

FOR SUSAN RICE, LOVE OF ENDLESS WAR MEANS NEVER HAVING TO SAY US IS SORRY

Yesterday evening, reports appeared in both the New York Times and Khaama Press in Afghanistan that the final hurdle for the Bilateral Security Agreement had been cleared and that US President Barack Obama would sign a letter to be read at the loya jirga. The letter would note that the US has made mistakes in its war efforts in Afghanistan. Further, the letter would convey an apology along with a pledge to avoid repeating the mistakes in which innocent Afghan citizens suffered.

But for the endless war faction within the US military and government, an apology just won't do (even if there was one to Pakistan that finally reopened the supply routes after the US killed 24 Pakistani border troops). National Security Advisor Susan Rice immediately got time with Wolf Blitzer on CNN to nip the idea of an apology in the bud:

"No such letter has been drafted or delivered. There is not a need for the United States to apologize to Afghanistan," National Security Adviser Susan Rice said on CNN's "Situation Room."

"Quite the contrary, we have sacrificed and supported them in their democratic progress and in tackling the insurgents and al Qaeda. So that (letter of apology) is not on the table."

Rice said she has seen news reports but has no idea where they are coming from, describing the claims as a "complete misunderstanding of what the situation is."

Here's the video:

[youtuber
youtube='http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KRDWTuAp
cxM']

I'm surprised she didn't go all the way to insisting on an apology from Afghanistan for being ungrateful for all the freedom we've unleashed on them.

The Times version of the story has been through a number of changes. Note that the url retains the early headline for the story "Key Issue Said to be Resolved in US-Afghan Security Talks". The story now reflects the push-back from Rice, but it also shows that diplomats are focusing on a letter anyway (but of course now can't call it an apology):

A senior State Department official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss continuing negotiations, was more noncommittal, saying that a letter acknowledging past issues like civilian casualties was a possibility being weighed. "We will consider his request for reassurances, including the option of a letter from the administration stating our position," the official said.

Under the Afghan description, in return for the letter, Mr. Karzai would then accept wording that allowed American Special Operations raids to search and detain militants within Afghan homes, but only under "extraordinary circumstances" to save the lives of American soldiers. That would seem to greatly hamper the American intent behind those operations, which commanders have said are critical to taking the fight directly to Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups.

The Washington Post goes further on the letter and suggests that it will indeed be signed by

Obama and delivered:

A last-minute hitch in the agreement over a post-2014 U.S. military presence in Afghanistan appeared to have been resolved Tuesday as the United States agreed to put certain assurances in a letter to Afghans that is likely to be signed by President Obama, U.S. and Afghan officials said.

The assurances will include a pledge that U.S. troops will enter Afghan homes only in exceptional circumstances to save lives, as well as what has become a standard U.S. expression of regret for Afghan suffering and the loss of innocent lives in the 12-year-old war.

The proposed letter is to be read to an assembly of more than 2,500 Afghan elders and officials, scheduled to start Thursday in Kabul, that will consider whether to endorse the long-term security agreement with the United States. Obama's final decision on signing the letter will depend on wording that is still under discussion.

The president "is not averse to signing," said a senior administration official, one of several who discussed the talks on the condition of anonymity. "One way or the other," the official said, "it's going to be worked out in the next 24 hours."

Oh. I see. So the US will now "assure" Afghanistan that after 2014, its death squads will only enter Afghan homes under "exceptional circumstances". Of course, in the mindset of folks like Susan Rice and William McRaven (who now is in charge of Special Operations Command), every single night raid carried out is exceptional. And it is carried out based on intelligence that is so secret that it can't possibly be shared with Afghanistan's government

or military (who are sovereign and all that, but can't really be trusted, now, can they?).

As Don Bacon reminded us in comments last night, we need only consider the number of times the US lied while pretending to hand over full control of Parwan Prison to see how much value Afghanistan should place on any assurance from the US relating to changing its behavior on night raids.

And as for Karzai now giving his blessing to US troop immunity as part of the BSA, a similar caution applies to the US assurance that troops will be subject to prosecution under US laws for crimes committed in Afghanistan. Just consider all the evidence of crimes that Matthieu Aikins uncovered on the Nerkh killings, with the US still maintaining no US personnel committed any crimes or that Zacharia Kandahari remained in Facebook contact with his team even while he was supposedly on the run from being handed over by the US to Afghanistan. Rest assured that US death squads will view this portion of the agreement as full immunity from criminal charges since the US has charged so few troops compared to the number of crimes that have been committed.