

## Between Iraq and a hard spot

*by The Peoria (Ill.) Journal Star*

Only in the parallel universe of the Bush administration is down considered up.

Indeed, in response to British Prime Minister Tony Blair's announcement that America's primary ally will be withdrawing 1,600 more troops from Iraq - to 5,500, down from 40,000 at the start of the conflict - U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice called it a positive sign. "The British have done what is really the plan for the country as a whole, which is to transfer security responsibility to the Iraqis as the situation permits." Added Vice President Dick Cheney: "I look at it and see ... an affirmation that there are parts of Iraq where things are going pretty well."

Yes, and that's why the president has proposed not a drawback but a surge of 21,500 more U.S. troops, because things are going so well. And Iraq had stockpiles of weapons capable of producing "a mushroom cloud" on the U.S. horizon. And Saddam Hussein had a lot to do with 9/11. And American GIs are considered "liberators" in Baghdad. And Iraqi oil is paying for this war. And Washington, D.C., is on America's West Coast. In the history of political spin, precious few White Houses have taken the liberties this one does. Thank your lucky stars for that.

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