

Then & NOW

What Questions Should Our Politicians Be Asking About Iraq?

2003 Al Qaeda was not fighting or attacking anyone in Iraq.

2007 "Al Qaeda Strikes Back," by Bruce Riedel, *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2007, states in part: "The U.S. invasion of Iraq ... played directly into the hands of al Qaeda leaders. ... In Iraq, Zarqawi adopted ... strategy to alienate U.S. allies and destabilize the country. ... More important, he focused on the fault line in Iraq society—the divide between Sunnis and Shiites—with the

[G]oal of precipitating a civil war."

Examples: Al Qaeda, through the use of foreign fighters and Sunni insurgents, organized and attacked Shia leaders, holy sites (Golden Mosque in Samarra), and civilians and assassinated prominent religious leaders. The Shia responded with violence.

The cycle of violence was started.

Add this cycle to an overlay of mistakes by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, Provisional Authority leader L. Paul Bremer, and others (disbanding the Iraq Army, providing insufficient American troops, and contributing to rising unemployment—which is still 40% to 60%), President George W. Bush (who disregarded General Shinseki's call for more troops, and Senator McCain's and Senator Biden's calls for more troops and for the replacement of Secretary Rumsfeld) and:

One has a Civil War Fomented by Al Qaeda.

Fueled by religious hate, fought by foreign suicide-bombers and fighters, and insurgents drawn from the unemployed and managed by politicians, starting with Secretary Rumsfeld,

It is now our War with Al Qaeda being fought in Iraq.

We want the Iraqis to fight it. They have suffered tens of thousands killed; how should we treat them?

The Iraq Study Group Report

stated on page eight how we should treat them: "If the Iraqi government does not make substantial progress toward the achievement of milestone on national reconciliation, security, and governance, the United States should reduce its political, military, or economic support for the Iraqi government."

Do not blame Iraq.

The United States started and won the war, then we were attacked by Al Qaeda and its surrogates in Iraq. The war can be won. For example, The United States has started a program in Anbar Province to turn the Sunni against Al Qaeda. Al Qaeda is now attacking the Sunni Leaders. *Foreign Affairs* (ibid): "Decisively defeating al Qaeda will be more difficult now than it would have been a few years ago.

But it still can be done."

Foreign Affairs (ibid): "For the last several years, al Qaeda's priority has been to bleed the U. S. In Afghanistan and Iraq. Striking on United States soil has been a lesser goal. If al Qaeda survives,

[S]ooner or later it will attack the U.S. homeland again."

We are in a world war with Islamic extremism. It did not start when we entered Iraq, nor will it end if we leave. Politicians should not ask what we can do to get out of Iraq, but

what must we do to win in Iraq?

**How can one say we should leave
if one has not asked this question?**

**Are You Qualified To Lead
If You Will Not Ask This Question?**