

MY TURN TO SOUND OFF: CONGRESIONAL DEMOCRATS WOULD
BENEFIT FROM A CIVICS LESSON

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PINE BLUFFS – Well, it didn't take Democrats long. Only minutes after the commander of multi-national forces in Iraq, four-star General David Petraeus presented his report to a joint session of the House and Senate Foreign Relations Committees, Congressional Democrats attacked him unmercifully. But all they succeeded in doing was demonstrating their well-deserved reputation from the McGovern years, of being soft on national defense and unwilling to protect America from foreign enemies.

Back in January 2007, Democrat Senators, after a lengthy hearing, unanimously confirmed General Petraeus for the position to which he was named by the Commander-in-Chief, George W. Bush. At the time, they closely questioned the General about the strategy he was recommending; an increase of American ground forces numbering approximately 30,000, in order to seek out and destroy al Quada insurgents. Therefore, one might argue that by confirming him, they endorsed this new plan for fighting the war.

At the time, the newly elected Democrat majority was actively engaged in flaying President Bush for – according to them – failing to follow the advice of his generals, failing to adequately plan for what might happen in Iraq after the fall of Saddam, and having no strategy at all in that country of 52 million.

All this despite the fact that Democrats themselves have never had a plan for success in Iraq. Since they profess not to like the Republican strategy, what is *their* plan for victory? They have never had a clue about how to win this battle, and only seem at their best when insisting that the war is lost, and that we ought to immediately withdraw, thereby embracing an American defeat. Indeed, many of them have continuously denied even the existence of a "War on Terror."

Not long after the Bush Administration published its list of countries actively aiding al Quada, Speaker of the House, self-styled commander-in-chief and foreign policy expert, Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), embarked on a visit to the Middle East at taxpayer's expense. There, she was warmly received by Syrian officials, most of whom are complicit in fomenting unrest in both Lebanon and Iraq. (Anthony Joseph Sacco, Sr., "*Most Ethical Congress Ever is Ethically Challenged*," <http://www.quazen.com/News/Opinions>, August 14, 2007. Never mind that her actions were contrary to American Middle East policy, nor that constitutionally, the President has the sole power to conduct American foreign policy.

In the Senate hearing on Monday, September 10, General Petraeus, who has had the opportunity to view this war at close range, and who authored the Army's new counter-insurgency manual said, "There are no easy answers or quick solutions." Recognizing what Pelosi apparently does not, he warned that both Iran and Syria are attempting to destabilize Iraq for their own purposes.

For some time, Democrats have seemed uninterested in winning the War on Terror, but rather in using the ups and downs of the Iraqi struggle as a means to prevail in the upcoming election. They, and their surrogate groups, disputed the General's report before he even uttered a word in the Senate chamber. Master of the ad hominem or personal attack, the left-wing group MoveOn.org, financed extensively in the past by liberal philanthropist George Soros, bought an ad in the New York Times referring to General Petraeus as "General Betray us," and accusing him of "cooking the books for the White House."

This ad prompted The Wall Street Journal to editorialize, "The Democrats have now normalized the practice of accusing their opponents of lying. If other members of the Democrats don't move quickly to repudiate this turn, the ability of the U.S. political system to function will be impaired in a way no one would wish for." (*"Trashing Petraeus. MoveOn.org, and the new standards of Democratic debate."* The Wall Street Journal, September 11, 2007). My response? Some liberal Democrats, members of the Hate America crowd, would like nothing better than to topple our American political system.

Also on September 11, Senator John Ensign (R-NV), Chairman of the National Republican Senatorial Committee (NRSC) said, "Today, ostensibly on behalf of National Democrats, Democrat front group MoveOn.org is calling a unanimously confirmed United States General a liar and a betrayer of the public trust. Apparently the prospect of campaign funds is enough of an incentive for

Senate Democrats to stand idly by while a respected General is maligned before he has even presented his report to Congress." Ensign went on to say that a failure of Democrats to denounce the ad would mean they have decided re-election is more important than "moving our country forward" or being fair to Petraeus.

But Republican demands that Democrats disassociate themselves from the ad were met with at least one angry response. Rep. Neil Abercrombie (D-HI) said, "Nobody has to distance themselves from something they weren't associated with."

Tactics of the radical left aside, the practice of ad hominem attacks seems to have moved into the hallowed halls of Congress. On Thursday, September 6, Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee Rep. Tom Lantos (D-CA) said that the General's report would not be his own, but "would be written by Administration political operatives." Lantos followed that up by opening the hearing on September 10 with this: "We cannot take anything this Administration says on Iraq at face value." And during that hearing, Senator Hillary Clinton (D-NY), obviously pandering to the radical liberal base of her Party, said that to accept the General's report at face value "requires a willing suspension of disbelief." That's the same as calling the General a liar.

Those who listened to General Petraeus's presentation learned that the surge has been relatively successful militarily but needs more time. Violence is down in Anbar Province and several others in northern Iraq, where tribal chiefs,

disgusted by al Quada's bloody attacks against Iraqi citizens, have begun to fight alongside Iraqi government and U.S. forces. We learned more about the problems of nation building faced by the Iraqi government in seeking to reconcile the divergent interests of Shiites, Sunnis and Kurds. Also to be considered is representation of and power sharing by the many Iraqi tribes, and absorption of members of the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party, formerly loyal only to Saddam, into the mix. The fledgling Democracy in Iraq is dealing with many of the same problems that faced a young United States of America in the years immediately following the Revolutionary War. I urge everyone to read the full text of Petraeus's instructive report by going to http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2007/09/general_petraeus_rep.php instead of relying on the talking heads for information.

Although our military gains in Iraq are now so clear as to be obvious to even the most partisan Democrats, ". . . they are doing everything they can to obscure those successes and to force a reversal in strategy that would completely erase them," wrote David Limbaugh in his piece, *Has the Left No Shame?* September 11, 2007.

Some Democrats in Congress are attempting to micromanage the war, objecting to everything being done by coalition forces but offering no alternatives. Senator John Kerry (D-MA) called the Iraq mission "disastrous." Senator Ted Kennedy (D-MA) accused the Administration of "playing for delay," by sending General Petraeus to address Congress, and Senator John R. Edwards

(D-NC) mocked Mr. Bush's "so-called global war on terror," and said America is less safe now than it was before terrorist attacks. He said this with a straight face, seeming to ignore the long passage of time since the last terrorist strike on American soil.

All of this shows a defeatist, decidedly, non-Reagonesque attitude on the part of Democrat leaders. But even more basic, here's what Congressional Democrats fail to understand, and what any high school Civics teacher could explain to them. Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution gives Congress authority to do several things. Among those are 1) the power to raise an army and navy, and by implication, an air force, 2) the power to declare war, and 3) the power to either raise funds to pay for a war or withdraw funds to stop paying for it.

But what Congress may NOT do is manage a war. That task is reserved to the President by Article II, Section 2, Clause 1 of that same Constitution. The founding fathers designed it so because they understood that wars cannot be fought and won by a consensus wrung from a large group of senators and representatives over time, but must be quickly and vigorously prosecuted by one commander-in chief. That's the President of the United States.

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