



The Wrong Argument, at the Wrong Place, at the Wrong Time

David Horowitz y Ben Johnson

Colaboraciones n° 656

November 18, 2005

False charges that presidents lied us into war are nothing new, nor are the recriminations leveled against President Bush's Iraq war the most outrageous on record. The toxic allegation that FDR knew about Pearl Harbor in advance and deliberately allowed the Japanese to destroy the Pacific fleet to get reluctant Americans to join the war was the subject of a congressional investigation at the time, the subject of a book by America's leading historian [Charles Beard](#) (*President Roosevelt and the Coming of the War*) and wild accusations by [Clare Boothe Luce](#) and others. Recent scholars like [John Toland](#) and [Robert Stinnett](#) have repeated the charges. Today, these are generally regarded as fringe accusations just as the Left's present mania will seem as such when future generations look back on the conspiracy-theorist opponents of the war for freedom in Iraq.

Naturally, the evidence [weighs against](#) the Pearl Harbor conspiracy theory, but even if it were true would it change one iota the way Americans feel having gone to war against the fascist Axis? Americans would not demand we apologize to Emperor Hirohito, nor question the way we imposed constitutional democracy on the Axis powers after a prolonged (and bloody) military conflict and years of occupation.

Democracies are reluctant to go to war in the first place. In April 1941, when Hitler had already conquered all of continental Europe, a Gallup poll showed that 70 percent of the American public wanted to stay out of the war. It took a Pearl Harbor to change their minds. Whether this was a Roosevelt plot to deceive and manipulate that change does not affect one iota the moral issue of whether we should have opposed the Axis powers. The rationale for

the war, the excuse for getting America into the war, is irrelevant in the face of what we know World War II was about.

So why is the nation focusing now on a bogus argument about the rationale for the war in Iraq? There is not a shred of evidence Bush in any way manipulated or falsified intelligence, yet leftists demand investigations in order to breathe new life into conspiracy theories whose only effect can be to encourage our enemies and sap our nation's will to fight. Even if Sen. Pat Roberts' [Senate Intelligence Committee](#) should uncover information that the president had manipulated intelligence in order to convince the American people to topple Saddam Hussein, that would not affect the question of whether the war we are in is one we should be fighting.

Yet there is no basis for expecting that any such evidence would be found. If anything, the Bush administration has understated the world intelligence community's evidence on Iraq's WMD programs. CIA Director George Tenet - a Clinton appointee held over by Bush - called the case that Saddam had WMDs a "[slam dunk.](#)" The National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq, which Tenet produced in 2002, contained such [dire predictions](#) as:

Iraq is reconstituting its nuclear program. Iraq has chemical and biological weapons. Iraq was developing an unmanned aerial vehicle, a UAV, probably intended to deliver biological warfare agents. And all key aspects, research and development and production, of

Iraq's offensive biological weapons program are active, and that most elements are larger and more advanced than they were before the Gulf War.

That kind of unequivocal intelligence is difficult to overstate. In fact, all the world's intelligence agencies - including those of Russia and Jordan - agreed Saddam possessed chemical and biological weapons, had accelerated his nuclear weapons program, and posed a gathering threat to regional stability. Much of our previous intelligence had underestimated other nations' nuclear capacity: Soviet Russia, China, Pakistan, India, North Korea, and Iraq itself prior to Operation Desert Storm. Ba'athist Iraq's [significant ties](#) to [terrorism](#) - including [al-Qaeda affiliates](#) - are a [matter of record](#). That, coupled with the fact that we had [no human intelligence gathering in Iraq](#) after President Clinton allowed Saddam to kick the UN inspectors out of the country in 1998, stoked the president's sense of urgency. He decided to take out a threat, instead of indulging the Left's prescription: Leave the *ji-hadists* an irresistible target of 200,000 U.S. soldiers standing on Iraq's border while Saddam parades hapless inspectors through an endless maze of Potemkin villages, gets the UN sanctions removed, then begins his WMD program in earnest.

The Democrats know nothing will be found. In fact, previous studies - including [Phase One of the Senate Intelligence Committee](#) and the [Silberman-Robb report](#) - have cleared the president of pressuring agents to produce intelligence bol-

stering the case for war. [Four solid reports](#) have absolved Tony Blair of manipulating UK intelligence *ex post facto*, the same charge the Democrats now want to hang on President Bush. The leftists' thirst for inquests and tribunals is a last ditch desperation effort to validate their fevered fantasies while besmirching in a partisan manner the integrity of the president of the United States through the Big Lie technique: keep repeating the allegation, and eventually, it will stick. (See the most recent heading under ["Wilson, Joe."](#))

And yet, even if the investigation were to find Bush guilty, the war for democracy in Iraq, the war to deny the terrorists a nation-state base in Iraq, would continue; and *that* is the only issue that really matters.

Operation Iraqi Freedom was never about existing stockpiles of WMDs: the 2002 [Congressional Resolution Authorizing Force Against Iraq](#) - brought up for a Congressional vote at the [insistence of leftist Democrats](#) and voted into law by a majority of Democrats - has 23 "whereas" clauses. Only two identify stockpiles of WMDs as a cause of the war. Twelve refer to violations of UN resolutions and the 1991 Gulf War truce.

The human rights conditions in Iraq are one way to measure the Iraq War. The brutal repression of the Iraqi people has come to an end. Torture squads have been disbanded, and rape rooms have been shuttered. Ethnic exploitation has been curtailed, as Iraq's diverse eth-

nicities agreed to forge a common identity under a common government - led by a Kurd.

The orgy of freedom the world witnessed last January is another. Elated Muslims danced with glee through the streets of a nation that has seldom experienced genuine elections from its roots in ancient Babylon. Although Zarqawi declared war on the election and democracy as such, although he warned that every Muslim who voted was by that act an "infidel" and would be hunted down and killed, 58 percent of all Iraqis risked their lives to vote. They voted for democracy and against terror. They voted for the war policy of George Bush.

The recent vote for an Iraqi constitution - the most democratic in the history of the Islamic world - included nearly 70 percent of the population. It embraced Sunnis, Shi'ites, and Kurds. A new nation is being forged out of the ruins of Saddam's oppression. A war is being fought between terrorist Islam and an America-supported anti-terrorist Islam. And the Bush opposition in this country is either AWOL on this contest or supporting the other side.

The way to evaluate the war in Iraq is not by asking irrelevant and destructive questions about Colin Powell's UN speech. It is by asking questions such as this: Is the cause of Islamic *jihad* advanced or set back by the creation of an Iraqi democracy - an anti-terrorist Iraqi democracy - in the Middle East?

If Americans ignore the Democrats and this country maintains its resolve to stand by Iraq's nascent democracy, history will remember President Bush's contribution to the war against Islamofascism in the same way it remembers FDR's role

in defeating the fascists in World War II. And history will remember Reid, Schumer, and their cohorts as it remembers FDR's conspiracy-mongers, who sabotage an earlier American war for freedom, and failed.

David Horowitz is a nationally known author and lifelong civil rights activist. Since 1988 he had served as president of the [Center for the Study of Popular Culture](#). To access a complete bibliography of all his work, please [click here](#). Ben Johnson is Associate Editor of FrontPage Magazine.