What’s at stake:

“America has some great ideas, but one of the things it is really short on is memory. . . . We dropped 10 years of war on people halfway around the world that disrupted their society completely and have yet to take a good look at exactly what we did. . . . The Iraq war is not over, and that's why we need to have a record, so the next time someone in Washington comes up with the bright idea that they want to install a government that they like better than another one halfway around the world we will have something that isn't bullshit to talk about.” David Harris in *The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* (May 2014, p. 44).

My blog: War Department/Peace Department
http://jamesrichardbennett.blogspot.com/

My Newsletters:
http://www.omnicenter.org/newsletter-archive/

Index:
http://www.omnicenter.org/omni-newsletter-general-index/

See OMNI Patriotism Forum, Patriot Day

Nos. 10-16 at end.

Contents Illegal Iraq Invasion, Occupation, “Post Occupation,” New Civil War #17
Parry, President Obama’s Choices
Contact President and Representatives
Contact the President, Oppose Another War, from Historians Against the War
Peace Action, via HAW, Contact President Obama
Obama at a Crossroad of War or Peace

By Robert Parry, Consortium News, Reader Supported News
19 June 14

 Barack Obama is at a crossroads of his presidency: one path leads to heightened conflicts favored by Official Washington’s neoconservatives and liberal interventionists; the other requires cooperation with past adversaries, such as Russia and Iran, in the cause of peace.

For the first five-plus years of his administration, Obama has sought to straddle this divide, maintaining traditional U.S. alliances that have pushed for Washington’s violent interference in the affairs of other countries, particularly in the Middle East, but also collaborating behind the scenes with Russia to ease some tensions.

But the days of such splitting the difference are ending. Obama will soon have to decide to either stand up to the still influential neocons as well as hawks in his own administration and
seek help from Russia and Iran to resolve conflicts in Syria, Iraq, Palestine and elsewhere — or join the neocon warpath against Russia, Iran and Syria.

The first option would mean breaking with old allies, including the Saudi monarchy and Israel’s Likud government, and rejecting their view that Iran and the so-called “Shiite crescent” from Tehran through Baghdad and Damascus to Beirut represent the greatest threat to U.S. and their own interests in the Middle East.

This departure from the old ways would require realistic negotiations over the Syrian civil war, accepting the continued rule of President Bashar al-Assad at least for the near future; reaching an agreement over Iran’s nuclear program; and resolving the Ukraine crisis in a way that addresses Russia’s security concerns, including accepting Crimea’s decision to rejoin Russia, agreeing to a federated structure for Ukraine and keeping Ukraine out of NATO.

Sticking to the other [old] route would follow the interests of Saudi Arabia and Israel into new conflicts: deeper intervention in Syria’s civil war with the goal of overthrowing Assad; rejection of Iran’s offers to compromise on its nuclear program; and intensified confrontation with Russia over Ukraine.

This “tough-guy-ism” would surely make Official Washington’s pundits and pols happy. They could boast about American resolve in support of “freedom” and “human rights” — even if it led to worse tyranny, mass killings and economic pain.

MORE http://readersupportednews.org/opinion2/277-75/24326-focus-obama-at-a-crossroad-of-war-or-peace

GLOBAL IS LOCAL, LOCAL GLOBAL

“Conflicts in our age have become both local and global, blurring the distinction between the two. We can no longer speak of local and national conflicts without considering their international implications, nor can we ignore the impact of global trends and relations on local issues.” Ibrahim Kalin, “Islam and Peace,” in Crescent and Dove, ed. by Qamar-ul Huda (USIP, 2010, p. 30).

Action Alert: Oppose US Military Intervention in Iraq!

haw-info-bounces@stopthewars.org on behalf of Carolyn Eisenberg [Carolyn.Eisenberg@Hofstra.edu]

To:

haw-info@stopthewars.org

Attachments:

ATT00001.txt (572 B)
Send A Message Today!
Tell Your Member of Congress to:

Oppose US Military Intervention in Iraq and Syria
Oppose the $ 571 Billion Defense Appropriations Bill

Congressional Switchboard: 202-224-3121

As the situation in Iraq deteriorates, the “Never Learn” caucus is demanding US military intervention in the form of ground troops, air strikes, Special Operations and weapons deliveries. The unfolding tragedy in Iraq is a direct consequence of the illegal American invasion and occupation of that country. The least helpful idea is for the United States to involve itself militarily in Iraq or Syria. US military intervention, whether directly or by providing arms, will increase the suffering of people in those countries and enhance the risk of a wider regional conflict.

This coming week the House of Representatives is set to pass a $571 billion Defense Appropriations bill. Our oversized military drains resources from urgent domestic needs. The United States spends more money on warfare than the next eight countries combined and military action continues to be the default response to international crisis. Too many members of Congress claim to oppose war and then quietly pass outlandish military budgets. The proposed FY 2015 Defense Appropriations bill far exceeds what is needed militarily to protect our country. http://appropriations.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=381446

Please Call your Reps today and tell them:

No to $571 Billion FY 2015 Defense Appropriations bill !

No to Military Intervention in Iraq or Syria !
There is immense pressure on the President for military intervention in Iraq and Syria. **Let the President Obama know you oppose military intervention of any kind and urge him to seek a diplomatic solution.** White House Switchboard: **202-456-1111**

Carolyn Eisenberg and Margaret Power for Historians Against the War Steering Committee

Some useful articles:

[haw-info] Tell President Obama "Don't Try to Put Out the Fire in Iraq With Gasoline!"

To: 

haw-info-bounces@stopthewars.org on behalf of Marc Becker [marc@yachana.org]

Actions.


The rapid disintegration of the Iraqi Army has created enormous pressure on the White House to take military action. While the President has ruled out the use of American troops, other military interventions-including air strikes- are being actively considered. National **Peace Action** has put out an action alert directed to the White
House. We are pasting it in here for your consideration. We encourage you to forward it to friends.

Steering Committee of Historians Against the War

Believe it or not, some are responding to the escalating violence in Iraq with calls for U.S. military intervention. Have they learned nothing?

Please take action: Tell President Obama not to try putting out the fire with gasoline – no U.S. military intervention in Iraq, invest in diplomacy and international cooperation instead.

The advance of the forces of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) is no doubt alarming, but not a complete surprise in the context of deep social, ethnic, religious and political divisions in Iraq and the wider region. Our former Executive Director, David Cortright, has a sensible, concise post on this issue you might find illuminating.

Please contact the president and send this alert to friends, family and colleagues you believe would want to take this action. The people of Iraq and the region need peace, reconciliation and development, not more war and definitely not U.S. bombs or troops.

Humbly for Peace,

Kevin Martin
Executive Director
Peace Action

P.S. Please take action to let the president know more war is not the answer. To learn more about the situation in Iraq, here are a few recent articles you might find illuminating.

New York Times article on the current situation and consideration of U.S. military intervention

The Guardian on the collapse of the U.S.-trained Iraqi Army as ISIS advanced on Mosul

The Guardian again on the spread of ISIS in Iraq and Syria
Dear Dick,

President Obama is under heavy pressure to order direct U.S. military intervention in Iraq and Syria. But as Thomas Friedman wrote in the New York Times, avoiding direct U.S. military involvement in these two countries' civil wars is the "least bad option." [1]

Thanks to Reps. Barbara Lee [2] and John Conyers, we have a crucial opportunity TODAY to push back against the warmongers. The House will be voting on amendments to the defense appropriation that would block direct U.S. military action in Iraq and block the U.S. supply of manpads to Syrian insurgents.

Call Rep. Steve Womack at (202) 225-4301 today. When you reach a staffer (or leave a voice mail) say

I urge you to support Barbara Lee’s amendments to the defense appropriation to block funds from being used to wage another war in Iraq, and the Yoho-Conyers amendment to block the transfer of manpads to Syrian insurgents. Congress must assert its Constitutional responsibility to publicly decide when the United States goes to war.

When you're done, report your call with our easy response form:

http://justforeignpolicy.org/act/iraq-call-in

Robert Naiman and Megan Iorio
Just Foreign Policy

Help us meet our June fundraising goal—make a $10 tax-deductible contribution today!
We have $3,480 left to raise by the end of the month. Your financial support helps us create opportunities for Americans to agitate for a more just foreign policy.
http://www.justforeignpolicy.org/donate

References:

For a full list of US military deaths in Iraq and Afghanistan, go to: casualties.usatoday.com. But where are the Iraq and Afghan lists?? This is a morally zero nationalism and ethnocentrism devoid of compassion except for our own. --Dick

Dick,

Here is an article from Daily Kos which sums up why USA or anyone should stay away from war anywhere - especially in the Middle East.

Carl

This communication may be monitored and collected without consent in secret by the NSA

10 lessons from Bush's fiasco in Iraq

By Jon Perr, Follow for Daily Kos


"Obama lost Iraq." With the fall of Mosul and Tikrit to the forces of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIS), that will be the rallying cry for Republicans for the foreseeable future. Already, there is a chorus of voices from John McCain and the Wall Street Journal to right-wing radio and the conservative blogosphere charging that President Obama committed "the strategic blunder of leaving no U.S. forces in Iraq."

But foaming-at-the-mouth Republicans and their furious right-wing allies aren't just wrong. They are desperately trying to evade paternity for a world-historical calamity they birthed and still support. Iraq was lost the moment the first U.S. troops crossed the border from Kuwait.

It's no surprise Republicans are running away from Bush's bastard. After all, there were no weapons of mass destruction. Saddam posed no imminent threat to the United States. There were not "ties going on between Al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein's regime." Americans were not "greeted as liberators" and victory was not "rapid, in about three weeks." The mission was not accomplished on May 1, 2003, and Ahmed Chalabi was not "a patriot who has the best interests of his country at heart." In 2005, the insurgency was nowhere near "its last throes." Meanwhile, it certainly was not the case, as John McCain claimed in April 2003 that "Nobody in Afghanistan threatens the United States of America."

In the run-up to the invasion of the Iraq, Secretary of State Colin Powell warned President Bush, "You break it, you own it." Eleven years later and five years after Dubya ambled out of the White House, Iraq remains broken and he owns it.

But that's not the only maxim George W. Bush and his allies should have learned from their debacle in Iraq. Continue reading about 10 other lessons from Bush's Iraq disaster below.

1. Don't Fight Wars on the Cheap

Going to war without the manpower needed to bring victory and secure the peace was one of the first things the Bush administration should have learned in Afghanistan. In December 2001, a lack of U.S. ground forces enabled the escape of Osama Bin Laden from the Tora Bora cave complex that should have been his burial ground. By March 2002, President Bush could only downplay the fiasco by declaring, "I just don't spend that much time on him .... I'll repeat what I said. I truly am not that concerned about him."

But by the beginning of 2003, Bush and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld were repeating their mistake, only on a much larger scale. That February top Army General Eric Shinseki warned Congress and the Bush administration that the American occupation of Iraq would require "something on the order of several hundred thousand soldiers." And for that honesty and prescience, General Shinseki was mocked and ridiculed. As Rumsfeld put it:
The idea that it would take several hundred thousand U.S. forces, I think, is far from the mark.

Rumsfeld's deputy Paul Wolfowitz was even more scathing. Wolfowitz, who just days after the invasion claimed "we're dealing with a country that could really finance its own reconstruction, and relatively soon," lambasted Shinseki at a hearing of the House Budget Committee:

Some of the higher-end predictions that we have been hearing recently, such as the notion that it will take several hundred thousand U.S. troops to provide stability in post-Saddam Iraq, are wildly off the mark.

When chaos erupted in Baghdad less than a month after the start of the U.S. invasion, Rumsfeld brushed it off: "Freedom's untidy, and free people are free to make mistakes and commit crimes and do bad things."

As it turned out, Shinseki was right. But it would take another four years until his wisdom was widely acknowledged. On January 10, 2007—the same day President Bush announced his "surge" to reverse the exploding civil war in Iraq—the New York Times reported, New Strategy Vindicates Ex-Army Chief Shinseki.

2. Don't Uncork Bottled Up Sectarian Divisions

The under-sized occupation force wasn't the only thing crisis Shinseki foresaw before President Bush began to "shock and awe." He also highlighted a key reason why a much larger American troop presence would be needed in post-Saddam Iraq:

We're talking about post-hostilities control over a piece of geography that's fairly significant with the kinds of ethnic tensions that could lead to other problems.

Problems, indeed. While Saddam Hussein and his Sunni minority regime had used brutality and foreign conflicts to keep the Shiite majority and Kurdish separatists under control, the carnage following the first Gulf War showed what Iraq's pent-up sectarian divisions could produce once unleashed.

Behind closed doors, Secretary Rumsfeld admitted as much. In his famous October 15, 2002,"Parade of Horribles" memo, he fretted (briefly, to be sure) that "Iraq could experience ethnic strife among Sunni, Shia, and Kurds." As he put it in Point 17:

US could fail to manage post-Saddam Hussein Iraq successfully, with the result that it could fracture into two or three pieces, to the detriment of the Middle East and the benefit of Iran.

Within weeks of toppling Saddam, the United States was fighting former regime insurgents in the Sunni triangle, Shiite militias in Baghdad and Basra, and an influx of foreign Al Qaeda fighters in the west. The catastrophic disbanding of the Iraqi army and the draconian de-Baathification program carried out by L. Paul Bremer, viceroy of the Coalition Provisional Authority, made the dangerous situation more combustible.

Nevertheless, in August 2004 President Bush explained the growing U.S. casualties represented not the failure, but the success of the American invasion:

Had we had to do it [the invasion of Iraq] over again, we would look at the consequences of catastrophic success - being so successful so fast that an enemy that should have surrendered or been done in escaped and lived to fight another day.

Or as Vice President Dick Cheney put it almost two years before General David Petraeus led the U.S. surge, "I think they're in the last throes, if you will, of the insurgency."

Nine years after Cheney made that laughable statement, sectarian conflict has mushroomed across the Middle East. And as Dexter Filkins explained, the rise of ISIS in northwest Iraq can be attributed in large measure to the chaos across the border in Syria:

Iraq's collapse has been driven by three things. The first is the war in Syria, which has become, in its fourth bloody year, almost entirely sectarian, with the country's majority-Sunni opposition hijacked by extremists from groups like ISIS and Jabhat al-Nusra, and by the more than seven thousand foreigners, many of them from the West, who have joined their ranks.

But as we'll see below, President Bush's man, Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki, made matters much, much worse.

3. Al Qaeda Thought It Was Better to Fight Us There

On October 14, 2003, President Bush announced that "we're making great progress in Iraq" before turning to a talking point he would use for years to come:
We'd rather fight them there than here.

As it turned out, Al Qaeda fighters across the Middle East and North Africa felt the same way.

Before he launched his war in Iraq, President Bush told the American people that Saddam's regime "has aided, trained and harbored terrorists, including operatives of al Qaeda." But after the administration's zombie lie about a mythical Saddam and Al Qaeda link was repeatedly debunked, Bush had to acknowledge in a December 2008 interview with Martha Raddatz of ABC News that it was the American presence that drew Al Qaeda fighters to Iraq, and not the reverse:

BUSH: One of the major theaters against al Qaeda turns out to have been Iraq. This is where al Qaeda said they were going to take their stand. This is where al Qaeda was hoping to take -

RADDATZ: But not until after the U.S. invaded.

BUSH: Yeah, that's right. So what? The point is that al Qaeda said they're going to take a stand. Well, first of all in the post-9/11 environment Saddam Hussein posed a threat. And then upon removal, al Qaeda decides to take a stand.

4. Sectarian U.S. Allies Can't Be Bought, Only Rented

In August 2006, the Washington Post reported, "Tribal sheikhs in Iraq's Anbar province turned against a chief U.S. threat: al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI)." General David Petraeus later described the so-called "Sunni Awakening," which began five months before President Bush announced the surge of thousands of additional U.S. troops into Iraq, as a turning point in the U.S.-led war effort. On January 5, 2007—five days before Bush addressed the nation about his surge strategy—John McCain agreed with that assessment:

"Too often the light at the tunnel has turned out to be a train, but I really believe -- I really believe that there's a strong possibility that you may see a very substantial change in Anbar province due to this new changes in our relationships with the sheiks in the region.

But the decision of Sheik Ahmed Abu Risha and other Sunni tribal leaders to turn on the Al Qaeda forces led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and partner with the U.S. in arming some 90,000 Sons of Iraq came with a big asterisk attached. As the Post noted in 2008:

But experts stress the moves by Sunni sheikhs was less an embrace of U.S. objectives and more a repudiation of al-Qaeda in Iraq's actions...

"The Americans think they have purchased Sunni loyalty," Nir Rosen, a fellow at New York University Center on Law and Security, told Congress in April 2008. "But in fact it is the Sunnis who have bought the Americans" by buying time to challenge the Shiite government.

By late 2007, there were already worries that the Sunnis wouldn't stay bought, with Shiite politicians and CIA analysts warning that "when the U.S. leaves, what we'll have are two armies" and "there is a danger here that we are going to have armed all three sides: the Kurds in the north, the Shiite and now the Sunni militias." And that risk would be elevated if the Shiite-controlled government led by Prime Minister Al-Maliki refused to accommodate Sunni interests in Baghdad. And, as the New York Times warned as the last American troops were leaving Iraq in December 2011, that fear was being realized:

"The Shiite-dominated central government has arrested prominent Sunnis on accusations that they are secret members of the long-disbanded Baath Party, which has alienated Sunni elites. Meanwhile, a Sunni revolt a few hundred miles to the north of here against the Shiite-aligned government in neighboring Syria is gathering force.

Last month, government police officers wounded two guards and detained two others in a raid on the home of a Sunni, Sheik Albo Baz, in Salahuddin Province, prompting a protest by several thousand Sunnis in Samarra, a city divided by sect.

This followed the roundup by police officers of 600 suspected Baath Party sympathizers in October; they were accused of planning a coup.

For the moment, Abu Risha and many of the Sunni tribal leaders remain allied with the central government in Baghdad. But as the attacks from ISIS intensified, many of their Sons of Iraq did not. Many Sunni members of the Iraqi army simply walked away.

5. Don't Hitch the U.S. Wagon to the Wrong Strongman
That's why, as Fred Kaplan put it, "The collapse of Mosul, Iraq's second-largest city, has little to do with the withdrawal of American troops and everything to do with the political failure of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki." It was, after all, Maliki who refused to sign a permanent status of forces agreement with the U.S. It was Maliki who cracked down on Sunni opponents and put the tenuous relationship with the tribal sheikhs at risk. And Nouri Al-Maliki was George Bush's man in Baghdad.

Writing in the New Yorker, Dexter Filkins recalled Maliki's ascension to the premiership engineered by the Bush administration. In 2006, Bush undermined the incumbent PM, Ibrahim al-Jaafari, who struggling to form a government:

An avuncular, bookish figure, Jaafari had infuriated Bush with his indecisiveness, amiably presiding over the sectarian bloodbath that had followed the recent bombing of a major Shiite shrine.

During the videoconference, Bush asked Khalilzad, "Can you get rid of Jaafari?"

"Yes," Khalilzad replied, "but it will be difficult."

Difficult, but not impossible. "I have a name for you," a CIA offered told U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Zalmay Khalilzad, "Maliki."

And as Filkins explained this week, "Maliki is a militant sectarian to the core, and he had been fighting on behalf of Iraq's long-suppressed Shiite majority for years before the Americans arrived, in 2003." That also explains in part why John McCain and Lindsey Graham urged President Bush in September 2008 to engineer a coup against Maliki. That's why Filkins, who believes the U.S. should have tried harder to maintain a small legacy force in place, believes Al-Maliki is "probably the dominant" factor in the current disintegration in Iraq:

Time and again, American commanders have told me, they stepped in front of Maliki to stop him from acting brutally and arbitrarily toward Iraq's Sunni minority. Then the Americans left, removing the last restraints on Maliki's sectarian and authoritarian tendencies.

In the two and a half years since the Americans' departure, Maliki has centralized power within his own circle, cut the Sunnis out of political power, and unleashed a wave of arrests and repression. Maliki's march to authoritarian rule has fueled the reemergence of the Sunni insurgency directly. With nowhere else to go, Iraq's Sunnis are turning, once again, to the extremists to protect them.

That was evident in rapid ISIS takeover of Mosul. The much larger Iraqi army units evaporated in the face of hundreds of ISIS fighters. On Thursday, the Washington Post described the reaction of residents:

For many in the mostly Sunni city, the ouster of the hated national security forces was welcome, offering a sign of just how much the Shiite-dominated government in Baghdad has alienated the Sunni population in the eight years since Maliki came to power.

With his declaration of emergency coming just two weeks after a disputed and inconclusive election, Prime Minister Al-Maliki will likely seek to consolidate his power further still. Such a development could only make the Sunni alienation worse.

It's worth remembering that Nouri Al-Maliki wasn't George W. Bush's first choice to head up the post-Saddam government in Baghdad. That honor was bestowed on Ahmed Chalabi, the exiled swindler-turned-face of the Iraqi National Congress. By 2006, Chalabi was being sought by U.S. forces in Iraq for spying on behalf of Tehran. But in 2004, he was President Bush's guest at the State of the Union address. As John McCain described Chalabi the year before, "He's a patriot who has the best interests of his country at heart."

6. The Enemy of Our Enemy is Not Our Friend

If there was any question that the blowback from George W. Bush's invasion of Iraq only served to produce an Iranian ally in Baghdad, the final, humiliating proof came in January. As the radical ISIS forces already disowned by Al Qaeda swept from Syria into Fallajuh and Ramadi, adding to the chaos, Iran like the United States offered to provide military aid to the al-Maliki government. In acknowledging the irony of overlapping Iranian and American interests in seeing the defeat of ISIS AL Qaeda fighters in Syria and Iraq, Iranian reform politician Mashallah Shamsolvaezin declared:

We face the same enemy, and the enemy of my enemy is my friend.

Five months later, U.S. surveillance aircraft are monitoring Iraq as President Obama weighs additional assistance and possible American air strikes against ISIS forces. Meanwhile, the Wall Street Journal on Thursday reported that Iran had already dispatched two Revolutionary Guards units to help defend Baghdad
and protect the Shiite shrine cities of Najaf and Karbala.

If that assistance for Al-Maliki in Baghdad sounds familiar, it should. Because it was the influx of Shiite fighters from Iran and Hezbollah in Lebanon that helped the Allawi President Bashar Al-Assad reverse the civil war in Syria. And while the Iranian-allied forces helped Assad batter the Free Syrian Army backed by the United States, the Sunni forces of ISIS renounced by Al Qaeda were pounding the western-supported rebels as well.

To put it another way, in Iraq the enemy of our enemy is the friend of our friend. But that doesn't make Iran our friend: across the border in Syria, Iran is the friend of our enemy.

All of which brings us back to Lesson 2 ("Don't Uncork Bottled Up Sectarian Divisions") above. It's awfully hard to distinguish friend from foe in the Middle East if you, like John McCain, can't remember the difference between Shiite and Sunni. Just as dangerous is to pretend, as Weekly Standard editor and Project for the New American Century (PNAC) Iraq war cheerleader Bill Kristol did in 2003, that sectarian divisions don't exist at all:

On this issue of the Shia in Iraq, I think there's been a certain amount of, frankly, a kind of pop sociology in America that, you know, somehow the Shia can't get along with the Sunni and the Shia in Iraq just want to establish some kind of Islamic fundamentalist regime. There's almost no evidence of that at all. Iraq's always been very secular.

7. U.S. Forces Should Never Be Deployed Permanently in a Civil War Zone

Reacting to the current chaos in Iraq, John McCain on Thursday had only praise for himself:

"Lindsey Graham and John McCain were right," McCain said. "Our failure to leave forces on Iraq is why Sen. Graham and I predicted this would happen."

Of course, McCain has been wrong about almost everything in Iraq from the get-go. But his insistence on permanently keeping American troops and materiel in Iraq is based on a very flawed analogy. As he put it in June 2008:

Americans are in South Korea, Americans are in Japan, American troops are in Germany. That's all fine.

When The Nation reporter David Corn asked McCain about his earlier suggestion that American forces could remain in Iraq for a hundred years, "he reaffirmed the remark, excitedly declaring that U.S. troops could be in Iraq for 'a thousand years' or 'a million years,' as far as he was concerned."

But Iraq is not Germany, Japan and South Korea. In each of those cases, U.S. forces maintain permanent bases to protect the host government from external threats, project American power in the region and to deter potential Russian (previously Soviet), Chinese and North Korea aggression. In Iraq, the U.S. became embroiled in a sectarian civil war that ultimately cost 4,500 American lives and wounded over 30,000 more. There is no place on earth where the United States maintains a permanent military presence to prevent communal violence or tip the scales in a civil war.

Perhaps the most pathetic thing is that John McCain knew this maxim once. Twenty years before the Iraq War and 30 before he called for American intervention in Syria, McCain opposed President Reagan's 1983 peace-keeping mission in Lebanon. As CNN recalled in 2008:

McCain said "I do not see any obtainable objectives in Lebanon" and that "the longer we stay there, the harder it will be to leave." On Oct. 23, 1983, a suicide attack at the Marine headquarters in Beirut killed 241 U.S. service members.

"In Lebanon, I stood up to President Reagan, my hero, and said, if we send Marines in there, how can we possibly beneficially affect this situation? And said we shouldn't. Unfortunately, almost 300 brave young Marines were killed." McCain said at the debate.

8. Regime Change is a Recipe for Disaster

A Republican presidential debate in December 2011 provided one of the most telling moments of the entire campaign. One after another, the GOP candidates described the Iranian nuclear program as an imminent, existential threat to the United States that cannot be allowed to come to fruition. Then-frontrunner Newt Gingrich explained how he would handle Tehran and its nuclear ambitions:

I think replacing the regime before they get a nuclear weapon without a war beats replacing the regime with war, which beats allowing them to have a nuclear weapon. Those are your three choices.

Gingrich made that pronouncement, even as the last U.S. troops were preparing the leave Iraq, a place where
4,500 Americans were killed and a trillion dollars squandered. And all of that sacrifice came in the name of "regime change."

A quick spin through the Wayback Machine can dredge up the infamous letter from the Project for a New American Century to President Clinton in 1998. Signed by what now looks like many future inhabitants of Dante's inner circle, Bill Kristol, John Bolton, Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz, Elliott Abrams among others urged a replacement for the containment policy that had kept Saddam Hussein in a stranglehold:

In your upcoming State of the Union Address, you have an opportunity to chart a clear and determined course for meeting this threat. We urge you to seize that opportunity, and to enunciate a new strategy that would secure the interests of the U.S. and our friends and allies around the world. That strategy should aim, above all, at the removal of Saddam Hussein's regime from power. We stand ready to offer our full support in this difficult but necessary endeavor...

In the near term, this means a willingness to undertake military action as diplomacy is clearly failing. In the long term, it means removing Saddam Hussein and his regime from power. That now needs to become the aim of American foreign policy.

We all know how that policy, made real by the administration of George W. Bush and Dick Cheney, worked out. Replacing governments, especially by military force, has not generally been a happy experience for the United States. As for those still advocating regime change as a goal of American foreign policy, be careful what you ask for. You might just get it.

9. Democracy Promotion Can't Come from the Barrel of Gun

During its short but incredibly damaging life, the Bush Doctrine advocated three propositions. The first was that the United States would not tolerate safe havens for terrorists, a pledge belied by President Bush's refusal to launch unilateral American strikes to take out Osama Bin Laden and high-ranking Al Qaeda targets inside Pakistan.

The second pillar of the Bush Doctrine was democracy promotion. As he put it in his 2005 State of the Union address, Bush declared that the mission of the United States was nothing less than to end tyranny and dictatorship worldwide:

The only force powerful enough to stop the rise of tyranny and terror, and replace hatred with hope, is the force of human freedom...And we've declared our own intention: America will stand with the allies of freedom to support democratic movements in the Middle East and beyond, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world.

Predictably, the neoconservative amen corner collectively chanted its approval. David Brooks proclaimed "the Bush agenda is dominating the globe." On March 4, 2005, Charles Krauthammer declared, "We are at the dawn of a glorious, delicate, revolutionary moment in the Middle East," adding "It is our principles that brought us to this moment by way of Afghanistan and Iraq." Three days later in a Time piece titled Three Cheers for the Bush Doctrine, Krauthammer mocked the opponents of the Bush Doctrine vision of democratic transformation in the Middle East, labeling them "embarrassingly, scandalously, blessedly wrong." And the next day, the National Review's Rich Lowry proclaimed, "By toppling Saddam Hussein and insisting on elections in Iraq, while emphasizing the power of freedom, Bush has put the United States in the right position to encourage and take advantage of democratic uprisings in the region."

But it was Kristol of the Weekly Standard who was perhaps the Bush Doctrine's most vocal cheerleader and self-satisfied proponent. In the wake of the Iraqi elections, Kristol declared the complete victory of the Bush Doctrine and the arrival of a seminal moment in world history, one ushering in a new era of democratic change around the globe:

Just four weeks after the Iraqi election of January 30, 2005, it seems increasingly likely that that date will turn out to have been a genuine turning point. The fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989, ended an era. September 11, 2001, ended an interregnum. In the new era in which we now live, 1/30/05 could be a key moment--perhaps the key moment so far--in vindicating the Bush Doctrine as the right response to 9/11. And now there is the prospect of further and accelerating progress.

But things didn't work out that way. The elation of purple fingers in Iraq, the Orange Revolution in Ukraine and the Cedar Revolution in Lebanon soon faded. Iraq descended deeper into civil war. Hamas won the Palestinian elections in 2006. When the Arab Spring arrived, it came as a response to corrupt authoritarian rule. And it wasn't led by U.S. force or even American ideals, as the revolution triggered by a fruit vendor in Tunis showed.
And when Egypt replaced Hosni Mubarak with a freely elected Muslim Brotherhood government, the neocons were horrified by the Frankenstein democracy they helped engineer.

10. Preventive War is an Idea Whose Time Has Never Come

The third and most controversial tenet of the Bush Doctrine was preventive war. Whether or not preventive war constitutes legitimate self-defense under international law, history is replete with examples. (For Americans, the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor should leap to mind.) While “pre-emption” is "meant to grab the tactical advantages of striking first against what is seen as a truly imminent threat, when an adversary's attack is close at hand," in contrast the Oxford Bibliographies explained:

The strategic logic of preventive war is rooted in the desire to halt the erosion of relative power to a rising adversary and the future dangers this power shift might present. Leaders calculate that a war fought in the near term will be less costly than a war fought at a later date, after the potential adversary has had an opportunity to increase its military capabilities. Under preventive war conditions, there is no certainty that this future war will actually be fought; preventive war is launched to avoid the mere possibility of a higher-cost future war or the potential for the target state to use its rising power in a coercive way.

To be sure, President Bush's invasion of Iraq was an exercise in preventive war. In his October 7, 2002, address in Cincinnati, Bush warned, "Facing clear evidence of peril, we cannot wait for the final proof—the smoking gun—that could come in the form of a mushroom cloud." That echoed the talking point National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice mouthed a month earlier, when she fretted, "We don't want the smoking gun to be a mushroom cloud." Addressing the Veterans of Foreign Wars nearly six months before Colin Powell would make his infamous presentation to the United Nations, Vice President Dick Cheney was unequivocal about the future threat from Saddam Hussein:

Simply stated, there is no doubt that Saddam Hussein now has weapons of mass destruction. There is no doubt he is amassing them to use against our friends, against our allies, and against us. And there is no doubt that his aggressive regional ambitions will lead him into future confrontations with his neighbors -- confrontations that will involve both the weapons he has today, and the ones he will continue to develop with his oil wealth.

For his part, John McCain was on board 100 percent. He didn't just agree that the Iraq war would be a short one and that Americans would be "greeted as liberators." Three months after the invasion in June 2003, McCain announced:

I remain confident that we will find weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

But it didn't work out that way. Bush, Cheney, Rice and McCain (among others) were, as Iraq Survey Group Charles Duelfer testified in October 2004, "almost all wrong." And not just about WMD, but about Saddam's links to Al Qaeda and pretty much everything else. To have any legitimacy in international law and in the court of world opinion, the justifications for preventive war must be true and the "gathering threats" real ones. The Bush administration failed on every criterion.

To put it another way, if any idea should have been thoroughly discredited by the blood and treasure lost in ousting Saddam Hussein and the subsequent carnage in Iraq, it is the very notion of preventive war itself.

Nevertheless, if the Republicans now attacking President Obama have their way, the United States will be on a course for a new preventive war, this time against Iran. But if the negotiations with Tehran over its nuclear program falter, President Obama will have to ask himself the same challenges he issued two years ago. As Obama cautioned in March 2012, "This is not a game," he said. "And there's nothing casual about it."

If some of these folks think that it's time to launch a war, they should say so. And they should explain to the American people exactly why they would do that and what the consequences would be.

Or as General David Petraeus put it during the run-up to the invasion of Iraq, "Tell me how this ends."

The final ending hasn't been written yet. But we do know this: President George W. Bush broke Iraq. And his legacy, now and forever, is that he owns it. [End essay by Jon Perr. –D]
"To initiate a war of aggression, therefore, is not only an international crime, it is the supreme international crime differing only from other war crimes in that it contains within itself the accumulated evil of the whole." -- Robert H. Jackson, Chief U.S. Prosecutor, Nuremberg Military Tribunal

Absolutely Nothing: A Veteran’s Savage Indictment of the Iraq War by Jim Wright; June 14, 2014 on his blog: Stonekettle Station
http://www.stonekettle.com/2014/06/absolutely-nothing.html

Tragically, all we’ve fought for in Iraq, all that 4,500 American lives were shed to gain, is on the cusp, potentially, of vanishing. - Mitt Romney, “Ideas Summit,” 6/13/2014

All we fought for in Iraq.

All we fought for in Iraq is on the cusp of vanishing.

That's what Mitt Romney says.

We fought for. We fought for. We.

Oh, so it's we now, is it, Mitt?

We.

I must have missed you over there, but it was a busy place. We. The guy who helped set up “pro-draft” rallies and yet somehow managed to avoid service in Vietnam is upset about losing what “we” fought for? We.

Yeah, fuck you, Mitt.

And you’re all welcome to quote me on that.

Somebody stepped into my office yesterday and asked how I felt about it. He wanted to know how I felt about “losing” Iraq.

How do I feel about losing all we fought for?

I don’t know.

First, I’m going to need somebody to explain to me exactly what it was that we were fighting for.

What was it? What is it that we gained, according to Mitt Romney? And what is on the cusp of vanishing? What is that? No, really, somebody please explain it to me.

Because I’d love to know.

The Wikipedia says Operation Iraqi Freedom started on the 20th of March, 2003, which is just another reason why you shouldn’t believe anything you read in the Wikipedia (don’t, just don’t). That's not correct, the war began a day earlier. See, I was there on the night the war really started, at precisely 2200 hours, on the 19th of March in the Northern Arabian Gulf. I was there when US Navy SEALs and Polish GROM stormed the MABOT and KAAOT oil terminals a full day before Saddam Hussein discovered that his time was finally up. In point of fact, I had arrived there four months before, a few days before Christmas in December of 2002. From the day of my arrival (and before that really) to the day the war started, and for months after, I was a Navy intelligence officer working in support of the invasion force. There’s not much I don’t know about the events leading up to
war and the aftermath of the invasion.

Well, not much except for that one little detail.

Why.

All these years later, and I still don't know why.

Oh, I mean, I know what they told us, sure, Saddam Hussein attacked America on 9-11. Right? That's what they said, that's what the Commander in Chief told us. Saddam Hussein was in league with Al Qaida, remember? The son of a bitch and his stinking nation of terrorists attacked us. The Iraqis had it coming. And Georgie Boy was going to finish what his daddy started. Hooray! Right? That's what they said.

Except those of us in the professional intelligence community looked at each other and thought, wait, what? How the hell did we miss that? Saddam and Osama bin Laden are working together? Buwah? But Rumsfeld, he had his own little extra-constitutional intelligence outfit staffed with his simpering cronies who he paid to blow smoke up his pinched grey ass until his colon resembled beef jerky and he sure didn't have much use for us – after all, we were just the military he had.

Ours, as they say, is not to reason why, ours is to but do and die, right? At least that’s what Rummy told us and you know, you go into war with the Secretary of Defense you have, not the one you’d like to have. And if Rumsfeld says he’s got the real scoop, it must be true? Right? Sure, that justifies his contempt for us, sure it does.

Except, Rumsfeld’s little masturbation fantasy turned out not to be the case.

But hey, never mind that, Saddam Hussein was threatening us anyway, wasn’t he? Sure he was, in fact, that’s the first time you heard the phrase “Weapons of Mass Destruction” isn’t it? The bastard had nukes and germs and war gas and he was just itching to use them on America, wasn’t he? Heck we even had pictures of “mobile weapons labs” to prove it, isn’t that what Colin Powell told the UN and the world? And by damn Saddam had been buying Yellow Cake uranium from Niger, right? Colin Powell wouldn’t lie to us, would he? He was a hero, a general, he wouldn’t send his comrades into war on a lie now would he?

Except all that turned out to be bullshit too, and Colin Powell was either a dupe of staggering proportions or he was the kind of Soldier who would fuck his buddy right in the ass without so much as a reach-around and I’ll leave it up to you to figure which one is worse.

But by the time we figured out we’d been ass-raped by Colin Powell, we were shoulder deep in Iraq, Baghdad was burning, Iraq’s army had thrown down their weapons and taken off their uniforms and had melted into the population, Saddam had vanished and his sons were dead, and the President of the United States had already declared victory from the deck of an American aircraft carrier.

And so, the objective became … what?

Hearts and minds and freedom and democracy and nation building and magic bunnies who fart sunshine and rainbows.

Unfortunately, it turns out we’re real good at the blowing shit up part, not so good at the magic bunnies part.

Which in retrospect, shouldn’t be all that surprising - given that in order to build a civilization it helps if you actually have some vague familiarity with the people involved. Needless to say, we didn’t. And we didn’t care. To America, they were all little brown towelheads, sand niggers, raggedy-assed camel jockeys who ought to be grateful to America for burning down their shitty country. Sunni? Shia? Turkman? Baathists? What’s that? What do you mean they hate each other? They’re all Muslims aren’t they? They’re all Aayrabs, right? What do you mean they hate each other? And it all fell apart, disintegrating into insurgency and murder and bloody civil war – just exactly as anybody who actually knew something about the region and its people and its history could have told you it would. We lost less than a hundred soldiers in the actual war, the “peace” cost us nearly 5000 more. And the Iraqis? Who the hell knows? A hundred thousand? A million? It’s impossible to tell.

And it turns out that freedom and democracy and magic flying bunnies were as elusive as Iraq’s supposed WMDs – or Colin Powell’s honor.

So, what was it again that we were fighting for?
Juan Cole, Don't Trust the Bombers on Iraq: "Shock and Awe" Never Works

Juan Cole, Informed Comment, Reader Supported News, June 17, 2014
Cole writes: "In March of 2003, we were treated to an intensive bombardment of Iraq, which the Bush White House propagandists termed 'Shock and Awe.' As usual, the US Air Force practically promised us that if only they could throw down all their fancy munitions on the target country from the air, why, you might not even need those impossibly old-fashioned grunts in the US Army."

REMEmBER BUSH-CHENEY-RUMSFELD-RICE
Who Won Iraq? By Tom Engelhardt, TomDispatch, 19 June 14

It was all to be a kind of war-fighting miracle. The American invaders would be greeted as liberators, the mission quickly accomplished, and "major combat operations" ended in a flash -- as George Bush so infamously announced on May 1, 2003, after his Top Gun landing on the deck of the USS Abraham Lincoln. No less miraculous was the fact that it would essentially be a freebie. After all, as undersecretary Paul Wolfowitz pointed out at the time, Iraq "floats on a sea of oil," which meant that a "liberated" country could cover all "reconstruction" costs without blinking.

The Bushheviks entered Iraq with a powerful sense that they were building an American protectorate. So why wouldn't it be a snap to carry out their ambitious plans to privatize the Iraqi economy, dismantle the country’s vast public sector (throwing another army of employees out of work), and bring in crony corporations to help run the country and giant oil companies to rev up the energy economy, lagging from years of sanctions and ill-repair? In the end, Washington’s Iraq would -- so they believed -- pump enough crude out of one of the greatest fossil fuel reserves on the planet to sink OPEC, leaving American power free to float to ever greater heights on that sea of oil. As the occupying authority, with a hubris stunning to behold, they issued "orders" that read as if they had been written by officials from some nineteenth-century imperial power.

In short, this was one for the history books. And not a thing -- nothing -- worked out as planned. You could almost say that whatever it was they dreamed, the opposite invariably occurred. For those of us in the reality-based community, for instance, it’s long been apparent that their war and occupation would cost the U.S., literally and figuratively, an arm and a leg (and that the costs to Iraqis would prove beyond calculating). More than two trillion dollars later -- without figuring in astronomical post-war costs still to come -- Iraq is a
catastrophe. And $25 billion later, the last vestige of American Iraq, the security forces that, in the end, Washington built up to massive proportions, seem to be in a state of dissolution. Just over a week ago, faced with the advance of a reported 800-1,300 militants from the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and the opposition of tribal militias and local populations, close to 50,000 army officers and troops abandoned their American weaponry to Sunni insurgents and foreign jihadis, shed their uniforms by various roadides, and fled. As a result, significant parts of Iraq, including Mosul, its second largest city, fell into the hands of Sunni insurgents, some of a Saddamist coloration, and a small army of jihadis evidently funded by Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, both U.S. allies.

The arrogance of those occupation years should still take anyone’s breath away. Bush and his top officials remade reality on an almost unimaginable scale and, as we study the region today, the results bear no relation to the world they imagined creating. None whatsoever. On the other hand, there were two dreams they had that, after a fashion, did come into existence.

Many Americans still remember the Bush administration’s bogus pre-invasion claims -- complete with visions of mushroom clouds rising over American cities -- that Saddam Hussein had a thriving nuclear program in Iraq. But who remembers that, as part of the justification for the invasion it had decided would be its destiny, the administration also claimed a “mature and symbiotic” relationship between Saddam Hussein’s Iraq and al-Qaeda? In other words, the invasion was to be justified in some fashion as a response to the attacks of 9/11 (which Saddam Hussein had nothing to do with). Who remembers that, the year after American troops took Baghdad, evidence of the nuclear program having gone down the toilet, Vice President Dick Cheney, backed by George W. Bush, doubled down on the al-Qaeda claim? "There clearly was a relationship. It's been testified to," said the vice president on CNBC in June 2004. "The evidence is overwhelming. It goes back to the early '90s. It involves a whole series of contacts, high-level contacts with Osama bin Laden and Iraqi intelligence officials."

Based on cherry-picked intelligence, such claims proved fraudulent, too, or as David Kay, the man assigned by the administration to hunt down that missing weaponry of mass destruction and those al-Qaeda links, put it politely, "evidence free." By then, however, 57% of Americans had been convinced that there was indeed some significant relationship between Saddam’s Iraq and al-Qaeda, and 20% believed that Saddam was linked directly to the 9/11 attacks.

Be careful, as they say, what you wish for. More than a decade after its invasion and occupation, after Cheney made those fervent claims, no administration would have the slightest problem linking al-Qaeda to Iraq (or Syria, Yemen, or a number of other countries). A decade later, the evidence is in. Sunni Iraq, along with areas of neighboring Syria, one of the countries that was supposed to bow down before American might, now houses a rudimentary jihadist state, a creature birthed into the world in significant part thanks to the dreams and fantasies of the visionaries of the Bush administration. Across the Greater Middle East, jihadism and al-Qaeda wannabes of every sort are on the rise, while terror groups are destabilizing regions from Pakistan to northern Africa.

MORE: http://readersupportednews.org/opinion2/289-134/24327-focus-who-won-iraq

SUNNI INSURRECTION advancing, 2 Essays Forwarded by Common Dreams

Ramzy Baroud: Sectarian Monster Reawakened: Redrawing the Map of Iraq, Again http://www.commondreams.org/view/2014/06/18-1

War, Oil, and Intervention as Key Iraq Refinery Sustains Attack
The Fog Machine of War, *NYT* (June 15, 2014)

By CHELSEA MANNING  JUNE 14, 2014

Chelsea Manning on the U.S. Military and Media Freedom

FORT LEAVENWORTH, Kan. — WHEN I chose to disclose classified information in 2010, I did so out of a love for my country and a sense of duty to others. I'm now serving a sentence of 35 years in prison for these unauthorized disclosures. I understand that my actions violated the law.

However, the concerns that motivated me have not been resolved. As Iraq erupts in civil war and America again contemplates intervention, that unfinished business should give new urgency to the question of how the United States military controlled the media coverage of its long involvement there and in Afghanistan. I believe that the current limits on press freedom and excessive government secrecy make it impossible for Americans to grasp fully what is happening in the wars we finance.

If you were following the news during the March 2010 elections in Iraq, you might remember that the American press was flooded with stories declaring the elections a success, complete with upbeat anecdotes and photographs of Iraqi women proudly displaying their ink-stained fingers. The subtext was that United States military operations had succeeded in creating a stable and democratic Iraq.

Those of us stationed there were acutely aware of a more complicated reality.

Military and diplomatic reports coming across my desk detailed a brutal crackdown against political dissidents by the Iraqi Ministry of Interior and federal police, on behalf of Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki. Detainees were often tortured, or even killed.

Early that year, I received orders to investigate 15 individuals whom the federal police had arrested on suspicion of printing “anti-Iraqi literature.” I learned that these individuals had absolutely no ties to terrorism; they were publishing a scholarly critique of Mr. Maliki’s administration. I forwarded this finding to the officer in command in eastern Baghdad. He responded that he didn’t need this information; instead, I should assist the federal police in locating more “anti-Iraqi” print shops.

I was shocked by our military’s complicity in the corruption of that election. Yet these deeply troubling details flew under the American media’s radar.

It was not the first (or the last) time I felt compelled to question the way we conducted our
mission in Iraq. We intelligence analysts, and the officers to whom we reported, had access to a comprehensive overview of the war that few others had. How could top-level decision makers say that the American public, or even Congress, supported the conflict when they didn’t have half the story?

Among the many daily reports I received via email while working in Iraq in 2009 and 2010 was an internal public affairs briefing that listed recently published news articles about the American mission in Iraq. One of my regular tasks was to provide, for the public affairs summary read by the command in eastern Baghdad, a single-sentence description of each issue covered, complementing our analysis with local intelligence.

The more I made these daily comparisons between the news back in the States and the military and diplomatic reports available to me as an analyst, the more aware I became of the disparity. In contrast to the solid, nuanced briefings we created on the ground, the news available to the public was flooded with foggy speculation and simplifications.

One clue to this disjunction lay in the public affairs reports. Near the top of each briefing was the number of embedded journalists attached to American military units in a combat zone. Throughout my deployment, I never saw that tally go above 12. In other words, in all of Iraq, which contained 31 million people and 117,000 United States troops, no more than a dozen American journalists were covering military operations.

The process of limiting press access to a conflict begins when a reporter applies for embed status. All reporters are carefully vetted by military public affairs officials. This system is far from unbiased. Unsurprisingly, reporters who have established relationships with the military are more likely to be granted access.

Less well known is that journalists whom military contractors rate as likely to produce “favorable” coverage, based on their past reporting, also get preference. This outsourced “favorability” rating assigned to each applicant is used to screen out those judged likely to produce critical coverage.

Reporters who succeeded in obtaining embed status in Iraq were then required to sign a media “ground rules” agreement. Army public affairs officials said this was to protect operational security, but it also allowed them to terminate a reporter’s embed without appeal.

There have been numerous cases of reporters’ having their access terminated following controversial reporting. In 2010, the late Rolling Stone reporter Michael Hastings had his access pulled after reporting criticism of the Obama administration by Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal and his staff in Afghanistan. A Pentagon spokesman said, “Embeds are a privilege, not a right.”

If a reporter’s embed status is terminated, typically she or he is blacklisted. This program of limiting press access was challenged in court in 2013 by a freelance reporter, Wayne Anderson, who claimed to have followed his agreement but to have been terminated after publishing adverse reports about the conflict in Afghanistan. The ruling on his case upheld the military’s position that there was no constitutionally protected right to be an embedded journalist.

The embedded reporter program, which continues in Afghanistan and wherever the United States sends troops, is deeply informed by the military’s experience of how media coverage shifted public opinion during the Vietnam War. The gatekeepers in public affairs have too much power: Reporters naturally fear having their access terminated, so they tend to avoid controversial reporting that could raise red flags.
The existing program forces journalists to compete against one another for “special access” to vital matters of foreign and domestic policy. Too often, this creates reporting that flatters senior decision makers. A result is that the American public’s access to the facts is gutted, which leaves them with no way to evaluate the conduct of American officials.

[REMEDIES –D]

Journalists have an important role to play in calling for reforms to the embedding system. The favorability of a journalist’s previous reporting should not be a factor. Transparency, guaranteed by a body not under the control of public affairs officials, should govern the credentialing process. An independent board made up of military staff members, veterans, Pentagon civilians and journalists could balance the public’s need for information with the military’s need for operational security.

Reporters should have timely access to information. The military could do far more to enable the rapid declassification of information that does not jeopardize military missions. The military’s Significant Activity Reports, for example, provide quick overviews of events like attacks and casualties. Often classified by default, these could help journalists report the facts accurately.

Opinion polls indicate that Americans’ confidence in their elected representatives is at a record low. Improving media access to this crucial aspect of our national life — where America has committed the men and women of its armed services — would be a powerful step toward re-establishing trust between voters and officials.

Chelsea Manning is a former United States Army intelligence analyst.


MEDIA AND AL-QAIDA: LET’S MAKE DISTINCTIONS

On June 14, the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette reported (p. 1A, “Iraqis Urged to Face Down Sunni Menace”) that “Sunni militants . . . have seized large areas of territory” and were killing (who?) in “reprisal.” “Fighters from the al-Qaida-inspired Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant” drove “government forces at least temporarily from two towns. . . The Sunni Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIS for short) are Sunnis and have their own motivations. In Syria the two groups are opposed.

The irresponsible, unsubstantiated, frequent identification of insurgents or militants with al Qaida by US mainstream media is a contributing factor in the public’s support for and confusion over the US so-called War on Terror, better labeled War of Terror --Dick

[The last piece I wrote for #16 referred to Iran’s “willingness to confront” the growing Sunni threat in Iraq. –Dick]
Cole writes: "Iran has decided to intervene directly in Iraq and has already sent fighters to the front, according to the Wall Street Journal, based on Iranian sources."
READ MORE

Tehran Willing to Work With US Over Iraq Crisis
Reuters, Reader Supported News, June 13, 2014
Excerpt: "Shia Muslim Iran is so alarmed by Sunni insurgent gains in Iraq that it may be willing to cooperate with Washington in helping Baghdad fight back, a senior Iranian official told Reuters."
READ MORE

We don’t live near DC, but we can call, and that’s really better, because then we can get acquainted with all the President’s staff. Quote the President’s invitation as a cordial introduction. --Dick

From the White House: Write or Call

President Obama is committed to creating the most open and accessible administration in American history. That begins with taking comments and questions from you, the public, through our website.

Call the President

PHONE NUMBERS
Comments: 202-456-1111
Switchboard: 202-456-1414

TTY/TTD
Comments: 202-456-6213
Visitor’s Office: 202-456-2121

Write a letter to the President

Here are a few simple things you can do to make sure your message gets to the White House as quickly as possible.

1. If possible, email us! This is the fastest way to get your message to President Obama.

2. If you write a letter, please consider typing it on an 8 1/2 by 11 inch sheet of paper. If you hand-write your letter, please consider using pen and writing as neatly as possible.

3. Please include your return address on your letter as well as your envelope. If you have an email address, please consider including that as well.

4. And finally, be sure to include the full address of the White House to make sure your message gets to us as
quickly and directly as possible:

The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Contents Illegal Iraq Invasion, Occupation, “Post Occupation,” #16

JUNE 2014 INSURRECTION IN IRAQ and RESISTANCE in US TO ANOTHER WAR
Common Dreams, Obama Considering Air Strikes in Civil War
Boardman, Another Undeclared War
WAND, Call the President
CREDO, Don’t Bomb
Just Foreign Policy, Sign Petition
Progressive Secretary, Congress Repeal Authorization for Iraq War

BACKGROUNDs to the Uprising of June 2014
Blum, Iraq Ruined
Vibes, Failure and Fraud of Construction Program
Van Buren, Botched Construction But What’s a Trillion Dollars in a Senseless War
Zunes, US Occupation and Upsurge of Violence
Reagan: At least Half-Million Iraqis Killed, One of Worst Crimes of 21st Century
Iraqi Refugees and Rescuers
Google Search, UNHCR and Iraqis, April 11, 2014
International Organization for Migration (IOM)
Citizens Reach Out-- to Bring Them to US and Europe

2014
Salaheddin, 703 Killed in February 2014
Germanos, Mounting Deaths Attributed to US Invasion and Occupation
Isabel Coles, May 2014 Most Violent Month So Far This Year
Dick, Washington Post Editorial, May 2014, the Pro-War Mainstream Press Analyzed

US WOMEN SOLDIERS
END IRAQ WARS NEWSLETTER #17

--
Dick Bennett

Newsletters
http://www.omnicenter.org/newsletter-archive/

Index:
http://www.omnicenter.org/omni-newsletter-general-index/
jbennet@uark.edu
Blog
http://jamesrichardbennett.blogspot.com/

j.dick.bennett@gmail.com
(479) 442-4600
2582 Jimmie Ave.
Fayetteville, AR 72703