

VOICE OF THE LEFT

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Surge into Hell: Bush's Latest Plan for Victory in Iraq

Three months after the Bush Administration and a parade of U.S. army generals explicitly told the American people that no significant changes in troop levels or military strategy were needed, President Bush and his new cadre of goose-stepping lackeys boldly announced that new tactics were now required. In a complete reversal of his previous position, the president's new "plan for victory" called for an additional 21,500 combat troops to conduct a door-to-door sweep of the most violent sections of Baghdad and Anbar province. Of course, this was "not an escalation," as George W's favorite puppet (Condoleeza Rice) so eloquently explained a few days later... "but a surge."

Semantics aside, this "new directive" comes on the heels of a wide-sweeping Democratic victory in the recent Congressional elections in which the war in Iraq played a pivotal role. Plain and simple, the new policy is a kick in the teeth to the American people who clearly do not support this war. The president's strategy also reflects a complete misunderstanding of the Iraqi war by failing to recognize that the conflict is primarily a sectarian struggle emanating from centuries of mistrust and animosity.

No number of American troops can successfully police a Muslim civil war.

If Iraq is going to become a peaceful, democratic society, it will only happen after Iraqis have learned to trust each other and work together as one people to build democratic institutions. As for the likelihood of this happening in the near future, let's put it this way – there are no Muslim democracies anywhere in the world. (If you think Turkey is one, you need to do a bit more research.)

We have already suffered 30,000 casualties (military and civilian) and spent \$400 billion dollars in the misguided effort to turn Iraq into Southern California. Incredibly, we are now spending over \$400 million dollars a day to support a regime that has expressed the desire to forge closer ties with Iran, and which cannot control more than a few blocks in the capital city's so-called Green Zone.

This is now the second longest war that our nation has fought since winning independence from Britain in 1783.

And how has the surge been going? According to the Associated Press, the daily U.S. casualty rate for the first ten days of the escalation is higher than at any time since the war began.

What a pity.

As American journalist Tom Engelhardt recently pointed out, “Before the invasion of Iraq, the possibility of fighting an urban war in the Iraqi capital's streets and alleys was the American high command's personal nightmare. Now, it's their reality.” Engelhardt added another word of foreboding. “Let’s not forget that the beginning of the end of the Russian occupation of Afghanistan in the 1980s came when CIA-supplied Stinger missiles began to take down Russian helicopters in significant numbers.”

With six U.S. helicopters downed in the last three weeks, this is a warning flag of the first order.

In closing, the idea that the United States can create a constitutional democracy in a country lacking homegrown democratic institutions, that is torn apart by sectarian violence, and which sits on a geopolitical fault line, contradicts the opinions of nearly every professional scholar in the field. When esteemed British historian, Nial Ferguson, was asked whether or not such a thing had ever been achieved under these conditions, he had this to say.

“My research has failed to produce one such example.”

The words of Engelhardt and Ferguson should not go unheeded. Let’s put that \$400 million dollars a day toward cleaning up the environment, funding medical research and building better schools, hospitals, and roads. Then again, how about Homeland Security?