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## The Irrelevance of Military Victory

by Rep. Ron Paul

**A** military victory in Iraq is unattainable, just as it was in the Vietnam War.

At the close of the Vietnam War in 1975, a telling conversation took place between an NVA colonel named Tu and an American colonel named Harry Summers. Col. Summers reportedly said, "You never beat us on the battlefield." Tu replied, "That may be so, but it is also irrelevant." It is likewise irrelevant to seek military victory in Iraq.

As conditions deteriorate in Iraq, the American people are told more blood must be spilled to achieve just such a military victory. Twenty thousand additional troops and another \$100 billion are needed for a "surge." Yet the people remain rightfully skeptical.

Though we've been in Iraq nearly four years, the meager goal today simply is to secure Baghdad. This hardly shows that the mission is even partly accomplished.

Astonishingly, American taxpayers now will be forced to finance a multi-billion-dollar jobs program in Iraq. Suddenly the war is about jobs! We export our manufacturing jobs to Asia, and now we plan to export our welfare jobs to Iraq – all at the expense of the poor and middle class here at home.

Plans are being made to become more ruthless in achieving stability in Iraq. It appears Moqtada al-Sadr will be on the receiving end of our military efforts, despite his overwhelming support among large segments of the Iraqi people.

It's interesting to note that one excuse given for our failure is leveled at the Iraqis themselves. They have not done enough, we're told, and are difficult to train.

Yet no one complains that Mahdi or Kurdish militias or the Badr Brigade (the real Iraq government, not our appointed government) are not well-trained. Our problems obviously have nothing to do with training Iraqis to fight, but instead with loyalties and motivations.

We claim to be spreading democracy in Iraq, but Sadr has far more democratic support with the majority Shi'ites than our troops enjoy. The problem is not a lack of democratic consensus; it is the antipathy toward our presence among most Iraqis.

In real estate, the three important considerations are location, location, location. In Iraq, the three

conditions are occupation, occupation, occupation. Nothing can improve in Iraq until we understand that our occupation is the primary source of the chaos and killing. We are a foreign occupying force, strongly resented by the majority of Iraq's citizens.

Our inability to adapt to the tactics of 4th generation warfare compounds our military failure. Unless we understand this, even doubling our troop strength will not solve the problems created by our occupation.

The talk of a troop surge and jobs program in Iraq only distracts Americans from the very real possibility of an attack on Iran. Our growing naval presence in the region and our harsh rhetoric toward Iran are unsettling. Securing the Horn of Africa and sending Ethiopian troops into Somalia do not bode well for world peace. Yet these developments are almost totally ignored by Congress.

Rumors are flying about when, not if, Iran will be bombed by either Israel or the U.S. – possibly with nuclear weapons. Our CIA says Iran is 10 years away from producing a nuclear bomb and has no delivery system, but this does not impede our plans to keep "everything on the table" when dealing with Iran.


We should remember that Iran, like Iraq, is a third-world nation without a significant military. Nothing in history hints that she is likely to invade a neighboring country, let alone do anything to America or Israel. I am concerned, however, that a contrived Gulf of Tonkin-type incident may occur to gain popular support for an attack on Iran.

Even if such an attack is carried out by Israel over U.S. objections, we will be politically and morally culpable since we provided the weapons and dollars to make it possible.

Let's hope I'm wrong about this one.

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