

STATEMENT OF
FORMER SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE NEWT GINGRICH
BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

TUESDAY, JANUARY 23, 2007

THE COST OF DEFEAT IN IRAQ AND
THE COST OF VICTORY IN IRAQ

Chairman Biden, Ranking Member Lugar, and members of the committee:

Thank you for allowing me to testify.

This is an extraordinarily important series of hearings on a topic of enormous national importance.

The United States finds itself in a global struggle with the forces of Islamic fascism and their dictatorial allies.

From a fanatic American near Chicago who attempted to buy hand grenades to launch a personal Jihad in a Christmas mall, to 18 Canadians arrested for terrorist plots, to the Scotland Yard disruption of a plot in Britain to destroy ten civilian airliners in one day that if successful would have shattered worldwide confidence in commercial aviation and potentially thrown the world into a deep economic contraction.

We are confronted again and again with a worldwide effort to undermine and defeat the system of law and order which has created more prosperity and more freedom for more people than any previous system.

The threats seem to come in four different forms:

First, from individuals who are often self recruited and randomly inspired through the internet, television and charismatic social and religious friendships.

Second, from organized non state systems of terror of which Al Qaeda, Hezbollah and Hamas are the most famous. Additional groups have sprung up and provide continuity, training, and support for terrorism.

Third, from dictatorships in the Middle East most notably Iran and Syria who have been consistently singled out by the State Department (including in 2006) as the largest funders of state supported terrorism in the world. These dictatorships are investing in more advanced conventional weapons and in chemical and nuclear weapons.

Fourth, from a strange assortment of anti-American dictatorships including North Korea, Venezuela and Cuba.

This coalition of the enemies of freedom has growing power around the world. Its leaders are increasingly bold in their explicit hostility to the United States.

To take just two recent examples: Ahmadinejad of Iran has said “[t]o those who doubt, to those who ask is it possible, or those who do not believe, I say accomplishment of a world without America and Israel is both possible and feasible.” He has also said that Israel should be “wiped off the map.” Chavez of Venezuela, just last week in a joint appearance with the Iranian leader in Latin America, announced a multi billion dollar fund to help countries willing to fight to end “American imperialism.”

Both of these statements were on television and are not subject to misinterpretation.

Similarly there are many web pages and other public statements in which various terrorists have described in great detail their commitment to killing millions of Americans. I described these publicly delivered threats in a speech on the fifth anniversary of 9/11 which I gave at the American Enterprise Institute. The text of this speech is attached as an appendix to this testimony.

These threats might be ignored if it were not for the consistent efforts to acquire nuclear and biological weapons by these enemies of freedom

I first wrote about the extraordinary increase in the threat to our civilization from nuclear weapons in the hands of terrorists in *Window of Opportunity* in 1984. Attached to this testimony is a copy of the relevant pages from this book.

It is not accurate to suggest today that people were not aware of terrorism or were not warning about the threat to America’s very survival prior to 9/11.

Many sophisticated observers and professional military and intelligence officers have been issuing these warnings for two decades.

What has been amazing to watch has been the absolute inability of our system of government to analyze the problem and react effectively.

It is this collapse of capacity for effectiveness which is at the heart of our current dilemma.

The United States is now in a decaying mess in Afghanistan and an obviously unacceptable mess in Iraq.

While this language may seem harsh to defenders of the current policy, it is sadly an accurate statement of where we are.

Efforts to think through and solve the problems of Afghanistan and Iraq have to be undertaken in a context of looking at a wider range of challenges to American leadership around the world and potentially to our very survival as a country. These larger challenges are described in my attached presentation entitled "The Real World and The Real War".

With these caveats I want to focus on the challenge of Iraq.

TWO VERY HARD PATHS FORWARD IN IRAQ

America is faced with two very hard paths forward in Iraq.

We can accept defeat and try to rebuild our position in the region while accommodating the painful possibility that these enemies of freedom in Iraq -- evil men, vicious murderers, and sadistic inflictors of atrocities will have defeated both the millions of Iraqis who voted for legal self government and the American people and their government.

Alternatively we can insist on defeating the enemies of America and the enemies of the Iraqi people and can develop the strategies and the implementation mechanisms necessary to force victory despite the incompetence of the Iraqi government, the unreliability of Iraqi leaders, and the interference of Syria and Iran on behalf of our enemies.

Both these paths are hard. Both involve great risk. Both have unknowable difficulties and will produce surprise events.

Both will be complicated.

Yet either is preferable to continuing to accept an ineffective American implementation system while relying on the hope that the Iraqi system can be made to work in the next six months.

THE INHERENT CONFUSION IN THE CURRENT STRATEGY

There are three fundamental weaknesses in the current strategy.

First, the strategy relies on the Iraqis somehow magically improving their performance in a very short time period. Yet the argument for staying in Iraq is that it is a vital AMERICAN

interest. If we are seeking victory in Iraq because it is vital to America then we need a strategy which will win even if our Iraqi allies are inadequate. We did not rely on the Free French to defeat Nazi Germany. We did not rely on the South Koreans to stop North Korea and China during the Korean War. When it mattered to American vital interests we accepted all the help we could get but we made sure we had enough strength to win on our own if need be.

President Bush has asserted that Iraq is a vital American interest. In January 2007 alone he has said the following things:

But if we do not succeed in Iraq, we will leave behind a Middle East which will endanger America in the future.

[F]ailure in one part of the world could lead to disaster here at home. It's important for our citizens to understand that as tempting as it might be, to understand the consequences of leaving before the job is done, radical Islamic extremists would grow in strength. They would be emboldened. It would make it easier to recruit for their cause. They would be in a position to do that which they have said they want to do, which is to topple moderate governments, to spread their radical vision across an important region of the world.

If we were to leave before the job is done, if we were to fail in Iraq, Iran would be emboldened in its pursuit of nuclear weapons. Our enemies would have safe havens from which to launch attacks. People would look back at this moment in history and say, what happened to them in America? How come they couldn't see the threats to a future generation?

The consequences of failure are clear: Radical Islamic extremists would grow in strength and gain new recruits. They would be in a better position to topple moderate governments, create chaos in the region, and use oil revenues to fund their ambitions. Iran would be emboldened in its pursuit of nuclear weapons. Our enemies would have a safe haven from which to plan and launch attacks on the American people. On September the 11th, 2001, we saw what a refuge for extremists on the other side of the world could bring to the streets of our own cities. For the safety of our people, America must succeed in Iraq.

Iraq is a central component of defeating the extremists who want to establish safe haven in the Middle East, extremists who would use their safe haven from which to attack the United States, extremists and radicals who have stated that they want to topple moderate governments in order to be able to achieve assets necessary to effect their dream of spreading their totalitarian ideology as far and wide as possible.

This is really the calling of our time, that is, to defeat these extremists and radicals, and Iraq is a component part, an important part of laying the foundation for peace.

The inherent contradiction in the administration strategy is simple. If Iraq matters as much as the President says it does (and here I agree with the President on the supreme importance of victory) then the United States must not design and rely on a strategy which relies on the Iraqis to win.

On the other hand if the war is so unimportant that the fate of Iraq can be allowed to rest with the efforts of a new, weak, untested and inexperienced government then why are we risking American lives.

Both propositions cannot be true.

I accept the President's analysis of the importance of winning in Iraq and therefore I am compelled to propose that his recently announced strategy is inadequate.

The second weakness is that the current strategy debate once again focuses too much on the military and too little on everything that has not been working. The one instrument that has been reasonably competent is the combat element of American military power. That is a very narrow definition and should not be expanded to include the non combat elements of the Department of Defense which also have a lot of difficulties in performing adequately.

The great failures in the Iraq and Afghanistan campaigns have been in non-combat power. Intelligence, diplomacy, economic aid, information operations, support from the civilian elements of national power. These have been the great centers of failure in America's recent conflicts. They are a major reason we have done so badly in Iraq.

The gap between the President's recent proposals and the required rethinking and transforming of our non-combat instruments of power is simply breathtaking.

No military leader I have talked with believes military force is adequate to win in Iraq. Every one of them insists that the civilian instruments of power are more important than the combat elements. They all assert that they can hold the line for a while with force but that holding the line will ultimately fail if we are not using that time to achieve progress in non-military areas.

This failure of the non-combat bureaucracies cannot be solved in Iraq. The heart of the problem is in Washington and that brings us to the third weakness in the current strategy.

The third weakness in the current strategy is its inability to impose war time decision making and accountability in Washington.

The interagency process is hopelessly broken.

This is not a new phenomenon. I first wrote about it in 1984 in Window of Opportunity when I asserted:

[W]e must decide what sort of executive-branch planning and implementation system are desirable.

At a minimum, we will need closer relationships between the intelligence agencies, the diplomatic agencies, the economic agencies, the military agencies, the news media and the political structure. There has to be a synergism in which our assessment of what is happening relates to our policies as they are developed and implemented. Both analyses and implementation must be related to the new media and political system because all basic policies must have public support if they are to succeed.

Finally, once the professionals have mastered their professions and have begun to work in systems that are effective and coordinated, those professionals must teach both the news media and the elected politicians. No free society can for long accept the level of ignorance about war, history, and the nature of power which has become the norm for our news media and our elected politicians. An ignorant society is on its way to becoming an extinct society.

In 1991 my concern for replacing the broken interagency system with an integrated system of effective coordination was heightened when General Max Thurmond who had planned and led the liberation of Panama told me unequivocally that the interagency process was broken.

In 1995 that process was reinforced when General Hartzog described the failures of the interagency in trying to deal with Haiti.

As early as 2002 it was clear that the interagency had broken down in Afghanistan and I gave a very strong speech in May 2003 at the American Enterprise Institute criticizing the process.

By the summer of 2003 it was clear the interagency was failing in Iraq and by September and October 2003 we were getting consistent reports from the field of the gap between the capability of the combat forces and the failure of the civilian systems.

No senior officer in the Defense Department doubts that the current interagency cannot work at the speed of modern war. They will not engage in a fight with the National Security Council or the State Department or the various civilian agencies which fail to do their job. But in private they will assert over and over again that the interagency system is hopelessly broken.

It was very disappointing to have the President focus so much on 21, 500 more military personnel and so little on the reforms needed in all the other elements of the executive branch.

The proposals for winning in Iraq outlined below follow from this analysis.

KEY STEPS TO VICTORY IN IRAQ

1. Place General Petraeus in charge of the Iraq campaign and establish that the Ambassador is operating in support of the military commander.
2. Since General Petraeus will now have responsibility for victory in Iraq all elements of achieving victory are within his purview and he should report daily to the White House on anything significant which is not working or is needed
3. Create a deputy chief of staff to the President and appoint a retired four star general or admiral to manage Iraq implementation for the Commander in Chief on a daily basis.
4. Establish that the second briefing (after the daily intelligence brief) the President will get every day is from his deputy chief of staff for Iraq implementation.
5. Establish a War Cabinet which will meet once a week to review metrics of implementation and resolve failures and enforce decisions. The President should chair the War Cabinet personally and his deputy chief of staff for Iraq implementation should prepare the agenda for the weekly review and meeting.
6. Establish three plans: one for achieving victory with the help of the Iraqi government, one for achieving victory with the passive acquiescence of the Iraqi government, one for achieving victory even if the current Iraqi government is unhappy. The third plan may involve very significant shifts in troops and resources away from Baghdad and a process of allowing the Iraqi central government to fend for itself if it refuses to cooperate.
7. Communicate clearly to Syria and Iran that the United States is determined to win in Iraq and that any further interference (such as the recent reports of sophisticated Iranian explosives being sent to Iraq to target Americans) will lead to direct and aggressive countermeasures.
8. Pour as many intelligence assets into the fight as needed to develop an overwhelming advantage in intelligence preparation of the battlefield.
9. Develop a commander's capacity to spend money on local activities sufficient to enable every local American commander to have substantial leverage in dealing with local communities.
10. Establish a jobs corps or civil conservation corps of sufficient scale to bring unemployment for males under 30 below 10% (see the attached op-ed by Mayor Giuliani and myself on this topic).

11. Expand dramatically the integration of American purchasing power in buying from Iraqi firms pioneered by Assistant Secretary Paul Brinkley to maximize the rate of recovery of the Iraqi economy.
12. Expand the American Army and Marine Corps as much as needed to sustain the fights in Iraq and Afghanistan while also being prepared for other contingencies and maintaining a sustainable rhythm for the families and the force.
13. Demand a war budget for recapitalization of the military to continue modernization while defeating our enemies. The current national security budget is lower as a percentage of the economy than at any time from Pearl Harbor through the end of the Cold War. It is less than half the level Truman sustained before the Korean War.
14. The State Department is too small, too undercapitalized and too untrained for the demands of the 21st century. There should be a 50% increase in the State Department budget and a profound rethinking of the culture and systems of the State Department so it can be an operationally effective system.
15. The Agency for International Development is hopelessly unsuited to the new requirements of economic assistance and development and should be rethought from the ground up. The Marshall Plan and Point Four were as important as NATO in containing the Soviet Empire. We do not have that capability today.
16. The President should issue executive orders where possible to reform the implementation system so it works with the speed and effectiveness required by the 21st century.
17. Where legislation is needed the President should collaborate with Congress in honestly reviewing the systems that are failing and developing new metrics, new structures and new strategies.
18. Under our Constitution it is impossible to have this scale of rethinking and reform without deep support from the legislative branch. Without Republican Senator Arthur Vandenburg, Democratic President Harry Truman could never have developed the containment policies that saved freedom and ultimately defeated the Soviet Empire. The President should ask the bipartisan leaders of Congress to cooperate in establishing a joint Legislative-Executive working group on winning the war and should openly brief the legislative branch on the problems which are weakening the American system abroad. Only by educating and informing the Congress can we achieve the level of mutual understanding and mutual commitment that this long hard task will require.

Thank you for this opportunity to share these proposals.