

Dear Editor,

Reading Fareed Zakaria's lengthy critique of the Administration's war efforts against Iran, I was reminded that the main stream media refuse, of late, to acknowledge some basic realities which always accompany armed conflict. These include the fact that the enemy always gets a vote in the course of the war. And they also include that setbacks do not automatically mean that the strategy is fundamentally flawed.

The initial and fundamental goal of the war with Iran was to insure that the country's apocalyptic fanatic rulers did not obtain and then use nuclear weapons, a threat which was imminent and intolerable. This goal has largely been achieved. As the Iranian regime demonstrated intransigence and sabotage of agreements and negotiations, the goal of regime change evolved. It has yet to reach fruition, but the economic blockade of Iran's ports shows promise in ultimately wrecking the Iranian regime. More time may be needed to accomplish this, but that too is inevitable in war; events do not always proceed on a rigid schedule.

History is rife with examples of these realities. A famous one is the failure of Operation Market Garden, Bernard Montgomery's plan to end World War 2 in Europe by late 1944. In fact it took until May 1945 for Nazi Germany to surrender, yet no one considers the Allied victory in World War 2 a failure.

Tellingly Zakaria resorts to trivial consequences to damn the war effort. He observes that hotel bookings in Dubai are down, and that the war has cost money. He, like much of the main stream media abjures a cost-benefit analysis; specifically is it worth some hotel vacancies and a small fraction of our GDP to remove an Iranian nuclear sword hanging over all of our heads? Of course it is.

Zakaria is right to observe that the Administration has dithered somewhat in formulating its goals. This is also commonplace in war, for example the Allies during World War 2 debated and delayed the opening of a second front in Europe until D-Day, June 6, 1944. This debate and delay did not alter the ultimately victorious outcome of the war.

A thoughtful critique of the strategy and tactics of the war with Iran is certainly possible. But the trivia and commonplace issues featured in Zakaria's article bespoke a misguided antipathy for the war, not a reasoned analysis. His motivation appeared to be political rather than analytic, and so he revealed himself to be a partisan rather than an analyst. Therefore when readers examine his critique of the war with Iran, they should do so skeptically and consider the source.

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