

# Eye On Nation

## Lion's Eye Interview Series - Part II :

On February 22, 2007 Distinguished Political Science Professor Stephen Cimbala sat down with Lion's Eye Staff Writer John Miller

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**Miller: Yesterday (Feb 21) the Prime Minister of Great Britain, Tony Blair, announced a phased withdrawal of UK forces from Iraq. What is your take on that?**

Cimbala: I believe he and other European members of the coalition are beginning to get cold feet. The British have a history of experience running empires all over the world. They understand that it's not possible to do everything with hard knock. They didn't try to contest the feud between the Sunnis and Shia because it would have meant a bloodbath. I think that despite all the rhetoric in Washington that the only practical option is the gradual stand down of outside forces and the stand up of Iraqi forces. One can argue about time but it is inevitable.

**Miller: Do you believe the US will make a similar gesture in the near future?**

Cimbala: I think Congress is working on several proposals that would force the Bush Administration's hand on this issue, one of them being the reexamination of the resolution which gave support for the war. Some Democrats feel that cutting off the funding all together is the only way to stop Bush. If you throw in the 2008 Presidential election, I think it is safe to say that there will be fewer US troops in Iraq in the summer of next year. That's just a guess though.

**Miller: Why does the filibuster still exist in our system of government?**

Cimbala: It is to prevent majorities from getting caught up in ideas that are superficially appealing at the moment but then after considerable thought to be misguided. The filibuster gives the minority a chance to stop a bad locomotive from running off the track. I think some Democrats regret that they didn't filibuster the original war authorization resolution. The filibuster is there so there is not a rush to judgment...but it can be abused.

**Miller: The President's State of the**

**Union Address mentioned a lot of domestic issues like healthcare, social security and education. What do you think the President will focus on the most?**

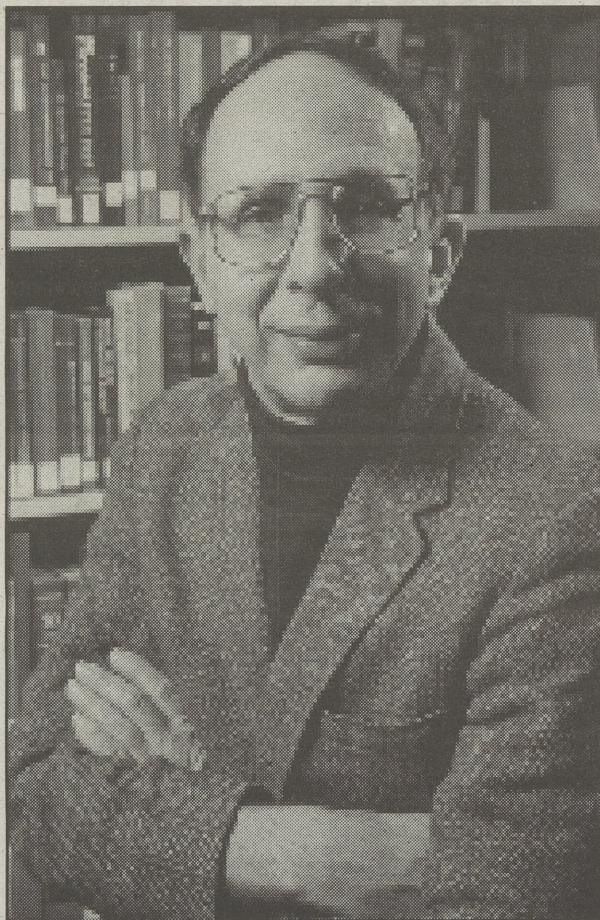
Cimbala: I don't know. It depends all upon money. To my knowledge Mr. Bush has not vetoed any spending bills. The result of that is a huge deficit. So I don't know where he could get the money for any new initiatives. I don't see much happening in the way of domestic policy, not in terms of social security reform for example.

**Miller: Why are so many candidates declaring so early 22 months before the next election?**

Cimbala: You have to raise so much money. Each of these candidates has to become a super bowl level organizer of TV coverage. It really takes an A-team. Hillary Clinton has one and I think Obama is getting one as well as Richardson and Giuliani. All it takes is one wrong word captured on a cell phone to de-rail a campaign. We are a year away from the February primaries and already the Clinton and Obama camps are slugging each other. Its all about who's going to get Hollywood's support.

**Miller: Tom Hanks, Barbara Streisand, and George Clooney have already made contributions to Obama's campaign as well as Steven Spielberg.**

Cimbala: Really?



Photograph submitted by Professor Cimbala by an unknown photographer

**"...he (Bush) will be remembered as the Iraq quagmire President and not the 9/11 President."**

nomination the Republicans will turn all their fire against him going through his life like a fine teeth comb. You can ride on charisma for a while but eventually you have to get into debates and show your stuff.

**Miller: Can John McCain survive his support for the troop surge?**

Cimbala: If there's a big debacle in Iraq that follows the surge than McCain takes a hit. And where will McCain stand if the surge doesn't work? What's his remedy? Escalation? What will he do about Iran? North Korea? He needs to be pressed on those issues which is something Giuliani will do in the debates.

**Miller: Does Rudy Giuliani have anything to run on besides his 9/11 fame?**

Cimbala: I think that's his main ticket. However he's got some real problems with the evangelical conservative base and of course his own personal history. On the other hand another 9/11 could drastically change things.

**Miller: Based on what we've seen so far who might be coming out in front on Super Tuesday next year?**

Cimbala: Due to the amount of primaries next February it's going to be the ones with the best organization and the most money and that is John McCain and Hillary Clinton unless one of them does something dumb before then. Money will be Obama's and Giuliani's problem although I can't see Giuliani tracking with evangelicals. I think McCain is desperate for the Republican nomination because of the way Karl Rove and company worked him over last time. But then again Bill Clinton was at the bottom in December 1991 so anything can happen. What about a Clinton/Obama ticket? Wouldn't that be interesting? It's not impossible.

**Miller: How would you grade George W. Bush's presidency after 6 years?**

Cimbala: Conservatives have to be disappointed and liberals of course have nothing positive to say about Bush. Instead of pursuing the war on terror and capturing or killing Osama Bin Laden Bush got caught up in this war in Iraq. Thomas Fisk wrote a great book called "Fiasco" which is exactly what it is. He has one last chance to get Iraq right. If he doesn't he will be remembered as the Iraq quagmire President and not the 9/11 President.

**Professor Cimbala teaches the following classes:**

PL SC 03 (Fall)  
PL SC 14  
PL SC 137  
PL SC 496