



# Common Sense



## Issue #1

### News Round-Up

[All summaries are written by Common Sense, links to source material can be found at [Opednews.com](http://Opednews.com)]

#### **White House Gives No Assistance to Leak Investigation, Produces Nothing After Three Weeks**

The Justice Department investigation concerning the outing of a CIA agent, Valerie Wilson, in order to exact political revenge on her husband has produced nothing after nearly three weeks. In such a situation the administration is faced with several options to expedite rooting out the leak, such as demanding all staffers sign testimonies stating that they were not involved, thereby increasing legal pressure. The White House has taken no such actions. President Bush has stated that he is "not sure we will find the leak", leading many in Washington to believe that the White House is attempting to protect the leaker. Despite overwhelming support in polls for an independent inquiry, as well as hundreds of thousands of signatures being delivered demanding the same, the White House continues to insist that the DoJ will handle the investigation.

See *Washington Post*, October 13, 2003  
*Editorial, "The Wrong Message"*

#### **Stars & Stripes Poll of Active Soldiers Finds Many Dissatisfied**

A poll conducted by *Stars & Stripes*, the Army's official newspaper, found that half of respondents described the moral of their units as "low", and over half said that their training was insufficient for the tasks at hand. 40% said the jobs they were doing had little or nothing to do with their training. "The numbers are consistent with what I suspect is going on there," said David Segal, a military sociologist at the University of Maryland at College Park. "I am getting a sense that there is a high and increasing level of demoralization and a growing sense of being in something they don't understand and aren't sure the American people understand."

See *Stars & Stripes*, October, 2003

#### **Halliburton Overcharges for Oil Imports into Iraq**

Debunking administration claims before the war that Iraq would finance its own reconstruction with oil profits, Halliburton has been forced to import oil into Iraq to meet demand, and is overcharging US taxpayers to do so. Halliburton has been billing the US \$1.59 per gallon for oil that is priced \$.71 in the region, representing well over a 100% overcharging. Analysis of Bush's \$87 billion budget request in congressional committees has also revealed that the allotment to Halliburton in the future is padded by approximately \$200 million. The *Washington Post* also reports that Halliburton is under suspicion for a recent White House-endorsed environmental rollback focused on a possibly dangerous oil process which was invented by Halliburton.

See *Reuters*, October 17, 2003  
*Ceci Connolly, AI*

#### **Internal GOP Memo Concerning Texas Redistricting Enrages Dems**

An internal memo concerning the unprecedented Texas redistricting plan has shed new light on the motivations of the controversial plan. The redistricting map, drawn by House Majority leader Tom Delay, includes districts which are hundreds of miles long and only a few miles long, and mathematically breaks up minority concentrated areas into heavily white, solidly Republican districts. The internal memo gloats over the plan, stating "This is the most aggressive map I have ever seen... This has a real national impact that should assure that Republicans keep the House no matter the national mood."

See *Washington Post*, October 11, 2003  
*Edward Walsh, AI*

#### **Identical Letters From Different Soldiers Appear in Local Papers**

Just as the administration began its PR offensive arguing that things were going better than reported in Iraq, a rash of identical letters appeared in local newspapers supporting their position, supposedly signed by dozens of different soldiers. Several of the soldiers said when called that they had never signed the letter. It has not been determined who initially ordered the letters sent.

See *The Olympian*, October 11, 2003

#### **Prominent Republicans Attack Administration's Iraq Policy**

In an appearance on *Meet the Press*, Republican Senator Dick Lugar, a traditional partisan figure, criticized President Bush for sending out four different members of his administration with "four different messages". He urged the president to get his house in order. Also, Daniel Pipes, who was appointed by the president to a prominent government post on the Middle East, despite objections to his alleged history of bashing Islam, wrote an op-ed for the *Chicago Sun-Times* arguing that the Iraq policy was not working and that things were getting worse. The criticism made waves since it was in direct opposition to the administration's recent public posture. Pipes argued that an accelerated removal of troops and handing over of authority to Iraqis was the only chance of success.

See *Chicago Sun-Times*, October 17, 2003

#### **Some Injured US Troops Languish in "Warehouses", Waiting Weeks for Medical Attention**

*UPI News Service* reports that for the National Guard and Army Reserve, "living conditions are so substandard, and the medical care so poor, that many of them believe the Army is trying push them out with reduced benefits for their ailments. One document shown to UPI states that no more doctor appointments are available from Oct. 14 through Nov. 11 -- Veterans Day".

*'I have loved the Army. I have served the Army faithfully and I have done everything the Army has asked me to do,' said Sgt. 1st Class Willie Buckels, a truck master with the 296th Transportation Company. Buckels served in the Army Reserves for 27 years, including Operation Iraqi Freedom and the first Gulf War. 'Now my whole idea about the U.S. Army has changed. I am treated like a third-class citizen.'*

See *United Press International*, 10/18/2003  
*Mark Benjamin*

## Opinion

# The Emperor Has No Clothes

## *Floor Remarks From Senator Robert C. Byrd (D-WV)*

In 1837, Danish author, Hans Christian Andersen, wrote a wonderful fairy tale which he titled The Emperor's New Clothes...

That tale seems to me very like the way this nation was led to war.

We were told that we were threatened by weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, but they have not been seen.

We were told that the throngs of Iraqi's would welcome our troops with flowers, but no throngs or flowers appeared.

We were led to believe that Saddam Hussein was connected to the attack on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon, but no evidence has ever been produced.

We were told in 16 words that Saddam Hussein tried to buy "yellow cake" from Africa for production of nuclear weapons, but the story has turned into empty air.

We were frightened with visions of mushroom clouds, but they turned out to be only vapors of the mind.

We were told that major combat was over but 101 [as of October 17] Americans have died in combat since that proclamation from the deck of an aircraft carrier by our very own Emperor in his new clothes.

Our emperor says that we are not occupiers, yet we show no inclination to relinquish the country of Iraq to its people.

Those who have dared to expose the nakedness of the Administration's policies in Iraq have been subjected to scorn. Those who have noticed the elephant in the room -- that is, the fact that this war was based on falsehoods -- have had our patriotism questioned. Those who have spoken aloud the thought shared by hundreds of thousands of military families across this country, that our troops should return quickly and safely from the dangers half a world away, have been accused of cowardice. We have then seen the untruths, the dissembling, the fabrication, the misleading inferences surrounding this rush to war in Iraq wrapped quickly in the flag.

The right to ask questions, debate, and dissent is under attack. The drums of war are beaten ever louder in an attempt to drown out those who speak of our predicament in stark terms.

But the time has come for the sheep-like political

correctness which has cowed members of this Senate to come to an end.

The Emperor has no clothes. This entire adventure in Iraq has been based on propaganda and manipulation. Eighty-seven billion dollars is too much to pay for the continuation of a war based on falsehoods.

Taking the nation to war based on misleading rhetoric and hyped intelligence is a travesty and a tragedy. It is the most cynical of all cynical acts. It is dangerous to manipulate the truth. It is dangerous because once having lied, it is difficult to ever be believed again. Having misled the American people and stamped them to war, this Administration must now attempt to sustain a policy predicated on falsehoods. The President asks for billions from those same citizens who know that they were misled about the need to go to war. We misinformed and insulted our friends and allies and now this Administration is having more than a little trouble getting help from the international community. It is perilous to mislead.

The single-minded obsession of this Administration to now make sense of the chaos in Iraq, and the continuing propaganda which emanates from the White House painting Iraq as the geographical center of terrorism is distracting our attention from Afghanistan and the 60 other countries in the world where terrorists hide. It is sapping resources which could be used to make us safer from terrorists on our own shores. The body armor for our own citizens still has many, many chinks. Have we forgotten that the most horrific terror attacks in history occurred right here at home!! Yet, this Administration turns back money for homeland security, while the President pours billions into security for Iraq. I am powerless to understand or explain such a policy.

I have tried mightily to improve this bill. I twice tried to separate the reconstruction money in this bill, so that those dollars could be considered separately from the military spending. I offered an amendment to force the Administration to craft a plan to get other nations to assist the troops and formulate a plan to get the U.N. in, and the U.S. out, of Iraq. Twice I tried to rid the bill of expansive, flexible authorities that turn this \$87 billion into a blank check. The American people should understand that we provide more foreign aid for Iraq in this bill, \$20.3 billion, than we provide for the rest of the entire world! I attempted to remove from this bill billions in wasteful programs and divert those funds to better use. But, at every turn, my efforts were thwarted by the vapid argument that we must all support the requests of the Commander in Chief.

I cannot stand by and continue to watch our grandchildren become increasingly burdened by the billions that fly out of the Treasury for a war and a policy based largely on propaganda and prevarication. We are borrowing \$87 billion to finance this adventure in Iraq. The President is asking this Senate to pay for this war with increased debt, a debt that will have to be paid by our children and by those same troops that are currently fighting this war. I cannot support

outlandish tax cuts that plunge our country into potentially disastrous debt while our troops are fighting and dying in a war that the White House chose to begin.

I cannot support the continuation of a policy that unwisely ties down 150,000 American troops for the foreseeable future, with no end in sight.

I cannot support a President who refuses to authorize the reasonable change in course that would bring traditional allies to our side in Iraq.

I cannot support the politics of zeal and "might makes right" that created the new American arrogance and unilateralism which passes for foreign policy in this Administration.

I cannot support this foolish manifestation of the dangerous and destabilizing doctrine of preemption that changes the image of America into that of a reckless bully.

The emperor has no clothes. And our former allies around the world were the first to loudly observe it.

I shall vote against this bill because I cannot support a policy based on prevarication. I cannot support doling out 87 billion of our hard-earned tax dollars when I have so many doubts about the wisdom of its use.

I began my remarks with a fairy tale. I shall close my remarks with a horror story, in the form of a quote from the book Nuremberg Diaries, written by G.M. Gilbert, in which the author interviews Hermann Goering.

"We got around to the subject of war again and I said that, contrary to his attitude, I did not think that the common people are very thankful for leaders who bring them war and destruction.

". . . But, after all, it is the leaders of the country who determine the policy and it is always a simple matter to drag the people along, whether it is a democracy or a fascist dictatorship or a Parliament or a Communist dictatorship.

"There is one difference," I pointed out. "In a democracy the people have some say in the matter through their elected representatives, and in the United States only Congress can declare wars."

"Oh, that is all well and good, but, voice or no voice, the people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. That is easy. All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to danger. It works the same way in any country."