

ANALYSIS OF PRESIDENT BUSH'S “ASSESSMENT REPORT” ON IRAQ

“Few appreciable gains.”

--Thomas Fingar, Deputy Director for Analysis at the National Intelligence Council, describing Iraqi political progress in Congressional testimony yesterday

“There's nothing to wait for.”

-Sen. Pete Domenici (R-NM), who went on to say “Almost everybody that has any knowledge of the reports . . . would indicate they are not going to show any degree of a big change that we needed. And so we're just wasting time.”
[Albuquerque Tribune, July 11, 2007]

Iraq Report is Chilling Assessment of the Lack of Progress to Date

Nearly four and one-half years since President Bush launched this war in March 2003, more than 3,600 American servicemen and women have been killed in Iraq, more than 26,000 have been injured, and the American taxpayer has spent nearly half a trillion on this misadventure (\$450 billion to date, with a pending request by the Administration for another \$147 billion). And yet, the Administration today makes vague statements about “progress” without any indication or confidence that it will be sustained or that real gains will be made. **The bottom line of this report is nothing more than the President's stay-the-course strategy repackaged.**

Lowlights of the President's Iraq Report

- The **Iraqi government has not met a single one of the 18 security, political, and economic milestones** that the Congress laid out as measurements for success.
- Of the 18 benchmarks, **Iraqis are making progress on only eight, mixed progress on one, while making “unsatisfactory” or “not satisfactory” progress on eight.** The report discredits one benchmark altogether, rejecting as “counter-productive” a major Iraq Study Group recommendation that Iraqis should pass legislation on amnesty.
- **Reality Check on Key Benchmarks:**
 - **NOT SATISFACTORY. Enacting and implementing legislation on de-Ba'athification reform:** “Senior Iraqi political leaders remain at odds over some of the most fundamental aspects of de-Ba'athification reform... a public discussion on the accommodations that different parts of Iraqi society will have to make with each other is not yet underway.”

- **NOT SATISFACTORY. Ensuring that Iraqi Security Forces are providing even-handed enforcement of the law:** “Left on their own, many ISF units still tend to gravitate to old habits of sectarianism when applying the law.”
- **UNSATISFACTORY. Reducing the level of sectarian violence in Iraq and eliminating militia control of local security:** “Militia presence is still strong and reaches into the security services of a number of ministries. Despite some progress, militias are still a dominant force in parts of Baghdad, Basrah, and many provinces in Iraq – and will likely remain so until the security situation begins to stabilize over time.”
- **UNSATISFACTORY. Increasing the number of Iraqi Security Forces units capable of operating independently:** “There has been a slight reduction in units assessed as capable of independent operations since January 2007”
- **UNSATISFACTORY. Ensuring that Iraqi’s political authorities are not undermining or making false accusations against members of the ISF:** “Iraqi authorities continue to undermine and make false accusations against ISF members... The effect is at times to deny the ISF the services of qualified officers or to discourage them from operating in a professional non-sectarian manner.”

“Too Early To Suggest That There Had Been A Lasting Turnaround”

Four and one-half years into the war, the *New York Times* reported today that American Ambassador Ryan Crocker and General David Petraeus, the top American commander in Iraq, said it is **“too early to suggest that there had been a lasting turnaround in the war.”** Ambassador Crocker said: **“If 20 people killed a day is good news, that tells you how bad things were previously.”**

The American People Have Spoken

The American people have spoken clearly – more than **70% support withdrawing almost all of our troops by April 2008.** Half do not believe the increase in U.S. forces since January has made a difference. This report proves them right. [USAToday/Gallup Polling]

Time to Responsibly Redeploy out of Civil War, Refocus on Terrorism

Put simply, our troops are being asked to police a civil war while Iraq’s own security forces refuse to step up to the plate, with the net result that **our military readiness has been diminished and we have diverted our attention in the war on terror.** Just today, the Washington Post reports that “six years after the Bush administration declared war on al-Qaeda, the terrorist network is gaining strength and has established a safe haven in remote tribal areas of western Pakistan for training and planning attacks, according to a new Bush administration intelligence report.”

“Iraq is distracting America...”

Maj. Gen. John Batiste (retired), who went on to say “It is in America's best interest to rethink our national strategy, deliberately disengage from Iraq, refit and rearm our military, get serious about homeland security, and prepare to win the next phase of the struggle against worldwide Islamic extremism.” [UPI, July 2, 2007]