



## Defeat the Defeatists!

[Stephen Schwartz](#)

Colaboraciones n° 731

January 3, 2006

The successful completion of the parliamentary election in Iraq represents a multiple victory for the faith of Islam, the people of the Middle East, and global democracy, and an obvious defeat for the enemies of responsible religious and civic values -- everywhere, in the U.S. as well as in Mesopotamia.

Voting was so popular with the Iraqis that the terrorists of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi effectively observed a cease-fire during the balloting. The Western mainstream media (MSM), with their usual ignorant obtuseness, completely misconstrued this remarkable development. To the MSM, Zarqawi called off his murderous lackeys to encourage his Sunni constituency to elect representatives to defend their interests.

In reality, the decision of the Zarqawi gang to let the process go forward without a horrific orgy of bloodshed had nothing to do with a sudden access of democratic and electoral enthusiasm in the mind of the terrorist chief. Rather, it embodied the clear demand of the Iraqi masses, Arab Sunnis no less than Shias and Kurds, that nobody interfere with their right to exercise a political choice. Zarqawi and Co. knew that if they were to fight the vote with bombs and bullets they would lose what little credibility they retain among Iraqi Sunnis.

In terms of Islamic theology and ideology, however, this tactical setback for the terrorists was much more: it represented a confession that their jihadist strategy has failed, and is thoroughly bankrupt.

Zarqawi's terrorism, as seen in the battle for Fallujah and elsewhere, has rested on three pillars, all drawn from the doctrines of the Wahhabi sect, the state religion in Iraq's southern neighbor, Saudi Arabia:

- Hatred of Shias, condemned by Wahhabis as heretics;
- Rejection of popular sovereignty, especially of voting and contested elections, in the name of a pure Quranic governance that has been a topic of controversy, and seldom realized, throughout Islamic history;
- Enforcement of Wahhabi canons of conduct, including bans on Sufism, or Islamic spirituality, long established in Iraq and especially its Kurdish zone; music; and any form of female attire short of the all-covering Saudi *abaya*. Zarqawi had Sufis, music lovers, and women caught with their garments too short to cover their feet, executed in the streets of Fallujah. That was one reason the Fallujans, including many who opposed the U.S.-led intervention, turned against Zarqawi.

By acceding to Sunni participation in the parliamentary election, Zarqawi and his mob of killers admitted that they cannot impose their bogus theory of Islamic political science on their alleged adherents. Sunnis elected to the parliament will sit alongside Shias and cooperate with Kurdish Sufis in the construction of the new state, economy, and society.

Zarqawi and his criminals may continue their terrorist spree, thanks to financing, incitement, and recruitment by the Wahhabi clerics of Saudi Arabia. But I predict the onslaught will soon end. It would end within days if President George W. Bush were to telephone Saudi King Abdullah and back him in ordering his pro-Wahhabi royal peers to sever the link between the state and the extremist sect.

Let me add another prediction, as easy as looking out the window and checking the weather. Peace and reform will prevail in Iraq, even with U.S. and other coalition troops still on the ground, but the story will end for the MSM. I will never forget the comment of the then-city editor of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, who I will spare embarrassment by preserving anonymity, after Violeta Chamorro, leader of the anti-Sandinista civic movement in Nicaragua, won that country's presidential election in 1990. "Nicaragua is no longer a story for us," the editor declared. Without violence that could be blamed on the U.S., there was no news. In reality, there had been little news from Nicaragua in the *Chronicle* for some time, because the paper, like an overwhelming majority of MSM organs in the U.S. and Canada, erroneously and smugly forecast that the Stalino-Sandinistas would sweep the vote. They were wrong.

"If it bleeds, it leads," is an MSM cliché. But I have to add that the bloodshed is only relevant when the MSM can use it to boost their individual fantasies about Vietnam and thus propagandize against the U.S. Atrocities in Iraq count more than atrocities in Chechnya.

The degree to which the MSM, academia, and other members of the Western intelligentsia live in a fantasy world of narcissistic self-righteousness is extraordinary. But the phenomenon is not new. It first became visible during the Spanish civil war of 1936-39, the original exemplar of what I call a theory of "two wars, two worlds." The Spanish war as experienced by the people of that tormented country, involving deep-going social issues, unresolved history, and the impact of what we now call globalization, was entirely different from the war as it was experienced by intellectuals -- mainly leftists -- in places like London and Manhattan. For this reason, when George Orwell published a veridical account of the war, *Homage to Catalonia*, it sold few copies in Britain, although it is now considered one of the greatest political works of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

A many-sided paradigm was established in Spain. The populace saw themselves fighting desperately and unrelentingly for a radical, even libertarian view of freedom, which is why they held out for three years. But their authentic voices were seldom heard; by contrast, foreign leftists projected the view that the harmless Spanish were defending peace against German and Italian aggressors. In this way, the American vs. European conundrum on which I have written elsewhere -- defense of freedom vs. the quest for peace -- was also manifested.

In Spain, the foreign left, and such *avant-la-lettre* paragons of the MSM as Herbert Matthews of *The New York Times*, presented Stalin as the best friend of the antifascists when in real-

ity, as immortally chronicled by Orwell, the Muscovite tyrant's secret police minions worked to undermine their Iberian allies. When the Spanish war became a conflict between Franco and Stalin, it was lost for the left, since the Spanish workers and peasants would not risk their lives for the Kremlin dictator. But a legend about Spain had grown up among the Communists of Brooklyn, who were then numerous, and it remains the dominant narrative about the Spanish war for non-Spanish intellectuals. It is a "second Spanish civil war" that has almost nothing in common with the real war in which real people were killed.

The phenomenon was repeated in Nicaragua and the former Yugoslavia. The genuine conflict between Sandinistas and *contras* in the Central American post-revolutionary republic was utterly unlike the propaganda war between the two sides' supporters in Washington. The *contras*, indigenous Nicaraguan peasants who fought for little more than beans and rice, were portrayed in the U.S. media as mercenaries incited by Ronald Reagan to loot and rape. But more violence was committed by the armed bodies of the Sandinista regime, instructed by East Germans, than by the *contras*. In the end, the Nicaraguan people voted for Mrs. Chamorro, whose party was associated with the *contras*. Once again, reality on the ground had nothing to do with the verbiage in the North American and European media.

In the Balkans, local victims of air bombing, artillery fire, pillage, rape, and other terror crimes witnessed extensive aggression by the Serbian fascist regime of Slobodan Milosevic.

But a large section of the Western media, led by the London *Times*, but also supported, in my experience, by such papers as the *San Francisco Chronicle*, preferred to report abstractly on "the collapse of Yugoslavia," to proclaim moral equivalence between the Serbs and their victims, or to recycle Serb claims that they were avenging Nazi acts committed three generations before.

So the MSM, after getting several major chapters in modern history wrong, from Spain through Central America and the Balkans, have now gotten Iraq wrong. They have developed an apparently incurable weakness for

totalitarianism: for Stalinism, Sandinismo, Serbianism, and now for the "slaughterers," as Zaraqawi's fanatics style themselves.

When will it end? Perhaps never. One thing is certain: the MSM, which has impudently demanded accountability from the Bush administration for errors in Iraq, will not admit its own errors. They will move on to the next iteration of their fantasy about Vietnam, and continue seeking fame as defeatist scandal-mongers. Defeatism is all that leftists have to offer today. But in Iraq, and elsewhere, defeatism will be defeated!