

Who Will Question Our Wars

by Roman Skaskiw

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A couple weeks ago, I attended my first Republican district convention. I missed 2008's, having been deployed to Afghanistan's Kunar Province on my third combat tour with the Army.

I'd hoped to speak in favor of a friend's amendment to the party platform which would have tempered its implicit support for American militarism.

Neither Iraq, nor Afghanistan are mentioned in the platform. Instead, there is support for "the proliferation of democratic principles around the world," and praise for military technology and our troops. As is usually the case, the misguided motives of empire hide behind a fawning over its servants.

Sadly, the opportunity to speak was denied when two thirds of delegates (exactly enough, we were told) voted to suspend the rules and adopt the existing platform without discussion. I suspect they were motivated by exhaustion rather than censorship. Hours of slogans about limited government, the philosophy of the founding fathers and the constitution had taken their toll. So I make my point here:

It is a contradiction to speak of limited government and support a trillion-dollar-a-year overseas empire and a military budget which, if you include the CIA, NSA, Homeland security, our nuclear weapons program (Department of Energy), caring for veterans (Department of Veterans' Affairs), and foreign military aid (State Department), is far greater than the rest of the world's combined.

It is a contradiction to speak of limited government and ignore the unprecedented expansion of government power and spending which occurred under the republican leadership of President Bush's administration, and included an expansion of the prescription drug program.

It is a contradiction to speak of individual liberty and support an endless war against something as ambiguous as terrorism. Terrorism is not a people or even an ideology, it is a tactic, and under the premise of fighting it, our liberties have been trampled by this administration as well as its predecessor.

It is a contradiction to speak of the Constitution, and ignore its mandate for Congress to declare our wars. Since this practice was suspended after WWII, we've fought a foreign,

undeclared war every decade, and our record of winning them has been unimpressive.

It is a contradiction to support American militarism and invoke the founding fathers who repeatedly warned of the danger posed by keeping large standing armies during peacetime, and advocated "peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none."

One candidate even accused Democrats of conspiring to decrease our involvement overseas. I wondered where he was getting his news.

Our democratic administration, after eviscerating the anti-war movement with campaign promises, has begun bombing Pakistan and Yemen and fighting a war through surrogates in Somalia. In 2009 President Obama ordered a surge of 30,000 troops in Afghanistan. There have also been less publicized surges in military contractors, training of indigenous forces, and war spending, the latter supported my Democratic congressman Loeb sack.

Hopefully, he and whichever of the four Republican candidates wins the nominations can use their mutual fondness for American empire to keep the race amicable.

I predict a vigorous debate over the morality of same sex marriage while the morality of our foreign, undeclared, almost decade-long wars will remain sacrosanct.

Here's another prediction: only national bankruptcy will bring the troops home.