

Iraq: Gross miscalculation of people's will

By Ron Walters

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Senator John McCain was recently on television saying that in the 1970s he had read the Pentagon Papers (that were courageously pilfered from the Department of Defense by Daniel Ellsberg), that they contained evidence from high-level sources, and that there were "gross miscalculations" made in the conduct of the Vietnam war.

He also thought that these miscalculations which led to the war were compounded by the post-World War II philosophy of John Kennedy who once said in a speech that, we would "go anywhere, pay any price, bear any burden..." in defense of freedom.

The McCain parallel is that the so-called "war on terrorism" is this generation of Neocons's equivalent to the Cold War, or the fight against global communism. But that was a very different fight. The Soviet Union consisted of states with a historically European military style, unsuited to guerilla tactics, as their loss in Afghanistan would signal.

Moreover, the Soviet Union was based, in part, on an approach to economics that could not be sustained because it depended on an ideology rather than upon objective modern business models and macro-economic fiscal policy and monetary policy. The fall of the Soviet Union and the viability of the communist system were substantially re-

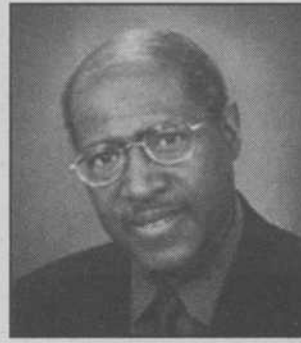
lated to these internal flaws, not to the external demand of Ronald Reagan to "tear down the Communist wall." These problems were the targets of reforms that Mikhail Gorbachev attempted too late.

So, one of the delusions of the Neocons is that they "won the war" against communism rather than it fell of its own weight. Then, they compound

that delusion of American global might by inventing a new enemy the size and scope of the communist and launch a military confrontation against it, in a proxy war in Iraq.

I consider Iraq to be an invented proxy war, as I call it, because of the failure to find Osama Bin Laden, the Al Qaeda leader. So, the Bush administration launched a more expansive "war against terrorism" that has the capacity to incorporate many elements in the Middle East which harbor the seeds of deep historical alienation based on the massive displacement, global embarrassment and the military defeat of the Palestinians since the end of World War II.

Then, it seeks to cleanse a conception of Islam that is retrogressive and opposes modernization of the role of women, of political equality among different groups, as essentially a cultural movement with extremist



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underpinnings.

The "insurgents" counter by conducting a guerilla operation with a cultural manifestation they have turned into a popular battle against an anti-Islamic force, represented by the United States, which gives them an unending supply of regional sympathy active support.

Thus, the pursuit of a war against global terrorism in Iraq is a gross miscalculation, violating all that America should have learned fighting North Koreans in the 1950s and the Vietcong in the 1960s and 1970s: You cannot win a guerilla war that is fought in a theater where the opposing force has the advantage of manpower and position.

In this sense, Operation Desert Storm was "won" by Bush's father only because Saddam Hussein chose to fight it as a conventional military war. However, top military officials have said that there is no military solution to the Iraq war — I would extend that to include the so-called War on Terrorism. The passions of ideology and fidelity to religious culture are some of the most unchangeable aspects of human nature and the attempt to overthrow them by force only invites counterforce.

One surprise for me is that although the

military officers admit the truth, the present generation of Neocons is perhaps too young to respect the lessons of the revolutionary era of the 1960s and 1970s, when the determination of out-gunned, poor people caused them to withstand confrontations with superior military powers. They either fought to a draw or defeated not only the French, the British and the Americans in Asia, but also the Belgians and White settler regimes in India, Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde, Angola, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Cuba, South Africa and other places.

Time after time, the arrogance of the colonial or post-colonial powers led them to devalue the strength of the desire of people who wanted their own brand of freedom. People using their bodies as bombs in Iraq is only the latest sign of a desire that has destroyed the Neocons' expectations of a quick victory.

The fact that the debate has shifted to an attempt to find more realistic terms to end the Iraqi war — the proxy war in Iraq — is the surest sign that the American people believe that a military victory is impossible, and the Neocons have compounded this problem long enough. And if "victory" in Iraq is impossible, then whither the global "war against terrorism"?

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Pornography

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sales are inside the United States and the bulk is being spent on pictures of pre-pubescent U.S. girls sold mainly to U.S. consumers.

Joan Irvine is executive director of the Los Angeles-based Association of Sites Advocating Child Protection, the adult-porn industry's watchdog on child porn.

Since the discovery of a child-porn image on an adult porn site can shut down a very lucrative business, adult pornographers — who operate legally on the Web — are trying to help police it through Irvine's organization.

"Protecting your business by protecting children," is the motto of the group, which

has received 150,000 reports of child porn over the past two years.

"The bulk of the porn that is reported to us involves young girls ranging in ages from 8 to 12," says Irvine. "While there is a growing number of child porn sites featuring boys, the preponderance of child porn is of pre-pubescent young girls. Some of it is hardcore, and I've been horrified to see pictures of girls as young as 2 or 3."

Irvine said that most of the people who report to her organization have been viewing adult pornography and come upon child porn on adult sites. "The general public and adult-site webmasters feel more comfortable reporting sites to the Association of Sites Ad-

vocating Child Protection than to governmental agencies," she said. "They often don't want the government to know that they have been viewing porn."

When Irvine's group receives a tip, it reviews the questionable material and investigates the sites, trying to find where it is hosted. It then reports the sites to the local FBI or the Department of Justice as well as the hosting company.

Child pornography is defined as the visual image of infants, toddlers and children under age 18 in sexual poses or in explicit sexual activity. The possession or distribution of such material is a federal crime in the United States, punishable by prison sentences.

Online child porn is, nonetheless, proliferating, with about 20 percent of all Internet pornography involving children, according to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

In 2001, arrests in the United States for possession of child porn showed a lot of material involving very young children, according to Allen's organization. Thirty-nine percent of arrests involved material that featured children between 3 and 5; 19 percent involved children under 3.

Allen said that "porn addiction" has been growing and that this has led to a growing demand for "new or more out-there" material. "Lately we've seen a more non-traditional pedophile," he said. "These are people looking at porn who are always looking for something more extreme."

Allen said that in 1999 his organization, in conjunction with the Dallas police, located a website hosted in Texas, run by a husband and wife out of their home. The couple had a roster of 70,000 customers each paying \$29.95 a month for child porn deducted directly through their credit cards. They were making more than \$2 million a year.

"The biggest challenges prosecuting child porn on the Internet is that there are no dis-

tinct boundaries, unlike the physical world where crime happens and there is a clear victim and offender," says Paul Bresson, a spokesperson for the U.S. Department of Justice in Washington, D.C. "A lot of the porn bounces off international servers and it's difficult to find where it is coming from."

Other countries that have large trades in child porn include Russia and the Philippines, says Parry Aftab, a lawyer who runs WiredSafety, a Web-based safety and education network with 9,000 volunteers who patrol the Internet looking for child pornography, child molesters and cyberstalkers. The group also runs a tip line for child porn that relays the information to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

Bresson said that in the United States, the most successful investigations have involved pedophiles who initiate contact with juveniles in chat rooms and e-groups and then travel across state lines to meetings where they were caught. Once authorities locate the pedophile they can seize their hard drives and obtain the child porn as evidence.

Irvine said that more than 60 percent of the sites reported to her group are hosted by three Internet service providers including Yahoo, the Sunnyvale, Calif., company that had revenues of \$4.83 billion last year. She said that investigations commonly lead to bogus companies on sites set up under false names.

Yahoo is aware that people do host child porn on its servers, and the company asks users to report any sightings.

Mary Osako, a Yahoo spokesperson, said Yahoo investigates each report of child porn made to them, and if they deem the content to be against the terms of service, they remove it and deactivate the user's account.

"We also work with law enforcement to apprehend the individuals if we can," Osako said.

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conomic injustice in the Charlotte case is the Carolinas Associated Minority Contractors. Unless this organization comprises Asian, Hispanic, and Indian members, it is a Black association, not a "minority" association.

The construction shell game is controlled by Whites, and Black people will remain on the margins as long as we settle for the crumbs thrown at us. Prime contractors will rationalize ad nauseam about why they continue to get the vast majority of the deals. The Charlotte article stated, "It's not what the courts call overt discrimination," says Steve Humphrey, whose Florida research firm, MGT of America, conducted the 2003 study. "It's what's called passive discrimination... where general contractors call up people they know, and most of them are White." That should make Black contractors feel better, shouldn't it?

Bottom-line: The onus is on us. If we can occupy the prisons to such a high de-

gree, why are we not also represented in building them, in maintaining them, in supplying their needs, and in selling them equipment, food, and other necessities?

Can a brother get some Black-made (and distributed) hair grease and some Shea butter soap and lotion up in here?

We must be more assertive, more aggressive, more determined, and we must build more capacity to take on larger projects. We must also have the backbone of Tommy Vaughn, who was offered \$18,000 to be a front company by "supply[ing] materials — even though he says most of the arrangements had already been made," and Bobby Nichols, who was offered \$20,000 "for going six times to the Eastern North Carolina prison to observe painting practices." Hats off to these to brothers! They did their part. Now, Black folks in Charlotte should commend and support them by insisting they get contracts, not bribes.

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