

COUNTERPROLIFERATION INSURGENCY

I've got two small points to make about Sy Hersh's latest, which has been covered generally just about everywhere.

What had been presented primarily as a counter-proliferation mission has been reconceived as counterterrorism.

The shift in targeting reflects three developments. First, the President and his senior advisers have concluded that their campaign to convince the American public that Iran poses an imminent nuclear threat has failed (unlike a similar campaign before the Iraq war), and that as a result there is not enough popular support for a major bombing campaign. The second development is that the White House has come to terms, in private, with the general consensus of the American intelligence community that Iran is at least five years away from obtaining a bomb. And, finally, there has been a growing recognition in Washington and throughout the Middle East that Iran is emerging as the geopolitical winner of the war in Iraq.

This, it seems to me, invites a logical approach to combating this idiocy. The Bushies are admitting, at least among themselves, that their "laptop of death" campaign (and other silliness) didn't work. It didn't work, of course, because it was manufactured bullshit. From the line, "the White House has come to terms, in private, with the general consensus of the American intelligence community that Iran is at least five years away from obtaining a bomb," I assume the intelligence community looked at how sketchy the whole laptop of death campaign was, and refused to condone Administration warmonger

based on that rationale. So they've simply invented a new rationale. Any bets on whether or not the intelligence community gets to review the evidence behind the allegations about Iran supplying Iraqi insurgents?

In any case, their ability and willingness to pivot like this and *change the entire rationale* for their war in Iran ought to be reason enough to oppose the idea. That's true, first of all, because it strongly suggests both rationales were just more manufactured evidence. But also because, as the Iraq war showed us, if we go to war without a clearly defined rationale and goal, we're going to get stuck in yet another desert quagmire.

And we're going to forestall the discussions about the real reasons we'd be going to war against Iran.