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By: Andrew Sullivan

"Iran's Victory In Iraq"

Ted Galen Carpenter is [gobsmacked](#) by neocon chutzpah over Iran's influence in Iraq:

For neoconservatives to argue that the withdrawal of the few thousand remaining U.S. troops from Iraq significantly worsens that aspect is either obtuse or disingenuous. If they didn't want Iran to gain significant influence in the region, they should have thought of that danger in 2002 and early 2003, instead of lobbying feverishly for U.S. military intervention against Iraq.

The United States has paid a terrible cost—some \$850 billion and more than 4,400 dead American soldiers—to make Iran the most influential power in Iraq. And the pro-war camp cannot even claim a consolation prize—the emergence of a truly democratic Iraqi government. [Evidence mounts](#) that that the Maliki regime is [becoming ever more authoritarian and corrupt](#). Such abuses as jailing (and even torturing) critics, harassing independent news media outlets and trying to bar Sunni political opponents from running for office have become increasingly common features in the “new Iraq.” And corruption has reached epidemic proportions. In essence, it appears that the United States, at great cost in both treasure and blood, has managed to replace a staunchly anti-Iranian Sunni dictator with a pro-Iranian Shiite quasi-dictator.

But they cannot grapple with this, because it would mean abandoning their ideology and partisanship, hence the absurd attempt to fix the blame for the worst foreign policy decision since Vietnam on the president who opposed it in the first place and is ending it - on his predecessor's schedule - today. What we have learned is that the project was inherently flawed - for reasons conservatives of all people should readily understand. Related coverage [here](#) and [here](#).