



Written by on June 25, 2010

The Islamic View of McChrystal's Firing

A CNN report on June 25 cited statements posted on two Islamist websites the previous day asserting that President Obama's replacement of controversial General Stanley McChrystal as the commander of U.S. and NATO troops in Afghanistan with Gen. David Petraeus is proof that the United States and its allies have lost the war.

The principal individual quoted in the report is Taliban spokesman Qari Mohammad Yousif Ahmadi, who boasted in a website statement: "History is evident of more powerful and experienced generals than General McChrystal and empires mightier than the United States of America being surrendered and bowed down before the Afghans."



Ahmadi asserted in his statement that changing commanders would not improve the chances for success and charged that Petraeus is a weak leader, continuing: "Indeed, he has got no (more) special qualities than General McChrystal had."

CNN also quoted from another website run by a group calling itself the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan that described Petraeus as suffering from mental fatigue as a result of the lengthy war, which began in October 2001.

"Nine years of military actions, different strategies and back-breaking monetary and life damages at the hands of mujahedeen have left the crusaders totally in distress," said the statement.

The term "mujahedeen" ("freedom fighter") was also used to describe the Afghan resistance to the Soviet troops that occupied Afghanistan from late 1979 through early 1989.

The post on the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan website stretched the limits of credibility to offer an outlandish explanation for why Petraeus apparently fainted while listening to a talk by Senator John McCain at a Senate Armed Services Committee meeting:

General Petraeus, being witness to the incidents in Afghanistan is the only person who realizes the gravity of [the] situation and described this situation well by falling unconscious.

Through this action he gave the answer to many questions to which the members of committee were eager to listen. They should learn from this answer by General Petraeus and start working for the well being of their masses.

Ahmadi's statement, in contrast, was a bit more restrained when he theorized that Petraeus "left a big question mark on his physical and mental health."

An explanation that Petraeus was simply bored half to death by having to listen to John McCain would have held more water!



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But both writers missed the obvious explanation that Petraeus, like McChrystal, is a workaholic prone to skipping meals and burning the candle at both ends.

If the Islamic writers' assertion that the change in military leadership was the desperate act by a U.S. leadership demoralized by the inevitability of its defeat indicates anything, it is that the Islamic world knows about as much — or as little — about how U.S. foreign and military policy is formulated as do most Americans. That is: next to nothing.

Both Islamists and Americans alike would understand the dynamics of U.S./NATO involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq more clearly if they knew more about the players comprising the U.S. chain of command, where the chain leads, and what the objectives of the policymakers in charge are. And the pieces of the puzzle are not all that difficult to decipher, for those who know where to look.

For example, in his online article "[CFR Gen. Petraeus Replaces CFR Gen. McChrystal](#)," Thomas R. Eddlem points out:

This is the second Afghan theater commander President Obama has fired. Obama fired Gen. David D. McKiernan in June 2009 and replaced him with McChrystal. Both McChrystal and Petraeus are members of the interventionist-oriented Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), a group of about 4,000 members who amount to a virtual Who's Who in politics, finance, and academia.

In our earlier article, "[Gen. McChrystal Goes to Washington](#)," we explored a bit more the CFR network directing American military and diplomatic initiatives in the Middle East, noting that it included Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates, U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan Karl W. Eikenberry, Special Representative to Afghanistan Richard Holbrooke, and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's husband, former President Bill Clinton.

There is no indication that the forced retirement of McChrystal and his replacement by Petraeus was anything more than infighting resulting from a clash of personalities and differences of opinion stemming from management style, not substance. The pervasiveness and omnipresence of CFR members directing every facet of U.S. foreign policy — including managing the undeclared, no-win wars in Korea, Vietnam, and Afghanistan — did not begin with General Stanley McChrystal, and it will not end with his removal.

Photo: Gen. Stanley McChrystal and Richard C. Holbrooke (out of picture), the U.S. special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, wait for the arrival of U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton at the military airport in Kabul, Afghanistan, Nov. 18, 2009: AP Images



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