

The Fallacy of Bleed Out

by
Dale Allen Pfeiffer

22/02/07 (www.mountainsentinel.com) The idea of bleed out is that, although Bush was wrong to get us into this war, we are there and we cannot simply pull our troops out. If we do so, then Iraq will collapse into civil war and Iran could very well take over the whole country, including its oilfields.

This seems plausible. But when you look closely at this argument, you will see that there is nothing to support it other than the delusion that the US is fighting the good fight. There were no terrorists in Iraq before we invaded the country. The so-called insurgency is in reality a resistance. This has been a war of conquest from the start. The US troops there must terrorize the Iraqis in order to maintain any sort of ascendancy. In so doing, they demoralize the Iraqis and themselves.

The country is in chaos. Analysts say the situation will only worsen if the US remains there. While sectarian fighting is featured in news reports, most of the actual violence is directed against US troops, along with Iraqi troops, police and civilians perceived as connected to the US. Last month, the Pentagon warned Bush that his troop surge could result in over 10,000 US casualties by the end of 2008.

What is there to lead anyone to believe that a bleed out of US troops would resolve this mess in a more peaceful manner? The idea is a fallacy based on hubris. Any continued US presence in Iraq will only prolong the anguish. So long as the US insists on keeping its hand in the Iraqi pie, this invasion is guaranteed to end in disaster. The Iraqi civil war is already underway. Its acceleration is inevitable. The only thing assured by continued US involvement is that more US soldiers will be killed, maimed and psychologically injured along the way.

Political leaders cling to this idea of bleed out simply because they do not want US interests to lose their grip on Iraq's oil wealth. This is what the invasion was about all along: oil. And now they are afraid to let go of the country for fear that we will lose this oil bounty. Should that happen, they can envisage this oil being used against us, perhaps leading to a realignment of the entire Middle East with all of its energy riches poised against the US.

They fear the collapse of US hegemony, the destruction of the US economy, the failure of consumer capitalism and the end of the US way of life. But wait a moment, the US contains 5% of the world population but consumes somewhere between 35 and 50% of its resources (depending on if you are viewing resources as a total or looking at only energy resources). US hegemony is directly or indirectly responsible for the impoverishment and exploitation of people the world over. Consumer capitalism and the US way of life are the leading causes of environmental destruction and global climate change. And the US economy is already being destroyed by decades of misguided economic policy and the Bush deficit.

On the other hand, we know that to solve all of these various problems, we need to decentralize, relocalize and turn to a more sustainable socioeconomic system. It would seem that those who cling to the Iraq invasion and other designs for imperialistic conquest are resisting the necessity of this change. They want to be the last man standing, while the majority of the US public and the rest of the world are left in a tangled, tormented heap.

In the long run, the majority of US citizens — and the world at large — would be better served if we simply admitted that this invasion was wrong from start to finish. We should allow those who led us into this immoral madness — be they Republican, Democrat or war profiteer — to stand trial for war crimes. As a country, we should make reparations for our conquest of Iraq; surely such reparations would not cost as much as the continued cost of war, and would save the lives of many US soldiers. And we should allow the UN, and in particular the Arab nations, to hammer out peace and lead the country out of chaos and bloodshed.

In so doing, we would have to give up the mantle of world imperialism. Yet, it is only after we relinquish that false and bloody mantle that we can begin the life reaffirming act of reaching for sustainability. Then, perhaps, the US can help lead the world into a true age of prosperity.