



Losing the War in Congress--Not in Iraq

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Walid Phares

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A simple statement made by a national legislative leader in Washington last week indicated that a war is being lost, but it is not the war in Iraq. It is the defeat of the war of ideas taking place in Congress.

The statement was the declaration by Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid that the United States had lost the war in Iraq, a conclusion he said he'd communicated to President Bush at a meeting last Wednesday. "This war is lost and the surge is not accomplishing anything, as indicated by the extreme violence in Iraq yesterday", Mr. Reid, a Nevada Democrat, said at a Capitol Hill press conference with anti-war legislators.

To Senator Reid, his conclusion is very simple and it is overly simplis-

tic. Reid believes the war is lost because there is "extreme violence in Iraq." Most Americans, when informed accurately, think otherwise.

Under the pounding of a media that thrives on sound bites and not on calm analysis, if read quickly, the statement cut through. But then, if one reflects on what the highest figure in the Senate has said, one would conclude that he and other like-minded politicians defy the implacable reality of logic.

Consider this: How can the move towards victory in an ongoing war be measured by the mere existence of violence or by its intensity? While a war is taking place, it is - of course and of necessity - comprised of violent acts. Yet because the question raised by Senator Reid had been

about whether we had been victorious in the war, he made an unnecessary and confused statement. Yes, the war is not yet over, America has neither won nor lost decisively, and it is precisely for that reason that one must expect to see the violence one sees in wartime. But in Mr. Reid's statement, he misguidedly concluded that the US-led coalition had utterly lost the war in Iraq, just because the enemy still attacks and counter-attacks.

Historians would certainly disapprove of Reid's logic and examples abound. When the 101st Airborne division was cut off and surrounded by German forces in the Battle of the Bulge the Allies weren't losing WWII, the Nazis were. One could have perceived that we were losing the war at that point, but the reality was entirely different. Mr. Reid and many other politicians, academics and commentators, in a gesture derived from farce, took it upon themselves to decide that progress towards victory in the war in Iraq will be measured only if no shots are heard and no car bombs explode. But if that were to occur, we would find ourselves at the end of the war, not in the middle of the war pursuing, and moving towards, victory which is where we are. Until the Iraqi state is up and running, the neighboring regimes threatening peace countered, with a strong anti-Jihadist movement leading the resistance against terrorism in the region having taken root, the enemy will of course be waging counter strikes relentlessly. Thus, measurement of our success in this war is about these factors, not about the mere evi-

dence of violence which proves only that we are engaged in a war.

A more comprehensive and worthy analysis of the war in Iraq should factor in the direction of the global confrontation between the forces of democracy and the Jihadist-authoritarian camp in the region. Since 2003, a brutal regime - genocidal in essence - has been brought down in Iraq; the Kurds have reached a survival level; the Shiites were saved from the savage Baathist regime, and the liberal element among Sunnis has had a chance to emerge. Yes, and it should have been predicted, the Iranian regime is penetrating Iraq, Syrian strongman Bashar Assad is sending the Jihadists through the borders and al Qaeda is attempting to seize the control of the Sunni Triangle. Therefore, one stage of the war was accomplished, the removal of Saddam; the other stage, the Syro-Iranian and Jihadi counter-offensive, is evolving. It doesn't really take a Middle East expert to understand this.

If Senator Reid and his colleagues were to engage in a serious discussion of Iraq, if Congress were to debate the best strategies to contain the Iranian and Syrian regimes, and if the legislators were to invite more Muslim dissidents instead of Islamist radicals to the Hill, then the road to victory in the war on terror would be paved with meaningful evidence. Unfortunately, instead of proposing a better map towards strategic victory, leading politicians - influenced by faulty expertise - are missing the whole logic of the War on Terror: its global dimension. And

to add egregious insult to intellectual injury, a congressional panel recently voted to ban the use of the phrase, the "Global War on Terror."

In this context, Mr. Reid's statement needs to be understood differently.

Indeed one war is being lost by America today; it is the war of ideas, not the war in Iraq. Ironically, the former is being lost by the very group of people elected to defend America, its citizens and its interests against her enemies.

Professor Walid Phares is the author of [Future Jihad](#). He is a Visiting Fellow with the [European Foundation for Democracy in Brussels](#) and a Senior Fellow with the [Foundation for the Defense of Democracies](#) in Washington.