



I have just finished watching Nightline on the Mickey Mouse network, and Terry Moran held a pretty good interview with General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker. What I really want to see, however, is someone, anyone, who will take the high podium, the bully pulpit, and say the truth. I want to hear someone say, "Look, we all know we were hoodwinked into this war, but this is where we are now and we had best figure out a good way out."

The Democrats are not saying this. Neither Hillary Clinton or Barack Obama are willing to own up to the uncomfortable fact that even if we are appalled at how we got into this mess, it is our mess and we owe it to the Iraqis and the world to get out properly.

The Republicans will not own up to it either. Mr. McCain has the distinction, however, of coming the closest to that. His formulation is that he wouldn't have done it this way, but we have to see it through. He has only to pivot slightly (and don't doubt that he can) and he can just as easily claim to have been against this misadventure all along.

What the public is thirsting for is not so much change as honesty. It may seem like change at first blush, but only because this is the most honesty impaired administration of all time (no, not since Nixon — of all time). The change that people really want is for their government to trust them enough to tell them the truth, and any wannabe administration will do themselves a huge favor if they get that process started now.

I prescribe this:

Tell the truth — It was a mistake to start this war

Tell the uncomfortable truth — We own this, and we cannot just walk away

Describe the next step — We need a plan to get out, and we cannot just run away (see [George Packer](#))

Plan for truth and reconciliation — We must learn how this happened and how to prevent it happening again

Realign the region — We cannot get out as long as the region is as frightfully misaligned as it currently is. We must work to achieve true realignment, which means talking to Iran, Syria and (ick) Hessbollah.

I am no Mid-East expert, but I can clearly see that we must do at least this if we are ever to gain respite from the hell that Bush/Cheney has visited upon us and Iraq. I only hope that one of our candidates will see this as well. Posturing is one thing, but leadership calls for more than postures, it calls for vision, action and sometimes a little discomfort.

Bring on the discomfort. Now.