

**THE BLOG**

Would Rupert Murdoch Have Let the WSJ Lead With This?

By Marty Kaplan

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The lead story in Thursday's *Wall Street Journal* is reporter Greg Jaffe's 3000-word obituary for the war in Iraq.

Titled "At Lonely Iraq Outpost, GIs Stay as Hope Fades: U.S. Soldiers Persevere Despite Snipers, Ambush; Fighting for Each Other," the story is a portrait of 50 American troops hunkered down in Tarmiyah, a city of 30,000 Sunnis 30 miles north of Baghdad. (The article is available ~~here behind a subscription wall, but if you go here, after enduring a Microsoft ad, you can watch a three-minute video narrated by Jaffe that conveys the heartbreaking gist of his piece.~~)

The news in the Jaffe article will come as new to no one except Bush, Cheney and the dead-enders who write for and relish the *Wall Street Journal's* editorial and opinion pages — people like Harvard professor Harvey Mansfield, whose *WSJ* ode to the imperial presidency, an attack on the rule of law, marks a new low in neocon apologetics.

But the *Journal's* news division employs some of the best reporters in the business. I wonder how the paper's Republican readers — two-thirds of whom say they support remaining in Iraq, if they match the national numbers — will react to reading that the "surge strategy"...does little more than chase insurgents from one part of the country to another," that American troops are battling on not because they believe in Bush's futile delusion of "victory," but because they have bonded with one another, and they are fighting to save the lives of their comrades-in-arms.

The only mission Bush has any chance to accomplish is handing the Iraq war to his successor. Every single life lost in pursuit of this mission — like the ones lost by Demon Company, the U.S. soldiers of the Army's First Cavalry Division stationed in the hellhole of Tarmiyah — is a life sacrificed not to protect America from terrorists, but to protect George W. Bush and Dick Cheney from accountability.

Rupert Murdoch is notorious for his hands-on involvement with his media properties, and for putting his thumb on the right side of the scales. If he owned Dow Jones, how likely is it that a piece like Greg Jaffe's would get the kind of play it gets today, or that it would be assigned in the first place?

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