

“Iraq is half the way from war to peace” – by Miloslav Surgos

The first decade of the twenty-first century is not over yet, but the world has already been affected by two major events: terrorist attack in NYC and Washington; and the war in Iraq. The war in Iraq was supposed to be a war of hope and new beginnings in the Middle East, when in fact it has been a war of deception and false pretences. It continues to be a war of mistakes and oversights, as a result of which the people of Iraq and the American people are suffering.

“One of the biggest mistakes during this war was the immediate dismissal of the Iraqi military forces and the entire administration affiliated with the Baas political party”, said Claude Welch for Pravda, a political science professor at the University at Buffalo. According to the German model of post-war denazification of Germany, the civil administration of Iraq, under the Paul Bremer regime, attempted to clear Iraqi administration of anyone affiliated with the Baas political party without considering the individuals’ positions within the party.

These two steps resulted in high number of unemployed, disappointed, betrayed but armed Iraqi men. Important specialists and professionals who were members of Baas movement, yet they were not politically active, were dismissed from many other public services, describes in detail Prof. Welch.

The war in Iraq was a perfect American modern military force triumph on a conventional ground. American military and naval tanks were marching through the weak defense of Iraq as easy as knife cuts through butter; about 2 months into the war, president George Bush had the opportunity to announce the end of major combats in Iraq, from the deck of an aircraft carrier. During this time of triumph, Minister Rumsfeld appropriately tried to keep the number and time of the military involvement in Iraq to its minimum. Pentagon didn’t pay attention to the military generals’ warnings that bigger involvement and more men will be necessary to prevail. That was the military planning second biggest mistake during Bush’s administration, as described by Kenneth Mayer, a political science professor at the University of Wisconsin, who closely studies the war in Iraq.

As it turns out the Iraq opposition does not wear a military uniform. Groups of armed ambush men were the biggest enemies of united military. “Even White House had to admit that not sending enough men in the beginning of the war was a mistake. The fact that the current increase of U.S. military representation immediately decreased the amount and extent of violence is a proof, Mayer continues.

The decision to attack Saddam’s regime didn’t trigger an earthquake only in Iraq. The cross-Atlantic relationships were affected by the war as well. A few US allies openly stated their disagreement with the Washington’s decisions, and refused to provide military help. This had impact not only the French-US and Germany-US relations but also on Europe. The European superpowers were not as willing to help as some of the smaller countries of central and Eastern Europe, such as Slovakia.

Even so, the major progress in the war did happen. “The long-time suppressed Shiites group came to power”, says Welch. “Shiites from Iraq are allies with Shiites from Iran that are shaken by this war. By the fall of Iraq, Iran lost its biggest enemy and strengthened so its own international position.” “Not only Iran, but also other countries in that region welcomed the fall of Iraq”, claims Mayer. The war in Iraq has exhausted American and British resources, which makes the chance of another military interference in this region unlikely. “At the same time, dictators of the world received a clear message of how far are American military forces capable and able to go. It is not a coincidence that after the attack in Iraq, Libya led by Muammarom Kaddafi, has changed its course”, says Mayer.

Five years ago, President Bush ordered the attack hoping for Iraq to be a future pillar (light-house) of freedom and democracy in the Middle East. The pillar is not standing (light-house is not lit) to date and the end of the war seems to be still far away. “To say the truth, the vision of democracy that would

shortly change the face of Middle East has proven naïve”, says Welch. In comparison to Saddam’s regime when his brutal dictatorship was smothering different opinions through violence and he didn’t hesitate to use military forces against its own citizens, something has nevertheless changed.

“Iraq is a country under a partial military occupation”, explains Welch. “Kurds regions in the northern parts of Iraq already have institutional drafts of democracy. Additionally, the government considers the will of its citizens much more than before. Iraq, however, is still not a legal state. It is constricted by corruption and inability to provide safe environment for its citizens.” For a long time we will not know if the vision of democratic and safe Iraq will ever get fulfilled. “At least 5 years, maybe more. It is too soon to be able to predict such answers. Even though, it currently seems to be positively progressing”, says Mayer.

OTHER TID-BITS: located throughout the page

“After five years, the question if the war was worth it, worth to win and possible to win, I see the answers clear: remove Saddam Hussein was the right decision, and this is a fight that America can and must win.”
- President George Bush

Safety

Since last year June the number of violent acts decreased by 60%. According to the general of American military forces in Iraq, David Petraeus, it can still easily turn around.

Rebellion of Arab Sunnites

The Sunnites tribes and nationalistic groups created so-called Unions of Consciousness that fight against Al-Kaida. The terrorist organizations strengthened up north where they continue to carry out suicide-bomb attacks.

In the year of 2007, USA sent 20 thousand more soldiers to Iraq to decrease the amount of violence.

The Progress in passing laws

Despite the efforts of the government of Nuri Maliki to enforce legislation that would guarantee the moderation (decrease) of the intensity and animosity among individual ethnic and religious groups, the progress is very little.

Unions of Consciousness

Approximately 80 thousand volunteers guard the headquarters and supply important information. About a fifth of them will become a part of the police.

Refugees

UN estimates that out of the 2 mil. refugees, only about 36 thousand returned after improving the safety in the country. More than 2 mil people who lost their homes remained in Iraq.

Army of Mahdi

Radical Shiite leader Mukhtadan Sadr and feared army of Mahdi announced armistice. Unsatisfied armed men trained in Iran are, however, still attacking the American forces.

Economy

International Monetary Fund expects the increase in production of oil leading to the increase of gross national product in Iraq. However, high unemployment remains and UN estimates about 4 mil people in Iraq still suffers from food shortage.

Kirkuk

A special UN minister aims to postpone the referendum about the future of oil-rich city, which is of interest to Kurdi, Arabs, and Turkmenistan.