

For the Bush White House, the real definition of victory has become "anything they can get away with without taking blame for defeat," said the retired Army Gen. William Odom, a national security official in the Reagan and Carter administrations, when I spoke with him recently. The plan is to run out the Washington clock between now and Jan. 20, 2009, no matter the cost.

Precipitous withdrawal is also a chimera, since American manpower, materiel and bases, not to mention our new Vatican City-sized embassy, can't be drawn down overnight. The only real choice, as everyone knows, is an orderly plan for withdrawal that will best serve American interests. The real debate must be over what that plan is. That debate can't happen as long as the White House gets away with falsifying reality, sliming its opponents and sowing hyped fears of Armageddon. The threat that terrorists in civil-war-torn Iraq will follow us home if we leave is as bogus as Saddam's mushroom clouds. The Qaeda that actually attacked us on 9/11 still remains under the tacit protection of our ally, Pakistan.

As General Odom says, the endgame will start "when a senior senator from the president's party says no," much as William Fulbright did to L.B.J. during Vietnam. That's why in Washington this fall, eyes will turn once again to John Warner, the senior Republican with the clout to give political cover to other members of his party who want to leave Iraq before they're forced to evacuate Congress. In September, it will be nearly a year since Mr. Warner said that Iraq was "drifting sideways" and that action would have to be taken "if this level of violence is not under control and this government able to function."

Mr. Warner has also signaled his regret that he was not more outspoken during Vietnam. "We kept surging in those years," he told *The Washington Post* in January, as the Iraq surge began. "It didn't work." Surely he must recognize that his moment for speaking out about this war is overdue. Without him, the Democrats don't have the votes to force the president's hand. With him, it's a slam dunk. The best way to honor the sixth anniversary of 9/11 will be to at last disarm a president who continues to squander countless lives in the names of those voiceless American dead.

The truth about September will be that the President is still losing the Iraq war, but that's not what we will be told, nor will the President tell the American people that he has no plan to treat all the gravely wounded soldiers returning from Iraq. Already America has lost over 3,500 soldiers, as many as 53,000 more are gravely wounded. As many as 50,000 more may yet be afflicted with post traumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injury.

As the Associated Press reported over the weekend, our government is overwhelmed now in trying to care for our wounded, and the President has this Nation on course to see 20,000 more casualties before he leaves office. That's what will happen unless his own Republican Party finally tells him and the American people the truth about Iraq, and the urgent need to get their soldiers out of harm's way.

The Vietnam Memorial in Washington is a place where we commemorate the soldiers who died during the last failed war. Had enough people gotten through to the President back in 1968, there would only be one side of

that Memorial because we could have saved at least 25,000 lives. That's why we have to get through to the President today. The American people can't, the Democratic Party can't, even the Iraq Parliament can't. That leaves only the Republican Party to stop the memorial to Iraq's fallen heroes from growing any larger than it already will be.

We have a chance today to save U.S. lives by seeing the Iraq war for what it is and what it isn't. It is a civil war created by us, and it isn't in America's interest to be there.

Bring the soldiers home, Mr. President.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WATERS addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it's an honor to address the House, and it's good to be here before we go on 4th of July break to celebrate the birthday of this great country.

As you know, in the 30-something Working Group, we come to the floor to discuss a number of issues that are facing the American people, and also, I think it's important to identify our focus on the issues in Iraq and Afghanistan and the issues that are facing the American people.

I think, Mr. Speaker, the events over the weekend in Iraq and also in Afghanistan even give us further focus on making sure that the issues that are facing our men and women that are in harm's way are addressed here in the Congress. I think it's also very important for us to focus on what has not happened in this Congress as it relates to making sure that we meet the needs of our men and women.

We have appropriation bills that have been held up in the process that are now moving through the process. It's not because of the majority side's lack of will to be able to move them, it's the fact that we have some of our friends on the other side of the aisle that see it fit to slow the process down, but that argument is for another day.

As you know, I'm one of the Members, especially on this side of the aisle, that push for bipartisanship. Mr. Speaker, I spend quite a bit of time here on the floor talking about how when we work together, we're able to move the American agenda forward. And I look forward to continuing to stand up on behalf of bipartisanship here in the House to accomplish a goal

to be able to make sure that our men and women in harm's way are able to receive the representation that the American people voted for.

Mr. Speaker, I think also what we should touch on is the fact that we have sent a number of documents to the White House, and those documents happen to be law, or proposed law. We had a bill that passed both House and Senate emergency supplemental that had not only benchmarks in it, but also withdrawal dates that were sensible and that were timely to let the Iraqi Government know that we will not continue to reward a lack of action on their side and accomplishment on their side as it relates to securing Iraq. That was vetoed by the President. But I can say that not one Democrat went to the White House and stood behind the President and said that we will stop any override of the President's veto.

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I am so glad that we did send that bill there to show the American people that we are willing to do the things that we need to do.

We also passed a nonbinding resolution against the surge in Iraq, the escalation, I must add, in Iraq of U.S. troops and personnel. That was a strong message that the American people wanted to send out. That was successfully passed. Now, we are going to have two reports when we get back July 15, I would say to Mr. LARSON, our Vice Chair, in a report in September. I think it is going to be very, very important for the Members to remember that we are Americans first, Members of Congress. Along with that, that first chair that I mentioned, and on the second hand, that we are from two different parties, because there are men and women who are counting on us to work together.

But those of us on this side of the aisle have to provide the leadership. If the leadership doesn't come from the White House, then we are here, sent by American taxpayers, American voters, to represent them from the said districts that we are from. But it is important that we provide that leadership and opportunity.

I would like to yield to my good friend, Mr. JOHN LARSON, from the great State of Connecticut. He is our Vice Chair of the Democratic Caucus. I want to thank you, sir, for your leadership on this very issue of Iraq.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Well, let me first and foremost congratulate the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK), and Mr. RYAN and Mrs. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ and Mr. MURPHY for continuing to come to the floor, the 30-somethings, and talk about issues that are so important to this country. There is no more important issue before this Congress or this country, than the war in Iraq.

There is no more important issue to the American public. But it is clear, and I think General Odom stated it