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For Congress
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**Vote Republican
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Question: What should we do about the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan?

Answer: We should Win Them, and then Leave.

Here's How: We should do it just like we did in Germany, Japan, and South Korea. For some of us here in District 2 those wars are still a part of living memory. Those who do remember will tell you that these victories didn't have as much to do with the landings on D-Day or at Incheon as they did with the Peace we imposed after the shooting stopped. You could argue that it took America fifty years to change the cultures of those three former adversaries. By putting in that time and effort, though, we forged three staunch allies and trading partners. That's the model we now have to follow in Iraq and Afghanistan.

I think the war in Afghanistan was an appropriate response to the attacks on 9/11. When we went after the Taliban and routed the Al Qaeda training bases under their protection we were acting in defense of the Republic, and we had a real shot at transforming that country. Notwithstanding regional suspicions and turf battles between warlords, I would argue that Afghanistan is a far more unified country and one that exists today within its traditional borders than is Iraq. Had we been able to concentrate resources on transforming Warlords from the Provinces into Senators and Congressmen in Kabul we might have helped President Karzai and the Afghan people to become a proud and self-sufficient nation a lot faster than it seems to be happening now.

What diverted our attention and our resources in Afghanistan was the invasion of Iraq. There we found glaring religious differences that have made cultural integration virtually impossible so far. Also in Iraq we have run afoul of regional political interests that are ever shifting but still able to finance opposition to our cause with Petro Dollars. Those wider concerns of both our allies and our enemies in the Middle East have prompted passive resistance to us in diplomatic circles and stealth financing of the militias that are actively engaged in combat against our troops.

It's a mess, but it is our mess. In the wise words of former US Secretary of State, Colin Powell, we broke it so we own it.

Do I wish we had never undertaken military action in Iraq? Of course. War should always be the absolute last resort because we should know by now that

wars can be started easily but in some ways they can never be stopped or ended.

Still, like it or not, we are fully engaged in Iraq and so we have to understand that we are there for the duration. Any kind of military withdrawal initiated today would create grave problems of Force Protection as we began by removing support for the combat units on the line. Moreover, we have to understand our involvement in Iraq and the entire Region as being far more complex than just a Military action. The Diplomatic, Economic, and Cultural engagements we have taken on as a result of our invasion are just as critical to the defense of the Republic as any fighting we've done. That's right, folks. If we opt to save the Blood and Treasure we are now spending on our military efforts by simply concluding them, we will find ourselves marginalized and ignored as both an ally and a trading partner by nations far beyond the Middle East.

America's great strength is that it stands for something. If we believe that Capitalist Democracy is the best political structure for governing a population with dignity and respect for all, then we have to do things to make that happen. Sometimes we have to do painful things. I have a daughter that's already done one combat tour with the RI Army Guard. Her husband's now doing his third. This war is Up Close & Personal for me, probably just like it is for you.

So, how do we make things better in the near term? We might be able to save some Defense Dollars and free up some existing Troop Strength by re-thinking force levels in Germany and Japan. We could become much more effective in both Middle Eastern theaters right now if we schooled ourselves more completely in the culture and the language of the people we are fighting for. That, alone, would prevent a number of unnecessarily insulting and degrading actions that our troops take every day, usually without even understanding they are giving offense. Money Saved, Prestige Enhanced. With greater understanding would come closer ties and more thorough partnership. We've seen that happen in the so-called Surge. Suni and Shia alike have decided that living under a Pax Americana is preferable to the chaos of the insurgency, so they have begun to work with Coalition Troops to finger the bad guys and make their own streets safe for commerce and daily living.

And in the longer term? It's the Economy, you intelligent and perceptive people. The radical fundamentalism that is behind the fighting in both Iraq and Afghanistan depends on followers that have no other options for income but to take the militia jobs and hand-outs offered by the warlords and radical mullah's. If we can build a factory we can give the locals a paycheck with no strings attached and get goods and services in return. That's exactly what's happening right now in Iraqi Kurdistan, to the north. There's a building boom, complete with Tourism! In Iraq! Why do you think the Iraqi Kurds showed such restraint during the recent Turkish incursion? They had too much to lose.

Can you connect the dots between Iraqi Kurdistan and Seoul? I can. That's what we will achieve if we persevere.

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