

Dealing With the Devil

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One hundred billion dollars. People often ask why we are in Iraq and why the war cannot be ended. One hundred billion dollars. With that kind of money flowing into the pockets of defense contractors and everyone connected to them, "the war" will continue indefinitely. For as long as the money flows, "the war" will continue.

Leaving Soldiers on the Battlefield

The Marines have a rule: they never, ever leave fallen Marines on the battlefield. No such call to honor and duty concerns our political leaders. Those now seeking the latest one hundred billion dollars say that the money is needed to support our troops. That is not true. Our troops have been abandoned in a foreign land, their only purpose, to justify another one hundred billion dollars, and another. The money itself becomes the rationale for continuing the war.

This war has cut a deadly swath through the lives of the American service members ordered to fight it, and wreaked even greater devastation on Iraq. But it has laid waste to the careers of those who facilitated it politically as well. From Hillary Clinton to Rick Santorum, from John Kerry to John McCain, from Joe Lieberman to Donald Rumsfeld, the list goes on and on. The decision to support this war has proven costly time and time again for its political supporters.

Congressional leaders and experts say that "compromise" is in the offing, that by "working together" the White House and Congress can find a way to "work things out." But that's only the chorus - the lyrics in the background reveal a different message to Congress from the White House: "Don't get in the way of the one hundred billion dollars." And "don't do anything to end the party, now or at any time while this administration is in power."

"The clock is ticking for our troops," Mr. Bush pointed out last week. He continued, "The longer Congress delays, the worse the impact on the men and women of the Armed Forces will be." Those, in fact, are two deadly accurate statements. The clock is indeed ticking for our troops, and the longer Congress takes to act, the greater the impact on them and the Iraqi people will be.

The United States occupation of Iraq will end. The American armies like all occupying armies before them will leave Mesopotamia. This military action has no purpose other than the enrichment of private individuals exacting their will and lining their coffers with the blood of American service members, the Iraqi people and US taxpayer dollars.

These Decisions Matter

To those members of Congress who would view a compromise to continue what is now in the world's opinion an illegal and immoral military action, think again. If you are told that you can sanction crimes against humanity and be held harmless, think again. If you do not see the dismembered walking among us, look more closely. If you think that your country benefits from "staying the course," spend a few quiet moments at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall. This is your Vietnam. These are all our sons and daughters. What will you do?