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## What Difference Does it Make to Kill Akhtar Mansour and Why?

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The Pentagon thinks it's killed a Taliban official (Akhtar Mansour) by drone. But what difference does it make to us to kill this man (meaning a positive difference, a gain, a benefit)? Whether or not some outfit in Pakistan applauds this or hates it, what difference does it make to Americans? Why is the U.S. still trying to kill off Taliban or stop them? Why is the U.S. still in Afghanistan 15 years after it went there to get bin Laden? Why did the U.S. start a war with the Taliban anyway? The humongous cost of this killing is already \$700 billion. When other costs are factored in, the cost will be 2 or 3 times that, or about \$2 trillion. For what? What did we get out of it? What are we supposed to be getting out of this?

Hillary Clinton strongly supported the U.S. going more deeply into Afghanistan. Obama approved the surge she supported. He's had 7 years to end the war and he didn't.

Hillary Clinton is an idiot. An official like her who bases decisions on anecdotes, emotions, images, and biases is an idiot and dangerous to boot. This is Hillary:

"It's clear that if I had been president, we would have never diverted our attention from Afghanistan. When I went to Afghanistan the first time and was met by a young soldier from

New York, in the 10th Mountain Division who told me that I was welcomed to the forgotten front lines in the war against terror, that just struck me so forcefully.” For God’s sake, is this how she’ll make decisions if elected? If she had sound instincts in foreign affairs, this kind of emotional basis for forming policy might be negated, but there is no evidence at all that she does. It all points in the opposite direction.

Why single out this benighted person? The unwelcome fact is that the country’s foreign policies have been in the hands of many emotional idiots for 15 years at least. How else does one evaluate the statements made by Bush 2 such as this one:

“I don’t care what the international lawyers say, we are going to kick some ass.” — George W. Bush, September 11, 2001, quoted in Clarke, *Against All Enemies* (2004), p. 24.

How about this one, that relegates reason, evaluation, understanding and argument to the toilet?

“I’m the commander . . . see, I don’t need to explain. I do not need to explain why I say things. That’s the interesting thing about being the president. Maybe somebody needs to explain to me why they say something, but I don’t feel like I owe anybody an explanation.” — George W. Bush, August 20, 2002, quoted in Woodward, *Bush at War* (2003), pp. 145-146.

How emotional were all those neocons who thought that Iraq would be a cakewalk, or who got all excited about the prospect of employing massive force to shock and awe? These men and women had no sounder judgment than Hillary did and does. If they had any maturity, wisdom, prudence, foresight, knowledge of history, or empathy for the American people, it was absent when they made their decisions.

To this day, there has never been a sound case made for U.S. war-making in Afghanistan, and we all know that there was no accurate case whatsoever made for attacking Iraq. It was all lies and propaganda.

So, when I read headlines trumpeting the killing of a Taliban official, I realize it’s propaganda, but still more do I still wonder what possible difference this and the continuation of like policies in Afghanistan can possibly make to the lives of most Americans. And the same answer always results: It’s all loss and no gain.