

The War Czar:

Well folks, we finally have what we need to bring the war in Iraq to a swift and successful conclusion. No, it's not Bills from Congress or Presidential Proclamations or more troops or less troops. The long sought solution is, that's right, a Czar. The idea worked so well in Russia that we thought we'd give it a try. Just kidding. Our Czar will be entirely different.

For one thing ours will be utterly powerless. While that will make the job pointless and frustrating, at least he won't be executed with his family behind the Summer Palace. Far from ruling the lives of millions, our Czar will have practically no influence whatsoever. A much safer job than poor Nicholas II had.

For another thing our Czar is a bright, efficient, experienced administrator who understands the nuts and bolts of complicated military organizations. Poor Nicky was a borderline idiot who got the job because the Romanoffs intermarried with the Royal families of England and Germany. He had the bad fortune to be the next male in line. It didn't matter that tying his shoes was a daily challenge.

So, my friend Mitzi and I were talking about what it might take to convince a decorated General to step into a job like this. Several other top military people had already declined the honor. Mitzi is from Austin, Texas. She survived the Governorship of George W. Bush and has special insight into what he might offer his Czar to be.

First, our Czar will get a really great hat to wear. Maybe something red with a tassel or a feather. It'll stand out to show that he's special, not just another body thrown into a losing situation. But it won't be crazy-showy like Napoleon's hat or Horatio Hornblower's. Mitzi told me about Governor Bush's cowboy hat. It was special made by Stetson. Up until that time they had never made such a small size for grown-ups.

Second, he'll get a shiny, very fancy sword. It'll be silver with gilt filigree and red velour straps. Tiffany and Company in Washington, DC will engrave it. Nobody knows for sure what the engraving will read. Some say it will be a personal message from the President like, "Sorry, I couldn't find anyone else." Others think it will be a simple, inspirational phrase with special meaning to anyone in the service like, "Numquam Voluntaris" (never volunteer). But Mitzi's money, and she's usually right about this stuff, is on "Mission Accomplished."

The next perk is probably too obvious to mention. A horse. A white horse. An Arabian white horse. First of all, good guys ride white horses. The Lone Ranger did. Hoppy did. It's just right. Additionally Arabians are a noble breed and beautiful. Besides don't you think an Arabian will play well in Iraq and Afghanistan? There is one problem with the horse deal. Size. The Czar will be jetting around the globe from hot spot to green zone and back again. He'll be on airplanes and hydroplanes and Humvees and Apaches. No room for a noble steed there. What he needs is a miniature horse! You know, one of those cute, pint sized purebreds. Just put it in its carry kennel, toss it on the Hummer and go. A lap horse.

Finally, the President will offer the Czar the best wishes and support of all Americans. It is absolutely critical to have these behind you. That way, when you are tossed overboard into the worst American mistake of the century, you will have positive vibes behind you all the way down the drain. We do as much for all our people serving there. It's the least we can do.

Well, I can't say that these benefits would get you or me to take the job. It still seems like an uphill climb on a muddy slope with all your worst nightmares waiting at the bottom for you. Smiling.

Aside from that, our recent history with Czars is not exactly glorious. Remember William Bennet? He went from Drug Czar to Radio Host. It would certainly give one pause if the best you could hope for following the Czar job were coming home to compete with Stern and Limbaugh.

So, the position is desperate and success unlikely. The rewards are meager and the personal price is great. If you already know that the reason the job exists is so that others can wash their hands of the problem, why take the leap? Why do we need a War Czar at all?

Because we have absolutely no clue as to how to get out of this mess we so foolishly created.