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Donkeys of Mass Destruction

By William Rivers Pitt
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About a month into the Iraq invasion, Congress set aside \$79 billion in funds for the military. Recently, Bush requested another \$87 billion because the occupation was dragging on far longer, and was costing more in men and materiel, than the rosy pre-war forecasts had indicated. In total, this comes to \$166 billion spent on Iraq by the Bush administration.



The actual numbers, while difficult to ascertain, are certain to be significantly higher. Yale University economist William D. Nordhaus has crunched the numbers, and states that the cost of this Iraq invasion exceeds the inflation-adjusted costs of the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, the Mexican War, the Civil War, the Spanish American War and the Persian Gulf War combined.



Why did we do this? We did this because George W. Bush and the members of his administration argued, day after day, week after week, month after month, that Iraq was in possession of massive stores of mass destruction weapons that would be delivered to Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda for use against the United States.



The total amount of weapons held by Iraq, according to the administration, is described on a WhiteHouse.gov webpage entitled 'Disarm Saddam Hussein. According to this page, Iraq possessed 26,000 liters of anthrax, 38,000 liters of botulinum toxin, 1,000,000 pounds of sarin, mustard and VX gas, 30,000 munitions to deliver these agents, plus mobile biological weapons labs, uranium from Niger to produce nuclear bombs, along with deep and abiding al Qaeda connections.

"Simply stated," said Dick Cheney on August 26 2002, "there is no



doubt that Saddam Hussein now has weapons of mass destruction."

"We know for a fact that there are weapons there," said Ari Fleischer on January 9 2003.

"There is no doubt," said General Tommy Franks on March 22 2003, "that the regime of Saddam Hussein possesses weapons of mass destruction."

"We know where they are," said Don Rumsfeld on March 30 2003, later denying to the press that he ever said such a thing. "They are in the area around Tikrit and Baghdad."

"We have sources that tell us," said George W. Bush on February 8 2003, "that Saddam Hussein recently authorized Iraqi field commanders to use chemical weapons."

"Intelligence gathered by this and other governments leaves no doubt," continued Bush on March 17 2003, "that the Iraq regime continues to possess and conceal some of the most lethal weapons ever devised."

In his February 5 2003 speech to the United Nations, Secretary of State Colin Powell warned of the "sinister nexus between Iraq and the Al Qaeda terrorist network."

George W. Bush, on March 18, had delivered a letter to Congress explicitly indicating that an attack on Iraq was an attack upon those who perpetrated September 11. Paragraph two reads, "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 September 11, 2001."

On May 1 2003, when he announced the end of "major combat operations," Bush proclaimed, "We've removed an ally of Al Qaeda."

It is now the 24th of November. Some 9,000 American soldiers have been wounded in Iraq, according to an official Pentagon count. Well over 400 American soldiers have died. The occupation itself has almost completely bogged down. Even the 'safe' areas in northern Iraq have seen a startling upsurge in violence. The two Blackhawks recently downed, to the tune of 17 Americans killed, were attacked in northern Iraq. Two soldiers had their throats cut in northern Iraq today,

with a third killed by a bomb outside Baghdad.

The uranium claims were based on crudely forged documents, the mobile labs were weather balloon launching platforms sold to Iraq by the British in the 1980s, the al Qaeda claims are utterly impossible to establish as true, any connection between Iraq and September 11 was publicly denied by George W. Bush himself recently, and the mass destruction weapons are utterly and completely absent. Despite the fact that Iraq lacks any aspect of the formidable arsenal described by the Bush administration, fighters against the American occupation have managed to slay and maim our troops with sharp and deadly accuracy.

How? How are people without the vast amounts of money, weapons and training enjoyed by American forces succeeding in killing and wounding so many of our soldiers? The answer lies in the same two ingredients that brought defeat to America on bicycles and oxen and human backs down the length of the Ho Chi Mihn Trail: Ingenuity and will.

The Palestine Hotel and the Iraq Oil Ministry building came under rocket attack last week. The missiles were not fired by Iraqi men, but from the backs of donkey carts. The fuses to remotely launch these missiles were fashioned out of car batteries. The missiles struck home, gravely wounding a civilian employee of the American petroleum company Halliburton.

Halliburton had fashioned huge siege walls to protect the Palestine Hotel, an interesting fact in and of itself. One is forced to wonder exactly how a company whose purpose is to pull oil out of the ground came to be so adept at preparing military-style defenses. More interesting, though, is the fact that those defenses were defeated by donkeys. Not anthrax, not botulinum toxin, not VX gas, not with any of the 30,000 munitions Bush claims Iraq possessed, not with a nuclear bomb fashioned with material from Niger, and not with the help of Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda. Halliburton was attacked by pack mules.

Americans continue to die, the cost of this invasion continues to skyrocket, and all of the dire threats we were told of do not, in any way, exist. In short, the donkeys are kicking our ass.

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New York Times and international best-selling author of three books - "War On Iraq," available from Context Books, "The Greatest Sedition is Silence," available from Pluto Press, and "Our Flag, Too: The Paradox of Patriotism," available in August from Context Books.

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