

What the Hell is an 'Unpopular' War?

Written by Reggie

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'Unpopular' - un'pop•u•lar - Lacking general approval or acceptance.

Aw, gee.. The American people really don't approve of the war. They've totally forgotten about the death and destruction in Afghanistan, but they just can't find it in their hearts to give the war in Iraq a thumbs up. What a shame.

It's so comforting to know that we're in the midst of what the pundits now call an 'unpopular war.' I suppose it's something like an unpopular brand of toothpaste, - not really terrible, but somewhat unappealing and not quite what the public wants. "It's not the war, really," we hear. "It's the way it was fought." It's not the toothpaste either, I imagine, but something about the after taste.

Is it conceivable that that this illegal, immoral war, built on a mountain of lies and deceptions is merely unpopular? Is it possible that the death, the bloodshed, and the hundreds of billions of wasted dollars simply lack the general approval of most Americans?

One has to wonder what would happen in a 'popular war.'

Polls show that most Americans want this long, costly war to be over. But they also want to win. They don't really know what they would win, and from whom they would win anything. They don't really know the bad guys from the good ones, but they seem tired of something. They want the troops home, but they fear being attacked in the night by someone out to get them.

And yet, most Americans are not angry or outraged or horrified by what has happened to this country, to Iraq, to our soldiers, and to the Iraqi people. They have set aside the images of Abu Ghraib, and the rendition of detainees for torture in other countries. They are not indignant at the lies they were told, nor are they screaming for impeachment of those who told the lies. They want bygones to be bygones.

They just find the war 'unpopular' and inconvenient and unacceptable in some sense.

But then again, many Americans also want toothpaste that whitens and brightens and prevents decay as it cleans. Good advertising could sell them on that idea, - and in the coming election, a clever campaign promotion could sell them on the belief that the war against Iraq is really not that bad at all. Being "unpopular" is not the end of the world.

And, just as they don't understand that baking soda is as good a tooth cleaner as any expensive and well marketed brand, the people of this country have no clue as to the reality of the past five years. They are an easy mark for those who want to complete the plans of the neocons, and continue the windfall for the war profiteers.

Very recently, Dick Cheney repeated the lies of the past and supported the reasons for going to war against a sovereign nation that had never, ever threatened us. When told by his interviewer that most people in the US don't really like the Iraq war, he hesitated for only a few seconds before saying, "So?" Kind of says it all, doesn't it?

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Cheney and Bush and Lieberman and McCain know their customers. They know that sound bites sell ideas and repeated sound bites sell wars. And they know that the American people have been deprived of the truth and the information they have the right to know by a corporate media that supported their wars from the start, and cover the realities of the war in nanoseconds.

They know that the milestone that is only hours or days away will be forgotten with the advent of the next sex scandal or political gaffe. Four thousand American young men and women will be given momentary coverage on the news networks and life will go on as usual. They will be lauded as having died to save our freedom, and the inference will remain that they died to avenge the attacks of 9/11.

The deaths and the terrible injuries sustained by our military will help to make the war in Iraq a bit more unpopular for a few days. The deaths and the terrible injuries sustained by the Iraqi people will never make the news at all. Their deaths are neither popular nor unpopular, but simply are the cost of their liberation by George Bush and his neocon warmongers.

I suppose that the war would have risen in popularity had we killed many more Iraqis, bombed their nation to smithereens and declared a Pyrrhic victory on their ashes. I fear that the 'unpopular' aspect of the Iraq war is neither based on its breach of International Law nor its sinister motives.

I fear that Americans are simply tired of being on a treadmill, going nowhere at a terrible price. And so, the war with its chaos and ugliness goes on. Remember that George W. Bush, like his war, is referred to as 'unpopular.' The media never speak of him as incompetent, or criminal or amoral. One has to wonder what it would take for Americans to call the war and the President what they really are.

Surely, the word 'unpopular' hardly does either of them justice.