

Veterans Day 2009: a letter

13 November 2009

A bumper sticker recently seen at a VA hospital: “Honor the Dead, Heal the Wounded, End the War.” Amen.

Obama’s mawkish pandering at Fort Hood for the soldiers slain by their mental health provider is beyond revolting, coming on the heels of the state murder of the DC sniper, a seriously disturbed veteran, whose condition was clearly caused or at least seriously exacerbated by his service in the first Gulf War—now almost 20 years ago—especially as our *non-serviam* Commander in Chief (that seems to be the only kind we get from the Boomer generation, iconic and ironically, as this cohort was so devastated and scarred by the Vietnam War) ... especially as Obama is clearly getting ready to commit 40,000 more American troops to the imperial travesty in Afghanistan. Countless more body bags are clearly in the offing, as well as more returning ravaged veterans, too many with serious and debilitating problems. More violence and atrocities will be returning home with them.

Obama’s later pseudo- and hypocritically solemn trek through Section 60 of Arlington Cemetery, where the interred dead from Iraq and Afghanistan remind us of our sacrifice to these farces foisted upon the American people, who bear the burden alone—as well as the mewling sympathies of an untouched First Lady—is nothing short of vomitous. That the cackling media gives credence to these state spectacles, as well as the circus atmosphere surrounding the murder of the DC sniper, enrages me, as it does countless other veterans. Embrace, please, this president so committed to “change”—nebulous and the stark lie that it is.

In recent treatment at the VA [Veterans Administration], I was able to observe returning combat veterans from America’s endless wars—Somalia, Iraq, Afghanistan and those still suffering deeply, these many years later, from the debacle of Vietnam—the vets being treated for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

What they have seen and done is unimaginable: from the piled and moldering bodies of villagers killed by Somali war lords (trained by the US military) to watching one’s high school buddies vaporized in Iraq, only later to be gathered up with garbage bags (body bags not readily available), to dark humor moments such as watching one’s comrades piss on the riddled bodies of Saddam Hussein’s sons—this stuff is not made up. Welcome to the wars, troops. That most of these vets come home and do not detonate is the real miracle. Blowback from these horrors will go beyond our life times. The VA where I was being treated is undergoing massive construction and will be a showcase—in part, to handle the damaged souls returning from our never-ending imperialist adventures. But it will not be enough.

Substance abuse and addiction for PTSD vets is the main entrée: crack, booze, heroin (which sometimes comes later), just like in Vietnam—toking a joint doused in cocaine or heroin to get “lit up”—to survive/endure the horror, is standard. Exact figures are not at hand, but the individual observed cases are demonstration enough. And let’s not forget the new pharmaceuticals: eating oxycontin (hillbilly heroin) all day or constantly munching on “xanax bars,” to deaden the ongoing meat grinder. Abuse of these drugs has horrific effects and aftereffects—to include blackouts leading to serious violence and jail time.

And all of the horrors are being carried out in stark contravention of the expressed will of the American people. Those responsible—to include Obama and certainly the previous criminals from the Bush administration—need to be held to account for their crimes. I would like to expand further on this, but I’ll have to stop here, as I cannot afford, this day, to get more enraged over it (if that’s possible, which it’s not, my cognitive therapy “anger management” classes from the VA notwithstanding).

Happy Veterans Day, America.

RN

12 November 2009



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