

A Deadline for Iraq and a Debate Challenge to Shays/Farrell

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Should we set a deadline for the withdrawal of troops from Iraq?

What are we doing in Iraq now anyway? And is it the same thing we set out to do when we invaded?

We invaded for three alleged reasons. First was the fear that Saddam Hussein was stockpiling weapons of mass destruction. Second was the belief that Iraq and Al Qaeda had deep ties. Third was the desire to institute more democracy in the Middle East, liberate an oppressed people, and spread liberty through the world.

Were these valid reasons? It turns out there were no modern weapons of mass destruction. It also turns out that there were no deep ties between Iraq and Al Qaeda, at least not prior to our invasion of Iraq. And the third reason is no reason at all: there are plenty of countries with oppressed people but America does not have a mandate from its citizens to be the world's police.

Well, were these at least valid reasons at the beginning? No. There was no evidence of either the weapons of mass destruction or the links to Al Qaeda. We insist on evidence beyond a reasonable doubt to convict a criminal to a prison sentence. Presumably we should have an even higher bar to committing lives and money to invading another country.

I would not have voted to go into Iraq in the first place. My Republican opponent Christopher Shays is an unabashed supporter of the war and the initial invasion. My Democratic opponent Diane Farrell has stated she would also have voted to invade Iraq if the NATO and the United Nations had supported it. I am the only choice for U.S. Congress in Connecticut's Fourth District who would not have voted to go into Iraq in the first place, with or without the support of other nations.

Fine, but I wasn't in Congress three years ago to vote against the invasion. The question now is, why are we there today? Today, there is a much larger link between Iraq and Al Qaeda. Al Qaeda operatives are gaining strength in western Iraq. They are a fluid foe, constantly withdrawing from those areas where American strength is greatest and moving to cause disruptions in areas in which we are less mobilized. It has been estimated the Al Qaeda comprise as much as a quarter of the insurgent fighters, and most of them are Iraqi, not foreign fighters.

So basically it has become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Where once a country had no ties to Al Qaeda, it now is a hotspot for the terrorists behind the 9/11 attacks. All likely as a result of our invasion.

So what does that mean we should do now? Should we stay and fight until every member of Al Qaeda is captured or killed? Should we cut and run tomorrow and hope they don't attack us on our home land anymore?

One alternative keeps us in Iraq forever. The other potentially gives Iraq up to the terrorists. Neither is particularly appealing. So what do we do?

We issue a firm deadline.

What? A deadline? Wouldn't that just encourage the terrorists? Isn't that admitting failure? Isn't that a tactical decision at best, not an overall strategic decision? Don't we need a specific exit strategy first, and multinational support, before we can issue a deadline?

Nope. We are the United States of America. We are a sovereign country and a free nation. We can do what is best for America. And we should do what is best for America.

What is best for America is a deadline, a date set in stone with the assurance that we will be out of Iraq by then. A deadline tells the Iraqi people that they have the support of the American military until that date to get their country in order. A deadline tells the Iraqi people that we are not occupiers but welcome guests. If the Iraqi people and the Iraqi government don't want us there, we shouldn't be there.

When should that date be? Should it be tomorrow? Should it be ten years from now? How can we decide?

Why not tomorrow? Because it would leave a huge hole in Iraq that would quickly be filled by terrorism and civil war as various factions fight for power. Even though we should not have invaded Iraq in the first place, we are proud and upright Americans and we do not like leaving a mess if we can avoid it. Iraq is simply unprepared today to govern itself.

How long? A reasonable time. In principle, even a deadline of a few months could mobilize the country into action. The earlier they start governing themselves, the earlier we can leave. The deadline is a maximum date. We can always leave earlier if all is well.

So it should be longer than a few months, to account for slow progress or unforeseen developments. But it should not be longer than a year. If the Iraqis cannot learn to govern themselves within a year, they won't be able to do it within two years.

That's why I propose July 4, 2007 as the ultimate pullout date.

We Americans should not have to suffer the irony of celebrating this great day of freedom and independence while our taxes are paying troops to occupy a foreign land.

There is another irony involved here, and that's that the country we are supporting is a Communist country.

Communist? What? Didn't the Soviet Union collapse? Isn't the Berlin wall down? Communism is dead! There are no more Communist countries, except possibly China, and even there they are moving towards free markets. Right?

Wrong. Iraq is a Communist country. Its own constitution, ratified last October, basically mimics the platform of the Communist Party USA.

Communist Party Platform	Iraqi Constitution
"Guarantee the right to a job at a living wage."	"Work is a right for all Iraqis so as to guarantee them a decent living."
"Guarantee the right to decent housing."	"The state guarantee to the individual and the family – especially children and women – social and health security and the basic requirements for leading a free and dignified life. The state also ensure the above a suitable income and appropriate housing."
"Guarantee the right to health care."	"Every citizen has the right to health care. The state takes care of public health and provides the means of prevention and treatment."
"Free education through the college level."	"Free education is a right for all Iraqis in all its stages."
Summary: "Full funding for education, affordable housing programs, day care, Social Security, a universal health care program, youth job training and recreation programs, and cultural programs."	Summary: "The State guarantees the social and health security to Iraqis in cases of old age, sickness, employment disability, homelessness, orphanage or unemployment, and shall work to protect them from ignorance, fear and poverty. The State shall provide them housing and special programs of care and rehabilitation."

Why did no one notice Iraq had voted Communism upon itself? Because to Democrats and Republicans, it is not that far away from what they propose. Both Shays and Farrell, for example, would vote for a minimum wage. But I, since I care about the poor and the unemployed, would vote against it, because I don't want to be the person who made it illegal for someone to work at a wage both he and the employer find mutually acceptable.

It takes a Libertarian to notice Communism. I am a Libertarian and I was born in Moscow when it was still the center of Communism in the Soviet Union.

Communism is collectivism or central planning. It is public ownership instead of private ownership. And that's the biggest problem with Iraq: who owns the oil?

Do you know who owns the oil and gas of Iraq? Is it an Iraqi corporation? Is it the federal Iraqi government? Is it the specific province in which the oil resides? Is it Halliburton?

Nope. It's everybody. It is the people.

Here is how it is to be produced and distributed: "The federal government with the producing governorates and regional governments shall undertake the management of oil and gas extracted from current fields provided that it distributes oil and gas revenues in a fair manner in proportion to the population distribution in all parts of the country with a set allotment for a set time for the damaged regions that were unjustly deprived by the former regime and the regions that were damaged later on, and in a way that assures balanced development in different areas of the country, and this will be regulated by law."

Sounds like a wordier version of "from each according to ability, to each according to need."

And the allotments for unjust deprivations mirrors one other plank of the Communist Party of America: "Creation of a social fund starting at \$200 billion to make up for past and continuing wrongs and to help achieve equality in facilities and infrastructure for communities of the racially and nationally oppressed."

But wait, you might say, this isn't Communism. It's Socialism at best. And aren't there plenty of free countries that have free healthcare and education and minimum wage?

I would answer that these things are symptoms of Communism. Liberty is incredibly powerful and hard to crush, but each of those things weighs it down, and with enough "free" stuff, no one can afford anything any more. But the biggest distinction between Iraq and the Socialist countries is the public ownership of the largest portion of the country's wealth. The oil and gas belong to everybody and will be mined on their behalf and distributed to those who need it most. Is that the sort of society that encourages a rugged individualism? Or the sort that encourages constant whining, a competition to show you are worse off than your neighbor so you can receive more money? That's Communism.

Iraq is a Communist country. And that's okay: there are plenty of Communist countries in the world, starting with Cuba right next door. We don't have to topple their regimes to ensure our freedoms. It is the Communists that call for a worldwide war on freedom. It is our job only to defend ourselves, whether it is through a missile defense system, fully secure borders, no amnesty for illegal aliens, or a stockpiling of enough nuclear weapons

in enough diverse locations to ensure total annihilation for any country, Communist or not, that attempts to destroy us or fails to keep terrorist groups within its borders from attempting to destroy us.

We shouldn't be in Iraq. We shouldn't have gone in to Iraq. But we shouldn't immediately abandon Iraq. Give them until July 4, 2007. Give them a chance to run their own affairs. Maybe one day they will pass a Bill of Rights to amend the Constitution to one that actually would defend the rights to life, liberty, and property. Maybe not. That would be their decision.

But we can give them these next ten months to do it.

And what happens if we can't? Is there any way we can extend the deadline for emergencies?

Only one way: a Congressional declaration of war. In an act of cowardice, Congress failed to exercise its sole responsibility to declare war the first time around by granting that power to the president. Not again.

If we are to stay in Iraq for even a minute past midnight, Eastern Standard Time, on July 4th, 2007, Congress must issue a declaration of war.

The commonly stated belief by members of both ruling parties in America is that a strict date would help the terrorists. There are two contradictory ways they imagine that might happen. First is if the terrorists take heart in the announced date and attack us more severely as soon as the announcement is made. This is the "kill the date-setters" theory. The second way is if the terrorists stop their insurgent fighting now and wait for us to leave, and once we leave, instigate a civil war to topple the Iraqi government. This is the "lie-in-wait" theory.

The "kill the date-setters" theory has no legs. Al Qaeda and other terrorists are not holding back anything now. This insurgency that they have right now is the best they can do. If anything, Al Qaeda and other insurgent groups will start losing recruits because the Iraqis see that the Americans are in fact leaving, that they are not occupiers, and so what are we fighting for?

The "lie-in-wait" theory is logically inconsistent. First of all, if true, it would mean that announcing a date would see a sudden cessation of violence. The transfer of power to the Iraqis could happen even faster, significantly ahead of schedule. We could leave earlier. And then what? Now that the Iraqi government has firm control over the country, and we have left, now the terrorists are going to start a civil war?

Well, they can do that anytime, two years from now, or twenty, or two hundred. Are we supposed to offer the Iraqis a blank check to come back and squash every civil war they have?

That's exactly what it means to be able to control the country: they can keep their nation together. Sure, it's harder for them because they are a Communist country and each faction wants to take control of the oil and gas that belongs to everybody and nobody simultaneously. But that's their problem. And it is likely to be a problem for the next 50-100 years.

But it's not our problem. Our problem is getting our troops home safe and sound after ensuring some basic stability to Iraq.

The best solution is setting a date.

Some may argue that I am not a military expert and that we should rely on the opinions of generals and others with military experience to determine the best strategy for exiting Iraq, and whether we should exit at all.

I disagree. The military experts serve at the pleasure of the citizenry. Their opinions may be noted, perhaps even solicited, but the final decision rests with the citizens and their elected representatives. And the duty of the representatives is to do not what is right for the military or for Iraqis, but for Americans. Candidates for the House of Representatives ought to debate their stance on this question for the people to determine who best represents their interests and their rights.

Currently I am the only candidate willing to set a deadline.

I invite my opponents Christopher Shays and Diane Farrell to debate the question of "Should we set a fixed withdrawal date for Iraq?" and related issues.

The debate is scheduled for August 29th at 8pm in Greenwich Town Hall. The format will be a civil discussion with each candidate speaking in turn for a maximum of two minute stretches. There will be plenty of time for rebuttals and counter-rebuttals, and for questions and comments from the audience. Everybody is invited. There is no entry fee.

For more information, please visit the Maymin for Congress website at <http://www.MayminForCongress.com> or contact us by voicemail or fax at 206.203.2006 or by email to campaign@mayminforcongress.com. You can also comment on the open forum on the website.