

March 14, 2006 Administration Claims vs. Facts in Iraq

For Immediate Release

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ADMINISTRATION CLAIMS vs. FACTS IN IRAQ

Washington D.C. - Dear Colleague, please review the attached summary of claims the Bush Administration has made over the past three years regarding Iraq versus the facts that refute them. It is these repeated statements, which have continually contradicted and distorted reality, that have led me to state publicly that I no longer have confidence in what I am told by this administration with regard to the situation in Iraq.

JOHN P. MURTHA

Member of Congress

Bush Administration Claims versus Facts: The War in Iraq

Saddam-al Qaeda Connection

CLAIM: "There's overwhelming evidence that there was a connection between al Qaeda and the Iraqi government. I am very confident that there was an established relationship there." - Vice President Cheney, 1/22/04

CLAIM: "The regime of Saddam Hussein cultivated ties to terror while it built weapons of mass destruction." Bush's UN speech, 9/23/03

Weapons of Mass Destruction

CLAIM: "We found the weapons of mass destruction." - President Bush, 5/29/03

CLAIM: "We know where the WMDs are." - Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, 3/30/03

CLAIM: "The British government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa." - President Bush, 1/28/03

CLAIM: "Evidence indicates that Iraq is reconstituting its nuclear weapons program...Iraq could have a nuclear weapon in less than a year."

- President Bush, 10/7/02

CLAIM: "There can be no doubt that Saddam Hussein has biological weapons and the capability to rapidly produce more, many more...Our conservative estimate is that Iraq today has a stockpile of between 100 and 500 tons of chemical weapons agent. That is enough agent to fill 16,000 battlefield rockets."

- Secretary of State Colin Powell, 2/5/03

FACT: "Sec. of State Colin Powell conceded Thursday that despite his assertions to the United Nations last year, he had no 'smoking gun' proof of a link between the government of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and terrorists of al-Qaeda. 'I have not seen smoking-gun, concrete evidence about the connection,' Powell said." [NY Times, 1/9/04]

FACT: "Three former Bush Administration officials who worked on intelligence and national security issues said the prewar evidence tying al Qaeda was tenuous, exaggerated and often at odds with the conclusions of key intelligence agencies." [National Journal, 8/9/03]

FACT: "A draft report on the search for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq provides no solid evidence that Iraq had such arms when the United States invaded the country in March" and none have materialized since. [Reuters 9/15/03]

FACT: On 7/8/03, the Washington Post reported the Administration admitted the Iraq-Nuclear allegation was false. "Revelations by officials at the CIA, the State Department, the UN, in Congress and elsewhere" made clear that the White House knew the claim was false before making the allegation. In fact, "CIA Director George Tenet successfully intervened with White House officials to have the reference...removed from a presidential speech in October [2002]." [W. Post, 7/13/03]

FACT: "Iraq did not have a large, ongoing, centrally controlled chemical weapons program after 1991... Iraq's large-scale capability to develop, produce and fill new chemical weapon munitions was reduced - if not entirely destroyed - during Operations Desert Storm and Desert Fox, 13 years of UN sanctions and UN inspections."

- Bush Administration Weapons Inspector David Kay, 10/2/03

War on Terror/Bush Doctrine

CLAIM: "All governments that support terror are complicit in a war against civilization."

- President Bush's UN speech, 9/23/03

Pre-War Cost Estimates

CLAIM: Iraq will be "an affordable endeavor" that "will not require sustained aid" and will "be in the range of \$50 billion to \$60 billion."

-Budget Director Mitch Daniels [Forbes 4/11/03, W. Post 3/28/03, NY Times 1/2/03, respectively]

CLAIM: "In terms of the American taxpayers contribution, [\$1.7 billion] is it for the US. The rest of the rebuilding of Iraq will be done by other countries and Iraqi oil revenues...The American part of this will be 1.7 billion. We have no plans for any further-on funding for this." - USAID Director Andrew Natsios, 4/23/03

Pre-War Oil Revenue Estimates

CLAIM: "The oil revenues of Iraq could bring between \$50 and \$100 billion over the course of the next two or three years...We're dealing with a country that can really finance its own reconstruction, and relatively soon." - Paul Wolfowitz, [Congressional Testimony, 3/27/03]

Post-War Planning

CLAIM: "I think has been fairly significant success in terms of putting Iraq back together again...and certainly wouldn't lead me to suggest or think that the strategy is flawed or needs to be changed." - Vice President Cheney, [9/14/03]

FACT: The Administration continues its close ties with the Saudis even though the Los Angeles Times reported on 8/2/03 that the bipartisan commission investigating 9/11 found the Saudi government "not only provided significant money and aid to the suicide hijackers but also allowed potentially hundreds of millions of dollars to flow to al Qaeda and other terrorist groups through suspect charities and other fronts."

FACT: The Bush Administration has received over \$200 billion for operations in Iraq, despite firing top economic adviser Lawrence Lindsey for suggesting (accurately) before the war that a war in Iraq would cost at least \$100 to \$200 billion.

FACT: The Bush Administration has requested more than \$20 billion for reconstruction in Iraq - despite the pledge that the U.S. would only fund \$1.7 billion.

FACT: International Oil Daily reported on 9/23/03 that Paul Bremer said that current and future oil revenues will be insufficient for rebuilding Iraq - despite the Administration's pre-war promises.

FACT: "A secret report for the Joint Chiefs of Staff blames setbacks in Iraq on a flawed and rushed war-planning process" in which "officials, conceded in recent weeks that the Bush administration failed to predict the guerrilla war against American troops in Iraq." [Wash. Times, 9/3/03]

Length of Military Operations

CLAIM: "Major combat operations in Iraq have ended." - President Bush, 5/1/03

CLAIM: The war "could last six days, six weeks. I doubt six months." - Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld [2/7/03]

Troop Deployment Needs

CLAIM: "What is, I think, reasonably certain is the idea that it would take several hundred thousand U.S. forces I think is far from the mark." - Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld 2/27/03

CLAIM: "The notion that it would take several hundred thousand American troops just seems outlandish." - Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, 3/4/03

Insurgency Strength

CLAIM: The Iraq insurgency is in its "last throes." - Vice President Cheney, 5/30/05

CLAIM: Mr. Cheney, speaking on CNN, said that the Iraqis were well on their way to establishing a democratically elected government in Iraq. "When we do, that will be the end of the insurgency." [Wall Street Journal 6/24/05]

FACT: The war in Iraq is still going on, and more American troops have been killed after "major combat operations" supposedly ended than before.

FACT: The Congressional Budget Office reported on 9/3/03 that "The Army does not have enough active-duty component forces" to do what is required in Iraq - meaning the U.S. needs to increase its deployment above the 135,000 currently in Iraq. That confirms General Eric Shinseki's estimate that it would take "several hundred thousand troops."

FACT: 32 of the original 33 brigade combat teams (BCTs) have been in Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation Enduring Freedom at least once (OIF/OEF).

FACT: 15 National Guard Bureau BCTs have deployed to OIF/OEF using up availability under current Partial Mobilization authority; most others have deployed to Guantanamo, Kosovo, Bosnia and Sinai.

FACT: Army continues to accept risk in North Korea.

FACT: "Testifying before the Senate Armed Services Committee, General Abizaid said that, actually, the insurgency has not grown weaker over the last six months and the number of foreign terrorists infiltrating Iraq has increased." [Newsweek 7/4/05]

FACT: Secretary Rumsfeld said, "We're not going to win against the insurgency. The Iraqi people are going to win against the insurgency. That insurgency could go on for any number of years." [Philadelphia Inquirer 6/27/05]

Troop Withdrawal

CLAIM: "Indeed, if you think about it, last June or July there were no Iraqi security forces, and today, in February of 2004, there are over 210,000 Iraqis serving in the security forces ... And there are a number of thousands more that are currently in training."
- Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, 2/23/04

CLAIM: "Mr. Bush gave no timetables for American withdrawal other than an assurance that "as the Iraqis stand up, we will stand down." [NY Times, 6/29/05]

CLAIM: Gen Abizaid said that the Iraqi forces could begin taking a lead role by next spring or summer, and that U.S. force reductions would probably come a year after that. [International Herald Tribune 6/27/05]

Situation on the Ground

CLAIM: Over the past several months, Administration officials have argued that the situation in Iraq was improving. Recently, General Peter Pace, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, noted on "Meet the Press" [Sunday, March 5, 2006] that the situation in Iraq was going "very, very well."

FACT: Gen. Peter Pace, then Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said that only a "small number of Iraqi security forces are taking on the insurgents and terrorists by themselves" which means we have a long way to go. [Washington Post 7/22/05]

FACT: Since the last week in February 2006, sectarian violence and death has reached new heights. In the past few weeks alone, over a thousand Iraqi civilians have been killed in the violence.

FACT: Electricity production remains below pre-war levels. Baghdad received an average of 6.4 hours of electricity per day. Oil production was at 1.77 million barrels per day, some 30% below pre-war production rates. [Iraq Weekly Status Report of March 1, 2006 from the U.S. State Department]

FACT: The number of incidents per week have tripled since one year ago [unclassified summary of classified information provided by the Central Intelligence Agency]

FACT: Unemployment ranges from 30-60% nationwide. In Anbar Province - the epicenter of the insurgency - unemployment reaches 90%. [unclassified summary of estimates by the State Department and U.S. intelligence agencies]