

Questions For The Iraq Study Group To Study

It is **reported** that the Iraq Study Group led by the highly Realistic James Baker

has unanimously agreed to a report that will call for a gradual pullback of American combat troops in Iraq but stops short of setting a firm timetable for withdrawal, The New York Times reported on Wednesday.

And this differs from the present policy how? Like this:

the Times said the Iraq Study Group will recommend that Bush make it clear that he will start the troop withdrawal "relatively soon," indicating sometime next year.

That's very clear and Realistic. No firm timetable, but a firm timetable of withdrawal by December 31st 2007. Independently of what may, realistically speaking, happen as a result.

That recommendation would be a compromise between calls from some Democrats for a timetable to withdraw U.S. forces and Bush's insistence that forces should remain until the mission to stabilize Iraq was completed.

Recommendations of the panel, which is co-chaired by former Secretary of State James Baker -- a close Bush family friend -- and former Democratic congressman Lee Hamilton, will be much harder for Bush to resist than if the group were divided, experts and study group advisers say.

This is an astonishingly amoral position for something called a 'study group' to adopt. It is almost as if they would rather have an effect -- any effect, even one that none of them agree with -- than be ignored. They would rather subscribe collectively to a report that every one of them considers mistaken, than state individually what they believe to be the truth.

If the result is just a vague anti-Bush editorial that could have been written without study, at the outset, we wonder what the Iraq Study Group has been studying, and why. We hope that they have at least studied the following vital issues, and will include careful guidance on them in their final report:

- Will the report be cleared with Allies, such as Iraq, Australia

- and Israel, before any action is taken to implement it?
- Is there a Plan for the Aftermath of the report? In particular, have enough troops been allocated to ensure that the report's Aftermath in Iraq is completely non-violent?
 - If not, will all use of force resulting from this report, by all parties in Iraq, have full UN Security Council approval?
 - Will the arrangements properly safeguard Iraqi antiquities?
 - And Iraqi oil installations?
 - Will there be adequate arrangements for the refugees?
 - Has sufficient attention been given to the effect of a US retreat on the Arab Street?
 - What does the group recommend as the exit strategy from their report?

Thu, 11/30/2006 - 07:06 | [digg](#) | [del.icio.us](#) | [permalink](#)

Iraq Study Group

1. Will the report be cleared with Allies, such as Iraq, Australia and Israel, before any action is taken to implement it?

I suspect that whatever decisions are arrived at by the White House will be discussed with the Allies, including the U.K., before any action is taken. I do not think the report will be "cleared," if what's meant by that is a veto right.

2. Is there a Plan for the Aftermath of the report? In particular, have enough troops been allocated to ensure that the report's Aftermath in Iraq is completely non-violent?

I don't think enough troops will be allocated to insure that the Aftermath is completely non-violent. Iraq is far from non-violent now with the current level of forces, and there is not the political will to invest materially more blood and treasure to the conflict.

3. If not, will all use of force resulting from this report, by all parties in Iraq, have full UN Security Council approval?

Clearly no.

4. Will the arrangements properly safeguard Iraqi antiquities, and Iraqi oil installations?

No, remaining antiquities and Iraq oil installations are currently under constant threat and given the answer to the second question above, will continue to be under threat.

5. Will there be adequate arrangements for the refugees?

Currently there are large numbers of internal refugees, as well as refugees in bordering countries. Given the answer to the second question above, it's hard to imagine that any plan will adequately provide for the current refugees, let alone additional refugees caused, for example, by increased fighting in the wake of a U.S. withdrawal.

6. Has sufficient attention been given to the effect of a US retreat

on the Arab Street?

I suspect that this issue is discussed in some detail, since it lends itself to broad conclusions either to withdraw, stay the course, or increase commitment.

7. What does the group recommend as the exit strategy from their report?

Good question.

by **Michael Bacon** on Thu, 11/30/2006 - 15:57 | [reply](#)

The Crux of Incountry Stability

Since we are speculating on what the Study Group report should speak to:

How might the actual aftermath of the war be conducted, beginning with the surrender of Baghdad in spring 2003, given the stirred Sunni/Shite/Kurd dynamics which continue to fester until addressed?

How can the U.S. and allies deal most practically with the now ingrained perception of all Iraqi citizens that they are an occupied country not responsible for their own destiny?

Rephrase these two questions however you would like in order to make them clearer. Thorny issues, but they are, and always have been the crux of the core problem to be solved.

by a reader on Fri, 12/01/2006 - 04:21 | [reply](#)

Too Subtle?

The responses thusfar lead me to wonder whether it has been understood that these "vital issues" are versions of some of the unrealistic criticisms of the original invasion.

Gil

by **Gil** on Sat, 12/02/2006 - 01:11 | [reply](#)

Questions

I thought "Questions For The Iraq Study Group To Study" was a good title and the post asked some serious and usefull questions regarding the current war. Perhaps I was wrong.

by **Michael Bacon** on Sat, 12/02/2006 - 01:22 | [reply](#)

Results of the experiment

Experience has shown that most of the unrealistic criticisms of the original invasion were realistic. In Popperian terms, the

justifications, or rationalizations, for the original invasion have been

proven wrong.

by a reader on Thu, 12/07/2006 - 15:53 | [reply](#)

Cold comfort this probably ha

Cold comfort this probably hasn't worked out well in some "universes" other than ours. How quickly the US changes course in a variety of ways will depend, as it did in the Vietnam instance, on how things play out in the US Congress. It looks like Bush, at least for now, is going to resist ceding control of his fate and will change only to the extent the US Congress can successfully force the issue. Or perhaps the political pressure will be great and the changes come more quickly.

by [Michael Bacon](#) on Fri, 12/08/2006 - 23:08 | [reply](#)

The real questions

Do you still think that the War in Iraq was a good decision, that the Iraqis would welcome the liberating bombs, and that this war helps fighting the War on Terror? Do you still think that those opposing it were "idiotarians"?

by a reader on Sun, 08/19/2007 - 13:56 | [reply](#)

yes

yes

-- Elliot Temple

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Dialogs

by [Elliot Temple](#) on Mon, 08/20/2007 - 00:23 | [reply](#)