

CHAPTER 13

MEDIA MATTERS FOR HILLARY

Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? Neither can you do good who are accustomed to doing evil. - Jeremiah 13:23

*I have displayed myself as I was, as vile and despicable when my behavior was such, as good, generous and noble when I was so. I have bared my secret soul as Thou thyself hast seen it, Eternal Being! - Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Confessions**

The article that appeared in the January 1994 issue of the *American Spectator* was entitled “Living With the Clintons: Bill’s Arkansas bodyguards tell the story the press missed.” The following claim in the article would soon create a firestorm:

One of the troopers told the story of how Clinton had eyed a woman at a reception at the Excelsior Hotel in downtown Little Rock. According to the trooper, who told the story to both Patterson and Perry as well, Clinton asked him to approach the woman, whom the trooper remembered only as Paula, tell her how attractive the governor thought she was, and take her to a room in the hotel where Clinton would be waiting. As the troopers explained it, the standard procedure in a case like this was for one of them to inform the hotel that the governor needed a room for a short time because he was expecting an important call from the White House.³⁴⁶

After the article was published, Paula Corbin Jones, the “Paula” mentioned in the article, filed a sexual harassment and eschewal suit against Clinton on May 6, 1994, two days prior to the three-year statute of limitations.

After several years of legal wrangling, Jones’ attorneys, hoping to demonstrate a pattern of behavior by Clinton, subpoenaed women they suspected had had affairs with Clinton. Their list of women included Monica Lewinsky. In his deposition for the Jones lawsuit, Clinton denied having “sexual relations” with Lewinsky. That falsehood ultimately led to the impeachment of Bill Clinton in December 1998.

³⁴⁶ http://www.spectator.org/dsp_article.asp?art_id=6736

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According to L. Brent Bozell III, the president and founder of the Media Research Center, the media virtually ignored the Troopergate story and its author. “While talk radio was on fire with the story, the mainstream press was practically silent,” Bozell wrote. “If any coverage was given, as it was on CNN, the story was—again—the Clinton White House’s ‘outrage,’ not the scandal itself.”³⁴⁷

In 1996, David Brock, the author of the Troopergate story, took a sharp turn to the left when he praised Hillary Clinton in *The Seduction of Hillary Clinton*. In July 1997, he turned on conservatives in an *Esquire* article entitled “Confessions of a Right-Wing Hit Man.” Brock in March 1998 penned a public apology to Bill Clinton. “I do know that I didn’t learn a damn thing worth knowing about your character,” Brock wrote.

With his shift to the left, Bozell said Brock stopped being a pariah and became a media darling. He appeared on all three network morning shows, as well as on *Meet the Press* and *Face the Nation*. According to Bozell, “No conservative was allowed on the set to rebut his nonsense.”

In 2002, Brock expanded on his lengthy *Esquire* article and published his next book, *Blinded by the Right: Confessions of an Ex-Conservative*. “Brock appeared on the *Today* show and *CNN News Night* on back-to-back days,” Bozell wrote. “He was on CNN’s *Crossfire* and *Reliable Sources* and on Tim Russert’s CNBC show. The *New York Times* ran a special feature on him, as did *USA Today*. The *Los Angeles Times* ran a massive book review. On and on it went, with hundreds upon hundreds of mentions given to the man who wrote a book in which he proclaimed himself a liar.”³⁴⁸

Brock would take on conservatives again in *The Republican Noise Machine: Right-Wing Media and How It Corrupts Democracy*. “Brock devoted six pages documenting my evil career seeking—*gasp!*—‘balance’ in the media,” Bozell wrote, “and it’s a good microcosm of his book: a journalistic high dive into the shallow end of the pool. Among other things, I am not, and have never been, as Brock attempted to report, an ‘adviser’ to the National Right to Life Committee. The Media Research Center no longer publishes a newsletter called *MediaWatch*, which was discontinued in 1999. My salary is not what he states. And my father married my mother, Patricia, not my aunt Priscilla, a clarification that will surely comfort both.”³⁴⁹

At about the same time his new book was published, Brock announced he was starting a new Web site called Media Matters for America (MMFA). According to the *New York Times*, “Mr. Brock’s project was developed with help from the newly formed Center for American Progress, the policy group headed by John D. Podesta, the former Clinton chief of staff.”

³⁴⁷ *Weapons of Mass Distortion: The Coming Meltdown of the Liberal Media*, p. 45.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 45–46.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 275.

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The article also noted that Podesta “has loaned office space in the past to Mr. Brock and introduced him to potential donors.” In addition, “Among Mr. Brock’s donors is Leo Hindery Jr., the former cable magnate; Susie Tompkins Buell, who is co-founder of the fashion company Esprit and is close to Senator Hillary Clinton of New York, and Ms. Buell’s husband Mark; and James C. Hormel, a San Francisco philanthropist whose appointment as ambassador to Luxembourg was delayed for a year and a half in the late 1990’s by conservative lawmakers protesting what they called his promotion of a ‘gay lifestyle.’”³⁵⁰

MMFA is often accused of being supported by George Soros, the billionaire financial speculator who spent millions of dollars towards the defeat of George W. Bush in 2004. MMFA has adamantly denied that accusation in numerous postings on its Web site. While there does not seem to be any evidence that Soros has directly supported MMFA, Soros-funded groups were instrumental in getting Brock’s group started. As mentioned in the *New York Times* article, John Podesta’s Center for American Progress helped Brock develop MMFA, loaned office space to the new group, and introduced Brock to potential donors. According to the *Washington Post* in 2003, Soros and mortgage billionaires Herbert and Marion Sandler pledged at least \$10 million in seed money to get the Center for American Progress started.³⁵¹ Podesta also commissioned Morton H. Halperin to recruit the center’s fellows. Today, Halperin concurrently serves senior vice president of the Center for American Progress and director of Soros’ Open Society Institute-Washington, D.C. and the Open Society Policy Center.³⁵²

Another tie between the Center for American Progress and MMFA is Eric Alterman. Alterman, a columnist for *The Nation*, concurrently serves as a senior fellow at the Center for American Progress and a senior fellow with MMFA.³⁵³ Like Brock, Alterman has written a book, *What Liberal Media?: The Truth About Bias and the News*, that made the unconvincing argument that there is a conservative bias in the news media. Alterman is so extreme that MSNBC, the network that continues to air *Countdown with Keith Olbermann*, fired him in September 2006. MMFA began hosting his “Altercation” weblog a few days later.³⁵⁴

MMFA has also benefited from contributions from the Democracy Alliance. Founded by Rob Stein, a former official in the Clinton Administration, and various donors, Democracy Alliance partners in October 2005 agreed to give \$28 million to nine groups. According to *The Nation*, “[T]he bulk of the

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<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/05/03/business/media/03BROC.html?ex=1398916800&en=e6f532263784f1bf&ei=5007&partner=USERLAND>

³⁵¹ <http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn?pagename=article&node=&contentId=A2623-2003Oct22¬Found=true>

³⁵² <http://www.soros.org/newsroom/experts/halperin?skin=printable>

³⁵³ http://www.mediamatters.org/about_us/staff_advisors

³⁵⁴ <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/14784419/#ImFired>

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money went to familiar names on the DC circuit, like the Center for American Progress (CAP), a think tank run by Podesta, and Media Matters for America, which monitors right-wing media and media bias, headed by former conservative journalist David Brock.” The same article noted that MMFA received “an \$11 million commitment over three years” from Democracy Alliance donors.

According to *The Nation*, Soros is a Democracy Alliance donor. However, the magazine also noted the following: “The Alliance would not dole out money itself, but collectively the partners would meet twice a year through its auspices to decide which organizations to fund, forming working groups based on four priority areas: ideas, media, leadership and civic engagement.”³⁵⁵

While MMFA may be technically correct in saying that Soros has not directly funded its efforts, it is clear that they have benefited indirectly from Soros’ millions.

MMFA is also sensitive about being linked to Hillary Clinton. In a July 3, 2007 item entitled “Limbaugh again falsely described *Media Matters* as part of ‘Clinton Inc.’,” MMFA criticized Rush Limbaugh for saying that “people reporting on fundraising don’t tally the financial value of these front groups. Media Matters, the Center for American Progress, they’re all her groups. And they’re all supposedly independent and supposedly non-ideological and supposedly charitable, non-profits and this sort of thing. But they’re Hillary fundraising groups, or front groups that go out and promote her and attack her enemies, and how do you put a dollar value on that? That’s part of Clinton Inc.”³⁵⁶

However, MMFA remained silent the following month after another person noted the potential value of MMFA and the Center for American Progress’ non-monetary contributions to Hillary Clinton’s campaign:

We are certainly better prepared and more focused on, you know, taking our arguments, and making them effective, and disseminating them widely, and really putting together a network, uh, in the blogosphere, in a lot of the new progressive infrastructure, institutions that I helped to start and support like Media Matters and Center for American Progress.³⁵⁷

Who made this statement? None other than Hillary Clinton herself at the Yearly Kos convention. MMFA claims that it is not part of Clinton, Inc., yet Hillary says she helped start and support MMFA. Who are we to believe? It’s like choosing between the veracity of pathological liars Tommy Flanagan and Joe Isuzu.

³⁵⁵ <http://www.thenation.com/doc/20061016/berman>

³⁵⁶ <http://mediamatters.org/items/200707030004?src=other>

³⁵⁷ http://video1.washingtontimes.com/fishwrap/2007/10/hillary_i_helped_start_media_m_1.html

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Further evidence of MMFA's ties to Clinton Inc. can be found in the annual report of Colorado Media Matters, MMFA's first state chapter. The Colorado secretary of state lists Ridder-Braden, Inc. of Denver as the registered agent of Colorado Media Matters. The president and co-founder of Ridder-Braden, Rick Ridder, served as the national campaign manager for Dean for America in early 2003. In addition, he served as a senior consultant for both Clinton-Gore campaigns. Ridder-Braden's research director, Craig Hughes, also worked for both Clinton-Gore campaigns. In November 2007, Ridder-Braden noted that Tyler Chafee, a senior associate, was on leave from the firm "to work full-time as the Colorado State Director for the Hillary Clinton for President Campaign."³⁵⁸

Despite MMFA's numerous ties to the Clintons and Brock's status as an admitted liar, many in the mainstream media accept what MMFA puts on its Web site as the gospel truth.

However, there are a few liberals who have not completely bought into Brock's latest charade. For example, on the June 30, 2001 edition of CNN's *Reliable Sources*, Jill Abramson of the *New York Times* said, "I think the problem is that once David Brock admits he knowingly wrote lies, it's hard to figure out when to believe him, essentially...."³⁵⁹

Abramson and Jane Mayer, who in 1994 wrote *Strange Justice: The Selling of Clarence Thomas*, had taken issue with Brock's portrayal of Anita Hill in his 1993 best-seller *The Real Anita Hill*.

"I do not offer Brock absolution," wrote liberal *Boston Globe* columnist Ellen Goodman in 2001. "The man who made a best seller out of a defamatory rant now wants to make a best seller out of repentance. What's his next gig, 'My Life as an Opportunist'? If his old allies accuse him of lying about lying, he deserves that. He did too much damage."³⁶⁰

Christopher Hitchens of *The Nation* took on Brock in a May 2002 column entitled "The Real David Brock":

When incurable liberals like Todd Gitlin and Eric Alterman begin using the name Whittaker Chambers as a term of approbation, we are entitled to say that there has been what the Germans call a *Tendenzwende*, or shift in the zeitgeist. The odd thing is that they have both chosen to compare Chambers's *Witness*, a serious and dramatic memoir by any standards, to a flimsy and self-worshipping book titled *Blinded by the Right*, by David Brock. Meyer Schapiro, one of the moral heroes of the democratic left, once said that Whittaker Chambers was incapable of telling a lie. That might well be phrasing it too strongly, but I have now been provoked by curiosity into reading

³⁵⁸ <http://ridder-braden.com/content/18/our-people>

³⁵⁹ <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0106/30/rs.00.html>

³⁶⁰ <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2001/07/01/ED146619.DTL>

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Brock, and I would say without any hesitation that he is incapable of recognizing the truth, let alone of telling it.³⁶¹

Unfortunately, most in the liberal media are not as discerning. On September 25, 2007, Rush Limbaugh did a “Morning Update” on Jesse MacBeth, who had made claims that he and his unit had committed war crimes in Iraq. MacBeth had become a hero to the anti-war left for speaking out against the war in Iraq. It turns out that, contrary to his claims, MacBeth had never served in Iraq, he was never an Army Ranger, and he had never even made it through Army basic training.

The following day, after Limbaugh referred to “phony soldiers” such as MacBeth, MMFA went to work. An item entitled “Limbaugh: Service members who support U.S. withdrawal are ‘phony soldiers.’”³⁶² Of course, those whom Limbaugh called “phony soldiers” were not actual “service members.” Nevertheless, MMFA stuck with its lie, which was then repeated by the media and liberal politicians.

MSNBC led the media attacks on Limbaugh. As the Media Research Center’s Brent Baker, noted, show after show on MSNBC smeared Limbaugh. “Radio talk show host Rush Limbaugh says veterans who support withdrawing the troops are ‘phony soldiers.’ Those are his words,” said Chris Matthews of *Hardball*, who obviously had not heard Limbaugh’s actual words. Paul Rieckhoff, a liberal veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom who apparently aspires to be his generation’s John Kerry, appeared as a *Hardball* guest and said Limbaugh “didn’t go to Vietnam because he had a bump on his butt. So, I mean, this guy’s a draft-dodger.”

After Matthews’ attacks on Limbaugh, it was Keith Olbermann’s turn. “Limbaugh now trying to claim that his tirade referred to just one phony soldier, Jesse MacBeth who falsely claimed to be an Army Ranger and veteran of the Iraq war,” said the Edward R. Murrow wannabe. “That re-write might have a better chance of passing the smell test had Mr. Limbaugh’s original ‘phony soldiers’ comment—still plural at that point—not come nearly two minutes before he ever mentioned MacBeth on yesterday’s radio show.”³⁶³

In addition to ignoring Limbaugh’s “Morning Update” on MacBeth the day before his “phony soldier” comment, Olbermann appears to have engaged in a bit of projection. Consider Olbermann’s reaction to this exchange between Rosie O’Donnell and Elizabeth Hasselbeck on the May 17, 2007 edition of *The View*:

³⁶¹ <http://www.thenation.com/doc/20020527/hitchens>

³⁶² <http://mediamatters.org/items/200709270010>

³⁶³ <http://www.newsbusters.org/blogs/brent-baker/2007/09/28/show-after-show-msnbc-smears-limbaugh-phony-soldiers-distortion>

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O'DONNELL: I haven't—I just want to say something. 655,000 Iraqi civilians are dead.* Who are the terrorists?

HASSELBECK: Who are the terrorists?

O'DONNELL: 655,000 Iraqis—I'm saying you have to look, we invaded—

HASSELBECK: Wait, who are you calling terrorists now? Americans?

O'DONNELL: I'm saying if you were in Iraq, and the other country, the United States, the richest in the world, invaded your country and killed 655,000 of your citizens, what would you call us?

HASSELBECK: Are we killing their citizens or are their people also killing their citizens?

O'DONNELL: We're invading a sovereign nation, occupying a country against the U.N.³⁶⁴

O'Donnell clearly asked, “Who are the terrorists?” and not “Who is the terrorist?” However, Olbermann characterized O'Donnell's statement as such: “Last week Miss O'Donnell said, quote, 650,000 (sic) people have died in Iraq. Who's the terrorist? It seems like an obvious reference to President Bush, but not on Fox noise, which decided she meant American troops.”³⁶⁵ Of course, an obvious reference to one person (i.e., President Bush) would not use the word “are.” Olbermann's statement was an obvious lie.

In Washington, Sen. John Kerry, who actually did smear those in uniform after he returned from an abbreviated tour in Vietnam, issued this public statement:

This disgusting attack from Rush Limbaugh, cheerleader for the Chicken Hawk wing of the far right, is an insult to American troops. In a single moment on his show, Limbaugh managed to question the patriotism of men and women in uniform who have put their lives on the line and many who died for his right to sit safely in his air conditioned studio peddling hate. On August 19th, The New York Times published an op-ed by seven members of the U.S. Army's 82nd Airborne Division critical of George Bush's Iraq policy. Two of those soldiers were killed earlier this month in Baghdad. Does Mr. Limbaugh dare assert that these heroes were ‘phony soldiers’? Mr. Limbaugh owes an apology to everyone who has ever worn the uniform of our country, and an apology to the families of every soldier buried in Arlington National Cemetery. He is an embarrassment to his Party, and I expect the Republicans who flock to his microphone will now condemn this indefensible statement.³⁶⁶

* O'Donnell was referring to a 2006 study by *The Lancet* that claimed 650,000 Iraqis died as a result of the invasion of Iraq. It was later discovered that George Soros provided almost half the cost of the research conducted by *The Lancet*. More recent research published by *The New England Journal of Medicine* estimated that 151,000 people—less than a quarter of *The Lancet* estimate—had died since the invasion in 2003. <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article3177653.ece>

³⁶⁴ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fxPkq8TCOJ8>

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁶ <http://article.nationalreview.com/?q=ZTdhNzdINmVIMjQ0ZDY1ZTAxOWU0NmM4YWQzMtQyNzQ=>

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Tom Harkin took to the floor of the U.S. Senate and used these words to condemn Limbaugh: “Maybe he was just high on his drugs again. I don’t know whether he was or not. If so, he ought to let us know. But that shouldn’t be an excuse.”³⁶⁷

Harkin’s condemnation in this case was a bit odd. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, “In 1979, Mr. Harkin, then a congressman, participated in a round-table discussion arranged by the Congressional Vietnam Veterans’ Caucus. ‘I spent five years as a Navy pilot, starting in November of 1962,’ Mr. Harkin said at that meeting, in words that were later quoted in a book, *Changing of the Guard*, by *Washington Post* political writer David Broder. ‘One year was in Vietnam. I was flying F-4s and F-8s on combat air patrols and photo-reconnaissance support missions. I did no bombing.’”

On another occasion, Harkin claimed he “flew many missions to Vietnam and the Philippines.” And in a short April 1, 1980 statement in the Congressional Record attacking the Veterans Administration for the way it was handling claims related to the herbicide Agent Orange, Harkin said that “as a Vietnam veteran in Congress, I feel particularly responsible for seeing that this issue continues to command our attention.”³⁶⁸

Challenged by Sen. Barry Goldwater, an Air Force General, to explain why he was awarded neither the Vietnam Service Medal nor the Vietnam Campaign Medal (decorations given to everyone who served in the Southeast Asian theater), Harkin changed his story. He claimed that he instead had flown combat sorties over Cuba during the 1960s. Harkin, who attacked Limbaugh’s “phony soldier” statement, stretched the truth a bit concerning his own military record. It turns out that he is a phony Vietnam veteran.

After Harkin’s statement, things continued to slide downhill for the Democrats. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid took to the Senate floor to say that he had prepared a letter to Mark P. Mays, CEO of Clear Channel Communications, “to publicly repudiate Rush Limbaugh’s characterization of troops who speak out against the Iraq war as ‘phony soldiers.’” The following letter was signed by Reid, Hillary Clinton, and 39 other Senate Democrats:

Dear Mr. Mays,

At the time we sign this letter, 3,801 American soldiers have been killed in Iraq, and another 27,936 have been wounded. 160,000 others awoke this morning on foreign sand, far from home, to face the danger and uncertainty of another day at war.

Although Americans of goodwill debate the merits of this war, we can all agree that those who serve with such great courage deserve our deepest re-

³⁶⁷ <http://thinkprogress.org/2007/10/01/harkin-maybe-limbaugh-was-high-on-drugs-again/>

³⁶⁸ <http://www.opinionjournal.com/extra/?id=110005497>

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spect and gratitude. That is why Rush Limbaugh's recent characterization of troops who oppose the war as "phony soldiers" is such an outrage.

Our troops are fighting and dying to bring to others the freedoms that many take for granted. It is unconscionable that Mr. Limbaugh would criticize them for exercising the fundamentally American right to free speech. Mr. Limbaugh has made outrageous remarks before, but this affront to our soldiers is beyond the pale.

The military, like any community within the United States, includes members both for and against the war. Senior generals, such as General John Batiste and Paul Eaton, have come out against the war while others have publicly supported it. A December 2006 poll conducted by the *Military Times* found just 35 percent of service members approved of President Bush's handling of the war in Iraq, compared to 42 percent who disapproved. From this figure alone, it is clear that Mr. Limbaugh's insult is directed at thousands of American service members.

Active and retired members of our armed forces have a unique perspective on the war and offer a valuable contribution to our national debate. In August, seven soldiers wrote an op-ed expressing their concern with the current strategy in Iraq. Tragically, since then, two of those seven soldiers have made the ultimate sacrifice in Iraq.

Thousands of active troops and veterans were subjected to Mr. Limbaugh's unpatriotic and indefensible comments on your broadcast. We trust you will agree that not a single one of our sons, daughters, neighbors and friends serving overseas is a "phony soldier." We call on you to publicly repudiate these comments that call into question their service and sacrifice and to ask Mr. Limbaugh to apologize for his comments.³⁶⁹

The letter backfired. Limbaugh placed the smear letter on eBay, which received 231 bids and ultimately sold for \$2,100,100. Limbaugh matched the final bid with his own funds and contributed everything to the Marine Corps-Law Enforcement Foundation, which offers scholarship assistance to children of Marines and federal law enforcement personnel whose parent dies on duty.³⁷⁰ Limbaugh, who sits on the board of the foundation and has supported it for several years, offered this challenge to Reid and his fellow Democrats who signed the smear letter: "You say you support the military. You say you're big, and you think it's patriotic, and that I was unpatriotic. Well, I would like for each of you, Senator Reid, and the 40 senators who signed, to match whatever the winning bid is. Show us your support for the U.S. military by all 41 of you pro-military people, Democrats in the Senate, match whatever the winning bid is and send that amount to the Marine Corps-Law

³⁶⁹ <http://democrats.senate.gov/newsroom/record.cfm?id=284592>

³⁷⁰ <http://mc-lef.org/>

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Enforcement Foundation.”³⁷¹ To date, the Democrats, most of whom are millionaires many times over, have not met the challenge.

MMFA misrepresented Limbaugh’s “phony soldier” comment and, instead of damaging Limbaugh’s career and accomplishing its goal of getting his program removed from Armed Forces Radio and Television Service, ended up embarrassing Hillary Clinton and her fellow Democrats.

The “phony soldier” episode should have discredited MMFA for good. However, journalists who got MMFA’s misleading version of the “phony soldiers” story also could have visited MMFA’s Web site during the same period and discovered other false claims on unrelated topics. For example, in an October 10, 2007 piece, Eric Boehlert wrote the following:

The media’s comical obsession earlier this month with the tone and frequency of Sen. Hillary Clinton’s laugh didn’t just represent another head-smacking moment in the annals of awful campaign journalism. It also served as a preview of what’s likely to come in 2008.

Anybody who thinks that if [Hillary] Clinton wins the Democratic nomination that the Cackle narrative won’t be revived has not been paying attention in recent years. That’s why it’s so important to take a moment to understand the press dynamics that allow a story like *The Cackle* to flourish, and why pointless stories like that—and John Edwards’ Haircut or Al Gore’s Sighs during a 2000 presidential debate—only affect Democrats.

You simply cannot find examples in recent years of Republican presidential candidates’ physical tics or trivial personal foibles that the press has pounced on and announced to be wildly important and deeply revealing. That’s just not a distraction Republican candidates have to deal with. The media phenomenon only applies to Democrats and the phenomenon only exists because journalists manufacture it.³⁷²

Of course, you only have to do an Internet search for the words “Bush smirk” to know that Boehlert’s contention is false. For example, Slate.com’s Timothy Noah addressed the “Bush smirk” in December 1999. “The smirk is causing much justifiable worry in Republican circles,” Noah wrote. “I hear some saying that his friendly outgoing personality on TV is mistaken for a smirk and smugness,” a ‘senior Republican official’ was quoted as saying in the Dec. 8 *Boston Globe*.³⁷³ The same piece even quoted *The New Yorker*’s Joe Klein characterizing Bush’s smirk as “the tic.” Yet Boehlert claimed there are no “examples in recent years of Republican presidential candidates’

³⁷¹ <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,301656,00.html>

* No one in the liberal media, incidentally, asked why—if Limbaugh actually said what MMFA claims he said—the troops themselves did not demand that Limbaugh’s program be removed.

³⁷² <http://www.mediamatters.org/columns/200710100002>

³⁷³ <http://www.slate.com/id/1004144/>

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physical tics or trivial personal foibles that the press has pounced on and announced to be wildly important and deeply revealing.”

While Brock and MMFA are very adept at misleading, they are quick to accuse others of engaging in the same practice. In fact, MMFA names a “Misinformers of the Year” every year. Fox News’ Bill O’Reilly “won” the honor in 2004³⁷⁴, while the liberal Chris Matthews was MMFA’s pick for 2005.³⁷⁵ On January 17, 2008, Matthews apologized to his viewers for comments he made regarding Hillary Clinton.³⁷⁶ His apology was offered just one day after MMFA’s David Brock wrote an open letter to NBC News President Steve Capus. “As you know, the event precipitating the current firestorm surrounding Matthews’ conduct occurred on MSNBC last week in the wake of Senator Hillary Clinton’s victory in the Democratic primary in New Hampshire,” Brock wrote. “During MSNBC’s coverage that night, Matthews said he would ‘never underestimate Hillary Clinton again’—an apparent reference to his long-standing pattern of on-air denigration of Senator Clinton’s candidacy and persona—documented in a Media Matters survey of *Hardball with Chris Matthews* published December 18, 2007.”³⁷⁷

MMFA’s choice for 2006’s “misleader,” ABC, demonstrates the group’s determination to rewrite the history of the Bill Clinton administration. “This year saw ABC air *The Path to 9/11*, a two-part miniseries that placed the blame for the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the Clinton administration and whitewashed some of the Bush administration’s failures leading up to the attacks,” MMFA claimed.³⁷⁸

Unfortunately, MMFA failed to offer much evidence to support its claim that *The Path to 9/11*, which was aired on September 10 and 11, 2006, blamed Clinton and whitewashed Bush’s failures.

“When ABC broadcast the miniseries, it did so with numerous inaccuracies still in it,” MMFA claimed. “The first night of the two-part miniseries included a fabricated scene that depicted Clinton administration officials declining to authorize the CIA to capture bin Laden. ABC retained the controversial scene despite the fact that it is contradicted by the 9-11 Commission report and had even been disputed by conservative media figures.”

However, 9/11 Commissioner John Lehman told ABC News that the movie “very well portrayed the events in a way that people can understand them without doing violence to the facts.”³⁷⁹ “I think the U.S. Government failed and failed very badly in two administrations not just one,” said Governor Thomas H. Kean, who chaired the 9/11 Commission and was the senior (and unpaid) consultant for the movie. “And any depiction, miniseries or oth-

³⁷⁴ <http://mediamatters.org/items/200412230006>

³⁷⁵ <http://mediamatters.org/items/200512230005>

³⁷⁶ http://mediamatters.org/items/200801170019?f=h_top

³⁷⁷ <http://mediamatters.org/items/200801170002>

³⁷⁸ <http://mediamatters.org/items/200612220014>

³⁷⁹ <http://abcnews.go.com/GMA/story?id=2419683&page=1>

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erwise, is going to show that and the people involved don't like it."³⁸⁰ Of course, anyone who suggests that the Clinton administration failed very badly opens himself up for attack. In an article entitled "Jersey Hustler," Joe Conason on Salon.com inaccurately claimed that Kean had been a "paid advisor" for *The Path to 9/11*. "For money and a moment of Hollywood glitz, he sold out what should have been the crowning achievement of a career in public service," Conason wrote.³⁸¹ Of course, MMFA also attacked Kean:

Might his son, Thomas H. Kean Jr., who is challenging Democrat Bob Menendez for his New Jersey Senate seat, not benefit from Kean's high-profile promotion of a film that falsely presents the actions of President Clinton, who is campaigning for Menendez; by promoting a film that smears a Democratic administration through fabricated scenes, is Kean not tarnishing his own image and that of the 9-11 Commission, which has to date acted in a largely bipartisan manner and produced a report that has garnered wide respect?³⁸²

Apparently, Conason and MMFA did not have as much concern about Lee Hamilton, the former Democratic representative from Indiana and vice chairman of the 9/11 Commission, selling out or tarnishing his own image. After his work with the 9/11 Commission was completed, Hamilton joined the advisory board of Stonebridge International, "a leading international advisory firm helping global business navigate the most promising and challenging markets, including Brazil, China, Russia and India."³⁸³ Stonebridge was co-founded in 2001 by Sandy Berger. That's the same Sandy Berger who, while preparing to testify before the 9/11 Commission, was caught stealing and destroying highly sensitive classified material concerning the Clinton administration's handling of terrorism.

It's difficult to imagine why MMFA and other Clinton defenders believe a movie about 9/11 would not include the Clinton administration's failures regarding al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden. After all, those failures were made over eight years while the Bush administration's failures took place between January and September of just one year. MMFA also complained that ABC (along with Scholastic Inc.) "omitted critical information regarding the Bush administration's pre-Iraq war weapons of mass destruction claims." The fact that those claims took place on the path *after* 9/11 was apparently lost on MMFA.

If anything, perhaps MMFA and the rest of Clinton Inc. should be thankful for the treatment Bill Clinton and his administration received in *The Path to 9/11*. Michael Scheuer, who created and served as the chief of the CIA's Osama bin Laden unit at the Counterterrorist Center, was much more harsh

³⁸⁰ http://abclocal.go.com/wpvi/story?section=nation_world&id=4544008

³⁸¹ http://www.salon.com/opinion/conason/2006/09/15/kean/index_np.html

³⁸² <http://mediamatters.org/items/200609090006>

³⁸³ <http://www.stonebridge-international.com/pages/page01b.html#alt>

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in his assessment of Clinton, Sandy Berger, and Richard Clarke. In an opinion piece before the movie aired, Scheuer wrote, “That trio, in my view, abetted al Qaeda, and if the September 11 families were smart they would focus on the dereliction of Dick, Bill and Sandy and not the antics of convicted September 11 conspirator Zacarias Moussaoui.... So, I look forward to ABC’s mini-series, as well as to seeing the quality of the network’s fact-checkers. If they do their job well, some of the September 11 Commission’s whitewash may start to be peeled away. If they fail, however, the reality that Bill, Dick and Sandy helped to push Americans out of the windows of the World Trade Center on that September morning will be buried in miles of fantasy-filled celluloid.”³⁸⁴

On September 9, 2006, Scheuer contacted ABC News via e-mail and offered this challenge:

This whole business over ABC’s movie is amazing. Now Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. and a pack of political whores who pass themselves off as “historians” have come out four-square for pre-publication censorship.

As I have told you, the core of the movie is irrefutably true: the Clinton administration had 10 chances to capture or kill bin Laden. Had the 9/11 Commission not whitewashed events, personal culpability would have been assigned and we as a nation could have moved on to fight al-Qaeda. The Commission turned out to be hack-dominated, however, and ignored the documents that were presented to them, as well as the testimony it received under oath. Instead of telling the American people that the intelligence regarding bin Laden, al-Qaeda and their intentions was abundant, precise, and not acted on, the Commissioners blamed ‘the structure of the intelligence community’ for the failure and then proceeded to wreck the community with a horrendous reform package.

The solution is really quite simple, I think. Declassify the documents and testimony of the men and women who risked their lives to collect the intelligence that Clinton and his lieutenants failed to act on. Present this information to the American people—and perhaps put some of those officers on TV to answer questions—and then let the chips fall where they may. If the critics of the ABC movie are so confident they are right, they would surely welcome this process.³⁸⁵

In naming ABC as its Misinformers of the Year for 2006, MMFA also singled out former ABC News political director Mark Halperin. Halperin’s sin was being a guest on Sean Hannity’s radio program and Bill O’Reilly’s Fox News program after he and ABC News explained “how the (liberal) Old Media plans to cover the last two weeks of the election.” The October 23, 2006, online piece was anything but misleading. For example, the first item in the

³⁸⁴ <http://www.washingtontimes.com/op-ed/20060704-110004-4280r.htm>

³⁸⁵ <http://blogs.abcnews.com/politicalpunch/2006/09/index.html>

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piece noted that the liberal media would “Glowingly profile Speaker-Inevitable Nancy Pelosi, with loving mentions of her grandmotherly steel (see last night’s *60 Minutes*), and fail to describe her as ‘ultra liberal’ or ‘an extreme liberal,’ which would mirror the way Gingrich was painted twelve years ago.”³⁸⁶

On October 30, just a week after Halperin’s piece appeared online, the *New York Times* included a profile on Pelosi in which it was noted that, when she noticed young women whispering while Bill Clinton was speaking to Democratic donors, Pelosi, “mindful that some guests had paid \$10,000 for a plate of chicken and bread pudding, shot a frown — the sort a grandmother gives when someone arrives at Christmas dinner in a wrinkled shirt — and in a split second, the whispers ceased.” The article went on to quote Pelosi as saying, “I think I am firm and strong.” The word “liberal” did appear in the article: “Ms. Pelosi’s victory in that election came in part by coloring her competitor in the primary, Harry Britt, as too liberal. In every election since, she has been derided by her district’s most liberal activists as not liberal enough.”³⁸⁷ Halperin nailed how the media planned to cover the 2006 election, yet the misleaders at MMFA labeled him a “misleader.”

Of course, if we are to accept MMFA’s contention that Mark Halperin spins the news in favor of conservatives, we also have to ignore a few things about him, including:

- During the 1992 presidential campaign, Halperin, who was supposed to be covering the Clinton campaign for ABC, instead assisted the Clinton campaign. After *The Wall Street Journal* charged that Clinton had received a Vietnam draft deferment for an ROTC program he never joined, Halperin was waiting for Clinton’s advisors to arrive in New Hampshire. “And as we got off the plane, Mark Halperin of ABC hands Georgie [Stephanopoulos] and I this letter,” said Paul Begala, “and I’m looking over George’s shoulder as he reads it, and I see that line, ‘Thank you for saving me from the draft,’ and my knees kind of buckled. And George said, ‘That’s it. We’re through. We’re out. It’s over.’”³⁸⁸ With this heads up provided by Halperin, Clinton was given several days of advance warning to prepare his response before facing reporters’ questions about a letter he had no reason to believe still existed.
- While Halperin was a White House reporter with ABC, his father, Morton (now with Podesta’s Center for American Progress), served as Director of Policy Planning at the State Department under President Clinton.

³⁸⁶ <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/TheNote/story?id=2599592&page=1>

³⁸⁷

<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/30/us/politics/30pelosi.html?pagewanted=1&ei=5088&en=1b0f4799a50dedca&ex=1319864400&partner=rssnyt&emc=rss>

³⁸⁸ <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/clinton/chapters/1.html>

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- In 1997, the same year Mark Halperin was promoted to Political Director of ABC News, his brother, David (now Senior Vice President at the Center for American Progress and the Director of Campus Progress), began a four-year stint as speechwriter to President Clinton.³⁸⁹
- In 1997, George Stephanopoulos, who had served as a senior political adviser for the Clinton campaign in 1992 and then President Clinton's communications director, joined ABC's *This Week* as a panelist. Remarkably, Stephanopoulos was made the anchor of *This Week* in 2002. As head of ABC News' political division, Halperin certainly had a say concerning whether or not Stephanopoulos, a self-described "true true believer" in Bill Clinton, would get the coveted position with *This Week*.
- In October 2004, Halperin issued a memo in which he told ABC News staff not to "reflexively and artificially hold both sides 'equally' accountable" during coverage of Democrat Kerry and Republican Bush. "I'm sure many of you have this week felt the stepped up Bush efforts to complain about our coverage," Halperin wrote. "This is all part of their efforts to get away with as much as possible with the stepped up, renewed efforts to win the election by destroying Senator Kerry at least partly through distortions. It's up to Kerry to defend himself, of course. But as one of the few news organizations with the skill and strength to help voters evaluate what the candidates are saying to serve the public interest. Now is the time for all of us to step up and do that right."³⁹⁰
- Speaking at the University of Kansas' Dole Institute for Politics in December 2006, Halperin seemed to echo MMFA's dubious contention that the so-called conservative media influence the rest of the media. According to the *Lawrence Journal-World*, "Halperin challenged the public to help end what he called 'the freak show' that has come to control national politics. In the 'freak show,' he said, someone wanting to damage a political opponent leaks a bit of information to The Drudge Report. It's picked up by Rush Limbaugh and Fox News, and it eventually finds its way to other outlets."³⁹¹

In addition to MMFA criticizing Halperin, Clinton Inc.'s think tank, which has Halperin's father and brother on its staff, took Halperin to task for his comments about the "old" media. "It's one thing to believe in an imaginary liberal bias," noted Think Progress, the Center for American Progress' blog. "It's another to deceive yourself into thinking that everyone else agrees with you."³⁹²

In 2006 Halperin committed the sin of telling the truth about the liberal media. A year later, he committed an even more serious sin in the eyes of the

³⁸⁹ <http://www.americanprogress.org/experts/HalperinDavid.html>

³⁹⁰ http://www.drudgereportarchives.com/data/2004/10/09/20041009_195805_mh.htm

³⁹¹ http://www2.ljworld.com/news/2006/dec/07/journalist_gives_insight_08_presidential_race/

³⁹² <http://thinkprogress.org/2006/10/27/halperin-liberal-bias/>

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Media Matters myrmidons: Halperin wrote something less than flattering about Hillary Clinton. Commenting on the Democrats' October 30 primary debate in Philadelphia, Eric Boehlert complained that the media echoed talking points virtually word for word and steadfastly ignoring poll after poll that showed the debate hadn't changed the campaign dynamics one bit, pundits tripped over themselves describing just how badly Clinton had been bloodied and 'cut' in the debate fight.³⁹³ Boehlert also mocked Halperin, now with *Time*. Halperin had given Clinton a grade of C- for her debate performance. "If she loses the nomination," Halperin wrote, "tonight will go down in history as the first step to her defeat — no fatal 'Dean Scream' catastrophe, but far from her finest moment, to say the least."³⁹⁴

Of course, Halperin was far from the only observer to note that Clinton's performance was not her finest moment. In fact, when Clinton spoke to CNN a week after the debate, she told Candy Crowley, "I wasn't at my best the other night. We've had a bunch of debates and I wouldn't rank that up in my very top list."³⁹⁵

As far as "poll after poll that showed the debate hadn't changed the campaign dynamics one bit," a Rasmussen Reports poll, "the first poll of the race conducted since Senator Hillary Clinton's debate gaffe concerning drivers licenses for illegal immigrants," found that "Senator Hillary Clinton's lead in the first-in-the-nation New Hampshire Primary has fallen to its lowest level of the season."³⁹⁶ A CNN Opinion Research Corporation poll released on November 5 found that Clinton was "the top choice of 44 percent of the likely Democratic voters interviewed for the poll. Her closest rival, Sen. Barack Obama of Illinois, was the top choice of 25 percent..." In an October CNN/Opinion Research poll, Clinton was supported by 51 percent of Democratic voters and had a 30 point lead over Obama.³⁹⁷

Obviously, contrary to Boehlert's claim, the debate changed the campaign dynamics more than a bit. After all, it was Hillary Clinton who announced she was suspending her presidential campaign on June 7.

³⁹³ <http://mediamatters.org/columns/200711060002>

³⁹⁴ http://www.time.com/time/specials/2007/article/0,28804,1678242_1678241_1678236,00.html

³⁹⁵ <http://www.cnn.com/2007/POLITICS/11/06/clinton.iowa/index.html>

³⁹⁶

http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public_content/politics/election_2008__1/2008_presidential_election/new_hampshire/election_2008_new_hampshire_democratic_primary

³⁹⁷ <http://www.cnn.com/2007/POLITICS/11/05/poll.presidential.08/index.html>

CHAPTER 14

LIKE SLOTHS TO A PLAME

They say opposites attract, but former diplomat Joseph Wilson and his wife, CIA operative Valerie Plame, are the exception to that rule. These two phonies make the perfect couple. – Boston Herald editorial

During the summer of 2004, the John Kerry presidential campaign began operating a Web site at www.RestoreHonesty.com. The site was launched after Ambassador Joe Wilson joined the Kerry team, and its purpose was to highlight Wilson's claims that the Bush administration had gone to war in Iraq under false pretenses.

In mid-July 2004, however, something odd happened. When visitors attempted to visit www.RestoreHonesty.com, they received the message "Not Found." The entire site had disappeared.*

Actually, there was a good reason the Kerry campaign quickly dumped the Wilson information down the memory hole: Joe Wilson had been shown to be less than honest.

On July 10, 2004, the *Washington Post* reported, "Wilson's assertions—both about what he found in Niger and what the Bush administration did with the information—were undermined yesterday in a bipartisan Senate intelligence committee report."³⁹⁸

Contrary to Wilson's claim that his wife, Valerie Plame, had nothing to do with him being sent to Niger, the *Washington Post* reported, "The report states that a CIA official told the Senate committee that Plame 'offered up' Wilson's name for the Niger trip, then on Feb. 12, 2002, sent a memo to a deputy chief in the CIA's Directorate of Operations saying her husband 'has good relations with both the PM [prime minister] and the former Minister of Mines (not to mention lots of French contacts), both of whom could possibly shed light on this sort of activity.'"

In addition, the bipartisan Senate panel "found that Wilson's report, rather than debunking intelligence about purported uranium sales to Iraq, as he has said, bolstered the case for most intelligence analysts."

* Today the URL goes to a site completely unrelated to Wilson and Kerry. However, if you use the Way-back Machine at www.archive.org, the original Web site can be retrieved.

³⁹⁸ <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A39834-2004Jul9.html>

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Even the Kerry campaign had enough common sense not to highlight a liar at a Web site named www.RestoreHonesty.com.

That should have been the end of the story for the former ambassador. However, Joe “Lies-R-U’s” Wilson rose from the dead and began peddling the same lies in 2005—this time he had help from, among others, Larry Johnson, a former CIA intelligence analyst who had served with Plame.

In a July 17, 2005 column in the *Star Tribune*, Johnson attacked the Bush administration for allegedly blowing Plame’s cover. The column concluded with these words: “At the end of the day, Wilson was right. There were no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. It was the Bush administration that pushed that lie, and because of that lie Americans are dying. Shame on those who continue to slander Joe Wilson while giving Bush and his pack of liars a pass. That’s the true outrage.”³⁹⁹

Of course, if the Bush administration lied about Iraq having weapons of mass destruction (WMD), then every major intelligence agency in the world lied, Arab leaders lied, and the Clinton administration lied for eight years. Clinton’s top expert on Iraq, Kenneth Pollack, had to be a liar since in *The Threatening Storm: The Case for Invading Iraq* (2002) Pollack claimed, among other things, that “The German intelligence service, using methods it won’t divulge, estimated in 2001 that Iraq was three to six years from having a nuclear weapon.” Pollack’s book was written with the imprimatur of the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR). CFR’s board of directors includes at least six Clinton administration officials, including Madeleine Albright and Richard Holbrooke.

If the Bush administration lied about Iraq having WMD, then there is yet another person who lied. Visitors to Wilson’s own Web site* can find several columns that he has written over the past few years. On October 13, 2002, Wilson wrote a column entitled “How Saddam Thinks” for the *San Jose Mercury News*. In this column, Wilson asks, “Can we disarm Saddam this time without risking a chemical attack or a broader regional war that threatens our allies?”⁴⁰⁰

Risk a chemical attack from a country that posed no threat because it had no WMD?

Wilson also referred to Iraq’s WMD in a February 6, 2003 column in the *Los Angeles Times*: “There is now no incentive for Hussein to comply with

³⁹⁹ <http://www.startribune.com/stories/1519/5509192.html>

* Wilson’s Web site is found at www.politicsoftruth.com. Of course, his book is also called *The Politics of Truth: A Diplomat’s Memoir: Inside the Lies that Led to War and Betrayed My Wife’s CIA Identity*. This writer has noticed that when a liberal uses the word “truth” in the title of a book, movie, or organization, that entity almost invariably has little to do with truth. Examples include Al Gore’s *An Inconvenient Truth*, Al Franken’s *The Truth*, Keith Olbermann’s *Truth and Consequences*, and Paul Rieckhoff’s *Operation Truth*. Also, recall that *Pravda*, an official organ of the Central Committee of the Communist Party between 1912 and 1991, meant “truth” in Russian. Unless someone else has made the same observation, I’ll call this phenomenon “Groenhagen’s Law.”

⁴⁰⁰ <http://www.politicsoftruth.com/editorials/saddam.html>

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the inspectors or to refrain from using weapons of mass destruction to defend himself if the United States comes after him. And he will use them; we should be under no illusion about that.”⁴⁰¹ This column was published just nine days after President Bush’s 2003 State of the Union address, the address in which Bush said, “The British government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa.” However, Wilson made no mention of Niger, uranium, or the president’s address. (Note: The Butler report, “Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction,” which was released in the United Kingdom in July 2004, concluded that “the statement in President Bush’s State of the Union Address of 28 January 2003...was well founded.”)

Given that it was clear Johnson lied about Wilson being “right” about Iraq’s WMD, one would have expected the Democrats to drop him as quickly as the Kerry campaign dropped Wilson in 2004. Incredibly, that was not the case. Just six days after Johnson lied in the *Star Tribune*^{*}, the Democrats allowed him to deliver their weekly radio address. In the address, Johnson talked about the alleged leak of Valerie Plame’s name and offered listeners yet another falsehood: “The President has flip-flopped on his promise to fire anyone at the White House implicated in a leak.”

Here’s what Bush said on July 18, 2005: “I would like this to end as quickly as possible so we know the facts, and if someone committed a crime they will no longer work in my administration.”

And here’s what Bush said on Sept. 30, 2003: “If there is a leak out of my administration, I want to know who it is. And if the person has violated the law, the person will be taken care of...”

Where’s the flip-flop? Bush’s pledge was predicated on a member of the Bush administration committing a crime in the Plame case. To date, no one has been charged with a crime specifically related to the so-called leaking of Valerie Plame’s identity. Lewis “Scooter” Libby, Dick Cheney’s chief of staff, was indicted on federal obstruction and perjury charges and resigned immediately after being indicted. He was later convicted, but not for revealing the name of an undercover CIA agent.

Johnson also stated the following in his address:

⁴⁰¹ http://www.politicsoftruth.com/editorials/big_cat.html

^{*} Johnson also included this lie in his *Star Tribune* column: “The lies by people like Victoria Toensing, Rep. Peter King and P.J. O’Rourke insist that Plame was nothing, just a desk jockey. Yet, until Novak betrayed her, she was still undercover and the company that was her front was still a secret to the world.” In fact, the name of Plame’s front company was exposed by the Wilsons four years before Novak’s column was published. According to records at www.opensecrets.org, Joe Wilson contributed \$2,000 to Al Gore’s presidential campaign on March 26, 1999. At that time, the contribution limit was \$1,000, so the Gore campaign returned \$1,000 to Wilson on April 22, 1999. On the same day, Valerie Wilson is listed as contributing \$1,000 to Gore’s campaign. Under “occupation,” Wilson listed “Brewster-Jennings & Assoc.,” the front company Johnson claimed was “a secret to the world” until 2003.

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We must put to bed the lie that she was not undercover. For starters, if she had not been undercover then the CIA would not have referred the matter to the Justice Department.

Val only told those with a need to know about her status in order to safeguard her cover, not compromise it. She was content with being known as an energy consultant married to Ambassador Joe Wilson and the mother of twins.⁴⁰²

This raises a question. Johnson left the CIA in 1989. As a civilian in 2003, he didn't have "a need to know about her status." Therefore, how can he confidently make the claim that Plame was indeed undercover in July 2003?

When it comes to Plame's status, this is where Johnson is most dishonest. He claims Plame was a non-official cover (NOC) officer, whose blown cover "compromised her company and every individual overseas who had been in contact with that company and with her." However, *Time* magazine reported in October 2003 that Fred Rustmann, a former CIA official who put in 24 years as a spymaster and was Plame's boss for a few years, said "Plame was never a so-called deep-cover NOC." This means the "agency did not create a complex cover story about her education, background, job, personal life and even hobbies and habits that would stand up to intense scrutiny by foreign governments." *Time* also reported that Plame's cover "probably began to unravel years ago when Wilson first asked her out. Rustmann describes Plame as an 'exceptional officer' but says her ability to remain under cover was jeopardized by her marriage in 1998 to the higher-profile American diplomat."⁴⁰³ (Note: Rep. Jay Inslee, D-Wash., suggested that unless Wilson was a polygamist, it didn't matter that Karl Rove did not use Plame's name when he mentioned "Wilson's wife."⁴⁰⁴ While Wilson is not a polygamist, Plame is his third wife.)

As far as putting individuals overseas at risk, the *Los Angeles Times* on July 16 reported, "Current and former U.S. intelligence officials said it was unlikely Plame was in danger as a result of being identified. An internal CIA review concluded that her exposure caused minimal damage, mainly because she had been working at headquarters for years, former officials familiar with the review said."⁴⁰⁵

Common sense should tell us that someone who goes to work day after day at CIA headquarters for several years is not a "deep-cover NOC." If that is not enough to indicate Plame's true status, the fact that the CIA willingly confirmed her employment with the CIA should.

Robert Novak on September 29, 2003 stated the following on CNN:

⁴⁰² http://www.dnc.org/a/2005/07/former_cia_offi.php

⁴⁰³ <http://foi.missouri.edu/iipa/nocnoc.html>

⁴⁰⁴ http://www.house.gov/inslee/issues/security/covert_identity.html

⁴⁰⁵ <http://fairuse.1accesshost.com/news3/latimes120.html>

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Nobody in the Bush administration called me to leak this. In July, I was interviewing a senior administration official on Ambassador Wilson's report when he told me the trip was inspired by his wife, a CIA employee working on weapons of mass destruction. Another senior official told me the same thing. When I called the CIA in July, they confirmed Mrs. Wilson's involvement in a mission for her husband. They asked me not to use her name, but never indicated it would endanger her or anybody else. According to a confidential source at the CIA, Mrs. Wilson was an analyst, not a spy, not a covert operative, and not in charge of undercover operatives.⁴⁰⁶

If Plame were an undercover agent, why did the CIA confirm her "involvement in a mission for her husband"? It seems a more appropriate response to Novak's inquiry would have been, "I'm sorry, Mr. Novak, but there is no Valerie Plame employed with the CIA." According to the 1982 Intelligence Identities Protection Act, the intelligence community has to take steps to affirmatively protect someone's cover. Obviously, the CIA failed to do this when it confirmed Plame's employment with the agency.

Joe Wilson endorsed Hillary Clinton and William Arkin of the *Washington Post* reported that he was one of her national security and foreign policy advisers.⁴⁰⁷ Clinton Inc. and their allies in the media have manufactured a myth concerning Wilson and Plame. Here is how Rebecca Traister of Salon.com dishonestly portrayed the myth: "Wilson went to Niger; he found no evidence that Iraq could have obtained uranium there; he reported his findings; the White House disregarded them; Wilson wrote about that; and the White House retaliated against his family, compromising national security in the process."⁴⁰⁸

There's a slight problem with this myth: the chronology is off. According to *Newsweek*, Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage told *Washington Post* reporter Bob Woodward about Plame's identity three weeks *before* talking to Robert Novak. Armitage met with Novak on July 8, 2003—"just days before Novak published his first piece identifying Plame."⁴⁰⁹

Armitage spoke with Woodward in mid-June 2003. However, the *New York Times* did not publish Wilson's column until July 6. Therefore, how could revealing Plame's identity to the media be retaliation for Wilson's column? How could have Armitage known in mid-June that the *New York Times* would publish Wilson's column three weeks later, let alone know the content of that column? Since the mainstream media (i.e., the "sloths") lack the de-

⁴⁰⁶ <http://www.cnn.com/2003/ALLPOLITICS/09/29/novak.cia/>

⁴⁰⁷ <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/opinions/documents/the-war-over-the-wonks.html>

⁴⁰⁸ http://www.salon.com/books/review/2007/10/24/valerie_plame/

⁴⁰⁹ <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/14533384/site/newsweek>

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sire, integrity, and motivation to ask these and other questions concerning the Wilsons, others will have to do that job.

CHAPTER 15

MISCELLANEOUS MOONBAT MYTHS

Moonbat (also “barking moonbat” and “moonbat crazy”) is a term often used currently in U.S. politics as a political epithet referring to anyone that is liberal or on the left. – Wikipedia

George Bush is on the ballot in 2008. - Rahm Emanuel⁴¹⁰

In addition to rewriting the history of the Clinton administration, the “moonbats” have been busy propagating myths concerning the Bush administration. I have included several of those myths below, in no particular order, along with the facts. We will certainly hear many of these myths repeated as the Democrats run against George W. Bush during 2008.

MYTH: The Bush administration gave the Taliban \$43 million before 9/11.

On May 22, 2001, *Los Angeles Times* columnist Robert Scheer claimed that the Bush administration had made a Faustian deal with the Taliban in Afghanistan:

Enslave your girls and women, harbor anti-U.S. terrorists, destroy every vestige of civilization in your homeland, and the Bush administration will embrace you. All that matters is that you line up as an ally in the drug war, the only international cause that this nation still takes seriously.

That’s the message sent with the recent gift of \$43 million to the Taliban rulers of Afghanistan, the most virulent anti-American violators of human rights in the world today. The gift, announced last Thursday by Secretary of State Colin Powell, in addition to other recent aid, makes the U.S. the main sponsor of the Taliban and rewards that “rogue regime” for declaring that opium growing is against the will of God. So, too, by the Taliban’s estimation, are most human activities, but it’s the ban on drugs that catches this administration’s attention.

⁴¹⁰ <http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2007/11/24/america/NA-GEN-US-Iraq-Politics.php>

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Never mind that Osama bin Laden still operates the leading anti-American terror operation from his base in Afghanistan, from which, among other crimes, he launched two bloody attacks on American embassies in Africa in 1998.

Sadly, the Bush administration is cozying up to the Taliban regime at a time when the United Nations, at U.S. insistence, imposes sanctions on Afghanistan because the Kabul government will not turn over Bin Laden.⁴¹¹

Scheer's column received little notice when it was published. However, after 9/11 it appeared on numerous left-wing Web sites. Michael Moore repeated Scheer's claim on several occasions, including on the March 8, 2002 edition of ABC's *Politically Incorrect*.⁴¹² Slightly more credible commentators, such as *The New Yorker's* Hendrick Hertzberg and *The Independent's* Robert Fisk, also claimed that Bush gave the Taliban \$43 million.

If these liberals would have done a little research, they would have discovered that the Bush administration did not give \$43 million to the Taliban. The U.S. State Department actually issued a press release on May 17, 2001 that explicitly noted that the \$43 million was for humanitarian assistance. According to Secretary of State Colin Powell, "[The aid] bypasses the Taliban, who have done little to alleviate the suffering of the Afghan people and much to exacerbate it."

The liberal commentators also missed this fact in the May 17 press release: "Last year the U.S. contributed about \$114 million in aid, making it the largest provider of humanitarian assistance to Afghans."⁴¹³

Of course, "last year" would have been 2000, the final year of the Clinton administration. Scheer apparently failed to notice that each and every one of those 114 million dollars in assistance was delivered to Afghanistan *after* the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1267. This resolution established the "Al-Qaida and Taliban Sanctions Committee."⁴¹⁴

The *Los Angeles Times* in November 2005 fired Scheer. According to Scheer, "The publisher Jeff Johnson, who has offered not a word of explanation to me, has privately told people that he hated every word that I wrote. I assume that mostly refers to my exposing the lies used by President Bush to justify the invasion of Iraq."⁴¹⁵ Another possibility is Scheer's own lies, such as claiming the Bush administration gave \$43 million to the Taliban, led to his dismissal.

⁴¹¹ http://www.robertscheer.com/1_natcolumn/01_columns/052201.htm

⁴¹² <http://abc.go.com/primetime/politicallyincorrect/episodes/2001-02/308.html>

⁴¹³ The press release's original URL, <http://usinfo.state.gov/topical/global/refugees/01051702.htm>, is inactive and cannot be retrieved. Given how widespread this myth is on the Internet, the State Department would be wise to make it available online. The full contents of the press release can be viewed at <http://www.apfn.net/messageboard/5-17-03/discussion.cgi.17.html>. In addition, a State Department fact sheet regarding the \$43 million can be found at

http://usinfo.state.gov/is/Archive_Index/U.S._Increases_Aid_to_Relieve_Afghan_Crisis.html

⁴¹⁴ <http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1267/index.shtml>

⁴¹⁵ http://www.huffingtonpost.com/robert-scheer/on-leaving-the-la-tim_b_10509.html

MISCELLANEOUS MOONBAT MYTHS

MYTH: “Veterans of the Clinton administration say the Bush team didn’t take their al-Qaeda warnings and plans seriously enough.” – Dan Rather, CBS News, August 5, 2002

Liberal commentators often claim the Clinton administration gave the incoming Bush administration a war plan to go after al Qaeda. For example, Al Franken in *Lies and the Lying Liars Who Tell Them* lied when he claimed that the Clinton administration had a “far-reaching plan” to eliminate al Qaeda and that the Clinton team “decided to turn over the plan to the Bush administration to carry out.”⁴¹⁶ Most of these claims are based on a discredited August 4, 2002 article in *Time*.⁴¹⁷ However, Sandy Berger stated the following before the 9/11 Commission: “But there was no war plan that we turned over to the Bush administration during the transition. And the reports of that are just incorrect.”⁴¹⁸

MYTH: Vice President Dick Cheney said Iraq had reconstituted nuclear weapons.

In the June 27, 2003 issue of the *New York Times*, columnist Nicholas D. Kristof wrote the following:

Hawks need to wrestle with the reckless exaggerations of intelligence that were used to mislead the American public. Instead, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld declared Tuesday, “I don’t know anybody in any government or any intelligence agency who suggested that the Iraqis had nuclear weapons.”

Let me help. Mr. Rumsfeld, meet George Tenet, director of central intelligence, who immediately before the Congressional vote on Iraq last October issued a report asserting: “Most analysts assess Iraq is reconstituting its nuclear weapons program.” Meet Vice President Dick Cheney, who said about Saddam on March 16: “We believe he has, in fact, reconstituted nuclear weapons.”⁴¹⁹

Let me help, Mr. Kristof. If Tenet said Iraq is “reconstituting its nuclear weapons program,” that is far different from him saying Iraq already had nuclear weapons.

Cheney’s statement is a slightly different case. However, common sense should have told Kristof that if Saddam never had nuclear weapons, then he had no nuclear weapons to reconstitute. If you read the entire *Meet the Press* transcript from which Kristof got the Cheney quote, it is clear that Cheney

⁴¹⁶ p. 115.

⁴¹⁷ <http://www.time.com/time/covers/1101020812/story.html>

⁴¹⁸ <http://www.thememoryhole.org/911/hearings/911hearing-trans-sept19b.htm>

⁴¹⁹ <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/06/27/opinion/27KRIS.html?ex=1193889600&en=2ec0da366b252830&ei=5070>

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was referring to a reconstituted nuclear weapons *program*. Here is part of what Cheney said during his March 16 appearance:

And I think that would be the fear here, that even if he were tomorrow to give everything up, if he stays in power, we have to assume that as soon as the world is looking the other way and preoccupied with other issues, he will be back again rebuilding his BW and CW capabilities, and once again reconstituting his nuclear program. He has pursued nuclear weapons for over 20 years. Done absolutely everything he could to try to acquire that capability and if he were to cough up whatever he has in that regard now, even if it was complete and total, we have to assume tomorrow he would be right back in business again.

We know he's out trying once again to produce nuclear weapons and we know that he has a long-standing relationship with various terrorist groups, including the al-Qaeda organization.

We know that based on intelligence that he has been very, very good at hiding these kinds of efforts. He's had years to get good at it and we know he has been absolutely devoted to trying to acquire nuclear weapons. And we believe he has, in fact, reconstituted nuclear weapons. I think Mr. ElBaradei frankly is wrong. And I think if you look at the track record of the International Atomic Energy Agency and this kind of issue, especially where Iraq's concerned, they have consistently underestimated or missed what it was Saddam Hussein was doing. I don't have any reason to believe they're any more valid this time than they've been in the past.⁴²⁰

These statements leave no doubt that Cheney was referring to a reconstituted nuclear weapons program, and not actual nuclear weapons. Even the sentence that Kristof quoted was immediately preceded with “we know he has been absolutely devoted to *trying to acquire nuclear weapons*.” (My emphasis)

Unfortunately, Kristof was not the only commentator to take Cheney's words out of context. Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden, perhaps the most dishonest member of the U.S. Senate*, took Cheney's comment out of context several times during interviews, including on *Meet the Press*. “And on your show, you had that one Sunday the vice president of the United States saying [Saddam's] reconstituted his nuclear weapons,” Biden said. “I was on a simultaneous program, they asked me the question. I said either the president—either the vice president's not telling the truth or he did not get the same briefing I have or he fully misunderstands what he was told.”⁴²¹

⁴²⁰ <http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/bush/cheneymeetthepress.htm>

* Biden dropped out of the 1988 presidential campaign after campaign operatives with Massachusetts Gov. Michael S. Dukakis secretly distributed to news media outlets an “attack video” juxtaposing Biden's speeches with those of British Labor party leader Neil Kinnock. Dukakis insisted that he had no prior knowledge concerning the exposure of Biden's plagiarism.

⁴²¹ <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/18381961/page/2/>

MISCELLANEOUS MOONBAT MYTHS

Russert made no effort to correct Biden. And he certainly did not remind Biden that he also claimed Saddam was pursuing nuclear weapons before the invasion.⁴²²

MYTH: “For opponents, Bush’s notorious 16 words in his State of the Union address erroneously talking up the Iraqi nuclear threat make up a far more important prevarication than Clinton’s 11 (‘I did not have sexual relations with that woman, Ms. Lewinsky.’) - Nicholas Thompson, Salon.com

I had the opportunity to attend a presentation by Robert Novak at the Robert J. Dole Institute of Politics at the University of Kansas on October 30, 2007. Of course, the Plame affair was a topic of discussion. During that discussion, Interim Director Jonathan Earle, an associate professor of history, characterized Bush’s 16 words as a lie. Of course, Earle was not the first to do so. For example, the *New York Times*’ Frank Rich in a November 27, 2005 column referred to Bush’s “bogus 16 words about Saddam’s fictitious African uranium.”⁴²³ “Cherry-picking convenient lies about something as important as nuclear war is bad enough but the administration’s attempts to spin the after-shocks have been even worse,” wrote Arianna Huffington in July 2003. “They just don’t seem to grasp the concept that when you’re sending American soldiers to die for something the reasons you give—all of the reasons—should be true.”⁴²⁴ “[A]s late as the president’s State of the Union address in January 2003, our policymakers were still using information which the intelligence community knew was almost certainly false,” claimed Sen. Carl Levin, then the ranking Democrat on the Armed Services Committee.⁴²⁵

It turns out the 16 words were not a lie.

On July 26, 2004, FactCheck.org, “a nonpartisan, nonprofit, ‘consumer advocate’ for voters that aims to reduce the level of deception and confusion in U.S. politics,” posted an item entitled, “Bush’s ‘16 Words’ on Iraq & Uranium: He May Have Been Wrong But He Wasn’t Lying.” FactCheck.org included this summary of their report:

A British intelligence review released July 14 calls Bush’s 16 words “well founded.”

A separate report by the US Senate Intelligence Committee said July 7 that the US also had similar information from “a number of intelligence reports,” a fact that was classified at the time Bush spoke.

⁴²² <http://www.joebiden.com/getinformed/opeds?id=0056>

⁴²³ http://www.truthout.org/docs_2005/112705Y.shtml

⁴²⁴ <http://www.alternet.org/columnists/story/16427/>

⁴²⁵ <http://www.cnn.com/2003/ALLPOLITICS/07/08/sprj.irq.bush.sotu/index.html>

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Ironically, former Ambassador Joseph Wilson, who later called Bush's 16 words a "lie", supplied information that the Central Intelligence Agency took as confirmation that Iraq may indeed have been seeking uranium from Niger.

Both the US and British investigations make clear that some forged Italian documents, exposed as fakes soon after Bush spoke, were not the basis for the British intelligence Bush cited, or the CIA's conclusion that Iraq was trying to get uranium.

None of the new information suggests Iraq ever nailed down a deal to buy uranium, and the Senate report makes clear that US intelligence analysts have come to doubt whether Iraq was even trying to buy the stuff. In fact, both the White House and the CIA long ago conceded that the 16 words shouldn't have been part of Bush's speech.

But what he said – that Iraq sought uranium – is just what both British and US intelligence were telling him at the time. So Bush may indeed have been misinformed, but that's not the same as lying.⁴²⁶

MYTH: In his 2003 State of the Union address, President Bush characterized Iraq as an "imminent threat."

The day after Bush delivered his address, the *Los Angeles Times* published an article with the front-page headline "Bush Calls Iraq Imminent Threat." According to *Times* staff writer Maura Reynolds, "A somber and steely President Bush, speaking to a skeptical world Tuesday in his State of the Union address, provided a forceful and detailed denunciation of Iraq, promising new evidence that Saddam Hussein's regime poses an imminent danger to the world and demanding the United Nations convene in just one week to consider the threat."⁴²⁷

Reynolds must have been listening to a different speech. Here is what Bush actually said:

Some have said we must not act until the threat is imminent. Since when have terrorists and tyrants announced their intentions, politely putting us on notice before they strike? If this threat is permitted to fully and suddenly emerge, all actions, all words, and all recriminations would come too late. Trusting in the sanity and restraint of Saddam Hussein is not a strategy, and it is not an option.⁴²⁸

Bush's position was that Saddam's Iraq was not yet an imminent threat, but a "serious and mounting threat to our country, and our friends and our allies." This point was earlier made by Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz in December 2002:

⁴²⁶ <http://www.factcheck.org/article222.html>

⁴²⁷ <http://www.ph.ucla.edu/epi/bioter/iraqimminent.html>

⁴²⁸ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/01/20030128-19.html>

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Some people said [during the Cuban Missile Crisis] that Kennedy should have waited until the threat was imminent. We hear that again today. But **we cannot wait to act until the threat is imminent**. The notion that we can do so assumes that we will know when the threat is imminent. That wasn't true even when the United States was presented with the very obvious threat of Soviet missiles in Cuba. As President Kennedy said 40 years ago, "We no longer live in a world where only the actual firing of weapons represents a sufficient challenge to a nation's security to constitute maximum peril." If that was true in 1962, facing a threat that was comparatively easy to see, how much more true is it today against threats developed by terrorists who use the freedom of democratic societies to plot and plan in our midst in secret.

Stop and think for a moment. Just when did the attacks of September 11 become imminent? Certainly they were imminent on September 10, although we didn't know it. In fact, the September 11 terrorists established themselves in the United States long before that date—many months or even a couple of years earlier. **Anyone who believes that we can wait until we have certain knowledge that attacks are imminent has failed to connect the dots that took us to September 11.**⁴²⁹

Even Bush critic Al Gore acknowledged that the Bush administration was not arguing that Iraq posed an imminent threat. Speaking before the Commonwealth Club on September 23, 2002, Gore said, "President Bush now asserts that we will take preemptive action even if the threat we perceive is not imminent."⁴³⁰ Gore had apparently forgotten that he was part of an administration that also took preemptive action against Iraq in December 1998. That action was not characterized as a response to an imminent threat, but as a response to a "threat of the future."⁴³¹

There is little, if any, difference between how the Clinton administration characterized the threat posed by Iraq and how the Bush administration characterized that same threat. For example, in a January 11, 2001 press release, Richard Holbrooke, Bill Clinton's U.S. ambassador to the UN, was quoted as saying Iraq would be a major issue for the incoming Bush administration. "Saddam Hussein's activities continue to be unacceptable and, in my view, dangerous to the region and, indeed, to the world," Holbrooke said, "not only because he possesses the potential for weapons of mass destruction but because of the very nature of his regime. His willingness to be cruel internally is not unique in the world, but the combination of that and his willingness to export his problems makes him a clear and present danger at all times."⁴³²

The Clinton administration had used the "clear and present danger" phrase before. Secretary of Defense William Perry in 1996 said the following

⁴²⁹ <http://www.commonwealthclub.org/archive/02/02-12wolfovitz-speech.html>

⁴³⁰ <http://www.commonwealthclub.org/archive/02/02-09gore-speech.html>

⁴³¹ <http://www.usembassy.it/file9801/alia/98121704.htm>

⁴³² http://www.usembassy.it/file2001_01/alia/a1011102.htm

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after Saddam Hussein attacked the northern Kurdish city of Irbil: “The issue is not simply the Iraqi attack on Irbil, it is the clear and present danger that Saddam Hussein poses to his neighbors, the security and stability of the region and the flow of oil to the world.”⁴³³

The response to this “clear and present danger” was a U.S. missile strike against Iraqi military targets in southern Iraq.

When Clinton launched Operation Desert Fox against Iraq in December 1998, he said that he and his national security advisers “agreed that Saddam Hussein presented a clear and present danger to the stability of the Persian Gulf and the safety of people everywhere.”⁴³⁴

In two cases, when the Clinton administration characterized Saddam as a “clear and present danger,” that characterization was accompanied by the use of military force against Iraq. As late as the transition period in January 2001, Holbrooke expressed his view that Saddam posed a “clear and present danger at all times.”

Presumably, “at all times” would include the years 2001-2003. Indeed, the term “clear and present danger” continued to be used vis-à-vis Saddam during the lead up to the invasion. The *Weekly Standard’s* Terry Eastland in October 2002 addressed the use of the phrase “clear and present danger” in relation to a preemptive strike against Iraq: “In fact, if you do a Nexis search for the past six months for ‘clear and present danger’ and ‘Iraq,’ you’ll find more than 600 mentions. Do the same search on Google and you’ll get more than 4,600.”⁴³⁵

Those mentions included comments from those who believed Saddam was a clear and present danger. For example, U.S. Ambassador J. Richard Blankenship on October 8, 2002 delivered an address entitled “Iraq: A Clear and Present Danger” before American Men’s & Women’s Club.⁴³⁶

The mentions also included comments from those who argued that Saddam was a clear and present danger, but not yet an imminent threat. For example, speaking before the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies on September 27, 2002, Sen. Ted Kennedy said, “There is clearly a threat from Iraq, and there is clearly a danger, but the Administration has not made a convincing case that we face such an imminent threat to our national security that a unilateral, pre-emptive American strike and an immediate war are necessary.”⁴³⁷

Kennedy offered no explanation for why he required an imminent threat threshold for a preemptive strike on Iraq in 2003 when a clear-and-present-danger threshold was sufficient for a preemptive strike on Iraq in 1998.

⁴³³ <http://edition.cnn.com/WORLD/9609/03/iraq.pentagon/index.html>

⁴³⁴ <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=41731>

⁴³⁵ <http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/001/746piwrld.asp?pg=1>

⁴³⁶ <http://usembassy.state.gov/nassau/www/hiraq.html>

⁴³⁷ <http://www.alternet.org/story/14195>

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Kenneth Pollack in *The Threatening Storm* showed why Kennedy's imminent threat threshold was a foolish one: "Some have argued that the weakness of Iraq's current arsenal means that it is unnecessary to invade at this point—because Saddam does not constitute an immediate threat. This claim effectively suggests that we should wait until Saddam acquires the capacity to inflict massive damage before we take action against him. This is the problem that we face: by the time Saddam truly is threatening, it will be too late to do anything about it. We act either before he has acquired these capabilities or not at all."⁴³⁸

MYTH: The United States created Osama bin Laden.

In June 2004, Slate.com's Fred Kaplan claimed that, while Ronald Reagan played a role in ending the Cold War, he "also played a major role in bringing on the terrorist war that followed—specifically, in abetting the rise of Osama Bin Laden."⁴³⁹

Robin Cook, former leader of the British House of Commons and Foreign Secretary from 1997-2001, made the same "blowback" argument in 2005:

Bin Laden was, though, a product of a monumental miscalculation by western security agencies. Throughout the 80s he was armed by the CIA and funded by the Saudis to wage jihad against the Russian occupation of Afghanistan. Al-Qaida, literally "the database", was originally the computer file of the thousands of mujahideen who were recruited and trained with help from the CIA to defeat the Russians. Inexplicably, and with disastrous consequences, it never appears to have occurred to Washington that once Russia was out of the way, Bin Laden's organisation would turn its attention to the west.⁴⁴⁰

CNN terrorist analyst Peter Bergen, who interviewed bin Laden in 1997, in 2006 called the "blowback" argument "hogwash":

The story about bin Laden and the CIA—that the CIA funded bin Laden or trained bin Laden—is simply a folk myth. There's no evidence of this. In fact, there are very few things that bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri and the U.S. government agree on. They all agree that they didn't have a relationship in the 1980s. And they wouldn't have needed to. Bin Laden had his own money, he was anti-American and he was operating secretly and independently.

The real story here is the CIA didn't really have a clue about who this guy was until 1996 when they set up a unit to really start tracking him.⁴⁴¹

⁴³⁸ p. 418.

⁴³⁹ <http://www.slate.com/id/2102243/>

⁴⁴⁰ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/terrorism/story/0,12780,1523838,00.html>

⁴⁴¹ <http://www.cnn.com/2006/WORLD/asiapcf/08/15/bergen.answers/index.html>

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The folk myth concerning the CIA and bin Laden apparently became so widespread that the State Department was compelled to respond to the misinformation. A 2005 article asked the question “Did the U.S. ‘Create’ Osama bin Laden?”⁴⁴² That question was answered in the negative by, among others, Bergen, al Qaeda’s number two leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri, and Milt Bearden, who served as the CIA station chief in Pakistan from 1986 to 1989. Oddly, many of those who subscribe to the “blowback” theory also argue that Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden would never cooperate with one another because the former was a secularist and the latter is an Islamic extremist. If bin Laden would not cooperate with a secularist such as Saddam, why would he cooperate with the so-called “Great Satan”?

MYTH: Rendition is something the Bush administration cooked up.

Daniel Benjamin, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution and NSC staff member from 1994 to 1999, addressed this and several other myths concerning rendition in October 2007:

Beginning in 1995, the Clinton administration turned up the speed with a full-fledged program to use rendition to disrupt terrorist plotting abroad. According to former director of central intelligence George J. Tenet, about 70 renditions were carried out before Sept. 11, 2001, most of them during the Clinton years.⁴⁴³

Benjamin suggests the Clinton administration worked to ensure that targets were not tortured. “The guidelines for Clinton-era renditions required that subjects could be sent only to countries where they were not likely to be tortured—countries that gave assurances to that effect and whose compliance was monitored by the State Department and the intelligence community,” Benjamin wrote. “It’s impossible to be certain that those standards were upheld every time, but serious efforts were made to see that they were.”

However, Michael Scheuer, who devised the rendition system, said in 2005 that targets were tortured before and after 9/11. “I have no doubt about it,” Scheuer said. “You’d think I’m an ass if I said nobody was tortured. There was more of a willingness in the White House to turn a blind eye to the legal niceties than within the CIA. The Agency always knew it would be left holding the baby for this one.”⁴⁴⁴

A July 28, 2007 article in the *Guardian* appears to confirm Scheuer’s contention:

⁴⁴² <http://usinfo.state.gov/media/Archive/2005/Jan/24-318760.html>

⁴⁴³ http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/10/19/AR2007101900835_pf.html

⁴⁴⁴ http://www.craigmurray.co.uk/archives/2005/10/two_experts_on_1.html

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MI6 believed it was close to finding the al-Qaida leader in Afghanistan in 1998, and again the next year. The plan was for MI6 to hand the CIA vital information about Bin Laden. Ministers including Robin Cook, the then foreign secretary, gave their approval on condition that the CIA gave assurances he would be treated humanely. The plot is revealed in a 75-page report by parliament's intelligence and security committee on rendition, the practice of flying detainees to places where they may be tortured.⁴⁴⁵

According to the article, the CIA never gave the assurances.

MYTH: Sens. Gary Hart and Warren Rudman warned the Bush administration about an imminent terrorist attack eight months prior to 9/11.

According to David Talbot in an April 2, 2004 Salon.com article, "Hart was co-chair (with former Sen. Warren Rudman, R-N.H.) of the U.S. Commission on National Security, a bipartisan panel that conducted the most thorough investigation of U.S. security challenges since World War II. After completing the report, which warned that a devastating terrorist attack on America was imminent and called for the immediate creation of a Cabinet-level national security agency, and delivering it to President Bush on January 31, 2001, Hart and Rudman personally briefed Rice, Rumsfeld and Secretary of State Colin Powell. But, according to Hart, the Bush administration never followed up on the commission's urgent recommendations, even after he repeated them in a private White House meeting with Rice just days before 9/11."⁴⁴⁶

Hart himself in a Salon.com article entitled "A Paul Revere no one wants to hear from" claimed he "warned the Bush administration the terrorists were coming." According to Hart, the report his panel submitted to Bush said, "America will become increasingly vulnerable to hostile attack on our homeland [and] Americans will likely die on American soil, possibly in large numbers."⁴⁴⁷

Hart's Salon.com piece did not include this sentence prior to "Americans will likely die on American soil, possibly in large numbers": "States, terrorists, and other disaffected groups will acquire weapons of mass destruction and mass disruption, and some will use them."⁴⁴⁸ Of course, al Qaeda did not use WMD on 9/11.

Hart also failed to mention that his report stated, "A direct attack against American citizens *on American soil* is likely over the next quarter century."

⁴⁴⁵ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/usa/story/0,,2136651,00.html>

⁴⁴⁶ <http://dir.salon.com/story/news/feature/2004/04/02/hart/index.html>

⁴⁴⁷ <http://dir.salon.com/story/opinion/feature/2004/04/06/commission/>

⁴⁴⁸ <http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/nssg/Reports/NWC.pdf>

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Over the next quarter century? I'm not a history major, but I'm fairly certain that Paul Revere did not begin shouting "The British are coming" in 1750.

When Secretary of Defense William Cohen held a press briefing on the USS *Cole* on January 9, 2001 (see Appendix), he noted that Hart and Rudman did not say a terrorist attack on U.S. soil was imminent: "So we can anticipate, if you look at the Hart-Rudman committee or commission recommendations, that—they have indicated that they anticipate that a terrorist act will in fact occur on American soil within not the immediate future, but within a fairly foreseeable time frame." (My emphasis)

MYTH: Bush acted inappropriately after White House Chief of Staff Andrew Card told him that America was under attack.

In the movie *Fahrenheit 9/11*, Michael Moore includes a clip of President Bush sitting in a Florida classroom for five to seven minutes after Card told him that America was under attack. "When the second plane hit the tower, his chief of staff entered the classroom and told Mr. Bush the nation is under attack," Moore said in the movie. "Not knowing what to do, with no one telling him what to do, and no Secret Service rushing in to take him to safety, Mr. Bush just sat there and continued to read My Pet Goat with the children. Nearly seven minutes passed with nobody doing anything."⁴⁴⁹

Moore did not mention that Press Secretary Ari Fleischer was in the classroom holding up a legal pad. Big block letters were scrawled on the cardboard backing: DON'T SAY ANYTHING YET.⁴⁵⁰

Presidential candidate John Kerry used Moore's clip to attack Bush. "I would have told those kids very nicely and politely that the president of the United States has something that he needs to attend to," Kerry told a convention of minority journalists.⁴⁵¹ However, the candidate's wife had a different opinion. "I think the president behaved correctly in terms of being quiet amidst stunning news like that in a classroom of kids," Teresa Heinz told the host of MSNBC's *Hardball with Chris Matthews* a month before Kerry offered his criticism. "You know, what can you do? It takes you a couple of minutes to digest what you have just heard. And then he was . . . not in his White House and in his office with all of his people. He was in the school in Florida."⁴⁵²

Kerry also undermined his argument in an earlier interview with Larry King. According to Kerry, he was in a meeting in the office of Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle when he watched the second plane hit the World Trade Center on television, while standing next to fellow Democrats Barbara

⁴⁴⁹ <http://michaelmoore.com/warroom/>

⁴⁵⁰ <http://www.washtimes.com/national/20021007-85016651.htm>

⁴⁵¹ <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A46913-2004Aug6.html>

⁴⁵² *Ibid.*

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Boxer and Harry Reid. “And we shortly thereafter sat down at the table, and then we just realized nobody could think, and then, boom, we saw the cloud of the explosion at the Pentagon,” Kerry told King.⁴⁵³

“By Kerry’s own words, he and his fellow senators sat there for 40 minutes, realizing ‘nobody could think,’” said a Bush-Cheney campaign statement. “He is hardly in a position to criticize President Bush for ‘inaction.’”⁴⁵⁴

Of course, Kerry supporters responded that Bush, and not Kerry, was president on 9/11 and that Kerry was not in a position to take any action. Fair enough. Let’s compare Bush’s response to another president who was in office when a sneak attack occurred. According to historian William Manchester, a self-described “knee-jerk FDR liberal,” after President Franklin D. Roosevelt learned about the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, “the President of the United States did nothing for 18 minutes.” In addition, in 1994 PBS offered this glimpse into FDR’s demeanor after learning about the attack:

Alonzo Fields: Now, when I went upstairs, they had set up in the bedroom and they were taking communications from what was going on. And Paul Watson came out and he had this message and he says, “Mr. President, the whole damn Navy is gone. What in the hell are we going to do?” And the President and Mr. Hopkins—he said to Mr. Hopkins, he says, “My God, my God, how did it happen?” He had his head in hands and at his desk like this. He says, “How did it happen?” He says, “Now I’ll go down in history disgraced.”

David McCullough: [voice-over] At a Cabinet meeting that night, Labor Secretary Frances Perkins found Roosevelt deeply shaken. “He was having actual physical difficulty in getting out the words that put him on record as knowing the Navy was caught unawares.”

Alonzo Fields: He looked drawn. His face was kind of pale-ish-like and tired-like, and it seemed to be a maze around him, just a blind sort of fog around him. When I looked at him, I got that impression from him, that he was in a fog, and he was so despondent over the fact—he said, “We don’t know what’s out there.”⁴⁵⁵

While liberal presidential wannabes such as Kerry and liberal presidential historians such Robert Dallek and Douglas Brinkley (who wrote *Tour of Duty*, a fawning biography of John Kerry in Vietnam for the 2004 campaign) criticized Bush’s initial response on the morning of 9/11, Gwendolyn Tosé-Rigell, the principal at Emma E. Booker Elementary School, says Bush handled himself properly. “I don’t think anyone could have handled it better,” Tosé-Rigell told the *Sarasota Herald-Tribune*. “What would it have served if he had jumped out of his chair and ran out of the room?”⁴⁵⁶ In addition, Lee

⁴⁵³ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁵ http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/presidents/32_f_roosevelt/filmmore/filmscript.html

⁴⁵⁶ <http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/1158677/posts>

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Hamilton, vice chairman of the 9/11 Commission and a former Democratic congressman from Indiana, said, “Bush made the right decision in remaining calm, in not rushing out of the classroom.”⁴⁵⁷

MYTH: George W. Bush instituted the policy prohibiting media coverage of human remains, including the release of photographs of flag-draped military coffins.

According to the Associated Press in 2004, “Banning press and public access to the arrival of casualties in Dover was started in the 1991 Persian Gulf War, during the term of President George W. Bush’s father. The policy continued through President Clinton’s eight years in office, although it was not strictly enforced and there was no conflict on the scale of the either the Gulf War or the war in Iraq during Clinton’s tenure.”⁴⁵⁸

But Clinton did have the Black Hawk Down incident in Somalia in 1993, during which 18 Army Rangers were killed. According to the late Col. David Hackworth, Clinton ordered that images of the battle in Mogadishu be kept from the television networks. Eight videotapes of the battle made by an American reconnaissance plane circling overhead were marked “classified.”⁴⁵⁹ Clinton did not want those tapes to be broadcast on CNN.

The obvious goal of those who argue that such photos should be released is to turn Americans against the war. Even in World War II, a war far less controversial than the Global War on Terror, photos of dead Americans resulted in a negative reaction. Historian William Manchester in *Goodbye, Darkness* described what happened after the Pentagon decided to release photos of dead Marines on Tarawa:

The published photographs touched off an uproar. [Fleet Admiral Chester William] Nimitz received sacks of mail from grieving relatives—a mother wrote, “You killed my son”—and editorials demanded a congressional investigation. The men on Tarawa were puzzled. The photographers had been discreet. No dismembered corpses were shown, no faces with chunks missing, no flies crawling on eyeballs; virtually all the pictures were of bodies in Marine uniforms face down on the beach. Except for those who had known the dead, the pictures were quite ordinary to men who had scraped the remains of buddies off bunker walls or who, while digging foxholes, found their entrenching tools caught in the mouths of dead friends who had been buried in sand by exploding shells.

⁴⁵⁷ <http://www.deseretnews.com/dn/view/0,1249,595071129,00.html>

⁴⁵⁸ <http://www.firstamendmentcenter.org/news.aspx?id=13549>

⁴⁵⁹ *Hazardous Duty: America’s Most Decorated Soldier Reports From the Front and Tells it Like it is*, p. 168.

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MYTH: The Bush administration offered shifting rationales for removing Saddam from power after no WMD were found in Iraq.

In a September 29, 2004 “news analysis,” Marc Sandalow of the *San Francisco Chronicle* wrote, “A war that was waged principally to overthrow a dictator who possessed ‘some of the most lethal weapons ever devised’ has evolved into a mission to rid Iraq of its ‘weapons-making capabilities’ and to offer democracy and freedom to its 25 million residents.”

As we saw in Chapter 6, historian Niall Ferguson noted that the Bush administration offered five main rationales for removing Saddam from power *before* the invasion. Those rationales included ridding Iraq of its weapons-making capabilities and promoting democracy and freedom in Iraq. Apparently, Sandalow had forgotten that the operation to remove Saddam from power was called Operation Iraqi *Freedom*.

It is fair to say that the emphasis placed on the five main rationales shifted over time. However, the rationales themselves have been consistent since the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

MYTH: The U.S. invaded Iraq unilaterally.

According to the Heritage Foundation on March 19, 2003, “To date, there are 54 countries that have joined the Coalition of the Willing—not including Canada, Germany, and France, which have recently offered conditional support. This does not include all of the 15 nations that have offered quiet support. The number of nations to date already eclipses the 1991 Gulf War coalition, which had 38 countries.”⁴⁶⁰

MYTH: Hans Blix gave Iraq a clean bill of health prior to the invasion.

On March 18, 2003, British Prime Minister Tony Blair addressed the House of Commons and offered these words:

On 7 March, the inspectors published a remarkable document. It is 173 pages long, and details all the unanswered questions about Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction. It lists 29 different areas in which the inspectors have been unable to obtain information. On VX, for example, it says: “Documentation available to UNMOVIC suggests that Iraq at least had had far reaching plans to weaponise VX”. On mustard gas, it says: “Mustard constituted an important part . . . of Iraq’s CW arsenal . . . 550 mustard filled shells and up to 450 mustard filled aerial bombs unaccounted for . . . additional uncertainty” with respect to over 6,500 aerial bombs, “corresponding to approximately 1,000 tonnes of agent, predominantly mustard.” On biological weapons, the inspec-

⁴⁶⁰ <http://www.heritage.org/Research/Iraq/wm225.cfm>

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tors' report states: "Based on unaccounted for growth media, Iraq's potential production of anthrax could have been in the range of about 15,000 to 25,000 litres . . . Based on all the available evidence, the strong presumption is that about 10,000 litres of anthrax was not destroyed and may still exist."

On that basis, I simply say to the House that, had we meant what we said in resolution 1441, the Security Council should have convened and condemned Iraq as in material breach. What is perfectly clear is that Saddam is playing the same old games in the same old way. Yes, there are minor concessions, but there has been no fundamental change of heart or mind.⁴⁶¹

It's important to note that Saddam played "the same old games" between 1991 and 1998. After seven years of inspections, UNSCOM personnel left Iraq after the Iraqis stopped cooperating with UNSCOM. Prior to leaving Iraq, however, Richard Butler, head of the U.N. weapons inspection commission, said Iraq had enough biological weapons to "blow away Tel Aviv."⁴⁶²

Now, if inspectors were uncertain about Saddam's WMD programs after being in Iraq for seven years, does anyone seriously believe Hans Blix and his team could have found out the truth after just a couple of months? After reviewing Hans Blix's book, *Disarming Iraq*, Fareed Zakaria of *Newsweek International* described the lack of cooperation Saddam provided prior to the invasion:

More revealing are Blix's difficulties with the Iraqis. Time and again he and his colleague Mohamed ElBaradei tried to explain to the Iraqis that they needed to cooperate for the inspections to confirm what they claimed—that they had no weapons of mass destruction. After repeated requests to talk to Saddam Hussein, which were turned down, Blix and ElBaradei met with the Iraqi vice president (a powerless Hussein stooge). At that meeting, ElBaradei sternly explained that it was "incomprehensible" that Iraq had not taken the steps the United Nations had demanded. There was no response.... It was behavior like this that led Blix and many others to assume that the Iraqis were not coming clean because they had something to hide.⁴⁶³

Zakaria's review also mentioned one aspect of Blix's past with Iraq that most of the media have ignored:

From the mid-1970's through the early 90's, Iraq continuously, persistently and ambitiously sought nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. All Western intelligence services underestimated the extent of these efforts. International agencies, chiefly the International Atomic Energy Agency, headed by Hans Blix, actually gave Iraq a clean bill of health during these decades. As a

⁴⁶¹ <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200203/cmhansrd/vo030318/debtext/30318-06.htm>

⁴⁶² <http://www.cnn.com/WORLD/9801/27/iraq.latest/index.html#enough>

⁴⁶³ <http://www.fareedzakaria.com/articles/nyt/nytreview041104.html>

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result, everyone, including Blix, was wary of Iraq's declarations that it had destroyed its old stockpiles and wasn't building new ones.⁴⁶⁴

If Iraq had been able to fool intelligence services and intelligence agencies during those decades, why would anyone have any confidence in Blix and his inspectors in 2003? As Kenneth Pollack noted in *The Threatening Storm*, "[I]f faced with the threat of imminent invasion, Iraq would probably go along with a new inspection regime for some period of time, just to forestall the invasion and buy time in the expectation that the United States would eventually become distracted by other events, allowing Iraq to start cheating again. Pursuing the inspections route is a dead-end street."⁴⁶⁵

MYTH: "Halliburton's involvement in the Iraq reconstruction effort has been controversial since it won a multi-billion no-bid contract in 2003." – CNN, June 1, 2004⁴⁶⁶

Halliburton did not win a no-bid contract in 2003. The work that Kellogg Brown & Root, a subsidiary of Halliburton, did in Iraq "was done under a competitively awarded contract system known as the U.S. Army Logistics Civil Augmentation Program, or LOGCAP." According to Byron York, "LOGCAP is, in effect, a multi-year supercontract. In it, the Army makes a deal with a single contractor, in this case Halliburton, to perform a wide range of unspecified services during emergency situations in the future. The last competition for LOGCAP came in 2001, when Halliburton won the contract over several other bidders."⁴⁶⁷

MYTH: "And the Iraqis are certainly right in that nobody can prove a negative; you can't produce for inspection what you don't have." – Charley Reese, syndicated columnist⁴⁶⁸

Prior to the invasion of Iraq, several commentators stated that it would not be possible for Iraq to prove a negative, i.e., demonstrate that Iraq had no WMD. Such a contention ignores the history of South Africa's WMD program. South Africa developed at least six nuclear weapons. In March 1993, South African President Frederik Willem de Klerk declared that South Africa had dismantled and destroyed its limited nuclear capability. The IAEA declared it had completed its inspection in late 1994 and that South Africa's

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁵ pp. 364-365.

⁴⁶⁶ <http://www.cnn.com/2004/ALLPOLITICS/06/01/cheney.halliburton/>

⁴⁶⁷ <http://www.nationalreview.com/york/york070903.asp>

⁴⁶⁸ <http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article1657.htm>

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nuclear weapons facilities had been dismantled.⁴⁶⁹ South Africa proved a negative, i.e., they had no nuclear weapons.

In February 2003, South African President Thabo Mbeki announced that his country was sending experts in dismantling WMD to Iraq. “We trust that this intervention will help to ensure the necessary proper cooperation between the United Nations’ inspectors and Iraq, so that the issue of weapons of mass destruction is addressed satisfactorily, without resort to war,” Mbeki said.⁴⁷⁰ Obviously, Iraq failed to take advantage of South Africa’s assistance.

MYTH: Saddam had no intention to restart his WMD programs.

Joseph Cirincione, the nuclear policy director at the Center for American Progress, appeared on C-SPAN’s *Washington Journal* on November 20, 2007, and made this claim: “We were told [the Iraqis] had a nuclear weapons program, and if we didn’t take action, they might give a bomb to Osama bin Laden. We now know that it wasn’t true. No program. Nowhere close to a program. No intention of having a program.”⁴⁷¹

Cirincione’s contention is contradicted by both David Kay and Charles Duelfer. When Kay, who originally headed the Iraq Survey Group (ISG), delivered his Interim Progress Report to Congress in October 2003, he indicated that Saddam had never given up his desire to have nuclear weapons:

With regard to Iraq’s nuclear program, the testimony we have obtained from Iraqi scientists and senior government officials should clear up any doubts about whether Saddam still wanted to obtain nuclear weapons.

They have told ISG that Saddam Husayn remained firmly committed to acquiring nuclear weapons. These officials assert that Saddam would have resumed nuclear weapons development at some future point. Some indicated a resumption after Iraq was free of sanctions.⁴⁷²

Charles Duelfer, who replaced Kay, came to a similar conclusion a year later. According to the *Washington Post*, Duelfer’s report concluded that Saddam “‘aspired to develop a nuclear capability’ and intended to work on rebuilding chemical and biological weapons after persuading the United Nations to lift sanctions.”⁴⁷³

MYTH: George W. Bush entered the White House in January 2001 with plans to invade Iraq.

⁴⁶⁹ <http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/world/rsa/nuke.htm>

⁴⁷⁰ <http://www.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/africa/02/14/sprj.irq.safrica.ap/index.html>

⁴⁷¹ <http://www.c-span.org/VideoArchives.asp?CatCodePairs=&ArchiveDays=100&Page=2>

⁴⁷² <http://www.cnn.com/2003/ALLPOLITICS/10/02/kay.report/>

⁴⁷³ <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A12115-2004Oct6.html>

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In *Against All Enemies*, Richard Clarke wrote, “Former Treasury Secretary Paul O’Neill has written that the [Bush] Administration planned early on to eliminate Saddam Hussein. From everything I saw and heard, he is right. The Bush administration reply to O’Neill was something like: Of course we were. Clinton signed a law making regime change in Iraq the American policy. That’s true too, but neither the Congress nor Clinton had in mind regime change at the point of an American gun, a U.S. invasion of Iraq.” Clarke then dropped this bombshell: “The administration of the second George Bush did begin with Iraq on its agenda.”⁴⁷⁴

Of course, there’s a good reason why Iraq was on the second George Bush’s agenda from the beginning: It was on the Clinton administration’s agenda when they left office in January 2001. In a January 11, 2001 farewell press conference (see Appendix, “Iraq Will Be a Major UN Issue for Bush Administration”), Richard Holbrooke, U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, said, “Iraq will be one of the major issues facing the incoming Bush administration at the United Nations.” Further, the Bush administration “will have to deal with this problem, which we inherited from our predecessors and they now inherit from us.” Nevertheless, Clarke expresses surprise that the Bush administration believed it had to deal with the problem of Iraq.

Clarke would counter that dealing with the problem should not have entailed an invasion. However, O’Neill himself made clear that, contrary to Clarke’s claim, the Bush administration did not plan an invasion of Iraq from the beginning. “You know, people are trying to make the case that I said the president was planning war in Iraq early in the administration,” O’Neill told Katie Couric. “Actually, there was a continuation of work that had been going on in the Clinton administration with the notion that we needed regime change in Iraq.”⁴⁷⁵ Couric’s *Today Show* interview with O’Neill took place on January 13, 2004, weeks before Clarke’s book was released.

Clarke also makes the claim in his book that the Bush White House was exacting revenge against O’Neill for his lack of loyalty. This is an odd claim when you consider that, in the same interview, O’Neill responded as such when Couric asked if he would vote for Bush in November 2004: “Probably. I don’t see anybody that strikes me as better prepared and more capable.”

The day after O’Neill’s appearance on the *Today Show*, Dana Milbank and Vernon Loeb of the *Washington Post* repeated the charge that O’Neill said the Bush administration had planned as early as January 2001 to use force to remove Saddam from power. The reporters failed to note O’Neill’s comments to the contrary. Did they miss the previous day’s *Today Show*? Apparently not. Their article quoted from other parts of O’Neill’s interview with Couric.⁴⁷⁶

⁴⁷⁴ p. 264.

⁴⁷⁵ http://www.nationalreview.com/thecorner/04_01_11_corner-archive.asp#022684

⁴⁷⁶ <http://nucnews.net/nucnews/2004nn/0401nn/040114nn.htm>

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MYTH: The military services are not meeting their recruiting and retention goals.

The Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines all met or exceeded their retention and recruiting goals for fiscal years 2006⁴⁷⁷ and 2007.⁴⁷⁸ All four services also met or exceeded their goals during each of the first four months of fiscal year 2008.

MYTH: Operation Iraqi Freedom was illegal.

It is beyond the scope of this book to include a full discussion on the legality of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Instead, I will refer the reader to Professor Robert F. Turner, cofounder of the Center for National Security Law at the University of Virginia. Laurie Mylroie included Turner's essay, "Was Operation Iraqi Freedom Legal?," in her book, *Bush vs. The Beltway: How the CIA and the State Department Tried to Stop the War on Terror*. According to Mylroie, Turner makes it clear that "there are three distinct principles that can be invoked to argue the legality of the action":

Principle number one, factually supported by the broad line argument of this book, is the right of states to self-defense. Principle number two is the narrower (and less conclusive) legal argument that Iraq's repeated violations of the terms of the cease-fire resolution (which were the subject of repeated warnings by the Security Council) in effect vitiated the resolution. Principle number three, equally strong as the case for self-defense, is the argument that gross violations of human rights (themselves the subject of United Nations condemnation) by their very nature give other states the right to intervene.⁴⁷⁹

MYTH: The United States cannot afford the war in Iraq.

Lawrence Lindsey, Director of the National Economic Council and the Assistant to the President on Economic Policy ((2001-2002), addressed this issue in the February 4, 2008 issue of *Fortune*:

[T]his raises the question whether a number like "1% of GDP" is large or small. For this, imagine that we are not contemporaries trying to evaluate an ongoing conflict but economic historians a couple of centuries from now deciding whether going into Iraq was worth it for America. The future historian would note that for the past century America has been one of largest military powers on the planet. This naturally involved a budgetary commitment. For some of the past century, the American military was quite small. But on aver-

⁴⁷⁷ <http://www.defenselink.mil/releases/release.aspx?releaseid=10057>

⁴⁷⁸ <http://www.defenselink.mil/releases/release.aspx?releaseid=11398>

⁴⁷⁹ p. 13.

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age American military spending was about twice the share of GDP that it now is, about 5%. Moreover, with Iraq consuming between 15% and 20% of that figure, the future historian would likely view the entire affair as relatively minor in purely budgetary terms.

Lindsey also addressed the costs associated with not removing Saddam from power. He estimated that this alternative scenario probably would have required “eternal vigilance and a large troop commitment.” “But what if the administration had decided to leave Saddam alone and, in turn, he had had WMDs?” Lindsey asked. “The costs to the world would have been much higher.”⁴⁸⁰

MYTH: President George W. Bush called the U.S. Constitution a “god-damned piece of paper.”

According to Doug Thompson of Capitol Hill Blue, while Bush was meeting with Republican congressmen in 2005, he became angry and screamed, “Stop throwing the Constitution in my face. It’s just a goddamned piece of paper!”⁴⁸¹

After the quote appeared on the Capitol Hill Blue Web site, hundreds of other Web sites began to repeat the quote. The quote also appeared in numerous newspapers throughout the country. For example, the March 31, 2008 edition of the *Lawrence (Kan.) Journal-World* included a letter to the editor with the quote and the claim that it had been “neither verified nor discredited.”⁴⁸²

In fact, as the newspaper’s editorial page editor could have learned with a quick search on the Internet, Thompson is the sole source for the alleged quote. According to FactCheck.org, “We judge that the odds that the report is accurate hover near zero. It comes from Capitol Hill Blue, a Web site that has a history of relying on phony sources, retracting stories and apologizing to its readers.”⁴⁸³

⁴⁸⁰ <http://money.cnn.com/2008/01/10/news/economy/costofwar.fortune/index.htm>

⁴⁸¹ http://www.capitolhillblue.com/artman/publish/article_7779.shtml

⁴⁸² http://www2.ljworld.com/news/2008/mar/31/media_impact/?letters_to_editor

⁴⁸³ http://www.factcheck.org/askfactcheck/print_did_president_bush_call_the_constitution_a.html

CONCLUSION

Those who cannot learn from history are doomed to repeat it. – George Santayana

Those who would vote to prolong the presence of this partnership in public life are not doing so with the excuse of innocence or gullibility that might have obtained in 1992. – Christopher Hitchens, No One Left To Lie To: The Values of the Worst Family (1999)

During the fall of 1983, I was a young, enlisted Marine participating in a pre-Team Spirit '84 exercise called Bear Hunt '84 in the Republic of Korea (ROK). Our unit, Marine Aircraft Group 36 (MAG-36), based on Okinawa, spent nearly three months living in tents just a few miles south of the demilitarized zone.

My family had traveled to Washington, D.C. several times to visit an aunt and uncle who worked for the federal government, and we had driven through most of the western states while on vacation. However, except for a couple of quick trips to border cities in Mexico, Japan and Korea were the first foreign countries I had ever visited. Until then, I had spent my entire life in the small town of Oregon, Ill., which is located just 15 miles upstream from Ronald Reagan's hometown of Dixon. Growing up on the Rock River, life was relatively carefree and peaceful.

However, the world seemed to have become much more dangerous during the latter half of 1983. Reagan canceled his trip to the Philippines after Benigno Aquino was assassinated in Manila on August 21. On September 1, Soviet jet interceptors shot down KAL 007 over Sakhalin Island, killing 269 passengers and crew members. Relations with the Soviet Union were already tense, especially given the uncertainty concerning the leadership in the Kremlin. Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev had died on November 10, 1982 (the Marine Corps' birthday), and there were rumors that his successor, Yuri Vladimirovich Andropov, was in poor health.

On October 9, while South Korean President Chun Doo Hwan was on an official visit to Burma, a bomb killed 21 people, including foreign minister Lee Bum Suk, the economic planning minister and deputy prime minister, Suh Suk Joo, and the minister for commerce and industry, Kim Dong Whie. North Korea was blamed for the bombing.

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Then, on October 23, simultaneous suicide truck-bombings destroyed both the French and the United States Marine Corps barracks in Beirut, killing 241 U.S. servicemen, 58 French paratroopers and six Lebanese civilians. Three days later, U.S. troops invaded Grenada, where 18 U.S. servicemen died.

Closer to “home,” our unit lost a helicopter and several Marines after they struck a power line between two mountains. Unfortunately, the 1:50,000 topographic map the crew was using did not show the power line. A newer version of the map—with the power line added—had been published by the Defense Mapping Agency, but had not yet been shipped from Hickam Air Force Base.*

It seemed as if the American flag outside our mess tent was at half-staff during most of our stay in Korea that fall.

As a member of the S-2 (Intelligence) staff with MAG-36, part of my responsibilities while in Korea was to research and write a briefing concerning the North Korean Air Order of Battle, and then present that briefing to pilots and other officers. During the briefing, I told the officers that the greatest threat posed by North Korea was 245 or so AN-2 Colts. Initially developed in the Soviet Union as an agricultural aircraft during the 1940s, North Korea used—and still uses—the AN-2 for troop transport. The concern was that the AN-2s could evade radar systems by flying “low and slow.” If they could cross the DMZ undetected with hundreds of North Korean commandos, those commandos could wreak a great deal of havoc in South Korea.

I separated from the Marine Corps on December 13, 1985. For me, it was a lucky Friday the 13th. I had survived four years of the Marines without a scratch and was ready to start college. Ironically, the first and only time I saw combat was four years later when I was a graduate student at the University of the Philippines. On the morning of December 1, 1989, David Callender, a reporter with the *Capital Times* of Madison, Wis., knocked on the door of my \$10-a-month dorm room (you get what you pay for) and yelled, “Gringo is on the move.” By “Gringo,” Callender, who was at the University of the Philippines on a Rotary scholarship, was referring to Gregorio Honasan, leader of the Reform the Armed Forces Movement (RAM). Honason and his followers had launched a coup attempt against President Corazon Aquino. Against my advice, Callender and several other American students left campus that morning to get a better look at what was going on. I eventually joined them later that day at the corner of Epifanio de los Santos Avenue (EDSA) and Quezon Avenue, and again the following day as a government

* We lost another CH-53 helicopter during Team Spirit '84 when it crashed into a mountain. About 30 U.S. and ROK Marines were killed. Such accidents were not uncommon during the 1980s. According to the Department of Defense, there were 11,216 accidental deaths during the five-year period prior to 1988. In other words, we lost nearly three times as many troops due to accidents during that five-year period than we have lost in Iraq during the past five years.

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helicopter fired rockets at RAM forces holed up at Camp Aguinaldo, the national headquarters of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

While we were on EDSA, two F-4s flew above our heads. After I told the other Americans that the F-4s had to be ours since the Philippine Air Force had none, we all decided it would be a good idea to return to the campus.

Eventually, Honason and RAM were defeated. Classes at the University of the Philippines were canceled for several weeks. Given that the U.S. had displayed a show of force during the coup attempt, I was unsure how my classmates, who were mostly civil servants in the Philippine government, would react towards me. Only one had anything negative to say. However, he also happened to be the Libyan ambassador to the Philippines and, apparently, was still smarting from Reagan's retaliatory strike on Libya in 1986.

Three weeks before the coup attempt in the Philippines, the Berlin Wall fell, leading to the reunification of East and West Germany the next year. On December 26, 1991, the Supreme Soviet recognized the collapse of the Soviet Union and dissolved itself. With the end of the Cold War, world leaders began talking about the "peace dividend" that would result from decreased defense spending. However, as noted in a 2002 article in *Finance & Development*, the peace dividend was elusive. "The end of the Cold War was supposed to bring with it a 'peace dividend' that would release resources for more productive purposes," the authors wrote. "Instead, we are witnessing an era of scattered conflicts, while terrorist groups have become more sophisticated and destructive."⁴⁸⁴

As new threats emerged during the 1990s, Bill Clinton and his team in the White House adopted policies that made us much more vulnerable to those threats. In a book published during the final year of the Clinton administration, Donald Kagan and Frederick W. Kagan offered this warning:

America is in danger. Unless its leaders change their national security policy, the peace and safety its power and influence have ensured since the end of the Cold War will disappear. Already, increasing military weakness and confusion about foreign and defense policy have encouraged the development of powerful hostile states and coalitions that challenge the interests and security of the United States, its allies and friends, and all those with an interest in preserving the general peace.... In the past, the collapse of an international system that suited the United States deprived Americans of access to markets or caused American casualties on faraway battlefields. In the future, it will bring attacks on the American homeland, not merely by terrorists, but as part of deliberately planned and carefully executed military strikes against critical targets in the United States of America. The happy international situation that emerged in 1991, characterized by the spread of democracy, free trade, and peace, so congenial to America, has begun to

⁴⁸⁴ <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2002/12/gupta.htm>

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decay at an alarming rate and will vanish unless there is a change of course. The costs of failure now are far higher than ever before.⁴⁸⁵

“America’s course now is much harder than it would have been had it followed a prudent path after the Gulf War,” the Kagans noted in the conclusion of their book. “Its Iraq policy is in ruins; it will not be resurrected. The threat from North Korea has only been delayed. In the wings, Russia, which was friendly in 1991, is increasingly restive. China grows ever stronger and more technologically capable—sources of conflict with her are obvious. If ever there was a ‘strategic pause’ it is gone. Now the United States must begin to gird itself for the next round of conflict.”⁴⁸⁶

As I look back to my presentation about the North Korean Air Order of Battle 25 years ago, it seems almost comical that I portrayed the AN-2 as Kim Il Sung’s greatest threat to security on the Korean peninsula when that dictator’s son would later essentially blackmail the Clinton administration with the threat of nuclear weapons.

It is clear that the United States was caught off guard on 9/11. Many books published after 9/11 have made that point. For example, Peter Bergen’s *Holy War, Inc.* included a chapter entitled “While America Slept.” Gerald Posner authored *Why America Slept: The Failure to Prevent 9/11*. The chapter title and book title were both allusions to *While England Slept*, a collection of Winston Churchill’s speeches from 1932 to 1938, and John F. Kennedy’s *Why England Slept* of 1940. Both Churchill and Kennedy outlined England’s failure to prepare for war against Nazi Germany.

Churchill, Kennedy, Bergen, and Posner all had titles with the word “slept,” meaning the failures to prepare for threats had been in the past. The Kagans’ book had a title that was also an allusion to Churchill and Kennedy’s book. However, note the tense of the verb: *While America Sleeps: Self-Delusion, Military Weakness, and the Threat to Peace Today*. Of course, when the Kagans wrote their book, “today” was before George W. Bush had even been elected president.

Hillary Clinton’s campaign team looked very much like the team her husband had during his eight years in the White House. I believe that team’s policies ultimately led to 9/11. Given that legacy, the American people were wise not to allow them and their worldview back in the White House. But will they be wise enough to reject the naïve and inexperienced Barack Obama?

⁴⁸⁵ *While America Sleeps: Self-Delusion, Military Weakness, and the Threat to Peace Today*, p. 1-2.

⁴⁸⁶ *Ibid*, p. 435.

APPENDIX

On December 25, 2005, veteran journalists Ted Koppel and Tom Brokaw appeared as guests on *Meet the Press* and discussed a variety of issues with Tim Russert. Of course, the conversation eventually touched on the invasion of Iraq:

MR. BROKAW: There was not—you know, the French intelligence were sharing the same conclusions with the administration. I thought—I agree with you that I don't think that we pushed hard enough for vigorous debate. I think that on Capitol Hill that the debate was anemic, at best. You had—Ted Kennedy and Senator Byrd, really, were the only ones speaking out with any kind of passion in the Senate, the people who...

MR. RUSSERT: And they were not questioning whether Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction.

MR. BROKAW: No. No. No.

MR. RUSSERT: That seemed to be a uniformly held belief.

MR. BROKAW: Right. Yeah.

MR. KOPPEL: Nor did the Clinton administration beforehand.

MR. BROKAW: No.

MR. KOPPEL: I mean, the only difference between the Clinton administration and the Bush administration was 9/11.

MR. BROKAW: Right.

MR. KOPPEL: If 9/11 had happened on Bill Clinton's watch, he would have gone into Iraq.*

MR. BROKAW: Yeah. Yeah.⁴⁸⁷

On November 27, 2007, Bill Clinton said the following while campaigning for Hillary in Iowa. “Even though I approved of Afghanistan and opposed Iraq from the beginning, I still resent that I was not asked or given the opportunity to support those soldiers.” Even a liberal such as Ron Fournier of the Associated Press realized that Clinton's claim did not pass

* It is quite possible that Koppel reached this conclusion after having discussions with his son-in-law, Kenneth Pollack. Pollack was director for Gulf affairs at the National Security Council from 1995 to 1996 and from 1999 to 1999

⁴⁸⁷ <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/10531436/>

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the smell test. “If the former president secretly opposed the war but did not want to speak against a sitting president (as some of his aides now claim), what moral authority does he have now? And did he share his objections with his wife? She started out as a hawkish Democrat but is now appealing to anti-war voters.”⁴⁸⁸

In fact, Clinton apparently had no objections to removing Saddam from power. According to *The Nation*, when the Democracy Alliance met in Austin, Texas, in May 2006, a surprise guest, Bill Clinton, showed up. “When Guy Saperstein, a retired lawyer from Oakland, asked Clinton if Democrats who supported the war should apologize,” *The Nation* noted, “the former President ‘went f**king ballistic,’ according to Saperstein. Forget Hillary, Clinton said angrily during a ten-minute rant; if I was in Congress I would’ve voted for the war. ‘It was an extraordinary display of anger and imperiousness,’ Saperstein says.”⁴⁸⁹

Of course, Saperstein’s comment could be dismissed as hearsay. However, we cannot dismiss Clinton’s own words. Here is what he told *Time* magazine in June 2004:

After 9/11, let’s be fair here, if you had been President, you’d think, Well, this fellow bin Laden just turned these three airplanes full of fuel into weapons of mass destruction, right? Arguably they were super-powerful chemical weapons. Think about it that way. So, you’re sitting there as President, you’re reeling in the aftermath of this, so, yeah, you want to go get bin Laden and do Afghanistan and all that. But you also have to say, Well, my first responsibility now is to try everything possible to make sure that this terrorist network and other terrorist networks cannot reach chemical and biological weapons or small amounts of fissile material. I’ve got to do that. That’s why I supported the Iraq thing. There was a lot of stuff unaccounted for. So I thought the President had an absolute responsibility to go to the U.N. and say, “Look, guys, after 9/11, you have got to demand that Saddam Hussein lets us finish the inspection process.” You couldn’t responsibly ignore [the possibility that] a tyrant had these stocks. I never really thought he’d [use them].* What I was far more worried about was that he’d sell this stuff or give it away.⁴⁹⁰

According to the *New York Times*, Clinton’s November 27 remark in Iowa “came in the context of opposition to Republican-backed tax cuts for wealthy Americans like himself, and how that loss of revenue affected

⁴⁸⁸ http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20071128/ap_po/on_deadline_bill_clinton_1

⁴⁸⁹ <http://www.thenation.com/doc/20061016/berman/3>

* Of course, Clinton had a different opinion when he was president. After launching Operation Desert Fox in 1998, Clinton told the American people, “And mark my words, he will develop weapons of mass destruction. He will deploy them, and he will use them.”

⁴⁹⁰ <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,994507-7,00.html>

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financing for the military.”⁴⁹¹ Of course, as president, Clinton had the opportunity to support “those soldiers.” Instead, he dramatically cut the defense budget. Former Clinton officials Alan Binder and Janet Yellen wrote of the 1997 balanced negotiations, “discretionary spending had already declined roughly 11 percent in real terms between 1992 and 1997. Further progress would be difficult because the entire cut had, to that point, come from the defense budget.”⁴⁹² According to Rich Lowry, “This, not the 1993 budget deal, was Clinton’s big contribution to deficit reduction—taken directly out of the hide of America’s military.”⁴⁹³

Hillary also changed her tune after the invasion of Iraq. She wrote the following to her constituents in November 2005:

Based on the information that we have today, Congress never would have been asked to give the President authority to use force against Iraq. And if Congress had been asked, based on what we know now, we never would have agreed, given the lack of a long-term plan, paltry international support, the proven absence of weapons of mass destruction, and the reallocation of troops and resources that might have been used in Afghanistan to eliminate Bin Laden and al Qaeda, and fully uproot the Taliban.

Before I voted in 2002, the Administration publicly and privately assured me that they intended to use their authority to build international support in order to get the U.N. weapons inspectors back into Iraq, as articulated by the President in his Cincinnati speech on October 7th, 2002. As I said in my October 2002 floor statement, I took “the President at his word that he will try hard to pass a U.N. resolution and will seek to avoid war, if at all possible.”

Instead, the Bush Administration short-circuited the U.N. inspectors—the last line of defense against the possibility that our intelligence was false. The Administration also abandoned securing a larger international coalition, alienating many of those who had joined us in Afghanistan.*

From the start of the war, I have been clear that I believed that the Administration did not have an adequate plan for what lay ahead.

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http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/28/us/politics/28clinton.html?_r=3&oref=slogin&oref=slogin&oref=slogin

⁴⁹² Alan S. Binder and Janet L. Yellen, *The Fabulous Decade*, p. 74.

⁴⁹³ *Legacy*, p. 249.

* Even Clinton sycophant James Carville has acknowledged that Clinton’s revised explanation for her vote does not pass the smell test. When Carville appeared on *Meet the Press* on February 3, 2008, Tim Russert read this passage from *Take It Back*, a book Carville co-wrote with fellow Clinton sycophant Paul Begala: “Some of the Democrats who supported the war in Iraq began to claim their vote was to put pressure on Iraq—that they voted merely to give the president the option to go to war. Bunk. The war resolution was a blank check. The language of the resolution could not be clearer. ‘The President is authorized to use the Armed Forces of the United States as he determines to be necessary and appropriate’ against Iraq.”

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/22976998/page/2/>

APPENDIX

I take responsibility for my vote, and I, along with a majority of Americans, expect the President and his Administration to take responsibility for the false assurances, faulty evidence and mismanagement of the war.⁴⁹⁴

A little over a year later, Hillary went beyond saying the Bush administration had “faulty evidence” about Iraq and claimed that she, like the rest of the country, had been misled: “I have said, and I will repeat it, that knowing what I know now, I would never have voted for it ... I have taken responsibility for my vote. The mistakes were made by this president who misled this country and this Congress into a war that should not have been waged.”⁴⁹⁵

Of course, if she were truly taking responsibility for her vote, she would not blame the Bush administration for misleading her. In addition, she is attempting to hide the fact that in 2003 she said, “The intelligence from Bush 1 to Clinton to Bush 2 was consistent.”⁴⁹⁶

Hillary also wants the voters to forget that she told CNN’s Wolf Blitzer the following in April 2004: “No, I don’t regret giving the president authority because at the time it was in the context of weapons of mass destruction, grave threats to the United States, and clearly, Saddam Hussein had been a real problem for the international community for more than a decade.” Further, “The consensus was the same, from the Clinton administration to the Bush administration. It was the same intelligence belief that our allies and friends around the world shared.”⁴⁹⁷

Would Bill Clinton have invaded Iraq if he had been president when 9/11 occurred? If the 2000 election had turned out differently, would a President Gore have gone to Iraq after 9/11? Of course, we can only speculate. However, it would be wise to base our speculation on what members of the Clinton administration said and did vis-à-vis Iraq during their last few years in office. I have quoted from many Clinton administration documents in this book. I have posted additional documents online for the reader to view at www.sinsofthehusband.com. After reading these press releases and other documents from the Clinton administration, I have to agree with Ted Koppel and Tom Brokaw when they said Bill Clinton would have gone to Iraq if 9/11 had happened on his watch. I believe any honest person would have to come to the same conclusion.

⁴⁹⁴ <http://clinton.senate.gov/news/statements/details.cfm?id=264263>

⁴⁹⁵ http://www.salon.com/news/feature/2007/02/14/hillary/index_np.html

⁴⁹⁶ <http://weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/003/157wjmh.n.asp>

⁴⁹⁷ <http://www.cnn.com/2004/ALLPOLITICS/04/21/iraq.hillary/>

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