

I recently returned from a trip to the Far East where I urged our friends in the region to help. An isolated America, I warned, is likely to become an isolationist America. The ramifications for international trade as well as politics are potentially explosive.

At the height of the Vietnam War, Senator George D. Aiken of Vermont became famous for a policy suggestion in the form of a quip. He argued that the U.S. should simply declare victory and get out.

Iraq is not a circumstance in which the U.S. should be trumpeting military victory despite its decisiveness. But little could be more appropriate than to announce a change in policy based on the fact that our principal mission has been accomplished, ridding Iraq of a despotic dictator and eliminating the near-term prospect that Iraq could become a center for the development and distribution of weapons of mass destruction, whether or not Saddam had a significant WMD capability prior to U.S. intervention.

Having intervened, the U.S. cannot end its responsibility until Iraqi society is back on its feet in a credible, progressive and legitimized governance basis. The question is whether that basis is more likely to be achieved with Americanization or internationalization of responsibility.

My sense is that the establishing of a more progressive government in Iraq will be achieved earlier and with substantially less bloodshed if it becomes clear that Iraq is being put back together under the mantle of an international mandate rather than by an intervening military power.

□ 1815

The goal should be to emphasize the idealism of the challenge before us rather than dwell on realpolitik posturing which can too easily trigger increased anarchy and even a clash of civilizations. Strength, to be sustainable, must come from a balance of judgment that brings respect rather than resentment from the rest of the world. Otherwise, an intervention designed exclusively to diminish terrorism could serve as a rationale to expand terrorism around the world, including on our own shores.

Four decades ago, the British author Lawrence Durrell wrote a series of novels called the "Alexandria Quarter" in which he describes a set of events in Alexandria, Egypt, before World War II. A seminal literary experiment in the relativity of human perception that was named one of the top 100 novels of the last century, each of the books viewed the same events through the eyes of four different participants. The full story cannot be comprehended without synthesizing how each of the protagonists viewed events from his or her own individual perspective.

Today, in Middle East, we have an analogous circumstance. For the full story of Iraq to be understood, we need to understand how events are perceived

through very different sets of eyes and very different sets of reasoning. American policy makers, for instance, generally reason in a pragmatic, future-oriented manner. Much of the rest of the world, on the other hand, reasons more generally, by historical analogy. Events centuries back play a definitively greater role in judgments made about policies today.

Symbolically, the nature of the radically different way Americans and Middle Easterners look at the world is reflected in the startling statistic that four out of five Al Jazeera viewers believe a French author who claims that the plane which blasted into the Pentagon on 9/11 was actually a U.S. military aircraft ordered by the U.S. military to hit itself in an effort to justify the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. This kind of conspiracy theory is instantaneously understood as ludicrous in America, but not elsewhere. In fact, even in the heart of the democratic Europe, conspiracy theories about the events of 9/11 have topped best-seller lists. Intriguingly, from a Muslim perspective, the fact that nearly 70 percent of the American public believe that Saddam Hussein was personally involved in the attacks of September 11 appears equally unconvincing. Muslims note that no Iraqi citizen was involved in the attack and believe that alleged evidence of Iraqi complicity is peripheral and tangential at best.

On the other hand, virtually the entirety of the Muslim world recognizes Saddam to have been a sadistic dictator. There is no public support for him, but extraordinary consternation that a Western power would intervene in the Middle East in the way it did.

It is possible to suggest, from an American perspective, that since we received inadequate support for the UN, it makes little sense to cede authority to outsiders now. On the other hand, if one does not rebalance transitional governance in Iraq, it is hard for America to suggest to the international community that all countries have an obligation not only to support the governing authority but provide reconstruction assistance.

The question is whether America would be better off with a new Security Council mandate that gives responsibility for coordinating the political transition process to the UN, assisted by American experts already in the field, while maintaining the U.S. role in military and internal security concerns, or whether we want to continue to bear near exclusive responsibility for a country with a government lacking legitimacy.

I am convinced that the fact that the U.S. did not get solid support from the UN, prior to the invasion, underscores the importance of seeking greater international legitimacy in the transition to a democratic Iraqi Government.

Simply put, legitimacy delayed is security denied.

PRIVILEGED REPORT REQUESTING PRESIDENT TO TRANSMIT REPORT ENTITLED "OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM STRATEGIC LESSONS LEARNED" AND DOCUMENTS IN HIS POSSESSION ON THE RECONSTRUCTION AND SECURITY OF POST-WAR IRAQ

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan (during special order of Mr. LEACH), from the Committee on Armed Services, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 108-289, Part 2) on the resolution (H. Res. 364) requesting the President to transmit to the House of Representatives not later than 14 days after the date of adoption of this resolution the report prepared for the Joint Chiefs of Staff entitled "Operation Iraqi Freedom Strategic Lessons Learned" and documents in his possession on the reconstruction and security of post-war Iraq, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

IMMIGRATION, OVERTIME, AND RUSH LIMBAUGH

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MCCOTTER). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, there are several items that I would like to comment on and share with my colleagues.

We had a very powerful day today. Hundreds of immigrants and immigrant supporters, friends of this Nation, parents and sisters and brothers and neighbors of some of the young men and women that are now on the frontlines of Operation Iraqi Freedom came to the Nation's Capitol to speak to the issues of civil rights and human dignity. They came in what we call the Immigration Freedom Ride. They leave tomorrow morning on to New Jersey and then to go to the seat of Ellis Island in New York to be able to restate to all Americans that we all came from somewhere, and that this Nation is bountiful because each of us were able to contribute our own culture and the respect for human dignity. They ask simple things, Mr. Speaker, and that is access to legalization, the ability to reunite their families, and civil rights and civil justice. They came in the spirit of the Freedom Riders of the 1960's and the first ones in the 1940's. They came in a spirit of Martin Luther King and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS), our own colleague. They walked across the bridge in Selma, Alabama, the Edmond Pettus bridge. They realize that the two have now intertwined: their quest for civil justice and civil rights, as our quest, the Freedom Riders' in the 1960's quest for civil rights and civil justice. And they call upon America's goodness, just as we who are African Americans, maybe called colored, maybe called Negroes in the early 1960's pressed the case that we too were Americans.