

CHAPTER 5

The Bush League of Nations

A Web of Deceit for the Gullible

If we're an arrogant nation, [foreigners] will resent us. If we're a humble nation but strong, they'll welcome us. ... We've got to be humble.

— George W. Bush, Oct. 11, 2000.

When Bush became president, he had at his fingertips—to be wisely used or squandered—a tremendous reservoir of worldwide goodwill towards the United States and Americans. This reservoir had been justly filled by several decades of honest American policies under many American presidents, both Democratic and Republican. Following 9/11 this reservoir of goodwill was overflowing. Even in Muslim countries, the horror of 9/11 created huge supermajorities of goodwill and sympathy towards America.

But Bush pursued an arrogant, unilateral, militaristic agenda, and when he went to bat in a most dubious cause—his war on Iraq—all he could muster was the lame Coalition of the Willing, better named the Bush League of Nations.

Bush's giddy decision to invade Iraq was based on lies, delusions and ulterior motives. His incompetence in building a coalition and in prosecuting the war was immoral and a fundamental dereliction of duty. He soon became America's most incompetent commander in chief ever, America's worst president ever.

During the seven decades before Bush, several American presidents courageously took the high road and successfully led the world in muscular wartime coalitions to promote just causes. Our allies willingly played ball with us in major league coalitions because our common causes were just, and because our American skippers were men of vision, strength, integrity and leadership.

Unfortunately, George W. Bush foolishly and arrogantly chose a unilateral, imperial, militaristic low road for America's team. The "Decider" chose division over unity, and he soon found himself playing in a fantasy league, "A League of His Own," the Bush League of Nations.

In early 2003—after NATO, the United Nations, and the world community all sharply rejected Bush's duplicitous plan to invade and occupy Iraq—the propaganda machines of the Bush regime and its allies in America's rightwing Big Media ran in high gear to create the Big Lie, namely, that a strong, broad-based military coalition

of many dozens of nations supported and still supports Bush's invasion and occupation of Iraq.

But there is no grand coalition in Iraq, and, as for the few participants, *none* of them were enthusiastic about Bush's war in the first place. As for the few participants, Bush is like an arsonist claiming that the firemen who risk their lives to extinguish the fire he created are supporters of his crime.

Bush's so-called Coalition of the Willing is a sham and a shame, a fraud and a failure. The Coalition of the Willing is not a major league of nations in any sense; it is not even a Class D minor league. It is the Bush League of Nations, misled by America's own Bush League commander in chief, George W. Bush.

Bush's duplicitous invasion and occupation of Iraq—like baseball itself—is something the world does not understand and support. Not only does Bush play by strange Bush League rules, he modifies and ignores the rules at will. He is the game's only umpire, a self-appointed umpire with bum eyesight—a cheater who knows the call before the pitch is made. Even the nations that love America, baseball and apple pie—nations that want to believe America plays a fair game—have not fallen for Bush's hubris and his un-American form of the game.

The Bush League is a fantasy league, whose immoral delusional owners are the Bush neocons. Among its many victims are truth, American values, and America's reputation and influence in the world. Bush's so-called coalition is the Big Lie, a fig leaf intended to hide naked Anglo-American aggression against Iraq and the region.

Most of the U.S. media either, at their worst, adopted a Pravda-style role and eagerly beat the war drums for Bush, or, at their best, rolled over and played softball, not wanting to appear disloyal. Numerous American media figures with views critical of the war were punished by their corporate employers. One of the most prominent victims is Phil Donahue, who in early 2003, when the war drums were beating loudest, had his television talk show cancelled by MSNBC (which, along with NBC, is owned by General Electric, a huge conglomerate with substantial military business in Iraq) because he questioned the case for war and opposed it.

According to a leaked NBC memo, Donahue presented a "difficult public face for NBC in a time of war," and the memo went on to warn that his show could be "a home for the liberal antiwar agenda at the same time that our competitors are waving the flag at every opportunity." Ratings trump responsible journalism. Money trumps truth.

Regarding the coalition itself, virtually the entire U.S. media swallowed and regurgitated the Bush League propaganda that there was a strong, broad military coalition of nations fighting shoulder to shoulder with America in Iraq, with the number of coalition members ranging from at least 28 nations to as many as 55 or more, depending on the source of the propaganda.

The reality is starkly different. Only two nations—the United States and Great Britain³¹—provided more than a token number of troops for actual combat in Bush's invasion of Iraq, and neither provided adequate forces to accomplish the mission,

³¹ A small number of Polish and Australian forces assumed specialist roles during the 2003 invasion of Iraq, although neither nation highlights this on its resume.

thanks to the inept leadership of Bush and Blair, who were later dubbed the “Axis of Feeble.”

The United States and Britain alone acted as de facto dictators in running Iraq after the invasion, as they shared responsibility, under Resolution 1483 of the UN Security Council, for the civil administration in Iraq, and each participated in the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) before the so-called handover of sovereignty to Iraq on June 28, 2004.

The military coalition—the Bush League of Nations—later assumed the name “Multi-National Force in Iraq” (or MNF-I), which was established May 15, 2004, and operates under the mandate of Security Council Resolution 1511 adopted October 16, 2003. Subsequent resolutions, including Resolution 1546 adopted June 8, 2004, and Resolution 1637 adopted November 8, 2005, further extended the MNF-I’s mandate from time to time, as the war dragged on.

Although the United Nations strongly opposed Bush’s invasion of Iraq, it tried after the invasion to help clean up the mess Bush created. As Iraq quickly descended into chaos in the months following the March 20, 2003, invasion, the United Nations encouraged all nations to help Iraq and cooperated with the United States in passing the above resolutions. Unfortunately, Bush was unable to strengthen the weak coalition he had previously cobbled together. To the contrary, the already weak coalition wilted before his eyes.

The MNF-I was organized into six geographical areas, with the United States in overall unitary command. Four of the six areas are headquartered by the U.S. military. The Multi-National Division Central South is headquartered by Poland. The Multi-National Division South East is headquartered by Great Britain. The MNF-I, woefully underpowered, is discussed further later.

The United States and Britain provided virtually all, approaching 100%, of the coalition troops proactively engaged in combat in Iraq. The world thus correctly sees the coalition as an American-Anglo occupation force.

But even America and Britain did not send their full-roster A Teams. With catastrophic consequences, their myopic leaders chose to do the job on the cheap and on the slow, sending less than one-third the military force required to accomplish the mission and “win” a war that should not have been waged in the first place. Their leadership was immoral, and the Bush League result was predictable.

Bush chose to ignore the Powell Doctrine—that overwhelming force must be applied on the battlefield whenever America’s troops are placed in harm’s way—and fielded a team without a shortstop, without a right fielder, without a catcher, and without experienced coaches. Bush rushed to battle—or, more correctly, he rushed others into battle—without the right equipment and game plan to ensure victory in the 2003 World Series in Iraq.

Bush’s incompetence greatly increased the number of American casualties, and although the pain and loss on America’s side is huge, the pain and loss on Iraq’s side is at least a thousand times greater.

The most competent military experts—those battle-proven pros like U.S. Army General Eric Shinseki, who had not only the experience but also the *responsibility* to give such advice—urged Bush to field a full team, an *A team*, but Bush foolishly decided to do the job on the cheap, without a full roster. The fans of America’s team

wanted a major league squad with all positions filled by the finest professionals, but Bush cut and penalized the team with his Bush League leadership. Perhaps Bush thought the game was amateur doubles tennis and that a *two-man* team led by political hacks would do. By playing it on the stupid and on the cheap, Bush made the GOP's war on Iraq very expensive for America's soldiers, America, Iraq and the world.

The fans of America's team wanted its professionals to have the best equipment, but Bush ignored even the catcher's simple request for a protective cup. After all, no Bush family cojones and no cojones of the Super Rich would be in harm's way.

Adding insult to injury, the Bush neocons dismissed as not *real fans*, not *loyal fans*, any of America's finest fans who dared to question Bush's game plan. Dissent and treason were synonyms in the Bush League playbook.

The Bush League is run by a cabal of amateurs, *none* of whom ever played major league baseball for keeps. They are like drunken cowboy wannabes who buy new cowboy hats and imagine they are real cowboys, but who have no personal experience in riding even a plow horse, let alone a wild bronco. Each is a Walter Mitty. America's longtime fans throughout the world see the delusion and are not buying tickets to any Bush League games. They are not buying the Bush League popcorn. They are not drinking the GOP Kool-Aid.

Although the Bush League of Nations in Iraq is a fantasy league with its origins in the imperial wet dreams of the Bush neocons, the blood and guts is real.

Because of the escalation of violence in Iraq, Bush League team members increasingly moved into "cut and run" mode, or perhaps we should say "vamoosing" mode, because the "cut and run" label is reserved for use only by the far right against Bush's political opponents and other sane people who argue for withdrawal.

In the next chapter we examine each of the more than 55 nations that have been claimed by the Bush neocons and their cheerleaders, at one time or another, as coalition members. Moving beyond the military contributions of the United States and Great Britain, one sees a deep cesspool of Bush League tokenism and GOP propaganda.

SIDEBAR: Jon Stewart on Bush and the Bush League

"Yesterday, the president met with a group he calls the coalition of the willing. Or, as the rest of the world calls them, Britain and Spain."

—Jon Stewart

As discussed later in this chapter, the diminutive coalition so humorously and accurately portrayed by Stewart soon became even weaker.

Britain's leader, who never gave a full measure to the coalition, quickly made force protection a top priority, rather than proactively trying to "win the war" by taking the fight to the ill-defined "enemy," and soon began drawing down British troop levels, while searching for a face-saving way to withdraw completely.

As for Spain, it completely withdrew all of its 1,400 troops in April 2004 in accordance with the overwhelming will of its people, who never supported Bush's war on Iraq in the first place.

By foolishly initiating an unjust war in Iraq, while not finishing the just war in Afghanistan, Bush found himself losing both ends of a doubleheader.

Virtually all the nations of the Earth—including especially those with world class teams whose cooperation is essential for America to win the Big Game—know that Bush is an incompetent player who personally went AWOL when he had a chance to try out for the Big Leagues then playing in Vietnam. In GOP style, Bush epitomizes the worst of America's sports figures: the spoiled, overpaid, steroid-sucking player who cheats; the arrogant, wealthy team owner who cares not for the fans or the game itself; and the lazy, incompetent manager who ignores rules and plays on "hunches."

The world knows Bush is not a team player, but rather an untrustworthy unilateralist who would claim all glory for himself in the event of any win, however serendipitous, and who expects to be bailed out by others when things go badly. Curiously, the Bush League press guide, published by Big Media, asserts Bush is errorless and omniscient. Perhaps that is why he ducks responsibility and claims victory even when he loses game after game by lopsided scores.

Bush was a failure in every business venture he ever attempted or touched. Why would other team owners join him in a league he owns and unilaterally runs? Bush invaded Iraq to benefit only himself and the Super Rich and powerful of America, not America's soldiers, not Joe Lunchpail who works for a living, and not the people of Iraq or any other nation, all of whom he holds in low esteem.

Bush has taken the most revered successful franchise in world history—the United States of America—and driven it to the cellar in the world standings. He must be impeached and thrown out of the game.

SIDEBAR: Bush Discusses Thinking

"I'm also not very analytical. You know I don't spend a lot of time thinking about myself, about why I do things."

—George W. Bush, aboard Air Force One, June 4, 2003

The world community refuses to follow Bush's lead in Iraq because of his shortcomings as a man and a leader. The world's teams and fans have voted with their hearts, minds and armies, and they want no part of a Bush League run by an immoral man who:

- bullies the smaller players when he doesn't get his way.

- did not want you to play in the first place, but later, after he mucked up the field, insists that you have the responsibility to join his game and clean up his mess.
- has one set of game rules for himself and his cronies, and another set for the rest of the world.
- ignores and changes the game rules whenever he wishes.
- breaks his team's commitments and promises at will, even those sealed with spit and blood.
- swears and calls people bad names.
- was picked to lead his team not because of talent and accomplishments, but because he is the son of a prior coach and owner.
- pouts and leaves the team when he doesn't get his way, taking his Rich Boy baseball equipment with him.
- lies and doesn't play fairly.
- ignores reality because he believes God swings his bat.
- believes it doesn't really matter how much he screws things up, because Armageddon and the End Times are close at hand.
- thanks to cronyism, gets to play first-string shortstop, even though he has never fielded a major league hard grounder.
- remains error free by shucking personal responsibility whenever he bungles a play, always assigning the error to someone else.
- was chosen by America's rightwing corporate media to be League MVP *before* the season even began.
- is the laziest player on the team.
- was born at third base but thinks he hit a triple.
- stole home, thanks to five Republican politicians on the U.S. Supreme Court, with thanks also to election fraud in the state run by his brother.
- pretends to be a Texas Ranger by wearing a ten-gallon hat, but can neither ride a horse nor swing a bat.
- is a reckless record Big Spender who pays his team's bills with Confederate currency and the blood and sweat of the unborn.
- has no clue what the real score is.

Long before Bush's invasion of Iraq, the world was appalled by the jingoism and warmongering emanating from the Bush White House. Among the most appalled were America's closest allies—all of them. For them, Bush in the White House was an endless nightmare.

Even the people of Great Britain, our closest ally, overwhelmingly opposed the Iraq war. The British Parliament, including Blair's own Labour Party, also opposed the war. Gerald Kaufman, the former foreign affairs spokesman for Blair's party, declared before the Iraq invasion, "Bush, himself the most intellectually backward American president of my political lifetime, is surrounded by advisers whose belligerence is exceeded only by their political, military and diplomatic illiteracy."

The so-called Bush doctrine of "preemptive intervention" was well marketed in America, but it reminded America's allies of dictators of days past. They knew that the United Nations charter clearly acknowledges a nation's right of legitimate self-

defense. But the Bush neocons wanted much more, the right of naked aggression, without any showing of self defense or just cause, and without being limited by morality or international law.

Longing to hear a few strong American voices for American values and common sense, our longtime allies must have taken comfort in the wisdom of Senator Robert Byrd (D-WV), who in his Senate floor speech on February 12, 2003—a month before the invasion of Iraq—stated:

And this is no small conflagration we contemplate. This is no simple attempt to defang a villain. No. This coming battle, if it materializes, represents a turning point in U.S. foreign policy and possibly a turning point in the recent history of the world. This nation is about to embark upon the first test of a revolutionary doctrine applied in an extraordinary way at an unfortunate time. The doctrine of preemption—the idea that the United States or any other nation can legitimately attack a nation that is not imminently threatening but may be threatening in the future—is a radical new twist on the traditional idea of self-defense. It appears to be in contravention of international law and the UN Charter.

Lacking adequate backbone and intellect, Bush was putty in the hands of Cheney and Bush League neocons. Widely acknowledged to be a cipher on foreign affairs, even by his own party, Bush had no personal foreign policy framework to serve as a counterbalance to their toxic agenda. Nevertheless, he willingly entered a *groupthink* isolation chamber—the Bush Bubble—that limited the opinions and information he received.

Bush in fact had never even thought much about America's foreign policy, and he prided himself on his utter lack of curiosity about such things. This sort of mental detachment—especially if you put in under a cowboy hat—resonates well with the deep-thinking rightwing Republican zealots of Texas. However, America and the world are better served if politicians like Bush never get within a thousand miles of any national office.

Bush's supporters try to ignore the awful reality that the vast majority of the world believes he is a liar and a scoundrel, not a statesman or leader to be trusted. The distrust comes from all the peoples of the world, of whatever religion, of whatever geographic region or country, of whatever language, of whatever color or ethnicity. It comes from America's strongest allies and America's worst enemies, and from all the people in between.

America's King George III is wearing no clothes. He plays a perverted form of major league baseball completely naked—completely Bush—and it is a ghastly sight. Perhaps Bush fancies himself wearing pinstripes like Babe Ruth, but, if the world's fans had their wish, Bush would be wearing prison stripes. His impeachment will have to do.

The stench of distrust will stick to America long after Bush leaves the scene of his high crimes and misdemeanors. When America transitioned from Clinton to Bush, America went from Class A leadership to Class *W*. Thanks to Bush, the world now sees America as a rogue nation, a militant pariah.

Bush has unwittingly made it much more difficult for future American presidents to lead the world in *just causes*—certainly one of the most costly unintended conse-

quences flowing from Bush' incompetence. Bush has delivered a crippling blow to America's reputation and power in the world, and it will take many years of hard work and some good luck for America to recover.

Bush has greatly damaged America's relations and influence with Europe, especially our long-term allies that he and his neocons gleefully knocked as "Old Europe." Bush foolishly tried to divide Europe into two camps—those that supported him and those that didn't—using simplistic black-and-white labels such as "old Europe" and "new Europe," but he succeeded only in widening the Atlantic rift between America and Europe, and causing Europe, with all its diversity, to become united in its opposition to Bush and his Bush League policies.

There is a widespread belief in Europe that America under Bush lost its way and is no longer a good model for Europe's transformation into what some have labeled the United States of Europe.

Thanks to Bush's unilateral militarism and eye-poking "diplomacy," Europe increasingly talks of the need to be a balancing, opposing power to America, and much less that of a friendly family member. The idea of a united Europe standing as an equal or superior to America is frequently called the "countervailing power" thesis and is completely Greek to the deep-thinking Bush neocons cocooned in their right-wing think tanks in Washington, who narrowly view power in military terms.

The decline in America's reputation and power has victims beyond America, including countless poor and oppressed people in numerous countries who might otherwise be saved by America. The victims of genocide in the Darfur region of western Sudan are a prime example.

SIDEBAR: Genocide in Sudan: Where is America?

In a brutal campaign of genocide, the Sudanese government and its Janjaweed militia allies are systematically raping and slaughtering black Sudanese living in the western part of Sudan known as Darfur. During Bush's watch, over 2.5 million black Sudanese have been savagely driven from their homes, countless women and girls have been raped, and over 400,000 have died in the genocidal slaughter and from the resulting disease and starvation.

Countless numbers of the survivors are asking, "In God's name, will someone please help us? Will someone at least save our children? Where is America?"

The sad answer is that Bush has our troops overextended and bogged down in Iraq with no exit strategy. America under Bush does not have sufficient available troops to even make a credible threat against the Sudanese regime.

The war on Iraq and Bush's tough talk were intended to cause evildoers worldwide to change their behavior. But America under Bush became a paper tiger. America under Bush lost the will and moral authority to lead and energize the world in *just causes*, such as stopping the genocide in Sudan.

From Iran to North Korea, the evildoers have been emboldened and do what they want. Even the third rate thugs in Khartoum commit genocide with impunity.

The victims of the genocidal Sudanese government can now also be fairly viewed as *Bush victims*—unintended victims, but still victims. Only God knows how many more will die because the “Christian nation” of America lost its way.

After reading a report on the horrendous slaughter of several hundred thousand Rwandans, mostly Tutsis, in the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, Bush declared, “Not on my watch.”

Unfortunately, Bush’s eyes are now closed, his body is feeble, and his heart is cold. He refuses to commit a single American soldier to help stop the genocide in Darfur. He refuses even to press the United Nations or NATO to commit troops to the mission. He is the definition of a “compassionate conservative.”

Perhaps, if we are lucky, one unintended benefit of Bush’s incompetence and power-drunk neocon policies in Iraq will be the complete rejection of these policies by the American people, thus making the election of rightwing politicians of Bush’s ilk less likely. At least that is the hope for an awakening America.

The Misnamed “Coalition of the Willing”

The term “Coalition of the Willing” has been used occasionally for more than 15 years to refer to coalitions acting on their own without approval of the United Nations. Although the Bush administration used the term briefly in connection with its Afghanistan campaign, its most common recent use has been to refer to Bush’s coalition to invade and occupy Iraq. Since the Bush neocons could get neither UN nor NATO support, they created a charade and misnamed it the Coalition of the Willing.

Several other more accurate terms have been suggested to describe Bush’s Coalition of the Willing:

- **“The Bush League of Nations—the Coalition of the Unwilling, the Bullied and the Bribed.”** This term is the best, of course.
- **“COW.”** Because many of the participants in the so-called Coalition of the Willing are being paid—bribed—by the United States to participate, Senator Robert Byrd (D-WV) referred to it by its acronym, “COW.” The United States is the cash cow that other nations wanted to milk. “The cow is US.”
- **“Coalition of the Unwilling.”** This truth speaks for itself.
- **“Coalition of the UN-willing.”** The vast majority of the world opposed any invasion without UN support. With UN approval, the coalition could have been incredibly strong and trustworthy.
- **“Coalition of the Willies.”** That’s what *Slate* magazine called the fracturing coalition in early 2004 as the Bush administration found it increasingly difficult to keep nations on board.
- **“Coalition of the Billing.”** Many used this term to highlight the opportunities for Halliburton and other war profiteers to make a fast buck. Well, it’s a lot more than a buck.
- **“Coalition of the Welfare States.”** A *New York Times* editorial used this term because many of the participants are small, impoverished nations desperately in need of financial aid from the United States.

- **“Coalition of the Unwilling to be Named.”** In addition to members it identified, the Bush regime announced it had the support of about 15 countries that wished to remain anonymous. Some referred to them as the “coalition of the unwilling to be named” or the “shadow coalition.”

SIDEBAR: The Coalition of the Unwilling to be Named

When Secretary of State Colin Powell announced in March 2003 that the coalition included 30 countries, he also referred to “15 other nations” supporting the coalition that “did not wish to be publicly named.” These nations were so proud to be allies in Bush’s Mafia-style adventure that they wanted to wear masks. They had the same pride in their Bush League adventure as do Bush Family males who party with prostitutes but don’t want their names publicized.

Some nations said they didn’t want their names to be used for propaganda purposes. They understood that Bush’s goal was to create propaganda, not a real coalition.

Based on a list of 46 coalition countries later appearing on the White House website, the “15 other nations” (actually 16) *unwilling to be named* apparently were: Bulgaria, Costa Rica, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Honduras, Kuwait, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Mongolia, Palau, Panama, Portugal, Rwanda, Singapore, Solomon Islands, and Uganda. Upon hearing the names of these superpowers, the Iraqi citizenry must have jumped with joy, knowing their salvation was at hand.

- **“Coalition of the Unwilling to be Maimed.”** A large majority of the “participating” coalition nations restricted their soldiers to non-combat roles, with the understanding and hope they would be kept out of harm’s way. This is like hiring a bunch of expensive baseball players who never leave the locker room. They may provide some useful services in the locker room, but let’s not pretend they are members of a team willing to go on the war-path.
- **“Coalition of the Silly.”** This term is from down under. Australia’s membership in the Bush League deeply divided that country.
- **“Coalition of the Shilling.”** Since the two principal shills for the war, Bush and Blair, lied about every justification for the war, this description is painfully on target. (Also, because the shilling was formerly a monetary unit in Britain, some commentators have used “Coalition of the Shilling” in the same sense as “Coalition of the Billing.”)

- **“Coalition of the Sinning.”** Because of the dismal human rights records of many of the coalition members, the International Press Institute in Vienna applied this label when the coalition was announced.³²
- **“Coalition of the Wanting.”** Most coalition members wanted something from the United States and reluctantly joined the coalition in order to please Uncle Sam, not because they believed in the war. Their contributions were understandably minimal or even zero.

Coalitions can be good or bad, strong or weak. Strong leaders with just causes can put together strong coalitions. Weak leaders with unjust causes are unable to do so. Unfortunately, coalitions are not really in Bush’s nature, since he’s a natural divider, a unilateralist with a track record of eye poking.

When you play charades, a charade is what you get. When you build a coalition with smoke and mirrors, smoke and mirrors are what you get. When George W. Bush and the GOP go to bat, a Bush League of Nations is what you get.

The Bush League Propaganda Machine

In the run-up to the March 2003 invasion of Iraq, White House propagandists and their rightwing media shills painted a picture of a vast willing global coalition supporting Bush’s war. A February 4, 2003, White House press release hyped a coalition of “nearly 50 nations” with a population of “approximately 1.23 billion.” The numbers proved to be faith-based, i.e., dead wrong. Even if the bogus population figure of 1.23 billion had been correct, it would have represented only about *one-fifth* of the world’s population of more than 6 billion.

As for the number of nations in the coalition, the propaganda claims varied widely. There were estimates in the 20s, 30s, 40s and 50s and higher, depending on the creativity of the propagandists.

Even counting all the Bush League members who gave nothing other than lip service and a flag, the number of members in Bush’s willowy coalition³³ was small when compared to the 191 nations in the United Nations.

Eighteen months after the invasion, the official website of the Multi-National Force couldn’t even agree with itself as to the number of coalition members. In October 2004 it referred to “28 non-U.S. military forces contributing to the ongoing stability operations throughout Iraq,” although it had 29 names on a list, and it showed only 26 flags in a colorful flag display section of the website. (Perhaps Honduras, the Dominican Republic and Moldova refused to have their flags soiled by visual association with the Bush League.) Not even the Bush neocons paid much attention to the details of the coalition, since it was out of the loop when it came to setting policy and making decisions.

During that same month—October 2004—Cheney in a campaign debate referred to 33 nations. A White House press release later mentioned 46 members. And so it

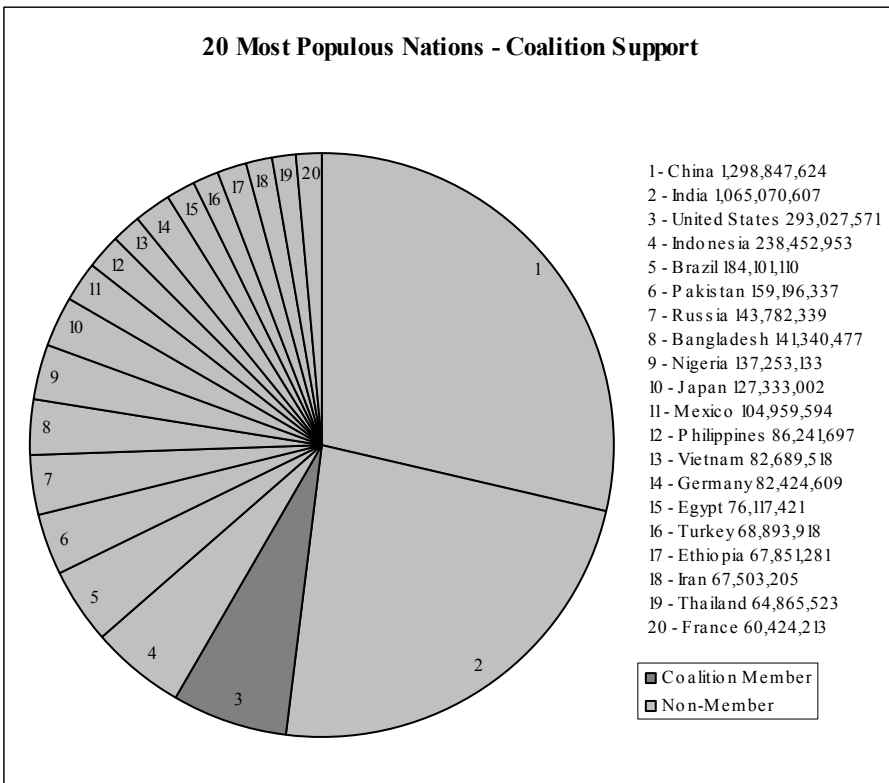
³² Johann Fritz, Director of International Press Institute, said the coalition “contains many governments that have done their utmost to suppress and stifle the independent media in their countries. They should not even be mentioned in the same breath as the other democratic countries named on the same list who continue to espouse the principles of a free press.”

³³ Yes, “W” also stands for “willowy.”

went. Given the absence of standards as to membership, and lack of scruples as to the counting, numerous fictitious accounts of the glorious coalition abounded.

During the rush to war in early 2003 numerous websites popped up to fan the flames of war, each spewing out propaganda describing an incredibly strong global coalition standing shoulder to shoulder in undivided support of Bush’s noble war. Frequently updated during the giddy early days of the war, these websites soon became stale, or disappeared completely, as the reality of the messy conflict hit home, and mouthing the Big Lie became less fun.

As for the Bush League claim that much of the world’s population stood behind his coalition, let’s take a look at the world’s 20 most populous nations. Certainly Bush—America’s leader and the most powerful person in the world—was in a position to demonstrate his leadership skills by convincing all, or almost all, of these 20 nations—representing the lion’s share of power and influence in the world—to support his Iraq war. After all, every one of these nations was appalled by the slaughter of 9/11. But let’s leave Bush World and take a look at the facts. The following chart shows that the only coalition member among the 20 most populous nations is the United States.



The chart shows that *none* of the top 20 most populous nations on Earth (other than the United States) are in the Bush League.³⁴ “The war is US.” By 2006 a growing majority of Americans finally realized what the rest of the world had known for years, that the Iraq war was a catastrophic mistake.

The Bush regime bullies small weak nations, as it has no backbone or aptitude to confront the more powerful. Bush is the quintessential bully: cowardly, *AWOL* to the core, and ultimately *Weak and Willowy* when forced to stand on his own two legs.

As time wore on, the Bush neocons referred less and less to their glorious coalition, and when they did, they omitted important details (such as the number of troops provided by each member, and their actual duties and accomplishments, or lack thereof), and retreated to the use of vague terms such as “strong coalition.”

A Real Coalition versus the Bush League of Nations

Given the huge success of the 1991 Gulf War I coalition—ably organized and ably led by W’s father, George H. W. Bush—one might have expected that virtually all of its member nations would have eagerly joined the 2003 coalition led by W. But the exact opposite is the case, and the blame lies at the feet of America’s incompetent leader who lied and bullied America into an illegal, unjust war. By definition, a leader who has no followers is a weak leader. Yes, “W” stands for “Weak.”

The Security Council in 1991 authorized, by a 12-2 vote, the use of force to remove Iraq from Kuwait in what later became known as Gulf War I, and no permanent member of the Security Council exercised its veto power. However, in 2003, Bush flip flopped and decided not even to subject his planned Iraq invasion to a vote of the Security Council because he had at most only four votes out of 15 in favor of his madness. Also, multiple vetoes among the five permanent members were likely.

The Bush neocons later stopped repeating one of their favorite lies about the coalition, namely that—and this is in the words of Don Rumsfeld, one of its more skilled liars—“the coalition in this activity is larger than the coalition that existed during the Gulf War in 1991.”³⁵ Even the pompous propaganda puppets at Fox News stopped pumping such specific comparisons, preferring more vague lies.

The 2006 version of the MNF-I website no longer displayed the names of the nations claimed to be in the coalition.³⁶ The previously prominent page with the colorful national flags of coalition members had been removed. In its place, the 2006 homepage contained one simple sentence: “At this time, *several nations* (emphasis added) are contributing to the ongoing stability operations throughout Iraq.”

The only other item on that sparse page was a neocon slogan in large font at the top, which proclaimed in Orwellian fashion: “The World, Working Together, to Make a Difference.” In crafting this Rovian slogan, the Bush League neocons exe-

³⁴ Britain is the 21st most populous nation. A solid majority of the British opposed Bush’s war on Iraq.

³⁵ This Rumsfeld quote is from October 2003, several months after the invasion.

³⁶ If you dug around enough, you could find on the 2006 website a link to a report “current as of May 15, 2005,” naming 26 countries then currently providing support. Even this was soon eliminated.

cuted a rare triple play—three lies in one slogan. Yes, all three parts of the slogan are lies: (1) “The World,” (2) “Working Together,” (3) “to Make a Difference.”³⁷

Even this tagline was soon eliminated. Expanded later in 2006, the official website remained a distrusted propaganda factory, a less than useless website that pumped out happy news from a happy Iraq that existed only in the minds of the happily demented.

If the “standards” used by the Bush neocons to determine who got dragged in and counted as a coalition “member” had been used in 1991, then well over 100 nations—a huge majority of all nations—would have been included in the 1991 coalition. Even the Soviet Union, which was not a member of the 1991 coalition, would have been counted in 1991 because it had voted in the Security Council to authorize military action.

Let’s look at the facts in the following chart:

³⁷ If making things *worse* is considered “making a difference,” then technically the third part of the slogan is in fact true. Yes, “W” also stands for “worse.”

Coalitions: 1991 Versus 2003

		1991 Coalition	2003 Coalition
Leader	Name	George H.W. Bush	George W. Bush
	Nickname	"Bush the Father"	"Bush the Boy," "Shrub"
	Also Known As...	#41	#43, "W" as in AWOL
	Description	Statesman and Builder	Divider and Destroyer
	Number of Followers	Almost all of the world	W: "What? Who? Where?"
	Number of Competent Leaders	1	0
	Exit Strategy	Yes	W: "What?"
Nations	Number of Nations in Coalition	34	55...or "it's huge" (or maybe it's just 2)
	Number of nations with significant ground combat troops	16	2
	Arab and/or Muslim nations with ground combat troops	13	0
Troops	Total Number	[660,000 to] 814,000	146,000 (Jan. 2007)
	Number of U.S. troops	575,000	132,000 (Jan. 2007)
	Percentage of Troops that are U.S.	71%	90%
	Non-U.S. Coalition Troops	239,000 (29%)	14,000 (10%)
	Number of Saudi troops	52,000 (6%)	0
	Number of French Troops	15,000	0
Coalition Casualties	Coalition Deaths	236 (+235 non-battle related)	3,251 thru 2006, and counting
	U.S. Deaths	147 (+ 235 non-battle related)	3,001 thru 2006, and counting
	British Deaths	47	127 thru 2006, and counting
	Allied Arab Deaths	39	0
	U.S. Wounded	Fewer than 1000 for coalition	23,000 thru 2006, and counting
	Add'l U.S. injuries/disease requiring medical air transport	N/A	25,000 thru 2006, and counting
Cost of War	Direct Financial Cost	\$61 billion	\$500 billion and counting
	Length of war	6 weeks total (100 hours after start of massive ground campaign)	Last 5 yrs. 10 mos. of Bush regime
	Real cost of war	\$61 billion	Catastrophic. Priceless
	Cost paid by U.S.	\$9 billion (15% of total)	Almost 100%
	Cost paid by Arab Gulf Nations	\$36 billion (59% of total)	0
	UN Security Council?	Yes	No
Approval	NATO?	Yes	No
	France?	Yes	No
	War condemned by:	Saddam, Cuba, Yemen, Jordan, and Palestine	98.44% of sane people

Here are a few comments regarding the previous chart:

- 1) The number of nations in the 1991 Coalition is sometimes counted as 31 (rather than 34), because four Persian Gulf nations combined their forces into one.
- 2) Regarding the 1991 Coalition, if Syrian and Turkish coalition forces along Iraq's border are counted, America's share of total coalition troops drops from 71% to 55%, according to a 1994 *Congressional Quarterly* study.

- 3) Regarding the 2003 Coalition, the zero for the number of Saudi troops of course does not include: (1) Saudi citizens who traveled to Iraq to kill coalition troops, and (2) bin Laden himself and other Saudi citizens who are members of al Qaeda or other terrorist groups. If these Saudis were included, the percentage for Saudi Arabia's contribution of troops to the coalition—The Bush League of Nations—would be hugely negative, not just zero.
- 4) Regarding the 2003 Coalition, the zero financial contribution from Saudi Arabia and other Arab nations does not include: (1) payments made by Saudi Arabia to help fund “educational programs” and other propaganda promoting hatred of the United States, Israel, Christians and Jews, (2) payments made by Saudi Arabia to fund terrorist attacks against Americans and Israelis, and (3) money transferred by Saudi organizations and individuals for similar purposes. If such payments were included, Saudi Arabia's financial contribution to the coalition—The Bush League of Nations—would not be zero, but would be hugely negative.
- 5) As the 2003 Coalition further crumbles, America's share of the troops is expected to rise to more than 95% by the end of 2008.

Arab and Muslim Opposition to the Bush League of Nations

One of the most disturbing truths about Bush's war on Iraq, a predominantly Arab nation, is that it is strongly resented by virtually the entire Arab world, including not only Arab governments but also Arab populations. Since this was decidedly not the case with Gulf War I in 1991, the widespread Arab enmity towards Bush's war cannot be attributed simply to preexisting hatred of the United States. Rather, it is Bush himself, cheered on by the *do-nothing-good*, rubber-stamping, GOP-controlled Congress, who stoked the fires of Arab hostility. Bush, billed as the Great Uniter, succeeded only in uniting Arabs against America.

Even oil-rich dictators who are long-term bedmates of the Bush family and America's petroleum industry—including the ruling royal family of Saudi Arabia—refused to join the Bush League, and their relationship soured as the war dragged on.

At a summit of Arab leaders in Riyadh in March 2007, King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia slammed the United States and the coalition. “In beloved Iraq, blood is being shed among brothers in the shadow of an illegitimate foreign occupation,” he declared. He also said that no foreign force would decide the region's future. Abdullah is working hard to avoid Tony Blair's fate, going down in history as Bush's lapdog poodle.

As for the 1991 Gulf War coalition, several Arab nations contributed a total of 190,000 Arab troops, which is greater than Bush's *entire* 2003 coalition, and *several times greater* than the total number of all non-American troops claimed at one time or another to have been contributed to that 2003 coalition by the rest of the world.

Although a few Arab nations did not join the 1991 Gulf War coalition, a large majority enthusiastically embraced it. In fact, Egypt, Morocco, Syria (yes, even Syria, which contributed 19,000 troops) and all six members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates) were part of combat operations to remove Saddam from Kuwait in 1991.

Unfortunately for Bush, not a single Arab nation is a declared member of his Bush League of Nations. Even Middle Eastern nations that opened up their territory to the coalition's use for logistics support, refused to join the coalition against Iraq. Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Qatar and Bahrain are all conspicuously absent from the coalition. A huge supermajority of their respective populations does not believe Bush is trying to bring democracy to the region.

SIDEBAR: Questions Never Asked

Why is Bush so hated by the people in the region he allegedly wants to help? Since most of the people in Iraq's neighboring Islamic countries live under dictatorships, why aren't they flooding across the borders into Iraq to fight *with*, not *against*, the United States and perhaps for their own eventual freedom? Bush and the GOP do not want you to think about such questions, as the answers are too disturbing. Regrettably, America's rightwing Big Media are also silent regarding these hugely important questions.

There was a real need to seal Iraq's borders against terrorists and insurgents seeking to enter Iraq and fight *against* American forces. But why haven't hundreds of thousands of Iranians entered Iraq to fight *on* the side of America? How many have? Perhaps 100,000? No. Perhaps just 1,000? No, although even that small number would have been a positive sign. How about just one? Has not a single freedom loving Iranian entered Iraq to fight *with* America? Regrettably, the vast majority of Iranians despise Bush and his policies as much as they despise their hated dictatorial rightwing ayatollahs. Perhaps Iranians see too much similarity between Iran's zealous Islamic ayatollahs and their Christianist ayatollah counterparts from Texas.

Consider Syria, which is run by a ruthless dictator. Why haven't tens of thousands of Syrian freedom fighters flooded into Fallujah and other hotspots to *support* Bush's effort "to bring democracy" to Iraq and to the region? If they trusted Bush, why aren't they helping Iraq now and thus themselves and their families in the long run? The answers to these questions are embarrassing for Bush. Hafez al-Assad, the father of Syria's current dictator, seized power in a bloody coup in 1970 and maintained power until his death in 2000 through incredible brutal measures aimed at both real and imagined enemies, of whatever religious or ethnic community. The most infamous of his despotic actions against his opposition, including the Muslim Brotherhood, was the encirclement and total destruction of Hamah in 1982, a city in which approximately 20,000 men, women and children were slaughtered.

In 2004 Saudi Arabia proposed—whether seriously or not—that Muslim nations such as Indonesia, Egypt, Morocco, Algeria, Malaysia and Yemen send troops to Iraq to join and replace American troops and operate under the auspices of the United Nations. Unfortunately, there were no takers, because no Muslim nation wanted the taint of being associated with Bush, who in any case wanted to continue calling all the shots. To be clear, *none* of these nations supported Bush's invasion

and occupation of Iraq. Rather, their intended purpose was humanitarian—to help clean up the mess Bush and the GOP created. In their eyes, this is like refusing to join a criminal’s plan of arson and looting, but then nevertheless trying later to help the criminal’s innocent victims.

As for Africa, none of the numerous predominantly Arab or Muslim nations on that continent chose to participate in Bush’s coalition. Not even Morocco, which is moderate and strongly pro-American, at least prior to Bush’s reign. The *entire continent* of Africa—consisting of 56 nations—contributed a total of *zero* soldiers to the coalition,³⁸ thus tying Antarctica.

Egypt’s lack of cooperation is especially noteworthy, not only because of its prominent position in the Arab world, but also because it is, and has been for many years, one of the two largest recipients of American foreign aid, the other being Israel. A member of the 1991 coalition, Egypt refused to join the 2003 Bush League of Nations.

Egypt’s President Hosni Mubarak blames the Bush administration for the unfortunate rise in hatred towards the United States. “After what has happened in Iraq, there is an unprecedented hatred and the Americans know it. . . . There exists today a hatred never equaled in the region.”

Of course, it is not just Arab nations and people who hate Bush and his war on Iraq. It is the entire Muslim world, which by and large believes Bush’s regime is waging an imperial war against Islam.

Consider Pakistan, whose government, a dictatorship, is generally heralded by Bush as a strong ally of the United States in the war on terrorism. Even Pakistan, a UN Security Council member at the time of the 2003 invasion of Iraq, opposed Bush’s war and refused to send troops to Iraq either before or after the invasion. Pakistan’s Foreign Office announced in August 2004 that Pakistan would not send troops to Iraq because of the “volatile” situation there.

Pakistan’s unwillingness to help its fellow Muslims in Iraq who desperately need assistance is regrettable, but understandable given the high level of violence in Iraq. A poll in early 2004 showed that Bush is widely detested in Pakistan. Only 8% of the Pakistanis polled were positive on Bush—perhaps the 8% confused him with USC’s Reggie Bush, the 2005 Heisman Trophy winner—whereas bin Laden was held in high regard by 65%. In commenting on this poll, conservative Pat Buchanan wrote in a *New York Times* editorial of March 26, 2004: “We are losing the hearts and minds of the Islamic young, creating a spawning pool out of which future terrorists will emerge.”

Thanks to Bush and the GOP, the opinion of the United States throughout the Muslim world has dropped into the toilet. As confirmed by countless polls, Bush’s voluntary war in the heart of the Muslim world drove America’s credibility to all-time lows.

Muslims especially resent that Bush’s Confederate Party Coalition tried to run Iraq like a plantation, with Arabs playing the GOP’s neo-Sambo role.

³⁸ For propaganda purposes, five African nations—Eritrea, Ethiopia, Uganda, Rwanda, and Angola—were claimed by the Bush geniuses as coalition members at one time or another. Even knee-jerk Bush supporters should be appalled at this insult to their intelligence.

Here are some additional observations about the two Gulf War coalitions:

- Given the great success of the 1991 Gulf War I coalition assembled by Bush the Father, it is revealing that Bush the Son didn't have a Holy Ghost of a chance to cobble together a real coalition in 2003.
- Many insiders and psychologists have speculated that Bush the Son started the Iraq war in 2003 simply to "one up" his father.
- While Bush's 2003 coalition was much smaller and weaker than the 1991 coalition, the mission of his 2003 coalition was much *more difficult*. The mission in 1991 was limited to evicting Saddam from Kuwait and defeating Iraqi forces arrayed in fixed positions in the open desert in southern Iraq, not to occupying and running Iraq.
- Bush the Father understood the dubious proposition of pressing on to Baghdad in 1991, but Bush the Son chose not to seek his counsel or that of America's best military experts and friends around the world.
- Iraq's military was much *weaker* in 2003 than it was at the time of Gulf War I in 1991, largely due to the severe beating it received in 1991 and years of UN-approved sanctions. The United States estimated that it destroyed 80% of Iraq's military capacity in 1991.
- On the other hand, Bush the Son inherited an American military that was *much stronger* than it was in 1991 (a fact expressly acknowledged by Bush the Father), thanks to a substantial strengthening of America's military during the Clinton presidency.
- Even though Iraq was much weaker in 2003 and the United States was much stronger, Bush the Son and the GOP leveraged their incompetence to create America's worst foreign policy disaster ever.
- Of the 34 nations in the 1991 coalition, an overwhelming majority, 21, did not support Bush's 2003 invasion and wanted no part of it, and the position of the others can generously be described as reluctant tokenism or silent opposition.
- Britain was the *only* major-league supporter of Bush's disastrous invasion of Iraq in 2003, and even Britain's "enthusiasm" in 2003 was only a whisper of what it was in 1991.
- Britain sent only a fraction of the troops in 2003 that it sent in 1991, and when the worsening security situation in Iraq demanded *more* troops, it looked for ways to provide *fewer* and keep them out of harm's way.
- France was the favorite target of the Bush bullies and America's Big Media. How utterly shameful and counterproductive. France is America's oldest and most loyal ally, having stood shoulder to shoulder with America during its Revolutionary War, during Gulf War I, and during many wars in between. But past sacrifices, long-term friendships, and wise counsel mean nothing to the Bush League neocons who prefer docile acquiescence from weak-kneed suck-ups. In addition to the sin of leading the broad opposition at the United Nations to Bush's war in 2003, France committed the most unpardonable sin of all, namely, it had the "Gaul" to be right. The French people and its government were right, and Bush was wrong, dead wrong, and he and the GOP owe France an apology.

- The large hate-France wing of the Republican Party wants you to believe that France always opposes America, which is just another GOP lie intended for gullible minds. Just consider the most recent relevant example, which is the Gulf War I coalition led by Bush the Father. France was a willing member of that coalition and contributed 17,000 troops, 350 tanks and 38 warplanes. In fact, if you add up *all* the troops—whether fighting or non-fighting—provided by the *dozens* of Bush League “members” other than the United States and Britain, you get a *total* force³⁹ for Bush’s 2003 coalition that is fewer in number than the 17,000 French troops who served in the 1991 coalition.
- France is the definition of a true friend. The French fight shoulder to shoulder with America when the cause is just, and they speak the truth as they see it when the cause is not.
- Let’s also remember that the French gave America the Statue of Liberty, the world’s most famous symbol of human rights, and that Bush and the GOP gave America Abu Ghraib, America’s most infamous symbol of torture and disregard of human rights.
- The 1991 Gulf War Coalition was formidable and legitimate, and no one called it Bush League. In that genuine coalition, several European and Arab nations deployed entire divisions of troops.

Troops Contributed to the Iraq Coalition, By Country

The admission “standards” for Bush’s coalition were so low and fraudulent that they were never written down or publicly disclosed. The Bush League geniuses shanghaied nations at will, especially small weak nations, and thus created a coalition out of thin air. Many shanghaied countries expressly disavowed membership. Several “members” declared themselves neutrals.

There is not a single coalition nation whose citizens broadly supported the Bush League of Nations and its imperial leader. Not one.

A majority of the 55+ nations claimed at one time or another by the Bush necons and their cheerleaders to be coalition members have been recently cited by Amnesty International or Human Rights Watch for various human rights violations.

The 39 most prominent “members” of the Bush League of Nations appear on the two-page chart that follows.

³⁹ By July 2005, the 26 “members” of the Bush League of Nations other than the United States and Britain had a total of 16,370 mostly non-combat troops in Iraq, or fewer than 650 per nation.

Coalition Troops By Country

Country	At Invasion	End of 2004	Max.	Jan. 2007	Comments
United States	150,000	140,000	162,000	132,000	lowest was 115,000 in Feb. 2004
United Kingdom	45,000	8,361	10,000	7,200	most were outside Iraq at invasion, 5000 by end of 2007
South Korea	3,300	3,700	3,700	2,300	to be cut by half in 2007
Italy	0	3,085	3,085	0	withdrew Nov. 2006
Poland	194	2,500	2,500	900	non-combat troops, withdrawal planned
Ukraine	0	1,589	1,589	0	non-combat mechanized infantry, withdrew Dec. 2005
Netherlands	0	1,345	1,345	0	withdrew Mar. 2005
Spain	0	0	1,300	0	non-combat, reconstruction, withdrew Apr. 2004
Romania	0	700	865	600	
Australia	2,000	400	550	550	training security forces
Japan	0	550	550	0	non-combat engineers & medics, withdrew July 2006
Denmark	0	496	515	470	to withdraw by Aug. '07
Bulgaria	0	485	485	0	non-combat troops and support personnel, withdrew Apr. 2006
Thailand	0	0	423	0	non-combat medical and engineering troops, withdrew Aug. 2004
El Salvador	0	380	380	380	humanitarian and peacekeeping
Honduras	0	0	368	0	non-combat, reconstruction, withdrew May 2004
Mongolia	0	180	180	100	non-combat construction & guarding pipelines
Dominican Republic	0	0	302	0	non-combat, restrictive rules of engagement, withdrew May 2004
Hungary	0	0	300	0	non-combat transportation group, withdrew May 2005
Georgia	500	300	300	300	combat, medics and support

Coalition Troops By Country (Continued)

Country	At Invasion	End of 2004	Max.	Jan. 2007	Comments
Azerbaijan	0	250	250	150	non-combat
Nicaragua	0	0	230	0	non-combat, restrictive rules of engagement, withdrew Feb. 2004
Singapore	0	0	192	0	non-combat, training, withdrew Mar. 2005
Norway	0	0	150	0	military engineers, withdrew Oct. 2005
Latvia	0	122	136	120	non-combat
Portugal	0	128	128	0	non-combat gendarmes, withdrew Feb. 2005
Lithuania	0	105	105	50	non-combat, including doctors
Slovakia	0	105	105	0	non-combat, decontamination, withdrew Jan. 2007
Czech	0	100	100	100	military police, 300 at peak
Albania	0	70	120	120	non-combat troops
New Zealand	0	0	61	0	non-combat engineers, withdrew Sep. 2004
Philippines	0	0	51	0	non-combat medics and engineers, withdrew Jul. 2004
Estonia	0	55	55	34	non-combat
Armenia	0	0	46	46	non-combat medics, engineers
Tonga	0	45	45	0	non-combat, withdrew Dec. 2004
Kazakhstan	0	29	29	29	non-combat military engineers
Bosnia & Herzegovina	0	0	37	36	non-combat
Macedonia	0	33	33	33	non-combat
Moldova	24	12	12	12	non-combat bomb defusing experts, withdrew Jan. 2007 , may return
Total	201,018	165,125	192,622	145,530	

America's closest neighbors, Canada and Mexico, whose leaders knew Bush best, courageously refused to join the Bush League, even though they risked retaliation from the Bush White House. Let's consider America's shameful treatment of Canada.

In addition to participating in the war on terrorism, Canada willingly participated in the war in Afghanistan, and many of its soldiers died there, including several killed accidentally by friendly American fire. Nevertheless, Canada angered the Bush neocons when it declared it would participate in the Iraq war only with UN approval, which was not forthcoming. In December 2003, Bush decided that countries not supporting his invasion of Iraq could not bid on some \$18 billion in reconstruction contracts, thus denying them a share in the spoils of war. Pumped up by early military successes, Bush was then at his vindictive best, and he put Canada on a long list of nations to be punished. This disgusted the Canadian population, including Canada's new Prime Minister, Paul Martin, especially in view of the blood shed by Canada's troops in Afghanistan and the \$300 million already committed by Canada to the reconstruction of Iraq. Martin said he found Bush's decision "very difficult to fathom." Although Bush later relented, the damage was already done.

The Canadians were victims of a key Bush League rule: The only thing that counts is what you do for Bush and the GOP today. Forget history. Prior friendship, cooperation and sacrifices don't count. Jump when Bush says jump. If you do not docilely participate in Bush's latest fiasco du jour, you will be punished. Even Conservative Party leader Stephen Harper, who was elected Canada's prime minister in January 2006, refuses to support Bush's war.

Many coalition members, such as Rwanda, provided nothing other than the duplicitous misuse of their names. The Bush neocons referred to this as "moral support," even though the vast majority of the citizens of each such nation opposed the war. Some countries provided logistical support only, such as the use of air space and air bases, which in most cases had no military value.

Many so-called coalition members actually opposed the war and wanted nothing to do with the military campaign, but were nevertheless willing to provide humanitarian help in the event Bush foolishly pursued his unilateral war.

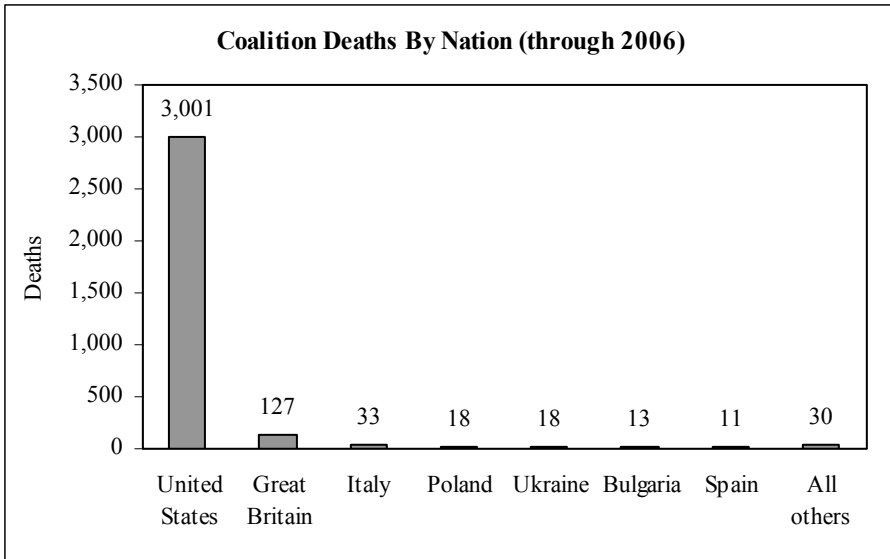
The Bush administration bragged about the number of nations in the coalition without ever referring to the broad opposition of the people of each member nation. However, there's a critical distinction between a *nation's people* willingly sending troops to war (whether or not there's a popular vote) and a nation's *leader* making the decision on behalf of the nation. Again, *no* coalition member nation ever had a solid majority of its citizens support Bush's Iraq war.

The leaders of several coalition members made calculated political decisions to put their nations' flags, but not muscle, behind the coalition. By making soft nominal commitments, many such suck-up leaders hoped to stay in Bush's good graces and receive benefits in return, such as increased foreign aid, debt forgiveness, American investment, or a favorable bilateral trade agreement.

The citizens of each member nation by and large understood the political charade that their leaders were engaged in, and they cut their leaders some slack, especially when it became apparent that their troops were to be involved with minimal risk and in minimal numbers.

In addition to receiving what is best described as bribes, such leaders also wanted to avoid retribution. Statistically, it was smaller nations with weak militaries or even no military that succumbed most frequently to the Bush League bullying. None of the 20 most populous nations, other than the United States, joined Bush's grand coalition.

There is not one leader of a coalition member who truly supports and likes Bush and his Iraq war. Even Tony Blair must regret the day he climbed into bed with America's King George III and got royally screwed. In Bush's dog and pony show, Blair played a poodle.



The source of the data in the above chart is www.icasualties.org.

Very few of the small number of casualties suffered by coalition members other than the United States and Britain resulted from coalition soldiers taking the fight to the enemy.

The U.S. military sometimes refers to “swimmers” and “non-swimmers” to distinguish between those who are truly committed to a military venture and willing to fight, and those who are not. Unfortunately, *virtually all* of the nations in the Bush League are non-swimmers who share the central goal of staying out of harm's way. The United States and Britain provided almost 100% of the swimmers. Some non-swimmer nations lost brave troops in Iraq, but with few exceptions the deaths were caused by traffic accidents, roadside explosions, mortar and sniper attacks, suicide bombings, and the like, and were not the result of proactive military engagement with the enemy.

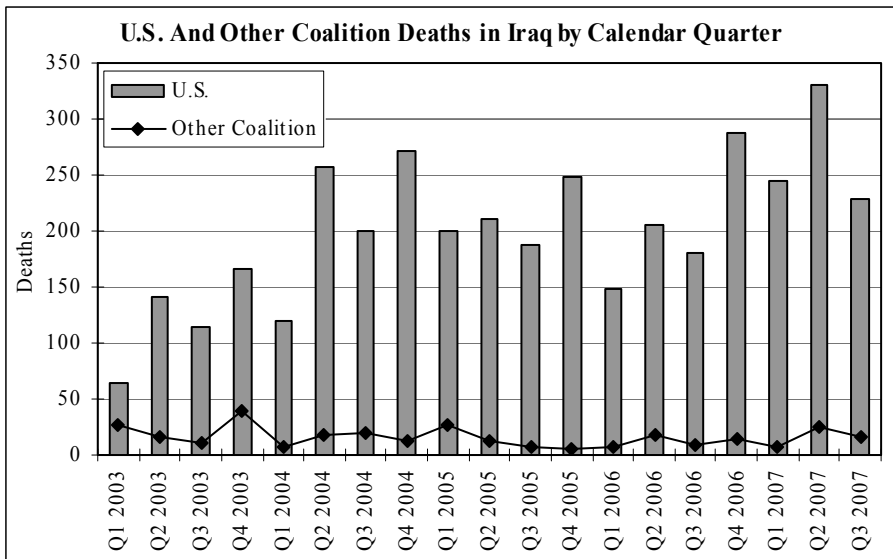
The Bush League has more flags than swimmers. Virtually all of the flags were “mailed in” without the heart, soul, and commitment of the respective peoples they represent. There is so little pride among the members of this coalition that they choose not to gather for group photos showing off all their colorful flags.

Only a few countries offered “direct military” participation. Statements by the Bush administration itself show that more than 90% of the coalition members refused to send troops to actually fight the war. Instead, they offered to participate in ways that were largely soft and worth little or nothing, such as “political support,” “moral support,” and “over-flight rights.”

Virtually all of the leaders of the coalition nations wanted nothing to do with Bush’s war, but were willing after the fact to provide “humanitarian and reconstruction aid” under what proved to be two huge false assumptions, namely that: (1) their personnel would be welcome and safe after the Americans and Brits did the shooting and restored a safe environment, and (2) there would be wonderful opportunities to make money at the Iraqi Public Trough, which the Bush neocons would keep filled to the brim with Iraqi oil revenues and U.S. taxpayer dollars.

These leaders are like neighbors who unsuccessfully try to dissuade a drunken man from beating a small child, but later—after the thug has given his neighbors the finger and beaten the child anyway—step in to offer some medical aid and comfort to the battered victim. And if the thug offers them some money in the process, well what’s wrong with that?

To be clear, we honor the service of all coalition troops, since with rare exception they bravely followed their orders. The blame lies not with the troops but with their respective political leaders.



Although Bush’s war was created and directed by old, white, typically wealthy, male politicians, young Americans fight it. More than three-quarters of U.S. fatalities

are 30 years old or younger. Slightly more than 25% are ages 21 or younger. Half are from 22 to 30 years old. Fewer than one-quarter are 31 years or older.⁴⁰

Finally noticing that they had bungled things badly in Iraq, the Bush neocons in 2004 began a hard push to get NATO to join in and help clean up their mess. Their efforts to engage NATO were less than effective for many reasons.

SIDEBAR: NATO

In addition to Bush's Iraq war being unlawful under international law, there are several other reasons why NATO refused to join his Bush League of Nations. Here are a few of the lowlights:

- **Unilateral Militarism.** The Bush neocons made all the decisions regarding the war it wanted, and all glory and booty would be theirs. To the extent other nations participated, their role was to take orders.
- **Disrespect.** Bush went out of his way to insult NATO members who disagreed, and he foolishly and childishly made it personal in order to please his rightwing base. In November 2002, just prior to the NATO summit in Prague, Bush shunned German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder in a rude display of Bush League diplomacy. Let's not forget the GOP jokes about the Germans and the French, especially the French. Republicans led by crooked Congressman Bob Ney even had French fries replaced by "freedom fries" on the congressional menu, but Ney later ate his words and his "freedom fries" when he headed off to prison to serve a 30-month sentence for corruption.
- **More Disrespect.** In addition to insulting NATO members that refused to join his Bush League of Nations, Bush even disrespected the few NATO members that did by never seriously consulting with them about the conduct of the war.
- **Lack of Empathy.** Bush failed to consider the domestic political reality facing each NATO member nation and its leader. Even Tony Blair was not treated as an equal, which caused the British to call him Bush's poodle, a lapdog always at Bush's beck and call for photo ops and glorious barking whenever Bush's ratings needed a boost.
- **Lack of Trust.** It is difficult to find a single world leader who trusts Bush and his warmongering party.
- **Afghanistan.** Unfortunately, Afghanistan provided an excellent case study of how Bush misuses and disrespects NATO.

Although NATO refused to join the coalition, it later helped train Iraq's military personnel. Because this peacekeeping effort was not under U.S. control, it was more popular in Europe. NATO nations unwilling to join Bush's messy war on Iraq were understandably willing to help the battered people of Iraq by helping clean up his mess.

⁴⁰ The source of this data as well as the data in the preceding chart is www.icasualties.org.

Knowing Iraq was going to be a *cakewalk*, Bush, like a spoiled child, did not want to share any of the delicious cake with anyone. But when the cake he baked turned out to be toxic, Bush desperately searched for others to eat it. In 2004, and without the slightest hint of an apology, Bush informed both NATO and the United Nations that it was *their* duty to help clean up the mess.

Several Bush League members said in 2004 they would reconsider their plans to withdraw personnel from Iraq if a UN resolution gave the United Nations more authority in Iraq, but Bush remained intransigent.

Fear of retribution from the Bush administration influenced the decision of many coalition members to join the coalition and stay longer than planned. However, Bush's incompetence and disastrous foreign policy reduced his political and moral leadership to such a low point that he could not effectively punish nations that left the coalition or reduced their commitments. Nations opposing Bush drew strength from their numbers. If Bush were to take punitive action against every nation that opposed his war, he would have to punish the entire world.

As the security situation in Iraq worsened, many coalition members looked for face-saving excuses to justify a partial or complete withdrawal as soon as possible. The meaningless transfer of sovereignty from the United States to Iraq on June 28, 2004, was one such convenient excuse. The series of Iraqi elections, including those of January and November of 2005, offered additional excuses.

Profiting from the increasing chaos unleashed by Bush's malfeasance and incompetence in Iraq, and using the car keys handed to them by Bush, Islamic hardliners in Iraq's elections are riding to power in that famous "democracy" vehicle, a vehicle they are likely to abandon later at a time of their choosing. Perhaps Bush thought, "Dang, I thought religious rightwingers in Iraq would be great—no one told me them dudes wasn't Christians."

The extent to which Iraq becomes a theocracy remains to be seen, but expect to see the marriage of religion and state, with civil law replaced largely by Islamic canon as embodied in the shariah. The only certainty is that the ultimate rulers of Iraq will not be the docile pawns so coveted by Bush and his GOP neocons in their imperialist New American Century dreams.

Ten Reasons Why the United States Must Immediately Withdraw from Iraq

Here are ten compelling reasons why the United States must immediately withdraw its military from Iraq.⁴¹

1) A huge supermajority of Iraqis wants its government to set a timetable for the United States to withdraw its forces. Does the Bush administration believe in Iraqi democracy and self-determination, or not?

- It does not. If Bush's GOP regime ever believed in democracy, it would have set a firm timetable for withdrawal years ago, and U.S. forces thus would already be out of Iraq, whatever the chosen timeframe for withdrawal (e.g., 3, 6, or 12 months).

⁴¹ Of course, the U.S. military would be tasked with determining and implementing a plan for orderly withdrawal.

- Numerous surveys of Iraqis, beginning within a year of the 2003 invasion, established that a huge supermajority of Iraqis want American troops to leave Iraq soon. A survey in late 2005 indicated that 82% of Iraqis were “strongly opposed” to the U.S.-led occupation.
- According to the Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA) survey of September 1-4, 2006, 91% of Iraqis want a firm timetable for the United States to withdraw its forces. 37% of Iraqis chose “withdraw within 6 months,” 34% chose “within 1 year,” 20% chose “within 2 years,” and only 9% chose “only reduce as the security situation improves.”⁴² No ethnic group favored that last choice, an open-ended commitment.
- There is a growing sense of urgency, which is reflected in the polls conducted by the PIPA during January 2006 and again in September 2006. The latter report states: “As compared to January 2006, there has been, overall, a growing sense of urgency for withdrawal of U.S.-led forces.”
- If U.S. forces stay in Iraq, at some point they will officially be asked to leave or will be forced to leave. The United States should proactively manage this inevitable exit, not be managed and mangled by it.

2) Sixty-one percent of Iraqis (as of September 2006) approve of attacks on U.S.-led forces in Iraq.⁴³

- This figure is a substantial 14-point increase from the 47% reported in the survey conducted by the PIPA only eight months earlier (January 2006.) The lower 47% figure was outrageous enough by itself, far more than enough, to compel immediate withdrawal.
- Because the United States is a distrusted, uninvited occupying force, most Iraqis do not see such attacks on American troops as terrorism, but rather as a legitimate tool to encourage America to withdraw.
- Here’s another shocking finding from the January 2006 PIPA survey: while 47% of Iraqis supported attacks on U.S.-led forces, only 7% supported attacks on Iraqi government security forces, and only 1% supported attacks on Iraqi civilians.
- One can speculate as to what percentage of Iraqis smile when they see Americans killed or wounded in Iraq.

3) Announcing the withdrawal will help reduce Iraqis’ deep distrust regarding the U.S. government’s intentions in Iraq, and may significantly reduce the attacks on American forces. Here are a few examples of this distrust:

⁴² The results vary considerably along sectarian and ethnic lines, with the Shia results tracking closely to the overall results. No group favors an open-ended commitment, although the Kurds by a modest majority favored that approach only eight months earlier. (31% of Kurds chose the open-ended commitment in the September 2006 survey, down substantially from the 57% of Kurds that favored this approach only eight months earlier.) The Sunnis favored the fastest timetable, with 57% of Sunnis wanting U.S. forces out within 6 months, and an additional 34% favoring withdrawal within 1 year (for a total of 91%), and only 2% favoring an open-ended commitment.

⁴³ The overall percentage of 61% breaks down as follows: 15% of Kurds; 62% of Shia; and 92% of Sunni.

- A huge supermajority of Iraqis (78%) believes the United States, if told by the Iraqi government to withdraw all of its forces within six months, would not do so.⁴⁴
- A huge supermajority of Iraqis (77%) believes the United States intends to have permanent military bases in Iraq even after Iraq is stabilized.⁴⁵
- Only a small minority of Iraqis (18%) believes the United States plans to remove its entire military once Iraq is stabilized.
- The Bush administration lost the battle for the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people within six months of the invasion.

4) Iraqis believe the U.S. military presence in Iraq undercuts the legitimacy and effectiveness of Iraq's fledgling government, partly because it is viewed as subservient to U.S. control.

- According to the PIPA survey of Iraqis conducted January 2-6, 2006, three quarters of Iraqis believe America's withdrawal would make the various factions in Iraq's government more willing to cooperate with each other.
- By a margin of 5 to 2, Iraqis believe an American commitment to withdraw would "strengthen the Iraq government."

5) The invasion and occupation of Iraq is immoral and in violation of U.S. and international law.

- The Iraq war is in violation of the principles of a *just war* set forth in international law, including the Geneva Conventions.
- The Bush administration waged war on Iraq in violation of U.S. law and international law, including the UN charter, and in violation of Congress's authority to determine the necessity of war.
- The invasion and occupation of Iraq is immoral and was opposed by all major religious organizations in the world except the Southern Baptists in America.

6) The invasion and occupation of Iraq was built on a web of lies.

- Bush and Cheney participated in a conspiracy directed from the White House to lie to and mislead Congress and the American public about the reasons for invading and occupying Iraq, including misleading statements and lies about Iraq's nuclear weapons and nuclear weapons capability, the threat of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), connections between 9/11 and Saddam, connections between al Qaeda and Saddam, and the imminent threat of Iraq to the United States and other nations.
- Bush's war on Iraq had virtually nothing to do with promoting democracy and human rights, but was waged to extend America's corporate power, especially America's Big Oil interests, by establishing a permanent American military platform in the center of the Middle East, the world's biggest oilcan.

⁴⁴ The overall percentage of 78% breaks down as follows: 64% of Kurds; 76% of Shia; and 96% of Sunni.

⁴⁵ The overall percentage of 77% breaks down as follows: 58% of Kurds; 73% of Shia; and 97% of Sunni.

- As late as 2007, 90% of U.S. troops in Iraq still believed the U.S. invasion was in retaliation for Saddam's role in 9/11. The U.S. government must stop lying to our troops and start supporting them. A good first step is to pull them out of Iraq.

7) A majority of Americans want America's troops to withdraw.

- As the truth slowly emerged, a growing majority of Americans came to recognize that Bush's mission in Iraq is a failed mission.
- It is now too late, as well as politically impossible, for Bush to greatly expand the U.S. military force in Iraq to a level that would have had a reasonable chance of controlling the sectarian violence and creating an environment conducive to reconstruction work. In any case, Bush does not have the backbone to demand a military draft, and if he did, America would not support him. As of early 2006 barely 10% of Americans favored increasing U.S. forces in Iraq by *any* amount.
- A growing majority of the American people understands that withdrawal from Iraq is the best of rotten alternatives, all thanks to the incompetence of Bush and the GOP. The 2006 midterm elections confirmed this.
- Americans also understand that withdrawal is the inevitable course.
- In withdrawing from Iraq, America must place the blame where it belongs, not on America's finest, but on America's worst—Bush and his incompetent GOP administration. A quick withdrawal will best honor America's troops, especially those wounded and killed while bravely following orders, and it will prevent more of America's finest from dying in the pursuit of Bush's immoral war. America must not repeat the timetable of the Vietnam War, during which more than half of America's casualties were suffered *after* the U.S. government knew its war policies were destined to fail.

8) The continued occupation of Iraq is more harmful than beneficial to Iraq and most Iraqis.

- A huge supermajority of Iraqis (78%) believe the U.S. military presence is "provoking more conflict than it is preventing," according to the PIPA survey conducted September 1-4, 2006, in Iraq.⁴⁶ Only 21% believe it is "a stabilizing force."
- The 2003 invasion put Iraq on the road to civil war, ethnic cleansing and genocide, all of which are exacerbated by the continued presence of American troops. Unfortunately, Bush's policies from the start aggravated ethnic and sectarian differences in Iraq. In helping train Iraq's army and police, the United States unwittingly picked sides, and unintentionally encouraged the growth of sectarian militias and death squads, including Shia death squads that operate within the Ministry of the Interior and other offices of the Iraqi government.

⁴⁶ The overall percentage of 78% breaks down as follows: 41% of Kurds; 82% of Shia; and 97% of Sunni.

- Many of those Iraqis who tolerate the presence of American troops do so because they believe it serves their particular power-grabbing, revenge-seeking, or sectarian purposes.
- Raw military power does not give legitimacy to America's foreign policy. Trying to influence Islamic populations with military force works precisely in the opposite direction. The vast majority of Muslims do not hate America and America's way of life. They hate America's Bush League foreign policy and its imperial leader.

9) Withdrawal from Iraq is necessary because Bush and the GOP are unable and unwilling to conduct the occupation honestly and competently.

- Bush and the GOP cannot be trusted with matters of war and national defense. They neither talk straight nor shoot straight.
- The mismanaged reconstruction work in Iraq is the most corrupt military contracting in American history, and the GOP-controlled Congress completely abdicated its oversight responsibilities.
- The Bush administration itself is a horrible role model for people aspiring to improve their government and their lives.
- By telling Iraq it must fund reconstruction largely on its own, the Bush administration threw in the towel on meaningful reconstruction activities, except for America's huge military bases and fortified embassy bunker complex in the Green Zone—frequent targets of Iraqi insurgents—which are destined to remain imperial islands in a sea of chaos.
- The Bush administration rejected Powell's pottery barn rule. Bush's version is that if he breaks something, he just break more things, and then blames someone else.
- Bush's war propelled Iraq and the region on a course for genocide and war with unpredictable consequences. Although America's military presence in Iraq may keep the lid on the pressure cooker in Iraq in the short term, it is causing a dangerous build up in pressure in both Iraq and in the region.
- America's Bush League policymakers are flying blind in Iraq, unable to distinguish between friend and foe, and unwilling to learn or even talk with America's various adversaries and potential allies in the region.

10) America's so-called war on terrorism is compromised by the continued occupation of Iraq, which day by day is making America and the world less safe.

- The Bush administration created in Iraq a fertile breeding ground for terrorists where none existed before. Ironically, this disastrous turn of events gave the neocons a bogus rationale for "staying the course" in Iraq, namely that Iraq now is "on the front line in the war on terrorism."
- The presence of uninvited U.S. troops in Iraq inflames Muslims worldwide and is the best marketing tool for the recruitment and motivation of Islamic terrorists.
- Bush's occupation also motivates genuine Iraqi patriots who want to expel all foreign occupiers in a war of liberation.
- One drains the swamp to kill mosquitoes, but the ongoing occupation of Iraq creates new swamps that breed an endless supply of terrorists. The

Bush regime knows not whom they swat or why, and they cannot explain why they keep swatting.

Although the way forward in Iraq is fraught with great uncertainty and risk, any alternative is better than Bush's so-called "victory" strategy, or "stay-the-course" strategy, or "surge" strategy, all of which continue to fuel the chaos in Iraq. "Victory," "stay the course," and "surge" are not strategies, but simply slogans that lull the gullible mind.

SIDEBAR: What's the Right Question on Dumbness?

What's the right question on dumbness? Is it, "How dumb does Bush think his supporters are?" Or is it, "How dumb is *he*?"

During more than three years of war in Iraq, the Bush White House smacked down dissenting voices by saying America must "stay the course" in Iraq. But in October 2006, on the eve of the midterm elections, the Bush White House decided to prohibit the phrase "stay the course" in presidential speeches and public statements. Perhaps forgetting that modern technology permits things to be recorded, Bush later that month declared on ABC, "Well, hey, listen, we've never been 'stay the course.'" Bloggers soon pointed out numerous instances of Bush himself asserting, "stay the course."

Bush's "vision" for Iraq is a schizophrenic fantasy with two conflicting objectives. On one hand, Bush calls desperately for America *somehow* to extract itself from the *cakewalk-turned-quagmire*—the Iraq war that is both a civil war and a war of liberation—that has cost America a heavy human price and countless hundreds of billions of dollars. On the other hand, he desperately wants America, by miraculous hook or crook, to still control Iraq through a puppet regime and a permanent American military presence.

Like misbehaving children with their hands stuck in someone else's candy machine—and unwilling to release the candy they're trying to steal—Bush and his GOP never-wore-the-uniform neocons still lust for control of Iraq, that long-desired sweet centerpiece of their un-American fantasy known as The Project for the New American Century.

In the next chapter we'll take a hard look at more than 50 nations claimed by the Bush regime and the neocons, at one time or another, to be members of the Bush League of Nations.