



Written by [Sheldon Richman](#) on February 23, 2012

Obama Adm. “Brainwashes” Public on Afghanistan

Of course, the U.S. government was lying about Vietnam. This was the infamous “credibility gap.”

Would a politician suffer the same fate today if he were to claim that the Obama administration is lying about the war in Afghanistan? Perhaps, but George Romney’s son, Mitt, isn’t likely to find out. Yet he and the entire country are being lied to about that war.

From President Obama on down, we hear nothing from government officials but glowing public reports about how things are going in Afghanistan. In June, when Obama announced his initial timetable for withdrawal, Secretary of State [Hillary Clinton](#) said, “We have broken the Taliban’s momentum. We do begin this drawdown from a position of strength.”



But that’s not what the military says behind closed doors. Thanks to one U.S. military officer, the doors have been cracked open so the public can learn what officials really think.

[Lt. Col. Daniel L. Davis](#) “spent last year in Afghanistan, visiting and talking with U.S. troops and their Afghan partners ... [in] every significant area where our soldiers engage the enemy,” Davis wrote in *Armed Forces Journal*. “As the numbers depicting casualties and enemy violence indicate the absence of progress, so too did my observations of the tactical situation all over Afghanistan.”

Davis’s article summarizes longer classified and unclassified reports, including his 84-page report bluntly titled “Dereliction of Duty II: Senior Military Leaders’ Loss of Integrity Wounds Afghan War Effort” ([PDF](#)). His conclusion is unequivocal. “What I saw bore no resemblance to rosy official statements by U.S. military leaders about conditions on the ground,” he wrote.

Entering this deployment, I was sincerely hoping to learn that the claims were true: that conditions in Afghanistan were improving, that the local government and military were progressing toward self-sufficiency. I did not need to witness dramatic improvements to be reassured, but merely hoped to see evidence of positive trends, to see companies or battalions produce even minimal but sustainable progress.

Instead, I witnessed the absence of success on virtually every level....

I can say that [official] reports — mine and others’ — serve to illuminate the gulf between conditions on the ground and official statements of progress.



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The Obama administration leads the American public to believe that Afghan President Hamid Karzai has established a credible government, and that U.S. and NATO forces have enabled local governments to create stability. Davis says that is untrue:

I saw little to no evidence the local governments were able to provide for the basic needs of the people. Some of the Afghan civilians I talked with said the people didn't want to be connected to a predatory or incapable local government.

From time to time, I observed Afghan Security forces collude with the insurgency.

He also saw widespread incompetence.

Davis's investigation confronted him with the heart-wrenching fact that American and NATO forces are being put at risk for a hopeless cause and to no good purpose.

In August, I went on a dismounted patrol with troops in the Panjwai district of Kandahar province. Several troops from the unit had recently been killed in action, one of whom was a very popular and experienced soldier. One of the unit's senior officers rhetorically asked me, "How do I look these men in the eye and ask them to go out day after day on these missions? What's harder: How do I look [my soldier's] wife in the eye when I get back and tell her that her husband died for something meaningful? How do I do that?"

Obama, like his predecessor, systematically lies to the American people about the war. But don't expect the Republican nominee (unless it's Ron Paul) to expose the deceit.

Sheldon Richman is senior fellow at [The Future of Freedom Foundation](#).



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