



Jay Buckey served in the Air Force Reserve, and he knows that our military is well trained, and extremely capable. Yet he believes that the Bush administration has failed to set the right strategic goals. We need a new strategy that addresses both our short-term and long-term interests.

Policy Perspective: Iraq

The current conflict in Iraq is part of a larger problem. We have been involved militarily in Iraq for 16 years, and we have had a military presence in the Persian Gulf for decades. In the 1980s, the “Carter Doctrine” established the secure flow of Persian Gulf oil as a vital interest of the United States¹. A longstanding goal of our military’s Central Command is to maintain free access to the region’s oil resources². This doctrine remains an essential part of our foreign policy. Any serious effort to disengage from Iraq has to change this underlying reality.

The current administration has created a complicated and potentially explosive problem in the Persian Gulf through a series of strategic and tactical errors:

* **The administration failed to assess the situation accurately.** Data on weapons of mass destruction were not reviewed scientifically or objectively.³ Potential links to terrorism were exaggerated.⁴ The history of sectarian divisions in the area was not given sufficient attention.

* **Planning for the effort was not in keeping with good military practices.** Contingency planning was either not performed or ignored. There was no adequate backup plan to salvage the situation if the initial assumptions proved false -- as they did.⁵

* **The administration refused to adapt to changing realities.** They downplayed the chaos after the invasion and ignored signs of the growing insurgency. This allowed a bad situation to get worse.

* **The conflict was presented as essential to America’s freedom, yet the administration did not sufficiently fund the war and continued to cut taxes for the wealthy.** During World War II, our entire nation was involved in addressing the challenges of war. Today, collective sacrifice has not been called for in the U.S., and our military is not being sufficiently supported in areas ranging from body armor to health care for returning veterans.

Withdrawing from Iraq will involve action on several fronts: strategic, diplomatic, and military. On the strategic front, we need to revisit the Carter doctrine and establish an aggressive schedule to reduce our dependency on Persian Gulf oil. Our new doctrine should make developing renewable, domestically-produced, energy alternatives a **vital U.S. interest**. This would provide the U.S. with energy options and encourage other nations to help maintain stability in the Persian Gulf.

On the diplomatic front, we need to gather support from surrounding countries which have a vested interest in seeing a stable, functioning state in Iraq. We should make restructuring Iraq a global problem for the international community to solve together. Also, we should expand our options to include either a) a decentralized federation, or b) a two or three-state solution.

Militarily, the U.S. should focus on making an orderly withdrawal from Iraq, while increasing our efforts in Afghanistan. We also need to rebuild our forces. Currently, our military is overstressed, and the extensive use of the National Guard overseas compromises our ability to provide emergency response at home.⁶

Paid for by Buckey For Senate

¹ <http://www.jimmycarterlibrary.org/documents/speeches/su80jec.phtml> (Accessed 9/1/07)

² <http://www.milnet.com/pentagon/centcom/chap1/over1.htm> (Accessed 9/4/07)

³ <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=1435> (Accessed 9/4/07)

⁴ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/3119676.stm> (Accessed 9/4/07)

⁵ http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/06/11/AR2005061100723_pf.html (Accessed 9/01/07)

⁶ http://www.usatoday.com/news/military/2007-08-27-guard-deployments_N.htm (Accessed 9/4/07)