



Will Iraq's Failure be Iran's Success?

By Ardishir Rashidi-Kalhur

Five years into the war, America's battle for success in Iraq is only half way up the hill. With a little help from US friendly forces in the region, and the UN Security Council vote on August 10, to be a strong partner for peace, the second half of the battle might not need to be fought. Putting history into perspective, the current situation in the Middle East could be compared to the WWI alignment of the warring forces in the Balkans which led to the final dismantlement of the Ottoman territories. In Iran, the Shiite revolutionary fervor under President Ahmadi-Nezhad, echoes the fist-raising slogans of the anti-imperialist Bolsheviks under the late Lenin during WWI. Exercising patience, through a sustained cold war period and perestroika, the Soviet Union peacefully disintegrated into more than a dozen States.

If America holds steadfast with a purposeful resolve, along the UN mission for peace, the current regimes in the Middle East too, will disintegrate in due course without pushing the cannons of war further up the hill. Given the physical destruction and loss of lives in Iraq, a similar tactic to bring change to Iran should be beyond contemplation by US policy makers. Instead, the United States with the help of the recent willingness by the United Nations, and willing partners for change in Iraq and in the Middle East, ought to focus on addressing the nearly unrecoverable current situation in Iraq.

The most logical step forward is for President Bush to heed the solution put forward by Senator Biden for "soft" partitioning of Iraq into three autonomous states. With decades of peacekeeping missions and conflict resolution experience (e.g. most recently in the Balkan states), the United Nations can facilitate reformation of the failed state known as Iraq, and prepare the country for an election by which disputed territories and natural resource centers are democratically handed over to the duly elected regional governments. This in turn will be the firm democratic ground that the United States had stated as a goal when going in, but has so far failed to achieve. With the support of these newly formed autonomous governments and the UN endorsement of the election results, what has been a failure so far in Iraq could be turned into a successful US policy to help promote democracy in the region, and the necessary support to help arrest the advance of Iranian power and nuclear arm development.

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