

## THE DECEPTIONS OF WAR RECONFIRMED

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On the second anniversary of the invasion of Iraq, I wrote a column entitled "The Deceptions of War." Today, as we approach the war's fourth anniversary, we have even better evidence that the Bush administration cooked the intelligence that misled so many of our elected officials.

We now know that it was Douglas Feith who was the head chef in charge of stirring this stew of misleading information. Feith was Under Secretary for Policy in the Defense Department. Rumsfeld was not pleased with CIA reports on Iraq, so it was Feith's job to come up with "alternative" views about the threat that Saddam posed.

In a devastating critique on February 9, 2007, Pentagon Inspector General Thomas Gimble, appearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee, declared that Feith's work was "inappropriate" and was "not supported by the available intelligence." Specifically, Gimble said that there was no evidence for an alleged "mature symbiotic relationship" between Iraq and Al Qaeda, which the 9-11 Commission had already concluded in its own investigations.

Al Qaeda did not come to Iraq until President Bush extended the invitation with his infamous "bring them on" comment, which he now admits was "unsophisticated," which appears to be the only regret that he has about this disastrous war. On June 17, 2004, Defense Secretary Rumsfeld stated that Abu Musab al Zarqawi was "not Al Qaeda," even though Bush and Cheney continued to state that he was. Earlier in 2004 CIA chief George Tenet told a Senate committee that there was no connection between Zarqawi and Saddam.

In September, 2004, Zarqawi did indeed set up Al Qaeda in Iraq, but, because Osama bin Laden thought that Zarqawi was an illiterate thug, he delayed recognition of the group by eight months. American intelligence has determined that foreign fighters, many of them not Al Qaeda, have never been more than 10 percent of the insurgency.

The Libby trial has reconfirmed another instance of not only Bush administration deceit but also retaliation. Vice-President Cheney asked Joseph Wilson to travel Niger

to investigate allegations that Iraq was buying yellow cake uranium there. The Bush administration was furious when Wilson published a column pointing out that the Niger link was based on forged Italian documents. In retaliation Wilson's wife was outed as a CIA agent.

The CIA insisted that the Niger uranium link be deleted from a major address that Bush gave in October 8, 2002. Testimony in the Scooter Libby trial reveals that the CIA advised the Bush administration at least four times that the Niger claim should not be used against the Iraqi government.

As Bush was preparing for his 2003 State of the Union address his advisors desperately wanted to beef up its claim of Saddam's nuclear threat, especially since in December, 2002, the International Atomic Energy Agency had declared his nuclear programs defunct. They finally received permission from George Tenet to allow the infamous 16 words to be included.

In speech after speech after speech Senate Republicans have repeated the threat of Al Qaeda in Iraq, when in fact the most recent National Intelligence Estimate "emphasizes that although Al Qaeda activities in Iraq remain a problem, they have been surpassed by Iraqi-on-Iraqi violence as the primary source of conflict." Most people would read "Iraqi-on-Iraqi violence" as a civil war, of which we should have no part.

The Republicans also claim that the Democratic resolution will demoralize our troops and give solace to our enemies. It was good to hear our top military chief and the new defense secretary reminded us that in America decisions are arrived at by vigorous debate, and that is the type of government that we prefer around the world. Governments that operate on blind loyalty do not survive for long as free nations.