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The Boston Globe

Still no mass weapons, no ties to 9/11, no truth

By Derrick Z. Jackson, 12/17/2003

THE INVASION was still a lie. The capture of Saddam Hussein changes nothing about that. There were too many forked tongues in the road to his lair. The way we removed the dictator, we became a global dictatorship.

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No major reason for the war has been proven. The deadly WMDs became weapons of mysterious disappearance. In August 2002, Vice President Cheney said: "Simply stated, there is no doubt that Saddam Hussein now has weapons of mass destruction. There is no doubt he is amassing them to use against our friends, against our allies, and against us."

In the 48-hour warning to Saddam on March 17, 2003, Bush said, "Intelligence gathered by this and other governments leaves no doubt that the Iraq regime continues to possess and conceal some of the most lethal weapons ever devised. . . . The terrorists could fulfill their stated ambitions and kill thousands or hundreds of thousands of innocent people in our country or any other."

On March 30, a week and a half after the start of the invasion, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld boasted about the weapons of mass destruction, "We know where they are. They're in the area around Tikrit and Baghdad and east, west, south, and north somewhat."

Nine months later, no chemical or biological weapons of mass destruction have been found.

There were the administration's attempts to tie Saddam to the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11. They worked so well that nearly 70 percent of Americans believed Saddam was "personally involved" in the attacks. On March 21, two days after announcing the invasion, Bush wrote a letter to congressional leaders in which he said: "The use of armed force against Iraq is consistent with the United States and other countries continuing to take the necessary actions against international terrorists and terrorist organizations, including those nations, organizations, or persons who planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on Sept. 11, 2001."

By the fall, after Cheney revived a discredited claim that Sept. 11 hijacker Mohammed Atta had met with an Iraqi intelligence agent prior to the attacks, Bush was forced to admit, "We've had no evidence that Saddam Hussein was involved in September the 11th."

Bush scared Americans with fears of an Iraq armed with nuclear weapons. In his State of the Union address last January, Bush said: "the British government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa." That claim had been discredited months earlier by many US intelligence sources. Bush used it anyway.

Bush was so successful in putting mortal fear into Americans that there never was a pause to wonder if this was carnage without cause. We could not wait for United Nations weapons inspectors to finish their job. We could not wait for diplomats to try a last appeal. As with the environment and arms control, there was no attempt to listen to the world at all. There is a thin line between arrogance and shame. Because we are the preeminent power in the world, we assumed that our arrogance would not shame us.

Bush told the world we were going to secure America and liberate Iraqis at the same time. With no

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Saddam Hussein after his capture by US forces. (Reuters Photo)

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weapons of mass destruction, with no nuclear weapons, and with no tie to 9/11, Saddam's capture could not possibly have been worth the lives of 455 US and 80 European soldiers. With no weapons of mass destruction, no nuclear weapons, and no tie to 9/11, it could not possibly have been worth the lives of 7,600 to 45,000 Iraqi soldiers. With no rationale for the invasion, you could consider this a massacre.

As murderous as Saddam was, an invasion with no reason was not worth the killing of unknown thousands of Iraqi civilians. At the beginning of the war, Rumsfeld said: "To the Iraqi people, let me say that the day of your liberation will soon be at hand." Halliburton has been liberated to profit off Iraq, but I have yet to read a news report where a grieving Iraqi family clutches the body of an innocent loved one and hugs an American soldier in appreciation of their "liberation."

With no weapons, no ties, and no truth, the capture of Saddam was merely the most massive and irresponsible police raid in modern times. We broke in without a search warrant. Civilian deaths constituted justifiable homicide. America was again above the law. We have taught the next generation that many wrongs equal a right. In arrogance, we boasted, "We got him!" The shame is that we feel none for how we got him. The capture of this dictator, driven by the poison of lies, turned America itself into a dictator.

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