



Written by [Gary Benoit](#) on February 6, 2006

Anti-war Stance Is Right, Not Left

In actuality, there are fundamental differences between the left and us regarding the question of war.

Unlike the left, we do not believe any one man should ever be entrusted with the awesome power of deciding when to go to war. It makes no difference if the president is a Republican or a Democrat, a conservative or a liberal. The Constitution assigns to Congress, not the president, the power “to declare war.” If America needs to go to war, Congress should declare it.



Democrat presidents were wrong when they claimed that the decision to go to war was theirs to make, and President Bush is wrong when he makes the same claim. Mr. Bush’s acknowledgement of last December that “as President, I am responsible for the decision to go into Iraq,” overlooks the fact that this decision was not his to make.

Unlike the left, we recognize that the president’s powers as commander-in-chief are limited, as well they should be. Under our system of government, we have a president entrusted with certain specified powers; we do not have an elected dictator or a king. As Alexander Hamilton explained in *The Federalist Papers* (No. 69), the president’s authority as commander-in-chief amounts “to nothing more than the supreme command and direction of the military and naval forces, as first general and admiral ... while that of the British king extends to the *declaring* of war and to the *raising* and *regulating* of fleets and armies — all which, by the Constitution under consideration, would appertain to the legislature.”

Unlike the left, we do not want to send our troops to war to enforce United Nations Security Council resolutions. Yet this is exactly what President Bush did in the case of Iraq, by his own repeated admissions. For instance, on November 8, 2002, the day the Security Council passed its Resolution 1441 insisting that Iraq eliminate its reputed weapons of mass destruction, Mr. Bush declared: “America will be making only one determination: is Iraq meeting the terms of the Security Council resolution or not?... If Iraq fails to fully comply, the United States and other nations will disarm Saddam Hussein.”

Even though the left supports intervening militarily on behalf of the UN, it opposed Bush’s intervention in Iraq because the Security Council did not pass a new resolution explicitly authorizing a military invasion to enforce Resolution 1441 and other Security Council resolutions. The irony is that the Bush administration, by launching an offensive war against Iraq, actually demonstrated it was more interested in putting teeth behind Security Council resolutions than the Security Council itself was.



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Unlike the left, we believe in putting America first, which means minding our own business, avoiding foreign entanglements, and going to war only when necessary to defend our citizens and country. We should not be the world's policeman. Nor should we spill another drop of American blood to wage the Bush administration's "global democratic revolution."

Using military force to right the wrongs in other countries and cultures dissimilar to our own is sure to backfire, even if the intent is sincere. As John Quincy Adams correctly observed: "America goes not abroad in search of monsters to destroy. She is the well-wisher to the freedom and independence of all. She is the champion and vindicator only of her own.... She well knows that by once enlisting under other banners than her own, were they even the banners of foreign independence, she would involve herself beyond the power of extrication in all the wars of interest and intrigue, of individual avarice, envy and ambition, which assume the colors and usurp the standards of freedom."

Countries that mind their own business are less likely to be attacked than those that intervene in other countries' affairs, particularly when those interventions come to be viewed as unwanted occupations.

Unlike the left, we believe that "to be prepared for war is one of the most effectual means of preserving peace," as George Washington succinctly put it. This means preparedness by our intelligence services as well as the military against terrorist attack or military attack by a foreign power. Countries that are prepared are much less likely to be attacked than countries that are not prepared.

Unlike the left, we believe that in war "there is no substitute for victory," to quote General Douglas MacArthur. Why, therefore, do we want to bring the troops home *now*? Why not *win* and then get out? Well, if winning means eliminating Iraq's reputed weapons of mass destruction, there is no victory to obtain because those weapons do not exist. If it means toppling the Saddam regime, that victory has already been achieved. But if it means propping up the new Iraqi regime until that regime can stand on its own, that "victory" would be no victory at all, since that new regime is fast becoming another Iran, an "axis of evil" nation.

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