

Tales from the Oval Orifice: The Albatross Lays a Giant Egg

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JMC - Jack Random - The president has delayed his address to the nation on the future of the war in Iraq. As if he has not been commander-in-chief for the last three years and nine months, he requires further consultation with the heady experts in the State Department, the Defense Department and the military brass. What could they possibly tell him that he should not already know?

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THE ALBATROSS IN THE ROOM: GEORGE W. BUSH

By Jack Random

THE JAZZMAN CHRONICLES ? DISSEMINATE FREELY

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Albatross: 1: any of a family of large web-footed seabirds? 2a: something that causes persistent deep concern or anxiety. 2b: something that greatly hinders accomplishment.

Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition

Everyone who pushed and propagandized for the war, with the exception of Condoleezza Rice and Dick Cheney, has already jumped ship. The most relieved man in America today is Donald Rumsfeld, the last man to jump from a runaway train.

The various reports and tortured debate may provide the president a little cover but they will not alter reality. The singular fact that stares us in the face with a crooked grin, that defeats every proposal and shadows every argument, no matter how reasoned and supported by expert opinion, is the president himself.

George W. Bush is the albatross in the room. In fact, he is the albatross in every room.

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He is the reason for the ?grave and deteriorating? situation not only in Iraq but throughout the Middle East. By sanctioning an Israeli invasion and standing back to witness ?the birth pangs? of democracy, he created the crisis in Lebanon. By demanding elections and severely punishing the results, he created the crisis in Palestine. By prefacing his hegemonic crusade for ?democracy? with a declaration of the ?axis of evil?, he cut off all lines of diplomacy with Iraq, Iran and North Korea while transforming an early and effective ally in the battle against Al Qaeda (Iran) into an enemy.

Against this backdrop, even if he had not committed the cardinal crime of international conduct by launching an aggressive war and occupation against an unthreatening nation, the president would still be an albatross in nearly every nation in the region. By launching that invasion, inflicting mass casualties, splintering Iraq beyond repair, and creating a failed state, he has managed to alienate all nations, including Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Egypt.

Never has a president failed so spectacularly.

We can continue to debate the finer points of the Iraq Study Group recommendations but it will be a purely intellectual exercise until we recognize the albatross in the room.

The president is not only unwilling to seek a negotiated withdrawal, he is incapable of doing so. His credibility in Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Iran and Iraq has gone beyond absolute zero. He believes he is still in a position to make demands when the very ground upon which he stands is erupting in flames.

The way forward in Iraq (already a hackneyed cliché and a borderline oxymoron) does not run through this White House; it runs around it. It begins by recognizing that the president is the problem and the nation cannot afford to wait until the next election to resolve it. This is his war, his occupation, his exploding catastrophe, and others must now step forward to take responsibility for ending it.

There are two ways forward in Iraq and both were unwisely and prematurely taken off the table by the leadership of the newly elected congress.

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It might have seemed politically astute at the time but Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid severely underestimated the anger and frustration of the American people when they discarded their most powerful tools for stopping a president bent on destruction: Impeachment and appropriations.

Let the hearings begin under the banners of truth and oversight and let them proceed with the vigor of knowing that the lives of our soldiers and the security of the nation are in the balance.

In the solemn chambers of the new congress, let the people hear clearly and comprehensively the truth about:

- The lies and deceptions that led us to war,
- The use of media as a fence for government war propaganda,
- The use of mercenaries and corporate war profiteers,
- The institutional sanctioning of torture in Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo Bay, Afghanistan and places unknown and the tortured legalese used to justify it,
- The blatantly illegal espionage on American citizens and the political applications of the intelligence community,
- Dick Cheney's energy task force and the conspiracy to steal \$50 billion from the west coast in order to fill the coffers of a select handful of Texas oil and energy concerns,
- The ongoing fraud and corruption in post-Katrina New Orleans and the Gulf Coast,
- The sordid tale of New York Times reporter Judy Miller and the exposure of a CIA agent for political retribution,
- The Iraqi death toll and administration efforts to hide the truth from the American public.

In short, do your duty with diligence and the American people will not have to forgive you for changing your position; in fact, they will demand it.

With impeachment on the table, it will not be difficult to impose a deadline on the president for the withdrawal of our forces from Iraq. With the unvarnished truth fully laid out before our eyes, the only question that will remain is: *Why did it take so long?*

The way forward in Iraq is clear to every woman and man who recognized this war for what it was from its inception: A naked and criminal attempt to seize control of the world's most valued

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resource. When you are caught red-handed in the commission of a crime, the only way forward is to cease and desist.

We have lost a war we should never have started.

Our leaders should have listened four years ago when millions took to the streets and cried out in horror. Hear us now or pay the price.

Jazz.

JACK RANDOM IS THE AUTHOR OF THE JAZZMAN CHRONICLES (CROW DOG PRESS) AND GHOST DANCE INSURRECTION (DRY BONES PRESS). THE CHRONICLES HAVE APPEARED ON THE ALBION MONITOR, PEACE-EARTH-JUSTICE, THE NATIONAL FREE PRESS, LEFTWARD, DISSIDENT VOICE AND COUNTERPUNCH. SEE RANDOM JACK: WWW.JAZZMANCHRONICLES.BLOGSPOT.COM