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OPINION

# Afghanistan strategy is victory without peace

By MANIKA CASTERLINE  
Opinions editor

On Dec. 1 2009, President Barack Obama delivered a speech at West Point that addressed the position of the United States of America regarding the war in Afghanistan and outlined the course that needs to be taken.

Obama also mentioned how it is that we find ourselves fighting there by invoking the events that unfolded on Sept. 11, 2001. But, the focus was to garner support for the plan that he intends to implement as Commander-in-Chief.

Obama said, "In Afghanistan, we and our allies prevented the Taliban from stopping a presidential election, and although it was marred by fraud, that election produced a government that is consistent with Afghanistan's laws and constitution.

Our new commander in Afghanistan Gen. Stanley McChrystal has reported that the security situation is more serious than he anticipated. In short: "The status quo is not sustainable."

While the Afghan election is cited as a marker of success against the Taliban, it really is not accurate when looking at Afghanistan's political climate. The Taliban still utilized tactics of intimidation against voters who wanted to exercise their right to vote. And violence did prevail.

The alleged massive election fraud led to a post-election fallout, despite President Hamid Karzai's declarations that he was victorious in the race. Karzai's chief opposition, Dr. Abdullah Abdullah dropped out the weekend prior to when the run-off election was set to occur. The election in Afghanistan was logistically dysfunctional and

it sets a precedent that, from the top down, corruption is premisable. It was not a successful election by any parametrized definition. The reality is that the government of Afghanistan is in its infancy and not fully developed.

Obama addressed the necessity for more combat boots on the ground. "I have determined that it is in our vital national interest to send an additional 30,000 U.S. troops to Afghanistan. After 18 months, our troops will begin to come home.

"These are the resources that we need to seize the initiative, while building the Afghan capacity that can allow for a responsible transition of our forces out of Afghanistan. I do not make this decision lightly. We have been at war now for eight years, at enormous cost in lives and resources."

Obama continued, "We will pursue a military strategy that will

break the Taliban's momentum and increase Afghanistan's capacity over the next 18 months. They'll increase our ability to train competent Afghan security forces, and to partner with them so that more Afghans can get into the fight. And they will help create the conditions for the United States to transfer responsibility to the Afghans."

The cut and run of this strategy is that strategically it just doesn't cut it. Only one of Afghanistan's 34 provinces is currently considered to be secure and that is given that we have had troops deployed in the nation since 2001.

This escalation in troops is akin to the secret military escalation that was done by President Richard Nixon in the 1970's in that the means of sending more armed forces will hypothetically led to a rapid success by proxy. In theory, this type of immersion of forces

contributes to a drain of resources that, as it is, we can not afford to waste. For Nixon, Vietnam was about peace without victory, but for the Obama administration, the Afghan strategy is essentially victory without peace.

However, the financial cost lays a heavier burden on the American people, who are already in economic peril. The estimated cost for the conflict in Afghanistan is at \$30 billion this year.

Obama said, "For unlike, the great powers of old, we have not sought world domination. Our union was founded in resistance to oppression. We do not seek to occupy other nations. We will not claim another nation's resources or target other peoples because their faith or ethnicity is different from ours. What we have fought for what we continue to fight for

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# AB 656, the answer we have been searching for?

By MANIKA CASTERLINE  
Opinions editor

It is not a revolution or a movement by any means. But, UC and CSU students are taking to the steps of the very educational institutions that they go to in order to ensure that

their voices are being heard.

They are civically engaging in the process by protesting the changes that will be implemented within the system of higher education budget cuts and an increase in tuition.

There is, however, an alternative solution that has been proposed by

Assembly Majority Leader Alberto Torrico (D-Fremont). Torrico's AB 656 bill would charge a 9.9 percent oil severance tax that would help toward funding the California Higher Education Fund, which is created through the legislation.

As it is, both Texas and Alaska have similar oil taxes in place that

financially beneficial their systems of higher education. California is the third-largest oil producing state in the nation and the only oil producing state that does not have such a fee attached to drilling.

AB 656 is projected to inject more than \$1.3 billion into community colleges and public univer-

sities. California State Universities would receive the majority of the revenue at 60 percent, while UC's will get 30 percent and community colleges would account for 10 percent.

The 10 percent that is allocated for the community colleges may

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## CAMPUS COMMENT >>> How would you describe your personal style?



**Fannie Hughes**  
GRAPHIC DESIGN  
"Laid back."



**Georgette Hernandez**  
NURSING  
"Whatever looks good."



**Jaskiran Dulai**  
BIOLOGY  
"Comfy."



**Malaak Hararah**  
COMPUTER GRAPHICS  
"Skater/sporty."



**Wallace Chan**  
BIOLOGY  
"Whatever matches what I'm feeling."