

# Libby Indictment May Open Door to Broader Iraq War Deceptions

By Stephen Zunes | November 14, 2005

The details revealed thus far from the investigation that led to the five-count indictment against I. Lewis “Scooter” Libby seem to indicate that the efforts to expose the identity of undercover CIA operative Valerie Plame Wilson went far beyond the chief assistant to the assistant chief. Though no other White House officials were formally indicted, the investigation appears to implicate Vice President Richard Cheney and Karl Rove, President George W. Bush’s top political adviser, in the conspiracy. More importantly, the probe underscores the extent of administration efforts to silence those who questioned its argument that Iraq constituted a serious threat to the national security of the United States. Even if no other White House officials ever have to face justice as a result of this investigation, it opens one of the best opportunities the American public may have to press the issue of how the Bush administration led us into war.

Spurred by the Libby indictment, the Downing Street memo, and related British documents leaked earlier this year, some mainstream pundits and Democratic Party lawmakers are finally raising the possibility that the Bush administration was determined to go to war regardless of any strategic or legal justification and that White House officials deliberately exaggerated the threats posed by Saddam Hussein’s Iraq in order to gain congressional and popular support to invade that oil-rich country. Democratic Senate leader Harry Reid stated for the first time on October 28, the day of the indictment, that the charges raise questions about “misconduct at the White House” in the period leading up to the U.S. invasion of Iraq that must be addressed by President Bush, including “how the Bush White House manufactured and manipulated intelligence in order to bolster its case for the war in Iraq and to discredit anyone who dared to challenge the president.”<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, even prior to the return of United Nations inspectors in December 2002 and the U.S. invasion of Iraq four months later, it is hard to understand how anyone could have taken seriously the administration’s claims that Iraq was somehow a grave national security threat to the United States. And, despite assertions by administration apologists that “everybody” thought Saddam Hussein possessed chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and an advanced nuclear program immediately prior to the March 2003

invasion, the record shows that such claims were strongly contested, even within the U.S. government.

## Pre-invasion Skepticism

In the months leading up to the U.S. invasion of Iraq, there were many published reports challenging Bush administration claims regarding Iraq’s WMD capabilities. Reputable journals like *Arms Control Today*, the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, *Middle East Policy*, and others published articles systematically debunking accusations that Iraq had somehow been able to preserve or reconstitute its chemical weapons arsenal, had developed deployable biological weapons, or had restarted its nuclear program. Among the disarmament experts challenging the administration was Scott Ritter, an American who had headed the UN Special Commission on Iraq (UNSCOM) division that looked for hidden WMD facilities in Iraq. Through articles, interviews in the broadcast media, and Capitol Hill appearances, Ritter joined scores of disarmament scholars and analysts in making a compelling and—in hindsight—accurate case that Iraq had been qualitatively disarmed quite a few years earlier. Think tanks such as the Fourth Freedom Foundation and the Institute for Policy Studies also published a series of reports challenging the administration’s claims.

And there were plenty of skeptics from within the U.S. government. For example, the State Department’s

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intelligence bureau noted how the National Intelligence Estimate—so widely cited by war supporters of both parties—did not add up to “a compelling case” that Iraq had “an integrated and comprehensive approach to acquire nuclear weapons.”<sup>2</sup> Even the pro-war *New Republic* observed that CIA reports in early 2002 demonstrated that “U.S. intelligence showed precious little evidence to indicate a resumption of Iraq’s nuclear program.”<sup>3</sup> A story circulated nationally by the Knight-Ridder wire service just before the congressional vote authorizing the invasion noted that “U.S. intelligence and military experts dispute the administration’s suggestions that Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction pose an imminent threat to the United States” and that intelligence analysts in the CIA were accusing the administration of pressuring the agency to highlight information that would appear to support administration policy and to suppress contrary information.<sup>4</sup>

Late in the Clinton administration, the *Washington Post* reported U.S. officials as saying there was absolutely no evidence that Iraq had resumed its chemical and biological weapons programs<sup>5</sup> and there was no reason to believe that this assessment had changed. Just five weeks before the congressional vote authorizing the invasion of Iraq, another nationally syndicated Knight-Ridder story revealed that there was “no new intelligence that indicates significant advances in their nuclear, biological, or chemical weapons programs.” The article went on to note, “Senior U.S. officials with access to top-secret intelligence on Iraq say they have detected no alarming increase in the threat that Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein poses to American security.”<sup>6</sup>

In an August 2002 report published for *Foreign Policy in Focus*, I argued that “there is no firm proof that Iraq is developing weapons of mass destruction.”<sup>7</sup> In an article in *Tikkun* just before the outbreak of the war, I discounted claims that pro-Israeli interests were pushing the United States to invade by noting, “there are reasons to believe that Iraq may not have any more capability to attack Tel Aviv than it does to attack Washington.”<sup>8</sup> In the cover story I wrote for the September 30, 2002 issue of *The Nation* magazine, I reminded readers that the International Atomic Energy Agency had declared in 1998 that, after exhaustive inspections and oversight, it had found nothing to suggest that Iraq still had a nuclear program. I also observed how inspectors from UNSCOM had

estimated that at least 95% of Iraq’s chemical weapons program had been similarly accounted for and destroyed.<sup>9</sup> The remaining 5%, I argued, could have already been destroyed, but the Iraqis did not maintain adequate records.

I furthermore noted that the shelf life for the weaponized lethality of any purported Iraqi chemical and biological agents had long since expired. And I pointed out that Saddam Hussein was able to develop his earlier WMD programs only through the import of technology and raw materials from advanced industrialized countries, a scenario no longer possible due to the UN embargo in effect since 1990.

In the aftermath of the 1991 Gulf War and the subsequent inspections regime, virtually any aggressive military potential by Iraq was destroyed. Before UNSCOM was withdrawn, its agents reportedly oversaw the destruction of 38,000 chemical weapons, 480,000 liters of live chemical-weapons agents, 48 missiles, six missile launchers, 30 missile warheads modified to carry chemical or biological agents, and hundreds of pieces of related equipment capable of producing chemical weapons. In late 1997, UNSCOM head Richard Butler reported that his agency had made “significant progress” in tracking Iraq’s chemical weapons program and that 817 of the 819 Soviet-supplied long-range missiles had been accounted for. There were believed to be a couple of dozen Iraqi-made ballistic missiles unaccounted for, but these were of questionable caliber. There was no evidence that Iraq’s Scud missiles had even survived the Gulf War, nor did Iraq seem to have any more rocket launchers or engines.<sup>10</sup> UNSCOM also reported no evidence that Iraq had been concealing prohibited weapons subsequent to October 1995.<sup>11</sup> Even if Iraq had been able to engage in the mass production and deployment of nuclear or chemical weaponry, these weapons would almost certainly have been detected by satellite and overflight reconnaissance and destroyed in air strikes.

“Though the development of potential biological weapons would have been much easier to conceal, there was no evidence to suggest that Iraq had the ability to disperse their alleged biological agents successfully in a manner that could harm troops or a civilian population, given the rather complicated technology required. For example, a vial of biological weapons on the tip of a missile would almost certainly be destroyed on

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impact or dispersed harmlessly. Israeli military analyst Meir Stieglitz, writing in the Israeli newspaper *Yediot Ahrontot*, noted: “There is no such thing as a long-range Iraqi missile with an effective biological warhead. No one has found an Iraqi biological warhead. The chances of Iraq having succeeded in developing operative warheads without tests are zero.”<sup>12</sup>

Frightening scenarios regarding mass fatalities from a small amount of anthrax assumed that Baghdad possessed the highly sophisticated means of distributing such toxins by missile or aircraft. To become a lethal weapon, highly concentrated amounts of anthrax spores must be inhaled and then left untreated by antibiotics until the infection is too far advanced. The most realistic means of anthrax dispersal would be from an aircraft. For the attack to be successful, the winds would have to be just right, no rain could fall, the spray nozzles could not clog, the target population could not be vaccinated, and everyone would need to linger around the area chosen for the attack. Given this unlikely scenario, one can understand why in autumn 2001 unknown terrorists chose instead to send spores through the mail to indoor destinations in the eastern United States. This was found to be a relatively efficient means of distribution, even though it resulted in only a handful of deaths.

It is hard to imagine that an Iraqi aircraft, presumably some kind of drone, could somehow penetrate the air space of neighboring countries, much less far-off Israel, without being shot down. Most of Iraq’s neighbors have sophisticated anti-aircraft capability, and Israel has the most sophisticated regional missile defense system in the world. As one British scientist put it: “To say they have found enough weapons to kill the world several times over is equivalent to the statement that a man who produces a million sperm a day can thus produce a million babies a day. The problem in both cases is one of delivery systems.”<sup>13</sup>

In short, in the months and years leading up to the invasion, it should have been apparent that all of Iraq’s nuclear weapons-related material and nearly all of its chemical weapons were accounted for and destroyed; virtually all systems capable of delivering WMDs were also accounted for and destroyed; there were no apparent means by which key components for WMDs could have been produced domestically; and, a strict embargo on military hardware, raw materials, and WMD

technology had been in place for more than a dozen years. No truly objective observer, therefore, could have come to any other conclusion than that it was highly unlikely that Iraq still had any offensive WMD capability and that it was quite possible that Iraq may have indeed completely rid itself of its proscribed weaponry, delivery systems, and weapons production facilities.

It also became apparent early on that at least some of the evidence of Iraqi WMDs offered by the Bush administration was highly questionable and was contradicted by independent sources. Furthermore, given that the United States supported Saddam Hussein’s government in the 1980s when it really did have chemical weapons, an advanced biological and nuclear weapons program, and hundreds of long-range missiles and other sophisticated delivery systems, one finds it hard to imagine how Iraq could be a threat after these dangerous weapons had been destroyed or otherwise rendered harmless. Indeed, virtually every U.S. military intervention in the last half century—from the alleged “unprovoked attacks” on U.S. vessels in the Gulf of Tonkin to the supposed “endangered American medical students” in Grenada to the nonexistent “chemical weapons factory controlled by Osama bin Laden” in Sudan—has been based upon purported evidence presented by various administrations that later proved to be false.

As a result, one would have thought that more people in Congress and the media would have approached the question of Iraq’s WMDs as would a public defender of an admittedly disreputable client in the face an overzealous prosecutor with a history of fudging the facts: look skeptically at the government’s case for holes in the evidence and unsubstantiated conclusions. They were not hard to find.

### Killing the Messengers

The outing of Valerie Plame Wilson’s CIA affiliation was apparently a means of punishing Ambassador Joseph Wilson for going public with his charges that the Bush administration had misled the public with its claims regarding Iraq’s WMD programs. The leak served as a warning to any who would dare challenge administration efforts to frighten the American public into accepting an illegal and unnecessary war.

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As first reported by the *Washington Post*, Scooter Libby and Vice President Dick Cheney made frequent trips to CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia, to pressure analysts to come up with assessments that would “fit with the Bush administration’s policy objectives.”<sup>14</sup> CIA analysts who resisted such manipulation “were beaten down defending their assessments.”<sup>15</sup>

Indeed, virtually all of us who refused to buy into the bipartisan hysteria regarding the phony “Iraqi threat” were subjected to systematic efforts to undermine our credibility. *New Republic* publisher Martin Peretz accused me of “supporting Saddam Hussein,” Sean Hannity of Fox News suggested that my research was funded by terrorists, and the *National Review Online* falsely accused me of anti-Semitic statements that I never made. Scott Ritter, a Marine veteran and registered Republican, was labeled a traitor, and administration supporters started spreading rumors that he was a pedophile. When International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director Mohammed el Baradei reiterated that there was no evidence of Iraq attempting to restart its nuclear program, Cheney insisted that “Mr. El Baradei is frankly wrong.” The vice president then falsely claimed that the IAEA had “consistently underestimated or missed what it was that Saddam Hussein was doing”<sup>16</sup> and insisted that there was no validity to the IAEA’s assessments, despite their more than 1000 inspections—mostly without warning—in Iraq since the early 1990s. Later, the Bush administration had El Baradei’s phone wiretapped in an unsuccessful effort to find information to discredit him.<sup>17</sup>

When administration skeptics weren’t being attacked, we were being ignored. In September 2002, a month before the vote to authorize the invasion, I contacted the chief foreign policy aide to one of my senators, Democrat Barbara Boxer of California, to let him know of my interest in appearing before an upcoming hearing on Capitol Hill regarding the alleged threat that Iraq posed to the United States. He acknowledged that he and other staffers on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee were familiar with my writing on the topic and that I would be a credible witness. He passed on my request to a staff member of the committee’s ranking Democrat, Senator Joseph Biden of Delaware. I was never invited, however. Nor was Scott Ritter, Phyllis Bennis of the Institute for Policy Studies, or anyone else who expressed skepticism regarding the

administration’s WMD claims. The bipartisan Senate committee only allowed those who were willing to come forward with an exaggerated view of Iraq’s military potential to testify.

The basis of the constitutional framework of checks and balances between the three branches of government rests in part upon the belief that Congress does not allow the executive branch to remain unquestioned on issues of national importance. Senator Biden, however, was apparently determined to give the Bush administration a free ride. In the words of Aldous Huxley, “The survival of democracy depends on the ability of large numbers of people to make realistic choices in the light of adequate information.”<sup>18</sup> As he prepares for a likely presidential run in 2008, serious questions must be raised regarding Biden’s commitment to democracy.

Public opinion polls at the time showed that the only reason that a majority of Americans would support going to war was if Iraq was developing weapons of mass destruction that could be used against the United States. Secretary of State Colin Powell, in testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, ruled out other justifications for an invasion, stating, “The president has not linked authority to go to war to any of those elements.”<sup>19</sup> It is not surprising, then, that the administration was willing to go to extraordinary lengths to silence those who recognized that Iraq did not have the weapons programs and delivery systems that the administration claimed.

## The Complicity of the Democrats

These bogus claims by the Bush administration regarding Iraq’s alleged military threat are now well-known and have been frequently cited. And Republicans in Congress have blocked demands by some Democrats that a serious investigation be undertaken regarding the manipulation of intelligence regarding Iraq’s military capability.

It is important to recognize, however, that the leadership of the Democratic Party was also guilty of misleading the American public regarding the supposed threat emanating from Iraq. It was the Clinton administration, not the current administration, which first insisted—despite the lack of evidence—that Iraq had successfully concealed or relaunched its chemical,

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biological, and nuclear weapons programs. Clinton's fear-mongering around Iraqi WMDs began in 1997, several years after they had been successfully destroyed or rendered inoperable. Based upon the alleged Iraqi threat, Clinton ordered a massive four-day bombing campaign against Iraq in December 1998, forcing the evacuation of UNSCOM and IAEA inspectors. As many of us had warned just prior to the bombing, this gave Saddam Hussein the opportunity to refuse to allow the inspectors to return.

Clinton was egged on by leading Senate Democratic leaders, including Minority Leader Tom Daschle, John Kerry, Carl Levin, and others who signed a letter in October 1998 urging the president "to take necessary actions, including, if appropriate, air and missile strikes on suspected Iraqi sites, to respond effectively to the threat posed by Iraq's refusal to end its weapons of mass destruction programs."<sup>20</sup> Meanwhile, Clinton's Secretary of State Madeleine Albright was repeatedly making false statements regarding Iraq's supposed possession of WMDs.

During Fall 2002, in an effort to counter and discredit those of us questioning the Bush administration's WMD claims, congressional Democrats redoubled their efforts to depict Saddam Hussein as a threat to America's national security. Democrats controlled the Senate at that point and could have blocked President Bush's request for the authority to invade Iraq. However, in October, the majority of Democratic senators, including Minority Leader Tom Daschle and Assistant Minority Leader Harry Reid, voted to authorize President Bush to invade Iraq at the time and circumstances of his own choosing on the grounds that Iraq "poses a continuing threat to the national security of the United States ... by ... among other things, continuing to possess and develop a significant chemical and biological weapons capability, [and] actively seeking a nuclear weapons capability."<sup>21</sup>

In a Senate speech defending his vote to authorize Bush to launch an invasion, Senator Kerry categorically declared, despite the lack of any credible evidence, that "Iraq has chemical and biological weapons" and even alleged that most elements of Iraq's chemical and biological weapons programs were "larger and more advanced than they were before the Gulf War." Furthermore, Kerry asserted that Iraq was "attempting to develop nuclear weapons," backing up this

accusation by falsely claiming that "all U.S. intelligence experts agree" with that assessment. The Massachusetts junior senator also alleged that "Iraq is developing unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) capable of delivering chemical and biological warfare agents [that] could threaten Iraq's neighbors as well as American forces in the Persian Gulf." Though it soon became evident that none of Kerry's allegations were true, the Democratic Party rewarded him in 2004 with its nomination for president.

Kerry supporters claim he was not being dishonest in making these false claims but that he had been fooled by "bad intelligence" passed on by the Bush administration. However, well before Kerry's vote to authorize the invasion, former UN inspector Scott Ritter personally told the senator and his senior staff that claims about Iraq still having WMDs or WMD programs were not based on valid intelligence. According to Ritter, "Kerry knew that there was a verifiable case to be made to debunk the president's statements regarding the threat posed by Iraq's WMDs, but he chose not to act on it."<sup>22</sup>

Joining Kerry in voting to authorize the invasion was North Carolina Senator John Edwards, who—in the face of growing public skepticism of the Bush administration's WMD claims—rushed to the president's defense in an op-ed article published in the *Washington Post*. In his commentary, Edwards claimed that Iraq was "a grave and growing threat" and that Congress should therefore "endorse the use of all necessary means to eliminate the threat posed by Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction."<sup>23</sup> The Bush administration was so impressed with Edwards' arguments that they posted the article on the State Department website. Again, despite the fact that Edwards' claims were groundless, the Democratic Party rewarded him less than two years later with its nomination for vice president.

By 2004, it was recognized that the administration's WMD claims were bogus and the war was not going well. The incumbent president and vice president, who had misled the nation into a disastrous war through false claims, were therefore quite vulnerable to losing the November election. But instead of nominating candidates who opposed the war and challenged these false WMD claims, the Democrats chose two men who had also misled the nation into war through the same false

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claims and who favored the continued prosecution of the war. Not surprisingly, the Democrats lost.

Kerry's failure to tell the truth continues to hurt the anti-war movement, as President Bush to this day quotes Kerry's false statements about Iraq's pre-invasion military capability as a means of covering up for the lies of his administration. For example, in his recent Veteran's Day speech in Pennsylvania in which he attacked the anti-war movement, President Bush was able to say, "Many of these critics supported my opponent during the last election, who explained his position to support the resolution in the Congress this way: 'When I vote to give the President of the United States the authority to use force, if necessary, to disarm Saddam Hussein, it is because I believe that a deadly arsenal of weapons of mass destruction in his hands is a threat, and a grave threat, to our security'."

Despite the consequences of putting forth nominees who failed to tell the truth about Iraq's WMD capabilities, current polls show that New York Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, who also made false claims about the alleged Iraqi threat, is the front-runner for the Democratic Party nomination for president in 2008. In defending her vote authorizing President Bush to invade Iraq, Mrs. Clinton said in October 2002, "It is clear ... that if left unchecked, Saddam Hussein will continue to increase his capacity to wage biological and chemical warfare and will keep trying to develop nuclear weapons."<sup>24</sup>

In his Veteran's Day speech, Bush was able to deny any wrongdoing by his administration by noting how "more than a hundred Democrats in the House and the Senate—who had access to the same intelligence—voted to support removing Saddam Hussein from power." If the Democrats had instead decided to be honest and take a critical look at the phony intelligence being put forward by the administration, they would have said what so many of us were saying at the time: it was highly unlikely that Iraq still had such weapons. Instead, by also making false claims about Iraqi WMD capability, it not only resulted in their failure to re-take the House and Senate in the 2004 elections, but they have effectively shielded the Bush administration from the consequences of its actions.

Even some prominent congressional Democrats who did not vote to authorize the invasion were willing to

defend the Bush administration's WMD claims. When House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi appeared on NBC's *Meet the Press* in December 2002, she claimed: "Saddam Hussein certainly has chemical and biological weapons. There is no question about that."<sup>25</sup> Despite repeated requests for information, her staff has been unwilling to reveal what led the Democratic leader to make such a groundless claim with such certitude.

Now that the Democrats are finally speaking out against the administration's phony WMD claims, conservative talk show hosts, columnists, and bloggers have been dredging up scores of pre-invasion quotes by Democratic leaders citing non-existent Iraqi WMDs. As a result, though the Republicans have undoubtedly been hurt by their false statements on the subject, the Democrats are not likely to reap much benefit. Given the number of us that had warned them beforehand, they have no one to blame but themselves.

Some Democrats have defended their pre-invasion claims by citing the 2002 National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) on Iraq's Continuing Programs for Weapons of Mass Destruction from the CIA, which appeared to confirm some of the Bush administration's claims. However, there were a number of reasons to have been skeptical: For starters, this NIE was compiled in a much shorter time frame than is normally provided for such documents. Oddly, the report expressed far more certitude regarding Iraq's WMD capabilities than all reports from the previous five years despite the lack of additional data to justify such a shift. When the report was released, there was much stronger dissent within the intelligence community than about any other declassified NIE.

Some have defended the Democrats by saying that if they had insisted on hard evidence to support the administration's WMD claims, they would have been accused of being weak on national defense. This excuse has little merit, however, since Republicans accuse Democrats of being weak on defense whatever they do. For example, even though congressional Democrats voted nearly unanimously to grant President Bush extraordinary war powers immediately following the Sept. 11 attacks and strongly supported the bombing of Afghanistan, this patriotic exhibit did not prevent the White House from falsely accusing Democrats of calling for "moderation and restraint" and offering "therapy and understanding for our attackers."<sup>26</sup>

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Similarly, even though 2004 Democratic presidential nominee Kerry defended America's right to unilaterally invade foreign countries in violation of the United Nations Charter and basic international legal standards, President Bush still accused him of believing that "in order to defend ourselves, we'd have to get international approval."<sup>27</sup>

In reality, it appears that the Democrats were as enthusiastic about the United States invading and occupying Iraq as were the Republicans and that the WMD claims were largely a means of scaring the American public into accepting the right of the United States to effectively renounce 20th century international legal norms in favor of the right of conquest. Indeed, Senators Kerry, Edwards, and Clinton all subsequently stated that they would have voted to authorize the invasion even if they knew Iraq did not have WMDs. Given their apparent eagerness for an excuse to go to war in order to take over that oil-rich nation, they seem to have been willing to believe virtually anything the Bush administration said and dismiss the concerns of independent strategic analysts who saw through the falsehoods.

This may help explain why congressional Democrats had been so reluctant, until faced with enormous pressure from their constituents following the Libby indictments, to push for a serious inquiry regarding the Bush administration's misleading the American public on Iraqi WMDs: the Democrats were guilty as well. It may also explain why pro-Democratic newspapers such as the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* were so unwilling to publicize the Downing Street memos and so belittled efforts by the handful of conscientious Democrats such as John Conyers to uncover WMD deceptions. Such failures have led both newspapers' ombudsmen to issue rare rebukes.

Even after it has become apparent that the Bush administration had been dishonest regarding Iraq's alleged threat, Democrats still seem unwilling to take a more skeptical view of administration claims regarding alleged WMD threats from overseas. For example, congressional Democrats have overwhelmingly voted in favor of legislation targeting Syria and Iran based primarily on dubious claims by the Bush administration of these countries' military capabilities and alleged threats to American security interests. Given that the vast majority of Democrats who hyped false WMD

claims regarding Iraq were re-elected in 2004 anyway, they apparently believe that they have little to lose by again reinforcing the administration's alarmist claims of threats to U.S. national security.

## Current Ramifications

There is growing awareness that the American people were lied to by their government and needlessly drawn into war. How does this deception impact what the United States should do regarding Iraq today?

Three years ago politicians in both parties successfully scared the American people into believing that the national security of the United States would somehow be threatened if we did not invade Iraq. These same politicians now expect us to believe that U.S. national security will be jeopardized unless we continue to prosecute the war.

Some thoughtful activists and intellectuals who opposed the invasion of Iraq have since concluded that because the elected Iraqi government is reasonably representative of the majority of the Iraqi people, because much of the insurgent movement is dominated by fascistic Islamists and Baathists, and because the Iraqi government is too weak to defend itself, U.S. armed forces should remain. These activists argue that even though the premise of the invasion was a lie and the occupation was tragically mishandled, the consequences of a precipitous U.S. military withdrawal would result in a far worse situation than exists now.

Such a case might be worth consideration if the Bush administration and congressional leaders had demonstrated that they had the integrity, knowledge, foresight, and competence to successfully lead a counterinsurgency war in a complex, fractured society on the far side of the planet. To support the continued prosecution of the Iraq War, however, would require trusting the same politicians who hoodwinked the country into that war in the first place. A growing number of Americans, therefore, have come to recognize that any administration dishonest enough to make the ludicrous pre-war claims of an Iraqi military threat and any Congress that—through whatever combination of dishonesty or stupidity—chose to reinforce these false assertions simply cannot be trusted to successfully control the insurgency, extricate the United States from further military involvement, and successfully facilitate

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Iraq's development as a peaceful, secure, democratic country.

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## END NOTES

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- <sup>18</sup> Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*, ch. 6.
- <sup>19</sup> Cited in Jonathan Schell, "The Empire Backfires," *The Nation*, March 11, 2004.
- <sup>20</sup> Letter to President Bill Clinton, Oct. 9, 1998.
- <sup>21</sup> Senate Joint Resolution 45 authorizing the use of United States armed forces against Iraq, October 11, 2002.
- <sup>22</sup> Scott Ritter, "Challenging Kerry on His Iraq Vote," *Boston Globe*, August 5, 2004.
- <sup>23</sup> John Edwards, "Congress Must Be Clear," *Washington Post*, Sept. 19, 2002.
- <sup>24</sup> Sen. Hillary Clinton (D, NY), October 10, 2002.
- <sup>25</sup> NBC, *Meet the Press*, December 15, 2002.
- <sup>26</sup> Karl Rove from a July 22, 2005 speech in New York. White House spokesperson Scott McClelland defended his remarks, claiming that President Bush's chief political adviser was "simply pointing out the different philosophies and different approaches when it comes to winning the war on terrorism." See Jim Abrams, "Dems Say Rove Should Apologize or Resign," *Associated Press*, June 23, 2005.
- <sup>27</sup> Third Bush-Kerry debate, in Tempe, Arizona, October 13, 2004.

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