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Three Years Late And A Dollar Short on Iraq

[Center for American Progress](#). Posted [March 17, 2006](#).

The war on Iraq has proved to be the opposite of what the Bush administration predicted, but still the White House offers no changes, only more of the same.

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"As we approach the [third anniversary of the onset of the Iraq war](#)," neoconservative-turned-Bush-critic Francis Fukuyama writes, "it seems very unlikely that history will judge either the intervention itself or the ideas animating it kindly." The Bush administration laid out the "ideas animating" the Iraq invasion in its [2002 National Security Strategy](#). According to the Bush doctrine, "America would have to [launch periodic preventive wars](#) to defend itself against rogue states" and "would do this alone, if necessary."

Yet after three years of failed policy in Iraq, the Bush administration yesterday released a "[long-overdue](#)" [updated National Security Strategy](#) that "offers [no second thoughts](#)

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[about the preemption policy](#)" -- nor any new ideas for Iraq.

"When does consistency become stubbornness ... and when does stubbornness become stupidity?" asked Center for American Progress's Bob Boorstin. "[When do you give up a](#)

[doctrine that's not working?](#)" (For a progressive alternative, check out [Integrated Power](#).)

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Robert Scheer

Another military offensive

The media has focused intently on the latest U.S. military offensive in Iraq -- codenamed "Operation Swarmer." The *New York Times* reported, "The American military announced today that it had begun its [largest air assault since the invasion of Iraq in 2003](#).... The operation is expected to continue for several days." Swarmer is well over the [hundredth military operation since early 2003](#). (Others include "Operation Slim Shady," "Operation Mandarin Squeeze," and "Operation Checkmate.") The Pentagon even downplayed its importance: "This is the kind of thing that happens pretty regularly in Iraq. It is a [typical brigade-size assault](#)." In fact, the assault is "[similar to many](#) that have been launched against Sunni rebels further west over the past year." The administration "[stressed the involvement of Iraqi troops](#)" in an attempt to quell public doubts "in part by demonstrating that the Iraqi military is growing stronger and eventually will be able to defend the country on its own."

More PR is not a strategy

A Washington Post headline best summed up the administration's recent Iraq strategy: "Bush Goes on Offensive To Explain War Strategy; [Speeches to Combat Public Pessimism](#)." The public relations push represented a return to "a familiar tactic to allay growing public pessimism about the war." The speeches haven't worked. "[Pessimism about the war in Iraq is increasing](#)," CNN reported yesterday. The latest CNN/USA Today/Gallup poll found that of Americans, "[60 percent said things were going poorly in Iraq](#)" and "55 percent said they believe Iraq is headed for a civil war." Also, [67 percent of Americans think Bush lacks a clear plan](#) for handling the situation in Iraq. Rather than alleviating concerns with a change in strategy, the administration continues to push its "stay the course" line.

Iraq's Parliament meets, briefly

While military operations continued, "[Iraqi legislators convened the long-awaited first session](#) of the new Parliament in the capital."

"The parliamentary meeting, [which might have been the high point](#) of a U.S.-backed process that began with the 2003 invasion to overthrow Saddam Hussein, [was reduced to 20 minutes of protocol](#) that did little but meet a constitutional deadline." "The Parliament's leaders [delivered blunt speeches that acknowledged the rising sectarian tensions](#) and the vacuum of power, then adjourned the session after a swearing-in ceremony for the 275 members."

The Iraq constitution mandates the legislators choose a speaker during the first session, but they were unable to do so. Therefore, they kept open the session by using "a [legal ploy](#) that gives parliament an open-ended timetable to elect a speaker." "[The country is going through dangerous times](#)," said temporary speaker Adnan Pachachi. "Sectarian tensions have increased and begun to create a national crisis that could destroy Iraq. We have to prove to the whole world that there will not be civil war between the people of this country. The danger is still there, and our enemies are watching us."

Sectarian violence continues

The danger is still so great in Iraq that "the interim government declared a holiday and imposed a [day-long ban on vehicles in the capital](#)" in advance of the parliamentary session. "When the transitional parliament met [last year, there was no such curfew](#), and streets were jammed with the cars of people going about their daily business." On Wednesday, Iraqi police found "36 bodies, all executed with gunshots to the head" who they believe are "the latest victims in a [long spate of sectarian bloodletting](#)."

The Bush administration refuses to face up to the facts on the ground in Iraq. The National Security Strategy described the fighting as, "A multinational coalition joined by the Iraqis ... aggressively [prosecuting the war against the terrorists in Iraq](#)." But *The Washington Post* reported, "The past two weeks have changed the war in Iraq, shifting its focus from a U.S.-driven fight against Sunni insurgents to a [direct battle for power and survival between Iraq's empowered Shiite majority and disempowered Sunni minority](#)." Asked to describe what the situation would look like if the violence became an all-out civil war, Defense Secretary Rumsfeld replied, "It's a hard thing to do. Until I've had a chance to think more about it, I will say, [I don't think it will look like the United States' Civil War](#)."

Where to go from here

Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski, former National Security Adviser, delivered the keynote address yesterday at the Center for American Progress conference, "[Iraq: Next Steps for U.S. Policy](#)." Brzezinski argued that "within a year [we should be able to complete a course of disengagement](#)" from Iraq. The Center for American Progress has a plan to achieve this goal by the end of 2007. "[Strategic Redeployment](#)," co-written by Lawrence Korb and Brian Katulis, calls for a gradual drawdown of American troops coupled with increased engagement with Iraq's political leaders. The plan goes beyond the debate between "cutting and running" and "staying the course" to show how we can more effectively achieve success in Iraq.

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What are the Bush objectives: the subjugation of all troublesome countries in the Middle East by means of brutality. This was the Nazi Party's objective in Europe and in Russia. Bush is on course because the world of nation states is not unifying against him, much as they failed to do against Hitler until well into his plan. Like Hitler, he has so far intimidated world opposition to his policy for the subjugation of states that have resources his country needs to dominate the world. The Democrats are a less straight forward version of the same thing. Welcome to the fascist state of America in the 21st Century. This is not hyperbole or exaggeration. It is a simple truth understood by those who use the word 'fascism' correctly without the ideological binders of the notion of totalitarianism. Do any of you disagree?

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