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Robert Scheer: Brooding Prince's Soliloquy

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Posted on Jan 9, 2007

By **Robert Scheer**

To surge or not to surge, that is the question. As our prince proposes, once again, to take arms against a sea of troubles, he responds not to the disaster that he has visited upon Iraq, but rather embraces a desperate strategy for salvaging what remains of his reign.



Mr. Fish

To win, perchance to dream. Few Americans, a mere 17 percent, according to the latest Washington Post/ABC poll, think that sacrificing more Americans in patrols on the streets of Baghdad will reverse the slings and arrows of our outrageous Iraqi fortune, but giving a speech about it might provide our hapless Hamlet with some temporary political cover.

"All the world is really watching," proclaimed Bush press secretary Tony Snow, "and it's important to get this right." Toward that end, as The New York Times reported, "The president's aides were contemplating having Mr. Bush deliver it from the White House Map Room, a site replete with the history and imagery of World War II—imagery that Mr. Bush has invoked as he has sought to compare the campaign against terrorism to the struggle against totalitarianism and the Nazis. But the Oval Office, a more traditional setting, was also being considered."

As for the speech's content, it is by necessity an exercise in the absurd, as the president previewed in his soliloquy for doubting Republican senators his conviction that Iraqi Prime

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Minister Nouri al-Maliki has had a profound change of heart. This radical Shiite leader, who only days ago turned over Saddam Hussein to the tender mercies of a mob chanting its allegiance to the even more fanatical Shiite leader Muqtada al-Sadr, now is expected to lead U.S. troops in battle against his chief political ally and sponsor of much of Iraq's most deadly sectarian fighting. Even Bush must know by now that those fellows with whom he is in bed over there bear us nothing but hate. Speak not of the pangs of despised love.

That must give pause to the president's top advisers, but nonetheless they fail to confront the insolence of office that so fully characterizes this man. "Iraqis will take on this plan and lead it. We will be there to support them and be there to help them hold it," said one senior U.S. official, who briefed the media offstage.

But some in attendance did claim afterward to have demurred. "I expressed reservations," said Sen. Olympia Snowe, a Maine Republican. "I said, 'Why should we expect any different result than previously,' that I didn't believe the Maliki government had demonstrated the political will or capacity or resoluteness for reconciliation, that the reason Americans are not supporting the war is because they see Iraqis fighting among themselves rather than for themselves, and I didn't see the surge addressing the root causes of the violence." Needless to say that patient merit of the unworthy went unnoticed by the brooding prince.

"He seemed very confident," said Sen. Thad Cochran, a Republican from Mississippi. "I'm convinced he has come up with a proposal that he thinks will work." But Cochran confessed to feeling lonely in his faith: "I think I was the only senator who acted like he would be supportive. I was surprised that no one said it but me."

No matter such temporal considerations, for Bush's preoccupation is the dread of something after the death of his presidency, when history will judge the calamity of his long political life and such judgment would likely bear the whips and scorns of time.

"I don't understand what he thinks is going on in Iraq, but whatever it is, he doesn't care about politics, or the Congress or his successor, when it comes to Iraq," offered Richard C. Holbrooke, a veteran of foreign debacles authored by a rival clan. "He wants to either win the war or, since that is an impossibility, pass it on to his successor."

Will the Congress deny him? That is the question posed by Republican Sen. Gordon Smith of Oregon, who only weeks before had withdrawn support for his leader's war: "What this sets up is a classic war powers confrontation between the White House and the Congress. Clearly he has the power to commit troops; the question is whether the Congress has the convictions to deny funding." The senator admitted to having no such convictions: "It would be a dishonorable thing to budget away the bullets." Better to spend them killing more of theirs and yours in an unworthy cause, for in that sleep of death what dreams may come, and, as the bard foretold, "Thus conscience does make cowards of us all." Ay, there's the rub.

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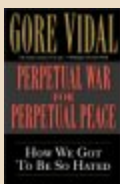


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- **Comment #46584** by [dreaming of peace](#) on 1/09 at 11:55 pm

I sincerely hope that Congress will deny him! No surge, and no more lives sacrificed in Iraq! Is it out of the question for him to undergo psychiatric evaluation and treatment for his delusions of grandeur?

- **Comment #46575** by [TAO Walker](#) on 1/09 at 10:50 pm

This Indian figures Robert Scheer is plenty smart enough to know that a lamebrain sitting-duck like Dubya has got to be a decoy. The question is: Does he know who set the Bush boy out there to draw all that fire? And to what purpose? If so, will he say?

Who exactly will be putting in the words that that will dribble telepromptly tomorrow night from that habitually smirking mouth, bypassing on the way the Lonestar Juvenile Primate's near non-existent critical faculties? It isn't the puppet, but who is pulling the strings, that people have a crying need-to-know now.....and who is pulling the puppeteer's and the puppeteer's puppeteers', right up to the master manipulators people never hear of, much less can put names and faces to.

Tomorrow night will be nothing more than another dreary episode in a dumb-show meant to keep nearly all of the people fooled nearly all the time. Sure, there are lives at-stake. But none among those who are raking in the loot so dimwittingly provided by the reckless and vacuous wannabe vaquero from west Texas.

To hell with "speaking truth" to power's interchangeable proxies and patsies, Mr. Scheer! A few plain facts about the nature and structure of the world-wrecking system of might-makes-right, however unwelcome to an American public slap-happily farting around at its fringes (and about to be shit on again themselves), will at least be an effort worthy of someone on such familiar terms with Bill Shakespeare.

HokaHey!

- **Comment #46571** by [Arun](#) on 1/09 at 9:21 pm

Only Bush, his family, Cheney and family and all the senators supporting war will go to war.
Americans let's make it happen.

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