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## The Moral Obligation to Lose The War

By Robert Shetterly

**05/12/07 "Common Dreams"** -- -- Every act has moral and immoral potential. The girl scout who helps an unsteady old man across the street could also have pushed him aside. The aftermath of each action engenders a new range of moral possibilities. Having pushed him aside, she might then regret her act and return to help him. Even when we've made bad choices, acted out of indifference or greed rather than compassion and generosity, another choice awaits us: how to compound or rectify the immoral act, stay the course or imagine how to salvage some measure of moral standing. Since even a racist like George Wallace can have a Road to Damascus experience, anything is possible.

The immense immorality of the choice to attack Iraq, and base that choice in lies, propaganda, and fear is hardly news now. But the fact that, above all else, it was a moral choice means that another moral choice is possible. And only one choice would atone for the original.

This war will not end until the funding is cut off. Anyone who would continue the funding to "support the troops," should also tell you that once you make a moral mistake, keep making it, and that those who pay with their blood for your mistake are grateful for the support. The logic of this position would also maintain that policy is made by soldiers and officers, not by the people, the Congress and the President.

None of the offered plans now before us to de-escalate the war disavow what we all know to be its original goals — control of Iraq's oil and the building of large, permanent US military bases in Iraq. Nor do any of these bills address the central issue of accountability, the fact that this war is a war crime, a crime against our democracy, our Constitution, the Iraqi people, international law, and our own soldiers. Without accountability, our democracy is meaningless. Without moral action, our claim to integrity and respect are meaningless.

Our obligation as citizens is not to play political games with the Democrats or Republicans to help them position themselves for the next election. Our obligation is to demand that the laws and ideals of this country be upheld. The problem with the Iraq War is not that we are losing it and that we need a better strategy. The problem is that we have no moral right to win it. As bad as the colossal mismanagement, greed and corruption are, they are not the true issue. Betrayal of the public trust is the issue. Pre-meditated murder is the issue.

It is my deepest belief that the only good that may come from this disgraceful time in our history, will be the honest acknowledgement of how and why the country was misled, followed by punishment for those responsible. Without that justice, we will learn nothing and be easy prey for the next abuse of power.

It is horrible to think that our soldiers have died and been injured in vain. However, if we

demand accountability, demand impeachment, something honest will have been redeemed. All that blood and those blasted bodies of beloved people may form the bulwark against future abuse. In a sense freedom will have been won, democracy will be affirmed, justice will be established — here.

No one can tell you what will happen when the US withdraws the troops. Although, many did predict the chaos of insurgency and sectarianism that resulted from the attack. But whatever happens after our withdrawal, it will be made easier if we involve international peacekeepers, remove our bases, forego any claim to the oil, and pay reparations. The war is a moral and legal catastrophe and will continue to be. But since we precipitated it, we can't pretend also to want to protect the Iraqis from it. We can't. We're the cause of it.

This administration has acted from a position that denigrates human rights, legal rights, moral rights, the rights of decency, inalienable rights, privacy rights, civil rights, women's rights, environmental rights, worker's rights, and children's rights. The only right they have respected is the right of entitlement. Their own. Our only hope is to demand our rights, our rights as citizens, our rights to our ideals, our rights to a sense of morality.

The destruction of a small village in Vietnam was once explained away by our military as a village that had to be destroyed in order to save it. That perversity became symbolic of the entire war. Accurately. The War on Iraq should now be described as a war that must be lost in order to save America. That is our moral obligation.

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