

amended. But at the end of the day I think we have to be sensitive and conscious of the fact that a lot of people will start to suffer in ways that most of us cannot imagine. When they lose their unemployment benefits and their savings are exhausted, they are about to lose their homes. I have seen that happen, and it is going to continue to happen.

Let's do the right thing. Let's find a way through this difficulty. Let's try to find a reasonable way to resolve it. Let's not leave here and go to the comfort and happiness of our families with these people disadvantaged.

IRANIAN INFLUENCE IN IRAQ

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, last week, Clifford May, the president of the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, wrote in the *National Review* that the U.S. should renew its focus on the Iranian regime's influence in Iraq. He warned that the success of the surge in Iraq, which both the President and Vice President opposed when they served in this body, could be transformed into a "bipartisan failure" if we don't increase pressure on the Iranian regime.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the *RECORD* the article to which I just referred.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the *RECORD*, as follows:

[From the *National Review*]

WHO'S LOSING IRAQ?

AND COULD IRAN BE WINNING?

(By Clifford D. May)

"I am very optimistic about—about Iraq. I mean, this could be one of the great achievements of this administration."

Vice President Joseph Biden's comments to CNN's Larry King sparked a brouhaha for an obvious reason: When they were senators, Biden and Barack Obama opposed the "surge" that averted America's defeat in Iraq. It takes chutzpah for them to now claim credit for the fruits of that strategy.

But a less obvious and more significant point is being missed: Iraq may, in the end, turn out to be nobody's achievement. It may turn out to be a military success transformed by politicians and diplomats into a bipartisan failure. Recent developments in Iraq are ominous. The Obama administration is not addressing them effectively. And conservative critics of the Obama administration are strangely silent.

Robert Dreyfus is a journalist of the left with whom I seldom agree; he writes for *The Nation*, a publication of the far left that usually makes my eyes roll. But in his *Nation* blog, Dreyfus correctly notes that as the campaign gets underway for Iraq's March 7 elections, close to 500 candidates have been banned for alleged ties to the Baath Party by the Justice and Accountability Council, "an unelected panel headed by an Iran-linked terrorist, Ali al-Lami."

Among those barred are "the No. 2 and No. 3 candidates in the main opposition bloc, the Iraqi Nationalist Movement, which is led by former Prime Minister Iyad Allawi [a secular Shia]. Already, two members of Allawi's party have been assassinated while campaigning. . . . Allawi, who many observers say had a credible chance of winning enough

votes to lead a governing coalition after the election, has suspended his campaign. . . . Many Sunni leaders are talking about a boycott."

The most serious concern here is not that Iraqi democracy is fledgling and flawed—we knew that. What's troubling is the fact that Iran's militant jihadi rulers are apparently manipulating the process—with impunity.

Most Iraqis do not want their country to be controlled by Iran. Most do not want it to become an Iranian satrapy like Syria, Iraq's neighbor to the west. Most Iraqis do not want to live as Iranians have been living—under the thumb of oppressive theocrats and thuggish Revolutionary Guards.

But Iraqis know that American troops—the "strongest tribe"—are leaving. The bullies in Tehran, by contrast, may be staying right where they are. Iran's rulers can give you money and weapons. Or they and their treacherous agents in Iraq can have you eliminated.

The fact that Ali al-Lami is playing a central role in determining who can and who cannot run for election is—or should be—alarming. In 2008, he was detained by American forces in connection with an Iranian-backed "Special Groups" militia believed to have bombed a municipal building, killing two State Department employees along with six Iraqis. A "senior U.S. military intelligence official" told the *Associated Press* there were "multiple and corroborating reports" pointing to al-Lami's involvement.

Abdul Rahman al-Rashed, the general manager of al-Arabiya television, writing in the international Arabic daily *Asharq Alawsat*, recently called al-Lami "the man to fear in Iraq. . . . He shows his claws at anyone who dares oppose him and he accuses his opponents of Baathism," including even Gen. David Petraeus "who has fought the Baathists the most and if it weren't for him, al-Lami would not be able to reach his home in one piece. Al-Lami accused Petraeus of Baathism (nobody has ever spoken such nonsense) and said that if General Petraeus was Iraqi he would have been charged under the Debaathification law."

In an interview with the *Times* (U.K.), Petraeus pointedly noted that al-Lami's panel has been linked with Iran's Revolutionary Guard. And on Tuesday, Gen. Ray Odierno, the senior U.S. commander in Iraq, identified al-Lami as one of two Iraqi politicians "clearly . . . influenced by Iran."

The "surge" implemented by Petraeus, Odierno, and their troops was largely responsible for the defeat of al-Qaeda in Iraq—the battlefield Osama bin Laden considered more consequential than any other. But Iran's proxy militias fought U.S. troops, too. And many Americans were killed by explosive devices manufactured in Iran and sent to Iraq for that purpose.

Yet Iran's contribution to the bloodshed in Iraq was consistently downplayed. To highlight it would have led to the question: "So what are you going to do about it?" And the Bush administration did not want to do anything about it—just as the Clinton administration did not want to do anything about Iran's role in the slaughter of American servicemen at Khobar Towers in 1996, just as the Reagan administration did not want to do anything about Iran's dispatching of Hezbollah suicide-bombers to kill Americans in Beirut in 1983, and just as the Carter administration did not want to do anything about the seizure of the American Embassy in Tehran in 1979.

Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the father of Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution, concluded: "America cannot do a damn thing!" The phrase has been repeated by Iranian rulers ever since.

President Obama ought to break with this pattern of fecklessness. He should show Iran

that there are consequences for facilitating the deaths of Americans, for sponsoring terrorism, for building nuclear weapons, for ruthlessly oppressing Iranians at home, and for undermining the election process in Iraq. At the very least, Obama should slow down the pace of American troop withdrawals in Iraq and impose serious sanctions—the kind envisioned by the legislation recently passed by both the House and the Senate.

But Biden said nothing about sanctions to Larry King. Instead he told him (and any Iranians who might be listening): "You're going to see 90,000 American troops come marching home by the end of the summer." The vice president added: "You're going to see a stable government in Iraq that is actually moving toward a representative government. I spent—I've been there 17 times now. I go about every two months—three months. I know every one of the major players in all the segments of that society. It's impressed me. I've been impressed how they have been deciding to use the political process rather than guns to settle their differences."

True: Biden has been a frequent flier to Iraq, where he has argued against the banning of candidates who displease Tehran. Also true: He might as well have been talking to a wall.

Iraq remains what it has been: a pivotal nation in the heart of the Middle East. Biden may think he and his administration have achieved something there. Obama may see Iraq as a distraction from the war against "the real enemy" in Afghanistan. Conservatives may view Iraq as a success Obama inherited from the Bush administration—and therefore no longer their problem.

All these views are wrong. It would be a cruel irony—not to mention a terrible defeat—if the sacrifices Americans have made were, in the end, to produce an Iraq dominated by Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and President Mahmoud Ahmadinijad, enemies of Iraq, freedom, and democracy—enemies sworn to bringing about a "world without America."

Why don't Biden and Obama recognize that? And why are their critics not more vocal about the fact that they do not?

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, today I missed rollcall vote No. 24, the motion to waive the Budget Act with respect to the motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 2847, with the Reid amendment No. 3310. I was regrettably detained due to the fact that I was serving as the ranking member at a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing. If I had been present, I would have voted to sustain the point of order.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING BULL MOOSE MUSIC

● Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, each day we read too many stories of small businesses unable to weather the current economic storm. Countless small firms both in Maine and across the Nation have been unable to compete with large chain stores and have been literally priced out of the market. Thankfully, today I wish to tell an inspirational success story and recognize a local retailer in my home State of Maine that