

Where's the Outrage?
November 2005*

In today's political atmosphere it is nearly impossible to find the truth, especially about what has happened and is happening in Iraq. Perhaps no one knows the truth about this mess we're in; perhaps no one wants to hear the truth. But legislators from the right and the left have been furiously flinging allegations at each other. In the middle, somewhere—maybe—we'll find out at least some of the truths about what our government is up to.

The left has accused the Bush administration of lying about weapons of mass destruction and using misinformation about these weapons as the pivotal factor influencing its decision to invade Iraq. Remember how Vice President Cheney told the nation, while addressing Veterans of the Korean War in August of 2002, that “there is no doubt that Saddam Hussein now has weapons of mass destruction. There is no doubt that he is amassing them to use against our friends, against our allies, and against us. And there is no doubt that his aggressive regional ambitions will lead him into future confrontations with his neighbors -- confrontations that will involve both the weapons he has today, and the ones he will continue to develop with his oil wealth.” A few months later, in January of 2003, Cheney repeated his claim about WMD: “Saddam Hussein's pursuit of weapons of mass destruction poses a grave danger -- not only to his neighbors, but also to the United States. His regime aids and protects terrorists, including members of al Qaeda. He could decide secretly to provide weapons of mass destruction to terrorists for their use against us. And as the President said on Tuesday night, it would take just

one vial, one canister, one crate to bring a day of horror to our nation unlike any we have ever known.”

The Bush administration has fired back, claiming the left has lost its resolve and is trying to revise history. Webster tells us that making untrue statements with the intent to deceive or to create a false or misleading impression is called *lying*. So is it fair to say that prior to the invasion of Iraq, the Bush administration lied to the American people. Vice President Cheney said, “there is no doubt...” that phrase just rings in my head. When a vice president says there is no doubt this should be a proven fact. There is no doubt the world is round. The vice president was talking about intelligence. There are always doubts about intelligence. This was misleading.

There are many other statements that have been said by President Bush and, at the time, national security adviser, Condoleezza Rice, which all went together to paint a picture of Saddam Hussein chatting with Osama bin Laden about blowing up the United States. I think it is clear that the administration oversold and overstated their case. They cherry picked the intelligence in order to convince Americans to support the war. Did they lie? I think that they probably did but pre-War issues are difficult to re-live. Most of us were not thinking clearly during that time. We, as a nation, were scared. We were mad. We wanted revenge. We as thoughtful Americans need to move on pass the Pre-War intelligence issue.

In my opinion, the administration is extremely vulnerable on the topic of how the war was conducted. It is now clear that Afghanistan is sliding back into anarchy. We did not destroy the Taliban. We did not capture or kill *any* of the top lieutenants in the Taliban. Mohamed Omar, leader of the Taliban, and Osama bin Laden are still on the loose. Not capturing them in

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Kabul was a failure of planning and leadership. Allowing them to escape from the Tora Bora Mountains was incompetence. (Rummy, Donald Rumsfeld, Secretary of Defense, should be fired. If you or I failed this badly not once but twice, on a major project at work we would have been fired.)

Let's just for a minute assume that for the sake of argument Saddam had tons of sarin and VX gas. To complete this assumption let us add both biological and nuclear weapons. Some of our troops upon entering Iraq were not equipped with appropriate gear for a chemical or biological attack. Why not? Suppose we found a stockpile of VX gas or biological weapons. How would we secure such an area? We proved that we were unable to secure caches of conventional weapons and ammunition that we found. As soon as we entered the country we should have raced to lock down the country as tight as a drum. Therefore no weapons of mass destruction could leave the country and none could be brought in. Not only was this not done it was not even attempted. We did not close the borders. Why?

Our own State Department clearly stated in a prewar report that after an initial invasion, nontraditional warfare would break out. What plans were made to combat roadside bombs? Because we rolled into Baghdad in Humvees that were not armored, I can only assume that we made no preparations for this contingency. Once it became clear that the main effective weapon of the insurgents would be roadside bombs why weren't the Humvees fitted for armor immediately? Incompetence? Arrogance? Why wasn't GM, Ford and Chrysler or better yet, US Steel, Nucor and AK Steel, asked by President Bush to produce as much armor as they could to arm all the Humvees in Iraq? Where was the National commitment?

This is where the administration is vulnerable. There was not one poor decision but

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instead there were hundreds. Hundreds of decisions which were not in the best interests of our troops, our country or the Iraqi people. This is where the true buffoonery (do you like this word? As far as I know it is not a real word but it truly describes certain situations like this.) of this administration is seen. (By the way, where is the congressional oversight?)

Recent news:

- Democrats won 2 governorships and defeated all of the California initiatives. Republicans state that these elections do not matter. Maybe. Look at the recent national news. Harriet Miers is out. Gas prices are killing Americans. Scooter Libby, assistant to the Vice President, is in trouble. Senate Majority leader Bill Frist is being investigated for insider trading. Finally, the president went to Virginia at the last minute to rescue the gubernatorial campaign of Jerry Kilgore. It didn't work in a state that Bush won by 9 points in 2004. There is even some discussion that the President's visit helped sink Kilgore. Republicans can try and say that this election was local and meant nothing but we know better.
- Da' Terminator, Arnold, was using the same finesse shown by some of his movie characters. He tried to force the legislators to drink from the Republican cup of budget cuts. The legislature said, "No." So Arnold took his message to the people. Four ballot initiatives. Teachers would have to work longer for tenure. Unions would have to spend less on political advertising. If I'm not mistaken this is the first major victory for labor in over 25 years. Now, Au-Nold will have to crawl back to the legislature and negotiate like a "girlie man." Real men don't negotiate. Not in Arnold's world.
- We have secret prisons to hold terrorists in countries around the world? I thought we

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were the good guys. This sounds like something Snidely Whiplash (cartoon villain) would do. If we don't torture like our President continues saying then why do we need these secret prisons?