

PRIDE AND PETULANCE

Today is Victory In Iraq Day. For Iraqis. Well, actually, it is the day American troops (yes we are the only ones left; even our "special friends", the Brits, left long ago) officially marked their exit from urban areas to be concentrated in centralized bases in the countryside. From the New York Times:

With parades, fireworks and a national holiday, the Iraqi government celebrated the final withdrawal of American troops from the country's cities on Tuesday, trying to exploit a political milestone to trumpet what the prime minister called sovereignty from foreign occupation.

Indeed, in spite of the still tenuous security situation in many areas, it is and should be a day of celebration of the return of another piece of sovereignty for the Iraqis. They will never truly stand until they stand on their own; it will be painful, fitful and slow, but it is a necessary process.

And how are neocons and some elements of the military (by no means all) taking the events of the day? Not well of course. The Dick, Cheney, is concern trolling that the U.S. troop withdrawal might "waste all the tremendous sacrifice that has gotten us to this point."

The neocons and PNACs who ginned up this war, and lied us into it, are worried about the frailty of the situation because of the American sacrifice. There were no WMDs, no links to al-Qaida, no threat from Sadaam to the US or anybody in the region at the time, and the one real power in the region, Iran, has been strengthened. And Dick Cheney marks the occasion by whining about *our* sacrifice. The Iraqis must be thrilled to hear those words.

As CNN's Michael Ware reports in the attached video clip, no one, whether American, Iraqi or

otherwise, should demean or devalue the efforts and lives lost by the American military, they did the job they were told to do, but the bigger picture on the Iraqi adventure is very ugly, and contrary to Dick Cheney, it is the sacrifice of the Iraqis that ought to be considered, because the American loss is insignificant to the hell we hath wrought upon Iraq. The US military and coalition forces have lost about 4,500 casualties (and nearly 1,400 contractor deaths which no one ever mentions).

The carnage on the Iraqi populous has been far more devastating however:

Thus, the best guess we can make at present is that at least 200,000 people died through violence since the US-led invasion, and that the true figure may be far higher. Moreover, an additional number that could be in the hundreds of thousands may have died from nonviolent causes – e.g., lack of clean water and healthcare – associated with the conflict, but this figure is uncertain. No matter what the correct figures turn out to be, it is clear that far too many have died as a result of this war of choice and subsequent occupation which may have deposed a dictator but which also disrupted an entire society.

As Stephen Soldz indicates, 200,000 Iraqi deaths is likely critically low, once non-violent deaths such as infant mortality, dysentery, unavailability of medical resources and other factors are considered, it is surely far higher. Yet Cheney, the Dick, makes no reference to the Iraqi sacrifice.

What a load of sanctimonious American exceptionalism baloney. The Iraqis are proud and should be celebrating; they are starting to get their country back, and they have sacrificed unimaginably. Giving the Iraqis their country back was supposed to be the point in the first place. But petulant whiners like Dick Cheney

don't care about that. They never did.