

Churchill Or Patton He Ain't

In an interview with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation telecast on February 17, Obama did an admirable job of avoiding giving direct answers to the questions. Unfortunately for him, that only works on the campaign trail. After the election the ex-candidate is expected to make decisions and provide leadership.

On the subject of Afghanistan, where he is in the process of sending 17,000 additional American troops, Obama gave the CBC this response:

“Well, I think Afghanistan is still winnable, in the sense of our ability to ensure that it is not a launching pad for attacks against North America. I think it's still possible for us to stamp out al Qaeda to make sure that extremism is not expanding but rather is contracting. I think all those goals are still possible, but I think that as a consequence to the war on Iraq, we took our eye off the ball. We have not been as focused as we need to be on all the various steps that are needed in order to deal with Afghanistan.”

Obama went on, *“If you've got narco-trafficking that is funding the Taliban, if there is a perception that there's no rule of law in Afghanistan, if we don't solve the issue of the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan, then we're probably not going to solve the problem.”*

So, Obama *thinks* a war in Afghanistan is winnable. He's not sure. (Perhaps he first has to have David Axelrod schedule some focus groups.) And even if we happen, by chance, to win, it will only be *“in the sense”* of shutting down the bases for attacks against North America. Apparently Obama believes it's still acceptable for the terrorists to continue their attacks in Europe, the Middle East, and Asia.

Obama *“thinks it's possible”* for us to stamp out al-Qaeda. But he had to clarify even that squishy statement, saying we might only hinder their operations a bit so that they are contracting instead of expanding. Oh.

Of course, we *“took our eye off the ball”* with Iraq so we haven't been *“focused”* enough on Afghanistan. That means, of course, that *“If we suffer a humiliating defeat in Afghanistan, American voters have to continue to blame George W. Bush, not me,”* and, in his opinion, *“The American military is incapable of fighting in both Iraq and Afghanistan.”* (Some older readers may recall that the United States once simultaneously and successfully fought the German Army in Europe and the Japanese Navy in the Pacific.)

With regard to narco-trafficking and Afghanistan-Pakistan border issues, it might be helpful for Obama to define the problem and plan a strategy to resolve it before wondering what will happen if we don't succeed. And it may also be helpful to get

cooperation from the Pakistan government - cooperation which no doubt rapidly evaporated after Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) publicly leaked the information that unmanned CIA Predator aircraft are being launched from a Pakistani airbase. (The fragile Pakistani government was trying to keep the public from knowing about its support of the actions.)

It's understandable that some Democrats have talked about reviving the draft. They certainly know that Obama is incapable of making stirring, patriotic speeches to rally the troops and persuade young men and women to volunteer to fight in a war their Commander in Chief only *thinks, in some sense, we can win.*

One can imagine how Obama would have encouraged the American and British citizens and troops in World War II had he been making the speeches, rather than Churchill or Patton:

"As you folks know, we have been attacked by the Japanese at Pearl Harbor. At the same time, Hitler's forces are swarming Europe, taking control of Poland, Czechoslovakia, and France. It seems like we Americans have to do something."

"I have been informed by my advisors that there is a chance we can defeat the forces of Japan and Germany. Focus groups are split on the issue, with many people saying they would be willing to learn to speak German - but Japanese would be too difficult."

"I sympathize with those feelings, and want to spare Americans the anguish of having to worry about whether a particular noun is male or female. I know I had that difficulty when I studied Spanish."

"We have therefore decided to send a limited number of troops into combat. We're not sure we can win the war, but we'll try to do our best. We may have to send additional troops into harm's way. If so, that will be because of the failed policies of the prior administration."

"We're hoping for a quick way out of the war. We may, for example, be able to persuade Hitler to stop bombing Great Britain in exchange for giving him control of the entire European mainland. The Japanese may be happy with the Philippines and everything west of Hawaii. I have created a Committee to Recommend Appeasement Policies to come up with recommendations in that regard."

"In the meantime, I urge all Americans to keep their fingers crossed. I think we can win the war... at least in the sense that many of us will still be around after it's over. In fact, I might even be pretty sure it's possible we can win, if we get lucky."

Winston (“*Blood, toil, tears, and sweat*”) Churchill or General George (“*Better to fight for something than live for nothing*”) Patton he ain’t...

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