



WEDNESDAY, JUNE 29, 2005

Bush: Lame Duck And Lame Commander In Chief

by Michael in New York on [6/29/2005 07:00:00 PM](#)

Why are Bush's numbers falling? Why do the American people grow increasingly concerned about Iraq?

It isn't about people who supported the war but now have their doubts. It isn't about people who never supported the war and have seen their fears realized. It isn't about people who weren't sure about the war and still don't know what they think. It isn't about the people who get confused every time Bush's rationalization for why we invaded Iraq changes.

Ultimately, it's about George Bush.

The American people have lost confidence in George Bush as our Commander in Chief. The American people are reluctant to admit it, but they realize George Bush is a weak military leader.

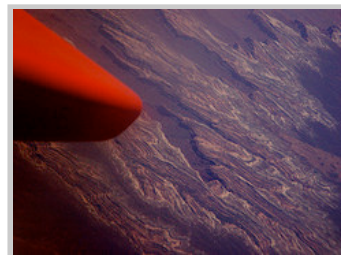
Last night, Bush had a chance to restore our confidence. He failed. Bush gave the same tired speech he's been giving for the past few years. His idea of confronting cold, hard facts is to say that war is "tough" and "hard," as if this were news to the American people. Bush could have acknowledged mistakes, but he is incapable of that. Bush might have given a realistic picture of where we stand in Iraq and offered concrete proposals for making it better, but he only offered blithe happy talk that everything is great and we're going to prevail.

A real military leader faces the facts on the ground. Problems arise -- they always do -- and have to be dealt with. A real leader recognizes problems, attacks them and solves them. But Bush refuses to acknowledge any problems.

For example, the training of Iraqis to take over their own security -- the single most important task in that country -- is proceeding at a punishingly slow rate. Bush threw out the number of 160,000 troops and then casually mentioned they fall into three categories: trained and ready to fight on their own, trained and capable of fighting with our help and not ready to fight at all.

How many of those Iraqis are trained and ready to fight on their own? Half? A third? A tenth? After the speech, we're told the truth. According to Sen. Joe Biden, **only 2,500 are fully trained -- less than two percent.** How many can fight with our help? About 8,900. In total, only about 8 percent can fight in any way. Of that 160,000 number he threw out, almost **150,000 are not trained in any meaningful way.** Bush refuses to say what's going wrong, how he'll speed up the training or explain why he is refusing the offers of Germany and Italy and others to train soldiers in their own countries. But

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