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Obama's Afghanistan Massacre Deniers

Why do liberals ignore millions of non-American war deaths?

Terry Michael | March 20, 2012

U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Robert Bales' suspected early March murder of 16 Afghan civilians is cast by the military-industrial-congressional-media complex as the isolated madness of a single American soldier. In fact, victims in the village of Kandahar are just the latest among six million who have perished in America's wars-of-choice in Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, and now the Central Asian graveyard of empires, Afghanistan.



That sobering estimate of death comes from John Tirman, executive director of the MIT Center for International Studies, and author of *The Deaths of Others: The Fate of Civilians in America's Wars*, whose arguments were recently summarized in *The Washington Post* [essay](#), "Why Do We Ignore the Civilians Killed in American Wars?"

Elected as the Democratic anti-war candidate in 2008, President Barack Obama was co-opted in less than a year by the permanent war machine that former president (and general) Dwight Eisenhower warned the country about in his farewell address of 1961, the year Obama was born. In a garishly staged December 2009 presentation to teenage cadets at West Point, Obama justified his own elective war-making with a speech reminiscent of drum-beating by his weekend warrior predecessor, George W. Bush, who sat-out Vietnam in the Texas National Guard.

Obama's election came just two years after Democrats won back both the Senate and House of Representatives, an electoral repudiation of the Bush administration and its neoconservative war-of-choice in Iraq. Where are those same congressional Democrats now? With Obama's hands as bloody in Afghanistan as were those of Bush in Iraq, these progressives and liberals avert their eyes and plug their ears when it comes to the death visited on Afghanistan by their own White House.

Just as their "conservative" predecessors tried to erase from collective memory the My Lai massacre in Vietnam and the Abu Ghraib prison torture in Iraq, these "liberals" attempt to excise from memory American Marines urinating on dead Muslims and the rampage by the four-times-deployed Bales in Afghanistan. They give themselves political cover and comfort with the illusion that this was just an isolated incident, involving a lone gunman, killing children, in a distant Afghan village, where America is, after all, only pursuing the worthy mission of spreading democracy.

With an exceptionalist view of our own goodness, Americans ignore the genocidal carnage unleashed on the world in the decades since the good war was fought by America's greatest generation. The reason isn't complicated. The chicken hawk elites who start, propagandize, and run the wars don't have to put themselves in harm's way fighting them. The Bushes and Obamas send 20-somethings to their deaths in the deserts of the Middle East and the tribal hills of Central Asia, in service to the industrial war profiteers, the neoconservative think tank experts, and the editorial page war hawks. Done in the name of "national defense," offensive military spending becomes Republican corporate welfare and a Democratic jobs program.

Occasionally, after gas prices rise too high or too many flag-covered boxes get delivered to the military morgue at Dover Air Force Base in Delaware (the home state of the liberal Administration's foreign policy "expert," Vice President Joseph Biden), a majority of Americans will tell pollsters "the wars aren't worth it."

But then, in the blink of a cable TV camera eye, the liberally-led masses return to infatuation with Barack's picks in the March college basketball brackets or the dress Michelle wore at the dinner for America's latest prime ministerial lapdog from Britain. The corporate, media, and political leaders who helped elect Obama go silent on the

real madness going on this March, because they don't carry the guns or fly the planes or drive the tanks in Afghanistan, and they don't know anyone who does.

Ignoring the "collateral damage," Americans join their leaders in assuaging collective guilt by offering more deficit-financed government benefits to reclaim the health of psychologically devastated and physically-maimed veterans. And the liberal Democrats join their conservative Republican colleagues in the empty mouthing of "support our troops."

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