Consensual Deception and US Policy in Iraq

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In its May 3, 2004 update, the National Security Archive reported that "the US government classified more than 14 million new national security secrets last year, up from 11 million in the previous year and 8 million the year before, according to the new annual report to President Bush from the oversight office for the national security secrecy system."[1] The Information Security Oversight Office referred to "the rising tide of secrecy" reflected in the administration's withholding of information "that will not cause damage to national security …"

Several days earlier, the National Security Archive had posted another update on its website relevant to government secrecy. This one referred to an ongoing lawsuit challenging "President Bush's Executive Order 13,233 that gave former Presidents and their heirs (as well as former Vice-Presidents for the first time) indefinite authority to hold up release of White House records."[2]

If the history of this and past administrations is to become publicly known, the "rising tide of secrecy" is an ominous sign, particularly for those seeking to make sense of US policies in the Middle East, including Iraq. The danger—in terms of the withholding of information—posed by an administration that has magnified the classification of official data, and that has promoted the habit of secrecy, can hardly be discounted. But there is another kind of danger that merits attention, the danger of indifference. Why, given the amount of information concerning US foreign policy in the Middle East that is in the public domain, do so many appear to know so little about it? Why does it remain virtually invisible, "disappeared" from public view? And why have US policy and Middle East politics been taboo in public discussion, save for a critical minority whose views on the subject are marginalized, the better to dismiss them?

In an explanatory text on "Cornerstones of Information Warfare," the Secretary of the Air Force, Sheila E. Widnall and Ronald R. Fogleman, General USAF, Chief of Staff, posed the rhetorical question, "what is information?"[3] Their reply was instructive. Information was defined as "phenomena, observable facts or events, [which] are *everything* that happens around us. Phenomenon must be perceived and interpreted to become information. Information then, is

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[1] "14 Million New Secrets Last Year," National Security Archive Update, May 3, 2004, available online at: <http://www.nsarchive.org>.

[2] "Archive, Historians Ask Judge to Rethink Dismissal …," National Security Archive Update, April 30, 2004, available online at: <http://www.nsarchive.org>.

[3] Secretary of the Air Force, Sheila E. Widnall and General, USAF, Chief of Staff, Ronald R. Fogleman, "Cornerstones of Information Warfare," available online at: <http://www.af.mil/lib/corner.html>.

the result of two things: perceived phenomena (data) and the instructions required to interpret that data and give it meaning." Without interpretation, they suggested, the data would be meaningless, as good as absent, in which case, the "familiar paradox" applied. Their formulation of it was this: "If a tree falls, but no one was around to hear it, did it make a noise?"

If the trees of US foreign policy in the Middle East have long fallen, did know one hear them? In the absence of sounds attesting to such a fall, it appears as though we are suffering from severe memory loss and historical amnesia. In a period that many view as unprecedented in terms of the dangers it represents to human survival, and one in which the Middle East figures prominently as a central and dangerous terrain, how can one afford not to know what past policies have been? And without such information, what is one to make of present US policy? What is one to make of the Middle East, whose unfamiliarity is no less serious? What is one to make of the cascade of terrifying news from a region that is regularly described as vital to US national security yet remains vitally misunderstood?

The questions apply with particular urgency to those in the know, to those who have access to information and who can offer some hoped for explanation for what to many appear to be irrational events emanating from alien worlds; in short, the mainstream media, the members of academia, the intellectuals. The very forces that play a critical role in the legitimation of power, proved in many cases, to be complicit with it, defecting in the struggle over information wars that constituted the second, undeclared front, in the war with Iraq.

Central to that war was persuading the American public of the credibility of official claims marshalled to justify preemptive war and the establishment of a military occupation in Iraq. Yet repeated revelations disclosed that the given causes for war were deceptive. The elimination of the Iraqi dictator, previously supported by US administrations, was not the final object of US policy. Nor was the reputed search for absent weapons of mass destruction, the purported reason for US military advances.

The promise of direct US military and political control over Iraq involved another vision, one kept safely out of public discussion, though consistent in some significant respects with past policy. The US occupation of Iraq put Washington in the center of the oil rich regions of the Middle East, poised to challenge resistance to its direct and indirect control over the region, with the assistance of militarized states such as Israel. Further, the expanded American presence in Iraq and the eastern Arab world assured Washington of the means to prepare for greater challenges from an eastward direction, which explains the reallocation of US forces from Europe to points in the Middle East. Such a realignment of power was not a function of developments in 2003 alone, but they were greatly facilitated by what Washington chose to interpret as its "victory" in Baghdad.

Would US public opinion support such intervention? For what purpose? Could it be counted on to legitimize the savage wars of "liberation" in Iraq, or to remain permanently indifferent to the destruction of the Palestinians? To judge by the administration's campaign of widespread disinformation, the risks of an awakened public opposition intensified the stakes in its information war, much as it deepened its penchant for secrecy.

And yet the administration's efforts to contain information, to disseminate disinformation occurred in the face of formidable odds, namely, the vast armies of journalists with access to new technologies that defied borders and checkpoints, and the voices of independent critics with knowledge of past policies and regional politics.

Offering a silent resistance to administration claims, moreover, were government archives and Congressional records whose relevance to current policies was striking. Of particular importance were those dealing with oil following the Arab embargo of 1973; those relevant to political revolution in Iran (1979); and those surrounding the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 under Ariel Sharon, which ultimately saw the expulsion of US forces at the hands of Lebanese *Hezbullah*, from Beirut. And then there were the records of US relations with Iraq, with Saddam Hussein, in which current members of the Bush administration had been present. It is in this earlier period, in the decade between 1979 and the collapse of the former USSR, that the outlook and policies of the Bush administration can be rooted.

Against knowledge of such past history and present policies, the administration launched the information wars, some of whose manifestations are described in what follows. The subject deserves far more attention than it has received, along with the "unwelcome factual truths" to be found in US records.

First, consider the statement of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld in his April 22, 2004 address to the Newspaper Association of America/American Society of Newspaper Editors. Rumsfeld expressed the view that "our great political system needs information to be self-correcting. While excesses and imbalances will inevitably exist for a time, fortunately they tend not to last. Ultimately truth prevails. The American people seem to have inner gyroscopes that keep them centered and balanced."[4] The Secretary additionally reminded his audience that: "our republic was founded on the notion that an unchecked government is a major obstacle to human freedom and to progress, and that our leaders need to be challenged, internally through the complex constitutional system of checks and balances, and externally by a free and energetic press." He informed those listening that in the 1960s he had been "a co-sponsor of the Freedom of Information Act."

None of the above seems to fit the functions of the Defense Department's Office of Strategic Influence, under Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Douglas Feith, whose purpose it was to "oversee, coordinate, and augment standing DOD [Department of Defense] efforts to influence foreign public opinion."[5] When the Department was obliged to close in response to adverse publicity, the Science Applications International Corporation was assigned to "design and conduct effective strategic influence and operational and tactical perception-management campaigns."[6] US policies in Afghanistan, Iraq and its so-called

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[4] United States Department of Defense, April 22, 2004, news transcript, Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld, remarks to the Newspaper Association of America/American Society of Newspaper Editors, available online at: <http://www.fas.org/sgp/news/2004/04/dod042204.html>.

[5] Carl Conetta, "Disappearing the Dead: Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Idea of a 'New Warfare'," Project on Defense Alternatives, February 18, 2004, p. 4, available online at: <http://www.comw.org/pda/0402rm9.html>.

[6] *Ibid*.

"war on terrorism" were among its primary concerns and "Information Warfare" was among its indispensable weapons, as the survey of the expanding field previously cited indicated.

Among those knowledgeable about the related techniques of "perception management operations" was Lieutenant-Colonel Steven Collins, chief of PSYOPS in the Operations Division at Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe in Mons, Belgium. Collins was keenly aware that "one factor undermining efforts to have an effect on world opinion today is the proliferation of news sources, in particular, the increase in the number of satellite television news services and internet connections makes it ever more difficult to influence opinions and attitudes globally, or even regionally."[7] An example of a high-risk source, from this perspective, was the Arab news channel, *Al Jazeera*. Collins observed, accordingly, that the US led Coalition "attempted to take Iraqi television news service off the air through both bombing and electronic jamming—as much, if not more, for the impact it was having outside Iraq than for the impact it was having within the country." "Perception management," as Collins explained, " includes all actions used to influence the attitudes and objective reasoning of foreign audiences and consists of Public Diplomacy, Psychological Operations (PSYOPS), Public Information, Deception and Covert Action." Further, in the context of "Operation Iraqi Freedom," Collins stated, "are public diplomacy, the deliberate attempt to persuade foreign audiences of the content and wisdom of one's policies, intensions and actions, and PSYOPS, the use of activities, predominantly media, to influence and persuade foreign audiences."

In practice, as Collins conceded, such efforts fell flat in Europe and the Middle East, as opposed to the home front, the unmentioned other target that figured prominently in decisions to promote the "embedding" of journalists in the ranks of the US military. The Lieutenant-Colonel described the program as seeking to "shape the world-wide perception of the conflict by a variety of measures, including that of 'embedding' reporters with military units scheduled to deploy." As he observed, the process "created an inevitable bond between reports and the units they covered."

Lieutenant-Colonel Tammy L. Miracle, US Army, made the same point in an article appearing in *Military Review*, in which she observed that some "500 journalists, photographers, and news crews were embedded within U.S. and British military units; another 2,000 unilateral journalists were in Kuwait."[8] The program was designed to keep the public focused on the US military, to demonstrate the professional and disciplined nature of the military. "Embedding journalists into Army units provides an opportunity for the world to see the American soldier's capability and dedication to the mission."[9] As neither Collins nor Miracle added, the "embedding" business also guaranteed that the journalists and the public, dependent on their view of the world, would see Iraqis as did the US military, through the barrel of a gun.

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[7] Lieutenant-Colonel Steven Collins, "Mind Games," available online at: <http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2003/issue2/english/art4_pr.html>

[8] Lieutenant-Colonel Tammy L. Miracle, US Army, "The Army and Embedded Media," *Military Review*, September–October 2003, p. 41.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 45.

Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld was in favor of the "embedding" process, which he saw as an example of the Defense Department's exceptional openness to the press. He claimed to have "instituted an embedding program during the combat operations in Iraq, including some 500 journalists from some 250 outlets that we believe enriched the coverage and serve the public well. Even today, we have dozens of *embeds* [italics mine] with our forces in Afghanistan and in Iraq."[10]

But Secretary Rumsfeld was apparently unprepared for the possibility that some US military personnel embedded in the US army might make use of the information technology that Collins and others worried about. The example of the photographs taken of US abuse and torture of Iraqi prisoners at the Abu Ghraib prison illustrates the problem. It appeared that "mobile phones fitted with digital cameras" were implicated in the dissemination of photographs taken by US guards at the Abu Ghraib prison. In response, the US Defense Secretary was reported to have prohibited members of the military from having "camera phones." *Agence France Presse* reported that "mobile phones fitted with digital cameras have been banned in US army installations in Iraq on orders from Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld …"[11] Several days after the above report appeared, the Defense Department sought to correct the impression that it was censoring the widespread technology. Instead, the Pentagon "is telling commanders in the field to strictly monitor the use of consumer wireless technology through Directive 8100.2—Use of Commercial Wireless Devices, Services and Technologies in the Department of Defense Global Information Grid—issued last month."[12]

The mainstream television media, prepared to accept the accounts of "embedded" journalists, were also open to other requests emanating from the military. In this case, the decision to withhold television coverage of the very same photographs of Abu Ghraib. As Dan Rather, the host of the television show that agreed to withhold the incriminating material at the request of the US military, explained, CBS had "received an appeal from the Defense Department, and eventually from the chairman of the military Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Richard Myers, to delay this broadcast given the danger and tension on the ground in Iraq. We decided to honor that request while pressing for the Defense Department to add its perspective to the incidents at Abu Ghraib Prison."[13]

The Department of Defense did add its perspective, inadvertently perhaps, in disclosures concerning "interrogation methods prepared for Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld after commanders at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, complained in late 2002 that with conventional methods they weren't getting enough infor-mation from prisoners."[14] The investigative work of Jess Braving of the *Wall Street Journal* revealed that the above report "outlined US laws and international

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[10] Rumsfeld transcript, April 22, 2004, *op. cit.*

[11] "Rumsfeld Ban Camera Phones in Iraq," May 23, 2004, available online at: <http://sg.news.yahoo.com/040523/1/3kib5.html>.

[12] Xeni Jardin, "Wartime Wireless Worries Pentagon," Wired News, May 26, 2004, available online at: <http://www.wired.com/news/politics/0,1283,63604,00.html>.

[13] "Court Martial in Iraq: US Army Soldiers Face Court-Martials for Actions at Baghdad's Abu Ghraib Prison," 60 Minutes 11, CBS TV, April 28, 2004.

[14] Jess Bravin, "Pentagon Report Set Framework for Use of Torture," *The Wall Street Journal*, June 7, 2004.

treaties forbidding torture, and why those restrictions might be overcome by national-security considerations or legal technicalities." The *New York Times* followed with its own account of how "lawyers decided bans on torture didn't bind Bush."[15]

The media did not easily accept accusations of open complicity in disseminating deceptive information. Thus the *New York Times* decided to publish a correction under the title, "The Times and Iraq," on May 26, 2004. As the editors explained, "in some cases, information that was controversial then, and seems questionable now, was insufficiently qualified or allowed to stand unchallenged. Looking back, we wish we had been more aggressive in re-examining the claims as new evidence emerged—or failed to emerge."[16] The concession was considered unprecedented. It was also inadequate and incomplete. The subject at hand was the administration claims with respect to Iraq's nuclear weapons, as well as its chemical and biological weapons. At issue for the *Times* was the role of its unnamed journalist in propagating the same claims based on a source whose credibility was exposed. The full story of the US role of Ahmad Chalabi, exiled head of the Iraqi National Congress, favored by the Pentagon, is part of this story.

What is crucial in this and other related stories is the indifference to contrary evidence, available to the *Times* as to the administration, on the very same central issues. This evidence was in the form of the abundant UN records and the accounts of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). According to Jacques Baute, who was the onsite director of inspection of the IAEA in Baghdad, "by 1998 'it was pretty clear we had neutralized Iraq's nuclear program. There was unanimity on that.'"[17] Neither the evidence nor the conclusion to which the IAEA arrived, though publicly available, were prominently displayed in the mainstream media, nor given recognition in official pronouncements coming from Washington.

In March 2003, Mohammed ElBaradei, director of IAEA, informed the UN Security Council that there was "no evidence of resumed nuclear activities … not any indication of nuclear-related prohibited activities at any related sites"[18] In January 2004, UN arms inspector David Kay announced on the basis of his work that Iraq currently possessed no such weapons and that the US was relying on unreliable sources. The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace offered an ample summary of relevant information in its own report: "WMD in Iraq: Evidence and Implications."[19]

But it may be instructive, in this context, to cite other earlier attempts to deflect attention from the subject of Iraq's alleged weapons and the United Nations. Thus in December 2002, the United Nations released the report prepared by the Iraqi regime of its weapons program. It contained information on US companies as well as those of other states that had similarly contributed to

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[15] Neil A. Lewis and Eric Schmitt, "Lawyers Decided Bans on Torture Didn't Bind Bush," *New York Times*, June 8, 2004, p. A1.

[16] "The Times and Iraq," *New York Times*, May 26, 2004, p. A10.

[17] Michael Massing, "Now They Tell Us," *The New York Review of Books* 51:3 (2004).

[18] Fareed Zakaria, "We Had Good Intel—The U.N.'s" *Newsweek*, February 9, 2004.

[19] Joseph Cirincione, Jessica T. Mathews and George Perkovich, with Alexis Orton, *WMD in Iraq: Evidence and Implications* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2004).

Iraq's capacity to build its chemical and biological weapons program. The Bush administration sought to keep the news within privileged circles, thus obtaining the sole copy of the report submitted to the UN which was subsequently released to four of the other permanent members of the Security Council. The purpose of the unilateral act was to keep unwelcome information out of the media and away from the public. As *Agence France Presse* reported, "the United States upset other Security Council members by removing the only complete copy of Iraq's declaration of its weapons of mass destruction from UN headquarters soon after it arrived," according to diplomats who were present.[20] The document was apparently withdrawn from the office of Hans Blix on the ground that it "contained sensitive data."

To return to the role of the media, consider the following evidence of its dismissal of opposition, this time from Congressional ranks. In a review of the media's coverage of Iraq, Michael Massing maintained that since Congressional Democrats hesitated to be viewed as opposing the US President, the press had no opposition voices or hearings to cover.[21] There were voices, however, and inquiries and resolutions. Interested readers could find them on the Internet, not on the front pages of the mainstream press.

In a report prepared for Representative Henry A. Waxman by the US House of Representatives Committee on Government Reform—Minority Staff Special Investigations Divisions, and issued in March 16, 2004, the Bush administration's statements on Iraq were examined. On the basis of a database on the subject, the Committee tabulated the numbers of misleading statements, their timing, their subject matter, and their authorship, which included the President, Vice President, Secretary of Defense, Secretary of State National Security Advisor; in short, those "five Administration officials most responsible for providing public information and shaping public opinion on Iraq."[22]

The report prepared for Representative Waxman concluded that the above five officials "repeatedly made misleading statements about the threat posed by Iraq. In 125 separate appearances, they made 11 misleading statements about the urgency of Iraq's threat, 81 misleading statements about Iraq's nuclear capabilities, and 61 misleading statements about Iraq's relationship with al Qaeda." Others collaborated in the deception. Among them was the Undersecretary for Defense Policy, Douglas Feith, who insisted on the connection between Saddam Hussein and al Queda, in spite of the doubts of the Defense Department and the director of the CIA, to which others subscribed, as evidenced in National Intelligence Estimate sources.[23]

The Iraq report indicated that the misleading statements made by the highest administration officials "began at least a year before the commencement of hostilities in Iraq, when Vice President Cheney stated on March 17, 2002: 'We know they have biological and chemical weapons.'" The President himself

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[20] Robert Holloway, "US Upsets Security Council by Seizing Iraq's Arms Declaration," *Agence France Presse*, December 10, 2002.

[21] Michael Massing, "Now They Tell Us," *op. cit*.

[22] "Iraq on the Record: The Bush Administration's Public Statements on Iraq," Prepared for Rep. Henry A. Waxman, United States House of Representatives, Committee on Government Reform—Minority Staff Special Investigations Division, March 16, 2004, available online at: <www.reform.house.gov/min>.

[23] *Ibid*.

delivered an address only three days before the Congressional vote on war, "with 11 misleading statements, the most by any of the five officials in a single appearance."[24]

The Waxman investigation was not the first of its kind. Administration critics, such as Representative Dennis Kucinich, Democrat of Ohio, charged the administration with going to war on the basis of assertions, "for which they have yet to produce any evidence, about Iraq's weapons of mass destruction." As he repeated: "the president led the nation to war on the basis of unfounded assertions." The date was June 4, 2003; the occasion was a news conference with Kucinich, Representative Barbara Lee (D-CA), and Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL). There were no dramatic reactions when Kucinich announced his plans to introduce a Resolution of Inquiry on the administration's justifications for war.

By the end of June 2003, Waxman was pushing for an independent commission to investigate the question of Iraq's alleged "weapons of mass destruction." At the time, he was one of 81 Democrats in the House of Representatives who along with 29 Senate Democrats had supported the war only to question their vote in the light of absent evidence claimed by the administration. On June 12, 2003, Waxman had issued the following statement: "For nearly three months, I have been asking a simple question: Why did President Bush cite forged evidence about Iraq's nuclear capabilities in his State of the Union address."[25] There had been other questions, similarly pointed, and similarly "disappeared" insofar as public reaction was concerned.

In conclusion, it may be appropriate to cite the attempt to "disappear" the dead, as Carl Conetta described the effort to mute public evidence of war casualties, those of US troops and Iraqi civilians. But as the same author also recognized in his report on "Disappearing the Dead," despite consistent efforts on the part of the Defense Department as well as White House to control information on the US wars on Afghanistan and Iraq, "these wars represent the most intensively reported in history." In addition to the sheer number of reporters involved, the technology available to them "was historically unparalleled." Satellite dishes, digital cameras, videophones, computers of all sizes and shapes, Internet access, combined to inform more people of more aspects of war than previously imagined.[26]

Despite the abundance of potential sources of information, Pentagon officials endeavored to mask the death of US forces and Iraqi civilians. In this effort, they relied on a specialized lexicon, one in which terms such as "collateral damage" were substituted for dead and wounded civilians, along with references to anonymous "body counts," as in the expression, "we don't keep body counts." Thus, the deputy director of operations for the Joint Chiefs, Rear Admiral John Stufflebeem, General Tommy Franks, the main spokesman of the Central Command, Captain Frank Thorm, and the US Defense Secretary were wary of replicating information provided by the military during the Vietnam war.

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[24] *Ibid.*

[25] Statement of Rep. Henry A Waxman, Ranking Minority member, House Committee on Government Reform, 108th Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Government Reform, June 12, 2003.

[26] Conetta, "Disappearing the Dead," *op. cit.*

Those with Internet access were hardly limited by what the Pentagon chose to offer on the subject. Various sites provided updated information on the subject.[27] But in addition, an equally telling account provided clarification of another kind. Three months before the US led invasion of Iraq, an international group of legal experts warned against the violation of international humanitarian law in anticipation of "use of cluster bombs and fuel-air explosives, and attacks on electricity supplies and dams."[28] Yet it was precisely the claim that the US had mastered "precision attacks" in which civilian casualties would be minimized and those of the US even more sharply reduced that was advertised by the administration. In practice, notions of "precision attack" were designed to undermine anticipated comparisons to Vietnam and to legitimize the resort to war.

Claims with respect to an allegedly new warfare that minimized casualties were designed to influence a public opinion that was systematically denied or spared the evidence of war. The invisible dead did not count.[29] But there was nothing invisible about Iraqi civilian casualties, estimated by some sources to be in the range of 11,500 as of May 2004. According to David Randall of *The Independent*, "greater precision is not possible. American and Britain have not only declined to count the number of civilians killed, but have obstructed any attempts to discover the total. The Iraqi Health Ministry tried to collect data on deaths several months ago, but was ordered to stop."[30] Among the sources that Randall cited was IraqBodyCount.org, whose total for the same period was 11,005.

Such figures gave no indication of another dimension of so-called precision warfare, namely, the increase in deformities stemming from depleted uranium shells used by US and British forces. According to a Green Party Euro-MP, doctors in Basra claim that there has been a "sevenfold" increase in deformities among children since 1991. Writing in *The Independent*, Nigel Morris maintained that "the amount of depleted uranium used by coalition forces in the two Gulf Wars is not known, but some estimates suggest it was 300 tons in 1991 and five times as much last year" (May 13, 2004).

The London-based MEDACT report on "the health and environmental costs of war on Iraq" estimated that as of October 20, 2003, the "toll on combatants and civilians who paid and continue to pay the price in death, injury and mental and physical ill health" was "between 21,700 and 55,000 people."[31] Working papers issued by the health organization included those focusing on comparing "widespread use of precision weapons and the high number of incidents

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[27] See the Iraq Occupation Watch, available online at: <http://www.occupationwatch.org> and Iraq Body Count, available online at: <http://www.iraqbodycount.net>.

[28] "Lawyers War of War Crimes Prosecutions," *Sydney Morning Herald*, January 25, 2003, available online at: <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2003/01/25/1042911585741.html>.

[29] See "Understanding Collateral Damage Workshop," Project on the Means of Intervention, Harvard University Carr Center for Human Rights, cited in Panetta, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

[30] David Randall, "Ordinary Iraqis Killed: 11,500 and Not Counting," *The Independent*, May 13, 2003.

[31] The report "Continuing Collateral Damage: The Health and Environmental Costs of War on Iraq" is available online at: <http://www.medact.org/tbx/pages/sub.cfm?id=775>.

involving civilian deaths and 'friendly fire'," and "the questionable legality of inhumane weapons used during the conflict and … their impact on health."

Did we know? And if not, why? What habits explain indifference or willing complicity with deception? What accounts for the reluctance to break with silence? Documentation of deception, as in books written by former government officials, had become something akin to a growth industry by the spring and early summer of 2004, as in the case of works by Paul O'Neill, Richard Clarke, as well as by former ambassadors and other ex-intelligence officers, and by a former translator for the FBI.

But long before the appearance of such works, innumerable critics across the US and internationally exposed the radical policies of the Bush administration, with its wholesale attack on civil liberties, social welfare legislation, environmental policies, as well as the unprecedented enrichment of the corporate sector, in an administration committed to the concentration of power and the associated policy of secrecy and deception. Those who contributed to resisting such efforts, including dissident intellectuals, journalists, veterans' groups, members of Congress, students and activists who raised their voices in opposition, as well as the countless and indispensable numbers of those who demanded to know, constituted the veritable reservoir of resistance against deception and self-deception and the ominous threat to democracy that they posed.