

September 26th, 2006

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# THE AMERICAN THINKER

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## ARTICLES...

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### **That Leaked N.I.E. on Iraq is a Flop**

September 26th, 2006

This weekend someone in Washington leaked to *The New York Times* the key judgment of a recently-completed – and highly classified— National Intelligence Estimate:

“The Iraq war has made the overall terrorism problem worse.”

According to the leakers quoted by *The Times* this NIE, prepared by the high-powered National Intelligence Council under John Negroponte, the Director of National Intelligence, asserts that “Islamic radicalism, rather than being in retreat, has metastasized and spread across the globe.”

Moreover, the leakers claim, the NIE specifically cites “the war in Iraq as a reason for this diffusion of jihad ideology.”

Let’s push beyond the issue of the leak – the President’s continuing willingness to tolerate officials within his administration who commit what amounts to treason is another subject for another day – and focus on the NIE itself. A word of caution before we proceed: the leakers obviously have read the NIE, but they didn’t leak the text itself. So it’s possible that the actual document – entitled *Trends in Global Terrorism: Implications for the United States* – doesn’t quite say what the leakers claim it says.

#### **“The al-Qaeda NIE”**

Still, if the NIE’s judgments are even close to what the leakers are reporting, then there’s a problem with the NIE that says more about the quality of thinking within our intelligence service than it does about the war in Iraq. To understand what this problem is, let’s conduct what scientists call a “thought experiment”:

Let’s imagine that al Qaeda has its own intelligence service, and that this intelligence service also has a National Intelligence Council that produces Estimates for its decision-makers just as ours produces them for President Bush and his advisers. Now let’s imagine two things that are even more improbable: that the CIA got its hands on one of these al Qaeda Intelligence

Estimates, and that *The New York Times* printed it:

*TOP SECRET: From the al Qaeda National Intelligence Council*

*Trends in Global Terrorism: Implications for al Qaeda:*

*In the name of Allah, we judge the war in Iraq to be an unmitigated disaster.*

*Our reasons for this judgment go beyond a simple listing of the obvious pluses and minuses:*

*Obvious Pluses:*

- *We have killed more than 2,000 Americans in Iraq.*
- *The war has ignited a powerful “anti-war” movement in the US, and in the West generally – as we had predicted it would in our 2002 Estimate entitled “The American and European Left Will Work for Us” – that has weakened Bush and may, perhaps, bring the anti-war Democrats to power in Congress in November.*
- *The war has further separated the Great Satan from its European allies.*
- *It has aided our recruitment efforts worldwide.*

*Obvious Minuses:*

- *We have lost our brother Saddam and the invaluable support he gave us during the 1990s.*
- *Despite our continuing and highly successful destabilization campaign – may our martyred brother al-Zarquari now enjoy the pleasures of 72 virgins – Iraqis have voted in free elections, put in place a modern constitution, and begun the revival of a vibrant economy. By doing so they have set an appalling example for all other Arab states that we can never erase.*
- *The American invasion of Iraq “flipped” Libya, and the treasonous pig Qaddafi has surrendered his nuclear weapons to the Great Satan.*
- *The American armed forces – which cannot be defeated on the battlefield by us or by anyone else on earth – are fully deployed throughout the Mideast.*

*Our judgment that the war in Iraq is an unmitigated disaster rests on another logic entirely – one that, praise be to Allah, our allies on the American left fail utterly to grasp. By dragging on for so long, and thus generating so much political controversy, this war has created the opportunity for those among the infidels who truly understand us to find their voice. Today in the American media once-obscure scholars such as Bernard Lewis, James Arlandson, and Andrew*

*Boston are reaching large and growing audiences with their accurate and deeply insightful analyses of Islam. And while it is one thing when the moron Bush stumbles onto the truth and calls us “Islamofascists” – it is quite another when the infidel leader Benedict visits a minor university in Germany, and there gives a scholarly speech about the nature of Islam that echoes across the globe and focuses worldwide attention on the central role of violence in our faith.*

*History teaches that when attacked, the infidel responds slowly – and at first, clumsily. (Consider how many centuries went by before Christianity responded to our conquests in the seventh and eighth centuries with what they are pleased to call the Crusades.) And of all the infidels, none responds more clumsily than the Americans. They are too corrupt – too distracted by their pornography and their shopping – to see clearly or even to think clearly about the threats they face.*

*But history also teaches that, given enough time, the Americans always come to understand the true nature of their enemy. And history teaches that once they do, they win.*

*We judge that a great shift is now under way within the Great Satan. While the “elites” in Washington continue to fight each other rather than us, the masses are becoming more resolute in their opposition to our jihad. Our agents report that throughout the Great Satan, in places like Birmingham, Alabama, and Raleigh, North Carolina, and Naperville, Illinois, and Fargo, North Dakota – and even in the outlying districts of New York itself – ordinary, working Americans are starting to wake up to who we truly are and what we mean to do. The people are moving ahead of their corrupt politicians.*

*For all the mistakes the Americans and their lackeys have made in Iraq – may Allah continue to mislead them – this war has been a disaster because it has triggered the one thing we were most determined to prevent: It has enabled the infidel to understand our true objective – which is, of course, the destruction of Western civilization.*

*We report our final judgment with reluctance, but with a high level of confidence: If we cannot defeat the infidel soon, our opportunity for victory will evaporate.*

## **A Classic Mistake**

Simply put, the problem with the leaked U.S. National Intelligence Estimate is that it’s made the classic mistake of concluding that by defending ourselves, we’ve made our enemies mad and even nastier than they had been. Well, of course our willingness to fight in Iraq “has made the overall terrorism problem worse” – for the moment. That’s what *always* happens when the shooting starts; don’t you think that military morale in Nazi Germany and Japan shot up when the US declared war on both countries? And of course our willingness to fight in Iraq has had the effect of “metastasizing” radical Islam – for the moment. It would have been surprising if this hadn’t happened.

The leaked NIE isn’t a flop because it’s wrong, but rather because it’s incomplete. It looks at just one impact of the war in Iraq – its effect on our enemies’ enthusiasm for our destruction –

but ignores entirely the war's impact on our own thinking and our own willingness to grasp the threat we face. In this sense, it gives the President and his advisers a dangerously false picture of where things are and, more importantly, where they are likely to go.

Since 9-11, we have gotten into the habit of thinking that all intelligence failures are “operational” failures. In fact, the biggest intelligence failures of all are “analytic” failures – and this looks very much like one of them.

*Herbert E. Meyer managed production of the U.S. National Intelligence Estimates during the Reagan Administration, while serving as Vice Chairman of the CIA's National Intelligence Council. His DVD on [The Siege of Western Civilization](#) has become an international best-seller.*

***Herbert E. Meyer***

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