

# What is Victory?

Exasperated, Rush Limbaugh spelled out for his caller America's goal in Iraq. "It's a seven-letter word," roared Rush. It "begins with 'v' and ends in 'y.'"

"Define victory," the caller retorted. Rush went to a break.

Excellent question. How do we know when we've won the war in Iraq? How do we define victory?

We know who we are fighting against—Ba'athists, jihadists, unreconstructed Saddam-loyalists, America-haters. But what are we fighting for?

"Freedom," comes the retort, "democracy." But Iraq is already free of Saddam. And what do we mean by democracy? If it means one-man, one-vote majority rule, Iraq will be governed by a Shi'ite majority that looks to Iran for inspiration and guidance.

Is that worth \$87 billion and a daily toll of American dead?

Some of us would settle for an Iraq free of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, where no attack on America is planned and no terror plot by al-Qaeda is tolerated. But it now appears—after four months of inspections by a 1,400-man Anglo-American team—that that is what we had under Saddam Hussein.

What the enemy is fighting for seems far less gauzy. His goal: expel the Americans from Iraq. If we cannot define victory, our enemy can. And it is a sobering thought that no Arab or Islamic revolution that fought hard to expel a Western power has been defeated in 60 years.

The French were run out of Algeria after an eight-year war, and the allies they left behind were slaughtered. The Russians were expelled from Afghanistan after an eight-year occupation by

an Islamic *jihad* and nationalist uprising. The Israelis abandoned Lebanon after an 18-year occupation, unwilling to pay the continuing cost in Jewish blood of battling Hezbollah guerrillas.

Moreover, pro-Western monarchs in that part of the world—King Farouk in Egypt in 1952, King Feisel in Iraq in 1958, King Idris in Libya in 1968, Emperor Haile Selassie in Ethiopia in 1975, the Shah of Iran in 1979—have all been overthrown in anti-Western coups.

Thus, while there are many models for how a Western power can be driven out of an Arab country, or a Western vassal overthrown, where is the model for an enduring Western victory in the Arab and Islamic world—in the last 50 years?

Kuwait, 1991, appears the best example. What were the elements of the triumph of Bush I in Desert Storm? First, his goal was to liberate an Arab nation, Kuwait, from an invading power. Second, he had the support of almost all Arab regimes. Arab troops from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Syria even fought alongside Americans. Yet, even then, the "Arab Street" seemed to side with Saddam. In this new war, however, Bush II suffers drawbacks his father did not.

First, America has never been so widely hated in the Arab world.

Second, the U.S. war on Iraq is seen in the Islamic world as a war of aggression waged on falsified charges that Saddam's Iraq had weapons of mass destruction and played a role in Sept. 11.

Third, where the U.S. was on the offensive in Desert Storm and in Operation Iraqi Freedom, we are now on the defensive. It is we who are the occupying power. Ours is the detested presence in an Arab capital.

Moreover, the tactics being used by the enemy are the same tactics used against the French in Algeria and the Israelis on the West Bank. Assassinate collaborators with terror attacks, such as on the UN headquarters and Jordanian embassy. Sting and infuriate the occupier by killing his soldiers, provoking him into lashing out and wounding and killing non-combatants, or even allies, like the Iraqi police in Fallujah. Thus, radicalize the people and polarize the nation between collaborators who side with the Americans and patriots and nationalists who gravitate to the resistance. Thus do we convert a terror war into a guerrilla war into a people's war. And down that long bloody road lies victory: the expulsion of the Americans and a regime of their own choosing.

It is the formula used by anti-colonial and anti-imperial movements from the Irish in 1919-1921, to the Irgun in Palestine, to the Mau Mau in Kenya, to the FALN in Algeria, to ZANU and ZAPU in Rhodesia, to the ANC in South Africa, to Hezbollah in Lebanon, to Hamas on the West Bank. The only way such movements have been defeated—in Puerto Rico in the 1950s and El Salvador in the 1980s—was when the Western power was able enlist nationalism on its side.

In Iraq, we have not yet done that. Indeed, we appear to be losing the battle for hearts and minds. Nonetheless, to quote Dean Rusk, "We are there and we are committed." ■

[none dare call it quagmire]

# The Cost of Empire

President Bush's war policy marks the beginning of the end of America's era of global dominance.

By Christopher Layne

THE ADMINISTRATION'S U-turn decision to ask for United Nations help in Iraq, and President George W. Bush's request that Congress appropriate \$87 billion to fund the occupation and reconstruction of that country send a very clear message: the administration's Iraq policy is a fiasco. And a foreseeable one at that.

U.S. intelligence agencies predicted that American troops occupying Iraq would not be welcomed as liberators but would be resisted. A pre-invasion State Department report warned that the administration had the proverbial snowball's chance of transforming Iraq into a Western-style democracy (a conclusion reinforced by a recent Zogby poll of Iraqis that found only 38 percent of Iraqis favor democracy, while 50 percent believe that "democracy is a western way of doing things and it will not work here"). Similarly, it was obvious that the administration's go-it-alone hubris, combined with its sledgehammer diplomacy, would chill Washington's relations with the other major pow-

ers and trigger a worldwide backlash of hostility toward the United States.

Those—here and abroad—who opposed Washington's reckless march to war can say we told you so. But that is not the point. More than that, it is necessary to step back from day-to-day events and place the Iraq war in the context of its longer-term significance for the United States. A good place to start is by asking why the administration embarked on war while ignoring widespread—and accurate—predictions that even a successful military campaign could lead to postwar disaster. In other words, what were the administration's war aims?

We know what they were not. Iraq was not an imminent threat to the security of the Middle East and Persian Gulf. (Did anyone say "weapons of mass destruction"?) And—the administration's manipulation of public opinion notwithstanding—Saddam Hussein was not involved in Sept. 11 and was not in bed with al-Qaeda. But, as both U.S. and British intelligence warned, by going to war with Iraq, the administration has

created a terrorist threat where none existed previously, making the U.S. less, not more, secure than it would have been had we not invaded Iraq.

The real reason the administration went to war had nothing to do with terrorism. Indeed, many of the administration's architects of illusion—Paul Wolfowitz, Douglas Feith, and Richard Perle, among others—put Iraq squarely in their geopolitical crosshairs while they were out of power during the 1990s. The administration went to war in Iraq to consolidate America's global hegemony and to extend U.S. dominance to the Middle East by establishing a permanent military stronghold in Iraq for the purposes of controlling the Middle Eastern oil spigot (thereby giving Washington enormous leverage in its relations with Western Europe and China); allowing Washington to distance itself from an increasingly unreliable and unstable Saudi Arabia; and using the shadow of U.S. military power to bring about additional regime changes in Iran and Syria.

It is fashionable to say that 9/11—and