

June 4, 2007      Good intentions frequently lead to unintended bad consequences. Tough choices, doing what is right, often leads to unanticipated good results. The growing demand by the American people for us to leave Iraq prompts the naysayers to predict disaster in the Middle East if we do. Of course, these merchants of fear are the same ones who predicted that invading and occupying Iraq would be a slam dunk operation; that we would be welcomed as liberators, and oil revenues would pay for the operation with minimal loss of American lives. All of this hyperbole came while ignoring the precise warnings by our intelligence community of the great difficulties that would lie ahead. The chaos that this preemptive, undeclared war has created in Iraq has allowed the Al Qaida to establish a foothold in Iraq and the strategic interests of Iran to be served. The unintended consequences have been numerous. A well-intended but flawed policy that ignored credible warnings of how things could go awry has produced conditions that have led to a war dominated by procrastination, without victory or resolution in sight. Those who want a total military victory, which no one has yet defined, don't have the troops, the money, the equipment or the support of a large majority of the American people to do so. Those in Congress who have heard the cry of the electorate to end the war refuse to do so out of fear, the demagogues will challenge their patriotism and support of the troops so nothing happens except more of the same. The result is continued stalemate with the current policy and the daily sacrifice of American lives. This wait and see attitude in Washington, and the promised reassessment of events in Iraq later on, strongly motivates the insurgents to accelerate the killing of Americans in order to influence the decision coming in three months. In contrast, a clear decision to leave would prompt a wait and see attitude in Iraq, a de facto cease fire, in anticipation of our leaving, the perfect time for the Iraqi factions to hold their fire on each other and on our troops and just possibly begin talking with each other. Most Americans do not anticipate a military victory in Iraq, yet the Washington politicians remain frozen in their unwillingness to change our policy there, fearful of the dire predictions that conditions can only get worse when we leave. They refuse to admit that the condition of foreign occupation is the key ingredient that unleashed the civil war now raging in Iraq and serves as a recruitment device for Al Qaida. It's time for a change in our foreign policy.