

War in Iraq continues to be fueled by a number of fallacies

By Dr. Han S. Park

The fallacies in the Bush administration's rationalization of the Iraq war need to be readdressed from a factual perspective.

The first fallacy involves the original justification of the invasion, that the presumed existence of stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq is a legitimate reason for American invasion. Yes, it's inexcusable that such weapons were never found in the first place. But a deeper crime is the belief we should unilaterally invade a sovereign state simply because it possesses WMDs - the very ones we and a handful of other countries have in their possession.

The global culture is predicated on a sense of justice that stems from a pervasively growing sense of equality. Thus, we must have an answer to the fundamental question: What makes only the United States, China, Russia, France and England qualified to continue to develop and possess these weapons?

The second fallacy is that we are in Iraq because of our resolve to fight terrorists. As deplorable as the 9/11 attacks were, Iraq was not responsible for the crime. Contrary to certain claims from the Bush administration, Baghdad is not the haven for al-Qaida. If anything, our presence there works as a magnet to attract terrorists from neighboring countries while, at the same time, fueling further resentment among insurgents.

The third fallacy is that some countries like Iran and Syria are "evil," and therefore, should never be given the right to engage in dialogue with us. If violent conflict is to be avoided and a political solution is to be given a chance to work, we must talk and negotiate with these countries. Diplomacy is negotiation, and it is the only mechanism by which a peaceful solution may be attempted.

The fourth fallacy is the belief that we can succeed in the war. The truth is that there is not even a viable definition of success. If success means that Iraq will embrace the kind of democracy enjoyed by Americans, and that the force of democracy will spill over the entire region, it is certainly more an illusion than a realistic possibility.

The fifth fallacy is that if we withdraw at this time, there will be chaos, and therefore, we must "stay the course" if we are going to keep our hopes alive. The truth is that chaos already exists in Iraq. Our only hope is that the Shiites and Sunnis in the region, not just in Iraq, might come to the realization that they must stop this insane self-destruction and negotiate a balance of power between them and among sub-sectarian groups.

On the other hand, our prolonged occupation will only continue to help the hardliners in recruiting and training even more extremists and terrorists, including al-Qaida.

The sixth fallacy is that the government of Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki is willing and able to form a unified governing body and remain friendly to Washington. It is public knowledge that the anti-American sectarian extremist Muqtada al-Sadr owns al-Maliki and his fragile government. They are the ones who were tormented by Saddam and his Sunni leadership and remain more than ready to seek revenge against the former foes by building their own exclusive power.

Iraq is in the whorl of a civil war, and the nation is in disarray. There is little America can do to alleviate this chaos - it is time to pack and leave. However, as we leave, we must bear the moral responsibility of helping those America-friendly Iraqis who await certain massacre. By claiming this responsibility, the past loss of lives among our soldiers would not have been in vain.

Though with questionable legitimacy, we did what we set out to do: Eliminate Saddam Hussein's brutal dictatorship and help the Iraqi people in establishing an elected regime. We never went into Iraq (or even Afghanistan) to engage in nation-building. No foreign power can accomplish this in the context of today's global culture.

The seventh and final fallacy is that not supporting the Iraq policy is the same as not supporting our men and women in uniform. This fallacious logic has helped the administration manipulate the American people who devotedly support our soldiers. In fact, such logic insults our intelligence, and it is time for us to recognize this distinction and demand the withdrawal of our young men and women before the mounting count of ultimate sacrifices becomes painful statistics.

People should rule in a democracy, and thus it is incumbent upon us to demand corrections to our current ill-fated course. Despite the instructive results of our midterm elections, the war machine continues to roll over the will of the people, fueled by the false legitimization of this administration's policy. The American people have spoken but have not been heard. Indeed, we are witnessing a crisis that threatens the very core of our cherished democracy.

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