

## BE OUR GUEST

By RICHARD A. CLARKE

# Time's running out

Counterterror expert says U.S. must take 7 key steps in Iraq – right now

For years after the leaders of Nixon's Pentagon knew that the war in Vietnam could not be won, American troops died there. One of the greatest forces behind that unconscionable bloodletting was national security adviser and then-Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. His once secret memorandum from that time says that any U.S. troop withdrawal from Vietnam would be like "salted peanuts" for the American people — in other words, they would be addictive and the people would want more.

We now learn from Bob Woodward's latest volume that the same Henry Kissinger, 83, is regularly visiting George Bush and advising him on Iraq.

Dr. K has not been to Iraq lately. But the Republican chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee just got back. John Warner (R-Va.) has always been known as an honorable and honest man and was, from the beginning, a stalwart proponent of the Iraq invasion. Yet Warner now says that there have been "steps backwards" in Iraq and the U.S. risks losing control in Baghdad. He concluded that if the high level of violence continues, in a few months the U.S. should look at a "change of course."

And the high level of violence is continuing. More Americans have now been killed in Iraq than were murdered in the World Trade Center attack on 9/11. In five days this week, 24 more American military were killed. As Condi Rice's plane circled Baghdad airport this week, waiting for an insurgent mortar attack to conclude, U.S. military officials were announcing that the level of roadside bombs had hit an all time high.

It was 4½ months ago that the U.S. ambassador in Iraq said the next six months would be critical to the future of our mission.

How many times and in how many ways can it be made clear that time is running out?

More than a generation after Vietnam, we appear to have returned to a moment when the Pentagon and other experts already know that the U.S. cannot achieve the President's goals.

Indeed, the Woodward book also claims that the overall U.S. commander for the Middle East, Gen. John Abazaid, admitted to Rep. John Murtha (D-Pa.) that



Roadside bombings like this one in Baghdad are at an all-time high.

there was little difference in their views on Iraq. Murtha, a Marine combat veteran, has called for immediate initiation of withdrawal from Iraq.

Murtha is right. And those who, in the face of overwhelming

evidence, somehow cling to the idea that all we need are more troops to serve as targets of the insurgency are dead wrong.

So, how do we do it? By taking seven big steps:

■ Declare immediately that the

U.S. seeks no permanent military bases in Iraq.

■ Announce our intention to turn over responsibility to the Iraqi Army and reduce U.S. forces in Iraq beginning in December and concluding with the withdrawal of all major ground combat units within 18 months.

■ Gain agreement from Kuwait to the stationing of U.S. combat units there to create an "over the horizon" capability to deal with terrorists in Iraq.

■ Accelerate training for the Iraqi security forces.

■ Working with regional allies, create an enhanced covert action and paramilitary capability to deal with terrorists in Iraq.

■ Speed up reconstruction assistance and target services and job creation.

■ Convene a regional process to guarantee the stability of Iraq and invite Iran, Syria, Jordan, Turkey and the Gulf countries.

Implementing such a plan would not give Iraq over to Al Qaeda, but it would reduce the U.S. hemorrhaging there. Pass the salted peanuts, please.

Clarke was counterterrorism adviser on the U.S. National Security Council on Sept. 11, 2001, and now writes on [www.goodharborreport.com](http://www.goodharborreport.com).



## ON AFRICA

By STANLEY CROUCH

## Film sheds light on heart of darkness

Since the fall of colonialism, the horrors of African life are so immense and so emotionally devastating that Africa seems the home of a curse upon its people that will not leave any time soon. We are often overwhelmed by the genocide, the disease, the tribal hatreds and the lack of serious resolve that provide little and leads to what seems an apparent indifference.

All of this makes modern African life seem more a nightmare of tribal superstition, greed, illiteracy and dictatorships as barbaric as any we could imagine.

Africans have suffered so profoundly and so consistently since the country's various dictators learned that they could do what they want for however long they want and no one would lift a finger against them.

The contemporary darkness of Africa is quite close to the stereotypes promised by the colonizers who were sure Africa would go to hell in a handbasket as soon as Europeans lost control.

That is why "The Last King of Scotland" is an extremely important film at this time. The movie portrays the life of Idi Amin, who was perhaps the most colorful of the African dictators who came to power through a coup, and who sustained his

presidency with a bloody rule.

By the end of his reign, when he was overthrown and went into exile, more than 300,000 people had been slaughtered and his regime provided further "proof" that Africans were incapable of handling the complexities of running a modern society.

Amin proved nothing of the sort, unless we are to assume that what the Serbs did in Bosnia or the Russians and Chinese did to their own people, or what the North Koreans have done to themselves shows us chapter and verse that Eastern Europeans, Russians, the Chinese and North Koreans are incapable of handling the demands of self-rule and leadership in the modern world. Perhaps they, like all of the dictators in Africa, need the calming hand of colonial rule.

But "The Last King of Scotland," starring Forest Whitaker as Amin, makes no such point. Though Idi Amin was a monster, like so many that the Third World must bear as it evolves so slowly into modernity, Whitaker does not play him as one, instead bringing a humanizing component to the notorious dictator.

Whitaker does the unimaginable. He chooses to make Amin many deceptive

things — gregarious, boyish, charming, superstitious, witty, shrewd and, finally, paranoid.

We are able to understand why the contingent of black American journalists visiting Uganda during Amin's reign were taken in so easily. This huge man who could dance so beautifully to the native drums and sing the native songs, and who loved to exhibit his homespun folk wisdom while pointing out that the Europeans wanted Africans to fail, this Amin could not at all be the monster Europeans claimed he was. They were embarrassingly wrong.

Whitaker shows how Amin could deceive a young doctor from Scotland into becoming his private physician. The doctor does not believe what is actually going on when members of Amin's cabinet begin to disappear. It is suggested that the doctor, seeing Amin as a primitive, could not imagine being fooled by him.

There are moments of absurdity in the film, like a love triangle reminiscent of films in the 1940s. Still, the silly little moments in the film do not succeed in deflating the momentous and unpredictable force of Whitaker's brilliantly conceived performance. In a time as villainous as ours, we always benefit, somehow, when the humanity of ruthless men in power is made clear to us. "The Last King of Scotland" does just that.

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## Close shameful tutoring gap

The federal No Child Left Behind Act promises tutoring to kids in failing schools. Yet as we speak, thousands of eligible students in New York City and around the nation are being denied the help they need.

Figures show that nationally, 81% of eligible kids — more than 1.5 million — did not get the private tutoring for which they qualified in the 2004-05 school year. Here in New York, it's a bit better but still dismal: around half of the students here who are supposed to receive tutoring get it.

This is yet another shameful reminder that there are two educational systems in America — one for the children of the rich and another for those of much more modest means. Well-off parents spend billions of dollars each year on learning centers like Sylvan or Kaplan and private tutors. Poor families either aren't aware that they can get federally funded tutoring, or they can't find quality academic help at an affordable price.

All children deserve the same quality of educational opportunity, on paper and in practice. That goes for the schools we run and the services we outsource.

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