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Admitting the Iraq War Disaster

By Ron Unz
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Despite being total failures, the same people responsible for the Iraq War still dominate the foreign policy of both the Democratic and Republican Parties. As a Republican U.S. Senator I would work to remove them from all national influence.

A decade ago my old friend Bill Odom, the three-star general who ran the National Security Agency for Ronald Reagan, publicly declared that the Iraq War was the “greatest strategic disaster in US history”.

He was exactly correct then, and his judgment seems even more prescient today, as the rise of the Islamic State and other powerful extremist groups has led to an endless cycle of war and terrorism in the Middle East, now directly threatening European and American cities. Furthermore, prominent economists have estimated that the long-term cost of the war to our country may run as high as five trillion dollars.

Most of our recent foreign wars in the Middle East area, under both the Bush and the Obama Administrations, have been expensive and immoral foreign policy disasters. Republicans Ron Paul and Pat Buchanan were right about these issues, as were all the other experts, both liberal and conservative, who have been saying the same thing.

I don't necessarily claim to have the solutions to the ongoing Middle Eastern crisis, but nothing useful can be accomplished until we admit that the Iraq War was a total disaster and absolutely not in our national interest. Today, the exact same individuals who promoted the war still absolutely dominate the foreign policy of the Republican Party and are also very influential within the Democratic Party. Until we completely repudiate them and their dreadful mistakes, we will not be able to move forward.

A few weeks ago in a Republican presidential debate, Donald Trump strongly denounced the Iraq War and the lies of the Bush Administration that promoted it, sending shock waves throughout the Republican Party establishment. Just days later, Trump won an overwhelming landslide victory among the Republicans of ultra-conservative and pro-military South Carolina, demonstrating that "a silent majority" of ordinary Republican voters may understand what most of their leaders do not.

I am very encouraged by these developments and hope that other Republican leaders may find the courage to take the same position.

Ron Unz is a theoretical physicist, software developer, entrepreneur, writer, and publisher. He has been a California political activist for the last three decades. He publishes the online magazine Unz.com. He is currently running for U.S. Senator from California as a Republican.