Persian, Alexander the Great, the British and the Soviet Russian empires. Are they likely to be conquered by NATO under Obomber the First?