

Nothing about the Iraq war qualifies it as a success

By **BILL DECKHART**

American soldiers were sent to invade a foreign country on the basis of lies.

I have opposed the war in Iraq since before the actual invasion. I have been at protests here in Bucks County, Trenton, Washington DC, New York, and Philadelphia. I stand with others in vigil every Saturday morning near the Oxford Valley Mall in Langhorne.

I was elated by a recent article in the Courier Times that reported that the Center for Journalistic Integrity had catalogued 935 lies that were told by the Bush Administration to lead us into the Iraq War. I only wish this had been plastered all over the front page.

Members of the Coalition for Peace Action have known from the beginning that the reasons the Bush administration gave for the invasion of Iraq were lies. Iraq had no weapons of mass destruction, as evidenced by the UN inspectors and even top Pentagon officials. Iraq had no connection to 9/11. American soldiers were sent to invade a foreign country on the basis of lies.

Even then, our soldiers acted with great precision and efficiency, taking down Saddam Hussein's regime in just five weeks. At this point, democracy could have been installed. Instead, Jay Garner was relieved of command and Paul Bremer was placed in charge. The descent of Iraq into quagmire was beginning.

The Iraqi army was disbanded. Now, there were 300,000 unemployed men who were trained soldiers and knew of weapons caches. In addition, there were huge American arms depots which were left unsecured because there simply were not enough troops to guard them.

Insurgency began, soon followed by civil war. American troops were continually put at risk. Sadly, this was in violation of a doctrine which had been created by Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Secretary of State Colin Powell known as the Powell Doctrine.

The Powell Doctrine states that the list of questions has to be answered affirmatively before military action is taken by the United States. Amongst the salient points are:

- Do we have a clear, attainable objective?
- Have the risks and costs been fully and frankly analyzed?
- Have all other nonviolent policy means been fully exhausted?
- Is there a plausible exit strategy to avoid endless entanglement?
- Have the consequences of our action been fully considered.

The invasion of Iraq and subsequent war fails to meet any of these criteria.

Then last year came the surge with an influx of troops to quell the fighting. Many judge it a success. We do not agree. The surge in American troops coincided with the cease fire ordered by Sheikh al-Sadr, leader of the Mahdi Army, and the formation of the so-called Simni Awakening Councils. This situation in effect arms both sides of a civil war and puts the safety of American soldiers in an inherently unstable position at the whim of warring factions.

We are not military experts, but we do question the wisdom of pouring lives and money into a civil war without a clearly defined mission for our soldiers and do not find that strategy to be a viable plan that simply requires another undefined amount of time to work. As a political tool, the surge places us in a situation that if the violence is decreasing the pundits will say we must stay, but also if the tenuous cease-fire fails and the violence increases the pundits will also say we must stay. This will only lead us further into a morass of dead and wounded American soldiers.

There are huge numbers of Iraqi dead, displaced, and refugees. There is an insufficient power grid. There is insufficient clean water. There is massive unemployment.

This also does not qualify as success.

Violence levels have remained stubbornly constant from the fall of 2007 through the early months of 2008. While they are roughly equivalent to the levels of the spring of 2005, they are still substantial.

Our military personnel and the Iraqi people need a radical change of strategy to truly bring about peace and the reconstruction of Iraq.

Bill Deckhart, Fairless Hills, is a massage and hypnotherapist, a member of the United Christian Church in Levittown and also the Coalition for Peace Action.

[March 26, 2008 6:40 AM](#)