

Obama expands war into Pakistan

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One week ago, President Obama in a speech at West Point sought to portray his escalation of the war in Afghanistan as the prelude to an early withdrawal of US troops. It has since become increasingly apparent that the speech was nothing more than a calculated exercise in public deception.

The speech was crafted to chloroform the public, the better to defy and disorient mass popular opposition to the war.

It is now clear that the actual policy Obama has decided to pursue is not only the maintenance of an indefinite military occupation of Afghanistan, but a vast expansion of the war into Pakistan.

Within hours of the speech, administration officials were “clarifying” Obama’s talk of beginning the withdrawal of US forces by July 2011 to make clear that there is no such deadline and that US troops will remain in Afghanistan long after that date. Now it has emerged that a central component of Obama’s war plan is an expansion of US drone missile strikes in Pakistan and the deployment of US Special Operations forces on Pakistani territory to carry out attacks on insurgents in that country.

Obama said nothing in his speech about expanding the war into Pakistan. As the *New York Times* reported Tuesday, quoting an unnamed senior aid to the president, “We concluded early on that whatever you do with Pakistan, you don’t want to talk about it much.”

The *Times*, which has for months been campaigning for an escalation of the war and its expansion into Pakistan, reported the day after Obama’s speech that the White House last month signed off on an expansion of CIA operations in Pakistan.

On Tuesday, the newspaper reported that prior to Obama’s speech, his national security adviser, General James L. Jones, met with the heads of Pakistan’s military and intelligence service and told them that

unless Pakistan moved quickly to expand its military offensive against insurgents to Baluchistan and North Waziristan, “the United States was prepared to take unilateral action to expand Predator drone strikes beyond the tribal areas and, if needed, to resume raids by Special Operations forces into the country against Al Qaeda and Taliban leaders.”

In an editorial on Tuesday bristling with imperialist arrogance, the *Times* demanded that the Pakistanis “stop temporizing and get fully into the fight.” On the expansion of US missile strikes in Pakistan, including their extension into Baluchistan, the newspaper wrote: “Such strikes have killed several top extremists, but the program is hugely unpopular in Pakistan and Mr. Obama must be judicious about expanding it. That means three things: extremely careful targeting, no civilian casualties, or as few as possible [i.e., as many as needed], and no publicity.”

In other words, the American people are to be kept in the dark about targeted assassinations, civilian casualties from missile strikes, and other covert military operations in Pakistan. And the *Times* will do its part to suppress any information about such actions.

The editorial went on to declare that Obama had to persuade the Pakistanis that “the United States is in it for the long haul this time.”

What this points to is an unprecedented program of US military aggression and subversion and the transformation of both Afghanistan and Pakistan into US protectorates. This is the meaning of the recent statement by National Security Adviser Jones that “We are not leaving the region. We have enormous strategic interests in Afghanistan, east of Afghanistan in Pakistan...”

Since Obama’s lying speech, a program of US colonial domination of Central and South Asia has been unfurled, and the US media has swung into action to bolster the effort with a new round of pro-war

propaganda, including the dispatch of TV news anchors to American bases in Afghanistan.

The war in Afghanistan is only part of the global strategy of American imperialism to assert its domination of a region rich in oil and gas and of critical geo-strategic importance for supremacy over the Eurasian continent. The implications of this drive are catastrophic for the peoples of the region, who will pay the price in countless deaths, social devastation and neo-colonial oppression. But they are also disastrous for the people of the United States, whose sons and daughters will be sacrificed and whose living standards will be further slashed to pay for never-ending military adventures.

There is an element of immense recklessness in Washington's aggressive policy toward Pakistan. It is driving the country into a civil war that could rapidly destabilize the entire region and heighten the danger of war between India and Pakistan and between India and China, all three of which are nuclear powers. Russia and Iran would inevitably be drawn into the maelstrom as well.

Obama's election was promoted by sections of the American ruling elite who believed he could serve as the figurehead for a certain recalibration of US foreign policy after the disasters of the Bush years. It is now clear that Obama is the front man for the military and the most ruthless representatives of the ruling class.

It is necessary for workers and youth to draw the requisite conclusions. The fight against the war is a fight against the Obama administration. It is a fight against the Democratic Party and the two-party system. And it is a fight against American imperialism and the capitalist system upon which it is based.

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