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July 18, 2003

## THE LIMITS OF POWER

By Harry Braun

America is now the undisputed military Superpower in the world. Indeed, it has more military assets than the rest of the world combined, which includes 10 "supercarrier" naval task forces (no other country even has one), as well as an overwhelming array of military air, ground, underwater and space weapons and intelligence assets. In addition, the U.S. armed forces have more advanced computers, robots, and weapons of mass-destruction than the rest of the world combined, including vast stockpiles of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, as well as ongoing research and development programs. In spite of this bewildering array of force, however, it is fascinating to notice how the U.S. forces are now bogged-down in Iraq and Afghanistan, which raises serious questions about the limits of military power.

### The Tar Baby

While the U.S. could vaporize Iraq with nuclear weapons, even the Bush administration is not capable of such actions, especially given that such an attack could make Iraq's oil radioactive, and therefore worthless. As such, the American occupation of Iraq will have to try to manage a country that has been reduced to rubble, with millions of angry Iraqis who have watched their lives, families and homes destroyed by the American invasion. While Saddam was a brutal ruler, the standard of living of the average Iraqi citizen was far better before the American preemptive attack, which the world now knows was based on forged documents and other falsified claims made by the Bush Administration. In order for someone to appreciate what the Iraqi people -- as well as the American military forces -- must now deal with, they would have to experience 115 degree F heat without the electricity needed to pump water and provide air conditioning. When the American forces invaded Iraq, they were the hunters. But in the resulting chaos that has followed, the Americans have now become the hunted in an urban guerrilla war where they are often not in their armored vehicles, which makes them easy targets. As one American soldier expressed it, "we are sitting ducks." Two days later that soldier was killed in an ambush. Even body armor doesn't help when someone comes up behind you and shoots you in the back of the head while your waiting in line for a cold drink.

### Looting & Chaos

While the Bush administration was careful not to target Iraq's Oil Ministry, its vast oil reserves, or the electrical grid that was needed to power the oil pumping stations, it failed to heed the warnings of analysts who predicted that Iraq might crumble into the chaos and looting that followed the invasion, which ultimately did more to devastate the Iraqi infrastructure than the American bombs. The looters not only took the computers, furniture, and bathroom fixtures, but they ripped out the wires from the walls, and removed the bricks from the buildings and sidewalks. As one observer said, they were like army ants that swarmed over everything, and when they were gone, nothing was left. What the looters did not steal, the Iraqis who still support Saddam or who just hate Americans are now blowing-up, including the oil pipelines and electrical transmission lines that traverse across vast areas of Iraq. As the Americans repair the damage by day, the Iraqis sabotage the repairs at night. The American troops are stretched too thin to protect all of these areas, their moral is dropping, and there is no end in sight.

It is only a question of time before the majority of Americans realize that the Bush administration has put the U.S. billions of dollars in debt because of an illegal war that destroyed a nation that never attacked us, and forced our military to deal with an unending quagmire of cultural hatred and death. It gets to look more and more like Vietnam every day. The only question is how much longer the American public will allow such atrocities to continue.