



Common Sense



Issue 8

News Round-Up

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

White House Investigated for Outing Undercover Agent “Purely for Revenge” on Whistleblower

The Justice Department has begun a formal investigation to determine whether senior administration officials leaked the name of an undercover agent to exact revenge on her husband, Joseph Wilson. Wilson gained notoriety for setting off the yellowcake uranium controversy, in which it was revealed that the administration had repeatedly used evidence despite objections from the CIA. Bob Novak, a conservative columnist, wrote that senior administration officials gave him Wilson’s wife’s name, and other evidence has emerged indicating a systematic effort to leak the information to other journalists in an attempt to discredit Wilson’s mission by implying nepotism in choosing him for the mission to Niger. *The Washington Post* quoted another anonymous senior administration source as saying the leak was delivered “purely for revenge”. See *Washington Post*, September 29, 2003
Mike Allen & Dana Priest

Speculation Swirls Around Cheney’s Chief of Staff in Investigation

A number of pieces of circumstantial evidence have emerged implying that Cheney’s chief of staff, Lewis “Scooter” Libby, may have been the source of the leak included in Novak’s column concerning Joseph Wilson and his wife. Some Washington insiders have hinted that they have been given his name by sources in the CIA. He also fits the scant description Novak has provided of his source. Wilson charged at the time that Cheney’s office had been made aware of the problems with the yellowcake evidence, and was corroborated by New York Times columnist Nick Kristof, tainting the Vice President’s reputation. Wilson also claims that journalists implicated Karl Rove, Bush’s chief political strategist, in pushing the story. See *Salon.com*, 10/3/2003
Eric Boehlert

Millions More Without Health Insurance in 2003, Poverty Rates Continue to Climb

Census numbers for 2002 found that the number of American covered by health insurance climbed by 5.7%. The drop is largely attributed to the 2.7 million jobs lost under Bush. Bush’s economic projection for his tax cuts had predicted nearly a million new jobs being created in the months since the cuts went into effect, but instead hundreds of thousands have been lost. 1.7 million more people fell into poverty during 2002, and the median household income dropped by 1.1%. See *Washington Post*, September 30, 2003
Ceci Connolly, A1

Republicans Jostle for Profit in Iraq

A number of firms and individuals connected to the administration and the Republican party have maneuvered to capitalize on business opportunities in Iraq, including government contracts. "It's like a huge pot of honey that's attracting a lot of flies," said Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.). One such firm, *New Bridge Strategies*, is run in part by Joe Allbaugh, Bush’s 2000 campaign manager. Douglas Feith, a high level White House aide and self-proclaimed neoconservative, has also played a large role in such ventures. “Getting the rights to distribute Procter & Gamble products would be a gold mine,” said one of the partners at New Bridge who did not want to be named. “One well-stocked 7-Eleven could knock out 30 Iraqi stores; a Wal-Mart could take over the country,” he said. See *New York Times*, September 30, 2003; *Washington Post*, October 2, 2003

Administration Knew Iraqi Oil Would Not Pay for Reconstruction

Before the war in Iraq, several administration officials, notably Paul Wolfowitz, claimed that the Iraqi oil industry would be quickly rejuvenated and would pay for the reconstruction. This has turned out to be far from true, and the industry has sucked in billions in tax-payer dollars with minimal yield. A newly-released report from before the war from an administration task force on the subject reveals that they were well aware of the decrepit state of the industry. See *New York Times*, October 5, 2003

Study Finds Intelligence Misperceptions Widespread, Linked to Media Sources

An extensive study performed by PIPA at University of Maryland and a prominent polling company has found that most Americans hold beliefs that have been refuted by the intelligence community. It finds that the number of mistaken beliefs is strongly linked to support for the war, and that amongst those who held no mistaken beliefs, support was extremely scant. The poll also found that Fox News watchers held the most mistaken beliefs, and that, in fact, the more people watched Fox News, the more mistaken their beliefs were.

http://www.pipa.org/OnlineReports/Iraq/Media_10_02_03_Report.pdf

No Weapons Found in Iraq, Says Preliminary Report

David Kay, the head of the US weapons hunt reported to Congress that no illegal weapons have been found in Iraq. Kay, who has made no secret of his political allegiance to the administration, attempted to make light of the findings, but was poorly received by congressmen of both parties. Republican Senator Pat Roberts, who is the chair of the intelligence committee and has consistently backed the administration, said, “I’m not pleased by what I heard today”. Kay requested an additional \$600 million to continue the search. See *AP*, October 2, 2003

Associated Press Found No Record of Bush Serving in National Guard

The President and his aides have often claimed that he served in the Alabama National Guard in attempts to bolster his image as a war-time leader. But an ABC News investigation seems to confirm that he never showed up for his service. They conducted extensive interviews and records searches and there is no evidence that he served any of his term. In fact, it appears that he enlisted to avoid the Vietnam draft, and then went AWOL from the National Guard. See *ABC News* June 25, 2003
Chris Willians, AP

Opinion

We Are Facing Death in Iraq for No Reason

A Serving US Soldier Calls for the End of an Occupation Based on Lies

Tim Predmore is a US soldier on active duty with the 101st Airborne Division, based near Mosul in northern Iraq. A version of this article appeared in the Peoria Journal Star, Illinois.

For the past six months, I have been participating in what I believe to be the great modern lie: Operation Iraqi Freedom.

After the horrific events of September 11 2001, and throughout the battle in Afghanistan, the groundwork was being laid for the invasion of Iraq. "Shock and awe" were the words used to describe the display of power that the world was going to view upon the start of Operation Iraqi Freedom. It was to be an up-close, dramatic display of military strength and advanced technology from within the arsenals of the American and British military.

But as a soldier preparing to take part in the invasion of Iraq, the words "shock and awe" rang deep within my psyche. Even as we prepared to depart, it seemed that these two great superpowers were about to break the very rules that they demanded others obey. Without the consent of the United Nations, and ignoring the pleas of their own citizens, the US and Britain invaded Iraq. "Shock and awe"? Yes, the words correctly described the emotional impact I felt as we embarked on an act not of justice, but of hypocrisy.

From the moment the first shot was fired in this so-called war of liberation and freedom, hypocrisy reigned. After the broadcasting of recorded images of captured and dead US soldiers on Arab television, American and British leaders vowed revenge while verbally assaulting the networks for displaying such vivid images. Yet within hours of the deaths of Saddam Hussein's sons, the US government released horrific photographs of the two dead brothers for the entire world to view. Again, a "do as we say and not as we do" scenario.

As soldiers serving in Iraq, we have been told that our purpose is to help the people of Iraq by providing them with the necessary assistance militarily, as well as in humanitarian efforts. Then tell me where the humanity is in the recent account in Stars and Stripes (the newspaper of the US military) of two young children brought to a US military camp by their mother in search of medical care.

The two children had, unknowingly, been playing with explosive ordnance they had found, and as a result they were severely burned. The account tells how, after an hour-long wait, they - two children - were denied care by two US military doctors. A soldier described the incident as one of many "atrocities" on the part of the US military he had witnessed.

Thankfully, I have not personally been a witness to atrocities - unless, of course, you consider, as I do, that this war in Iraq is the ultimate atrocity.

So what is our purpose here? Was this invasion because of weapons of mass destruction, as we have so often heard? If so, where are they? Did we invade to dispose of a leader and his regime because they were closely associated with Osama bin Laden? If so, where is the proof?

Or is it that our incursion is about our own economic advantage? Iraq's oil can be refined at the lowest cost of any in the world. This looks like a modern-day crusade not to free an oppressed people or to rid the world of a demonic dictator relentless in his pursuit of conquest and domination, but a crusade to control another nation's natural resource. Oil - at least to me - seems to be the reason for our presence.

There is only one truth, and it is that Americans are dying. There are an estimated 10 to 14 attacks every day on our servicemen and women in Iraq. As the body count continues to grow, it would appear that there is no immediate end in sight. I once believed that I was serving for a cause - "to uphold and defend the constitution of the United States". Now I no longer believe that; I have lost my conviction, as well as my determination. I can no longer justify my service on the basis of what I believe to be half-truths and bold lies.

With age comes wisdom, and at 36 years old I am no longer so blindly led as to believe without question. From my arrival last November at Fort Campbell, in Kentucky, talk of deployment was heard, and as that talk turned to actual preparation, my heart sank and my doubts grew. My doubts have never faded; instead, it has been my resolve and my commitment that have.

My time here is almost done, as well as that of many others with whom I have served. We have all faced death in Iraq without reason and without justification. How many more must die? How many more tears must be shed before Americans awake and demand the return of the men and women whose job it is to protect them, rather than their leader's interest?