

Spinning Barack Hussein Obama's Speech on Attacking Syria

This is how Barack Hussein Obama's Saturday evening speech (31 August 2013) on Syria was spun by a news reporter and political commentator in Germany.

Source: <http://www.dradio.de/dlf/sendungen/kommentar/2236164/>

(The following is this author's translation of a commentary by Stephan Detjen on Obama's speech. Stephan Detjen is a German journalist and chief correspondent for Deutschlandradio in Berlin.)

At first sight Barack Obama's delaying of the mission against Syria may have the effect of being a political evasive action of a president who found himself beyond the red line marked by himself, and all at once was in a dead end. In reality, however, the decision to obtain a vote of the Congress has a deeper, more basic dimension.

The short speech Obama gave yesterday in the rose garden of the White House will come as a significant constitutional-juridical setting that will set the course of American history. The president who as commander in chief always has control over war and peace in the United States has escorted the US Army into a parliamentarization in the USA. Neither he nor his followers will ever be able to go back beyond this line.

Obama, himself a lawyer, and during his younger years editor of one of the most respectable juridical periodicals in the USA, has bound his decision with clever reflection basic to the *We concept* about the subdivision and exercise of the highest power in the constitutional state. Also in the presidential form of government of the USA, this president searches in a dramatic dilemma for the connection to the *will of the people*, who express themselves through their representatives in the parliament. With the example of the British prime minister who was stopped on the way from being part of the attack on Syria last week by the British House of Commons, Obama knows the risk of a personal defeat in Congress.

Differently than David Cameron and also the German Federal Chancellor, the directly-elected president can claim the legitimization of his decisions because he was elected directly by the people of his nation. Obama's critics will call his wish for additional parliamentary legitimization an expression of weakness and decisive

inability, a stance which some in Washington gladly subordinate with pleasure and applies to the more engaged allies in Europe.

Really, Obama's address was a constitutional humility gesture of the president and commander in chief that is unusual for American political conditions. It proves how laboriously the acceptance of political decisions must be gained in a democratically constituted general public. However, in a time in which Obama must prove his powers of assertiveness in the struggle with potentates like Assad and authoritarian figures like Putin, the American president demonstrates at the same time a noteworthy basic trust in the justifying strength of parliamentary democracy. This trust makes not only Obama, but democracy par excellence, a winner of this stage of the Syrian conflict.

With his decision Obama shows the same democratic common characteristic that America and Europe have. This has been questioned often enough during former conflicts. In the approach of the Iraq war American intellectuals spoke of Americans as vigorous Martians and smiled at the Europeans as if they were softly inclined children of Venus. In the eyes of the US Secretary of Defense at that time, Europe was split into a part of old and dilatory traditionalists and new Europe which had stripped itself of international-law obligations and had thrown down historical ballast to join to a coalition thirsty for actions of the willing.

Now the USA and Europe meet in the parlamentarization of their war decisions. Within days David Cameron in Great Britain and now also Barack Obama in the USA have taken the path which the Federal Constitutional Court in Germany already decided in 1994. At that time in their so-called "out of area" decision, the Karlsruhe judges laid the decisive power concerning the mobilization of the German Army in the hands of the Bundestag. Nobody would have predicted a few days ago that just this constitutional decision would become a western pattern for war decisions in the 21-st century.

The parlamentarization of armies is, meanwhile, not only an abstract procedure decision. Parliaments decide differently on the mobilization of soldiers than do state leaders and governments. Parliaments are more hesitant, more scrupulous, more weighing up of the decision. Parliament controlled armies are more difficult to mobilize than armies under the command of a sole commander in chief.

However, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have made clear to all partners the borders of military possibilities for the pacification of the often intertwined conflicts of our time. Dictators, regimes and enemies of democracy will try everywhere to

capitalize and show that parliamentarianism in truth is an expression of western degeneration and weakness.

This will also be a part of the discussion that Barack Obama has now expressly demanded. The questions which he poses concern not only the Congress in Washington, but all parliamentary-founded democracies of the world.

One of my opinions is that Stephan Detjen does not have any idea about the role of Congress in declaring war. He has no knowledge of Article I, Section 7, Clause 11, of the *Constitution for the United States of America*, where it says that Congress has the power "To declare war."

Stephan Detjen thinks that Barack Hussein Obama is the perfect democrat and the savior of parliamentarianism!

The above commentary is only one German (read also European) example of making Barack Hussein Obama look good. Only the positive is emphasized and if there is nothing positive to say about Barack Hussein Obama, it will be twisted into positiveness.

I ask you, dear reader, to make your own opinions concerning this spinning!

Frederick William Dame
Patriotic, Steadfast, and True.
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