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## America's Longest War Gets Longer

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Anti-Russian hysteria in America reached its apogee this week as Democrats tried to divert attention from embarrassing revelations about how the Democratic Party apparatus had rigged the primaries against Bernie Sanders by claiming Vlad Putin and his KGB had hacked and exposed the Dem's emails.

This was rich coming from the US that snoops into everyone's emails and phones across the globe. Remember German chancellor Angela Merkel's cell phone being bugged by the US National Security Agency?

Unnamed US 'intelligence officials' claimed they had 'high confidence' that the Russian KGB or GRU (military intelligence) had hacked the Dem's emails. These were likely the same officials who had 'high confidence' that Iraq had nuclear weapons.

Blaming Putin was a master-stroke of deflection. No more talk of Hillary's slush fund foundation or her status as a subsidiary of Goldman Sachs and the rest of Wall Street. All attention was focused on President Putin who has been outrageously demonized by the US media and politicians.

Except for a small faux pas – a montage of warships shown at the end of the Democratic Convention is a blaze of jingoistic effusion embarrassingly turned out to be Russian warships!

Probably another trick by the awful Putin who has come to replace Satan in the minds of many Americans.

And what a joy for the war party that those dastardly Ruskis are now back as Enemy Number One. Much more fun than scruffy Arabs. The word is out: more stealth bombers, more warships, more missiles, more troops for Europe. The wicked Red Chinese will have to wait their turn until Uncle Sam can deal with them.

I always find conventions depressing affairs. Rather than the cradle of democracy, they remind me of clownish Shriners Conventions. Or as the witty Democratic advisor Paul Begala said, 'Hollywood for ugly people.' What, I kept wondering, is the rest of the world thinking as it watches this tawdry spectacle?

One thing that amazed me was the Convention's lack of attention to America's longest ever war that still rages in the mountains of Afghanistan. For the past thirteen years, America, the world's greatest military and economic power, has been trying to crush the life out of Afghan Pashtun mountain tribesmen whose primary sin is fiercely opposing occupation by the US and its local Afghan opium-growing stooges.

The saintly President Barack Obama repeatedly proclaimed the Afghan War over and staged phony troops withdrawals. He must have believed his generals who kept claiming they had just about defeated the resistance alliance, known as Taliban.

But the war was far from being 'almost won.' The US-installed puppet regime in Kabul of President Ashraf Ghani, a former banker, holds on only thanks to the bayonets of US troops and the US Air Force. Without constant air strikes, the US-installed Ghani regime and its drug-dealing would have been swept away by Taliban and its tribal allies.

So the US remains stuck in Afghanistan. Obama lacked the courage to pull US troops out. Always weak in military affairs, Obama bent to demands of the Pentagon and CIA to dig in lest the Red Chinese or Pakistan take over this strategic nation. The US oil industry was

determined to assure trans-Afghan pipeline routes south from Central Asia. India has its eye on Afghanistan. Muslims could not be allowed to defeat the US military.

Look what happened to the Soviets after they admitted defeat in Afghanistan and pulled out. Why expose the US Empire to a similar geopolitical risk?

With al-Qaida down to less than 50 members in Afghanistan, according to former US defense chief Leon Panetta, what was the ostensible reason for Washington to keep garrisoning Afghanistan? The shadowy ISIS is now being dredged up as the excuse to stay.

This longest of wars has cost nearly \$1 trillion to date – all of its borrowed money – and caused the deaths of 3,518 US and coalition troops, including 158 Canadians who blundered into a war none of them understood.

No one has the courage to end this pointless war. Meanwhile, tens of thousands of Afghans are being killed. Too bad no one at the Democratic or Republican Conventions had time to think about the endless war in forgotten Afghanistan.