

Iraq and America's Political Responsibility

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After a long and bloody military campaign against the Ottoman Empire's army, Lt. General Sir Frederick Stanley Maude of the United Kingdom finally completed the conquest of Mesopotamia in March 1917. Based on his proclamation to the inhabitants of Baghdad, the government of the United Kingdom was determined to establish a modern, sovereign, unified and economically prosperous state in the territories of the former Ottoman vilayets of Mosul, Baghdad and Basra. This first Anglo-Saxon occupation of Iraq came to an ignominious end first with the premature withdrawal of British troops in 1927, and later in 1932, with the termination of the British mandate by the League of Nations. Following nine years of civil war, Sunni terror over the majority Shiite population, and the Iraqi army's invitation to Nazi Germany to take over the country, the British hurriedly reoccupied Iraq. From the end of this second occupation in 1948, Iraq experienced several military coups, civil wars, foreign wars, genocides, and cruel dictatorships.

In 2003, like the United Kingdom of the 1920s, the United States and its coalition partners invaded Saddam Hussein's Iraq with the same missionary zeal and have ended up facing the same deep ethnic and religious divisions, bands of radical Muslim terrorists, numerous armed minority groups, and the intense interference of neighboring states. And once again, seven years after the overthrow of Saddam Hussein, Iraq is neither stabilized nor normalized. With the recent end of combat operations, the glaring incompetence of President Obama and his advisers is laid bare: lack of strategic clarity abroad, and reckless indebtedness that threatens national security at home.

Egged on by his anti-American and anti-capitalist base to fulfill one of his signature campaign promises to withdraw American troops from Iraq in sixteen months, President Obama risks the resurgence of mayhem and with it the degeneration of the country's fledgling democracy into a regionally dangerous political vacuum. To add insult to injury, the United States currently is experiencing a profound foreign policy malaise that is the combined result of the executive branch's mismanagement of the nation's international affairs and the utter corruption of the democrat majority in Congress. Clearly, this President and this Congress are not competent to lead the United States and the rest of the world. And this is primarily a political problem. Iraq, Afghanistan, the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and Central and South America are strategically interconnected and, therefore, for the United States there is no way of preserving and expanding the horizon of freedom without making sacrifices.

However, because of the destructive partisanship, the ideological exclusivity and the amateurish behavior of President Obama and his party, the United States conveys to the world a sense of lack of national unity and clear vision. Indeed, China, Russia, Iran and its allies are well aware that incompetent leadership combined with declining domestic strength will surely lead to political and military weakness throughout the world. As a result, they are all busy rebuilding and expanding their military powers and rethinking their strategies. The new alliance of Turkey, Syria, Qatar and Iran, with its manifold terrorist tentacles, is supported, subtly or openly, by Russia, China and even Brazil. All this is happening while President Obama is fretting publicly over the prohibitive cost of staying in Iraq and in Afghanistan.

Iraq, and Afghanistan too, are long-term challenges. So are China, Russia, Iran, Brazil and anti-Western terrorism. By now, it is an indisputable fact that China in Asia and Iran in the greater Middle East and South-East Asia are huge threats to their neighbors, and respectively to the current continental and regional balance. They are not merely threatening America's allies but also the United States itself. Even more ominously, they all pursue an aggressive policy of anti-capitalistic and anti-democratic rule at home. In fact, a new geopolitical reality is emerging before the very eyes of this administration that it thus far did not grasp and did not act against. The inconvenient political reality for President Obama is that both his supporters and his critics have lost confidence in his ability to manage the interrelated domestic and foreign affairs of the United States. Moreover, the dilemma for him is that domestic and international events are rapidly changing the status quo and the global balance of power.

If these incompetent and misdirected domestic and foreign policies continue, the United States is bound to lose its international supremacy. What is equally obvious is that with his anti-democratic, anti-capitalist and anti-American policies President Obama is not the political leader to defend and to uphold universal freedom throughout the world. It is no accident, therefore, that the incoherent policies of the Obama Administration have created massive confusion at home and abroad, and resulted in an almost complete breakdown of consensus with all of America's allies. Thus, both the premature Iraqi withdrawal and the exceptionally stupid deadline for Afghanistan are indeed the triumph of unwarranted optimism over professionalism and experience.

Yet there is another alternative. This administration must stay the course and prevent the American-built democratic institutions from collapsing under the relentless assaults of the anti-Western forces. Moreover, continued American and allied military presence will also prevent Iraq and Afghanistan from falling into the hands of foreign puppets or local autocrats. Finally, for political and ideological purposes, Iraq's and Afghanistan's public and private educational systems must be revamped and supervised for a long time. These oversights will ensure that both countries will develop into stable democratic societies in which the various ethnic and religious groups can exist together peacefully.

To achieve these objectives, the American people and the hopefully newly constituted Congress must stop the madness of the strategic incompetence and the distasteful and counterproductive self-flagellation of a president who clearly is out of his depth in leading the preeminent nation of the world.