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Bush Admits Defeat In War On Terror

by Michael in New York on [8/04/2005 11:15:00 AM](#)

"The New Yorker" nails it: Bush's "rebranding" of the war on terror isn't just silly Orwellian wordplay. **Bush is admitting defeat.** Per George Packer:

The Administration is admitting that its strategy since September 11th has failed, without really admitting it. The single-minded emphasis on hunting down terrorists has failed ("Hearts and minds are more important than capturing and killing people," Gregson said). The use of military force as the country's primary and, at times, only response has failed, and has stretched the Army and the Marines to the breaking point. Unilateralism has failed. "It's not a military project alone, and the United States cannot do it by itself alone," Douglas Feith, the Under-Secretary of Defense for Policy and a leading advocate of going it alone with military force, said on his way out the Pentagon door and into private life (good luck, fellas!). The overwhelmingly American character of the war has failed, isolating moderate Muslims -- who, in the end, are the only hope for political change -- or driving them closer to the radicals. Loading the entire burden of the war onto the backs of American soldiers, while telling the rest of the citizenry to go about its business, has failed, even as public relations: in a recent Gallup poll, only thirty-four per cent of Americans said that we are winning the war on terrorism. The phrase has outlived its enormous political usefulness.

They credit numerous groups for making the case for a broader, less war-based war on ideology, but don't mention one obvious person: John Kerry. But enough of that.

Bush has already floated the trial balloon of pulling out troops next spring and no one blinked an eye. How can they possibly justify setting a deadline? **The insurgency is stronger than ever.** More people are being killed this year than last. The Iraqi defense ministry is utterly unprepared to take over the security of the country. And Bush has repeatedly misled the American people about the number of Iraqi troops who can provide defense on their own, without our help. Iraq is not even close to stable. Don't get me wrong, even if we fail completely in making anything positive out of a bad situation, no soldier who dies for their country while following orders and behaving honorably has ever died in vain. But it will be a *tragic* loss of life if Bush abandons Iraq to boost midterm elections and allows a beleaguered country to sink into civil war and despair.

"The New Yorker" says Bush is right to finally recognize the "reality-based" common sense worldview endorsed by Kerry, the 9-11 Commission and others.

The Administration is right to reconsider its strategy, starting with the language. Will anything else follow? The global struggle against violent extremism would inspire more confidence if, for example, the Administration hadn't failed to include funding for democracy programs in Iraq beyond the next round of elections there; or if Karen Hughes, the President's choice as Under-Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy, hadn't left the job empty for five months while waiting for her son to graduate from high school; or if the White House weren't resisting attempts by Congress to regulate the treatment of prisoners; or if Karl Rove would stop using 9/11 to raise money and smear Democrats. No one really knows how American influence

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