OnTheIssues
Every Political Leader on Every Issue

John McCain on War & Peace

Republican nominee for President; Senior Senator (AZ)

Sub-sections under War & Peace:
- Global War on Terror
- Iran
- Iraq War
- Voting Record
- Other issues under War & Peace

Biden's plan to partition Iraq was a cockamamie idea

Q: Do you think Sen. Biden is qualified for the vice-presidency?

McCAIN: I think that Joe Biden is qualified in many respects. But I do point out that he's been wrong on many foreign policy and national security issues, which is supposed to be his strength.

He voted against the first Gulf War. He voted against it and, obviously, we had to take Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait or it would've threatened the Middle Eastern world supply.

In Iraq, he had this cockamamie idea about dividing Iraq into three countries. We're seeing Iraq united as Iraqis, tough, hard, but we're seeing them. We're now about to have an agreement for status of forces in Iraq coming up.

There are several issues in which, frankly, Joe Biden and I open and honestly disagreed on national security policy, and he's been wrong on a number of the major ones.

Source: 2008 third presidential debate against Barack Obama Oct 15, 2008

John McCain on Global War on Terror

In Afghanistan, employ same winning strategy as in Iraq

OBAMA: The [surge] was a tactic designed to contain the damage of the previous four years of mismanagement of this war.

McCAIN: I'm afraid Sen. Obama doesn't understand the difference between a tactic and a strategy. [I attended] a ceremony where 688 Americans were reenlisting to stay and fight for Iraqi and American freedom. Afterwards, you know what they said to us? They said, let us win. We don't want our kids coming back here. They are winning. Sen. Obama refuses to acknowledge that we are winnin in Iraq. There is social & economic progress, and a strategy of going into an area, clearing and holding, and the people of the country then become allied with you. They inform on the bad guys. And peace comes to the country, and prosperity. That's what's happening in Iraq, and it is a strategy. And that same strategy will be employed in Afghanistan. Sen. Obama, who after promising not to vote to cut off funds for the troops, did the incredible thing of voting to cut off the funds for the troops.

Source: 2008 first presidential debate, Obama vs. McCain Sep 26, 2008

Don't threaten Pakistan; it's part of Afghan strategy

Q: Should more US troops be sent to Afghanistan?

A: I won't repeat the mistake that I regret enormously, and that is, after we were able to help the Afghan freedom fighters and drive the Russians out of Afghanistan, we basically washed our hands of the region. The result was the Taliban, al Qaeda, and a lot of the difficulties we are facing today. We can't ignore those lessons of history.

I'm not prepared at this time to cut off aid to Pakistan. So I'm not prepared to threaten it, as Sen. Obama wants to do, as he has said that he would announce military strikes into Pakistan. Sen. Obama doesn't understand, it's got to be the same strategy that he condemned in Iraq is going to have to be employed in Afghanistan.

We're going to have to help the Pakistanis go into these areas and obtain the allegiance of the people. It's going to be tough. They've intermarried with al Qaeda & the Taliban. Pakistan is a very important element in this. I would not publicly state that I'm going to attack them.

Source: 2008 first presidential debate, Obama vs. McCain Sep 26, 2008

We face transcendent evil of radical Islamic extremism

Q: Palin spoke at a Pentecostal church not long ago, said, "Our national leaders are sending US soldiers," talking about Iraq, "on a task that is from God." Do you agree?

A: I think that they're on a task to try to defeat what Gen. Petraeus & Osama bin Laden have said is a central battleground in our struggle against radical Islamic extremism. We are facing a transcendent evil of radical Islamic extremism that wants to destroy everything we stand for and value. I know that's what she was talking about.

Source: ABC News: 2008 election interview with Charlie Gibson Sep 3, 2008

Since 1998, championed policy of "rogue-state rollback"

McCain has a consistent record of using the federal government as a means of reigniting patriotism and expanding "national greatness." Nowhere is this approach more coherent than in foreign policy. Put simply, McCain's national greatness program for fighting foreign wars & maintaining the US' unipolar supremacy would be the most openly militaristic & interventionist platform since Teddy Roosevelt started waving his Big Stick.

McCain wants more boots on the ground in Iraq. He advocates intervention in Darfur, and has championed a policy of "rogue-state rollback" since 1998. He initially maintained some Vietnam Syndrome-style reticence about sending US troops abroad, opposing deployments to Lebanon, Haiti, and Somalia (and even insisting as late as 1990 that "we cannot even contemplate trading American blood for Iraqi blood"). But all that evaporated by the late 1990s after the success of the first Gulf War and the US interventions that halted ethnic bloodshed in the former Yugoslavia.

Source: The Myth of a Maverick, by Matt Welch, p. xxiv-xxv Oct 9, 2007

Follow Osama bin Laden to the gates of hell

Q: When speaking about Osama bin Laden last week, Gov. Romney said, "It's not worth moving heaven and Earth, spending billions of dollars just trying to catch one person." Sen. McCain called that naive. Who's right?

GILMORE: We have to do everything that we can do to get this guy, because he is a symbol to the people who believe that they have a duty to destroy Western civilization.

ROMNEY: Of course we make sure bin Laden pays for the outrage he exacted upon America.

Q: Can we move heaven and earth to do it?

ROMNEY: We'll move everything to get him. But this is not all about one person, because after we get him, there's going to be another. But he is going to pay, and he will die.

McCAIN: Osama bin Laden is responsible for the deaths of thousands of innocent Americans. He's now orchestrating other attacks on the United States of America. We will do whatever is necessary. We will track him down. We will capture him. We will bring him to justice, and I will follow him to the gates of hell

Source: 2007 GOP primary debate, at Reagan library, hosted by MSNBC May 3, 2007

Prefers not to take troops out of Afghanistan

Q: Should we be moving troops from Afghanistan, as has been reported, at this delicate stage in that war, to Iraq?

A: I'm not aware of that, and on its face I would be very concerned. A recent trip that we made to Afghanistan, it's clear to one and all that the Taliban has been reconstituted, particularly in safe area in Pakistan just across the Afghan border, and there will be increased attacks on US and coalition forces. I've not seen the report, but I would be concerned about it.

Q: So you would prefer not to take troops out of Afghanistan?

A: I would prefer not to take troops out of Afghanistan. I think that the new policy of expanding the Marine Corps and the Army is vital, because we are going to have difficulties throughout the world, and we're going to have increasing difficulties in Afghanistan. It's a very serious situation there. But the good news is we have allies who are in there with us who are committed and are also making similar sacrifices.

Source: Meet the Press: 2007 "Meet the Candidates" series Jan 21, 2007

The War on Terror is the overriding and transcendent issue

This nation faces a severe crisis. We are fighting a war on terror. That is the overriding, transcendent issue in this campaign. We found out on 9/11, much to our dismay, that we are not safe. Bush is most qualified to lead us in

that fight. I want to help him in that effort.

Source: AZ Senate Debate, in Tucson Citizen Oct 16, 2004

The War on Terror is a fight between good and evil

The awful events of 9/11 declared a war we were vaguely aware of, but hadn't really comprehended how near the threat was, and how terrible were the plans of our enemies. It's a fight between a just regard for human dignity and a malevolent force that defiles an honorable religion by disputing God's love for every soul on earth. It's a fight between right and wrong, good and evil. And should our enemies acquire for their arsenal the weapons they seek, this war will become a much bigger thing.

Source: 2004 Republican Convention Speech Aug 30, 2004

The War on Terror a war we must fight

It is, whether we wished it or not, that we have come to the test of our generation, to our rendezvous with destiny. And much is expected of us. We are engaged in a hard struggle against a cruel and determined adversary. Our enemies have made clear the danger they pose to our security and to the very essence of our culture-liberty. Only the most deluded of us could doubt the necessity of this war. Like all wars, this one will have its ups and downs. But we must fight. We must.

Source: 2004 Republican Convention Speech Aug 30, 2004

Avoiding the War on Terror has cost us dearly

War is an awful business. The lives of a nation's finest patriots are sacrificed. Innocent people suffer. However just the cause, we should shed a tear for all that is lost when war claims its wages from us. But there is no avoiding this war. We tried that & our reluctance cost us dearly. While this war has many components, we can't make victory on the battlefield harder to achieve so that our diplomacy is easier to conduct. That is not just an expression of our strength. It's a measure of our wisdom.

Source: 2004 Republican Convention Speech Aug 30, 2004

Bush promised enemies would soon hear from us and they did

Bush ordered American forces to Afghanistan and took the fight to our enemies, and away from our shores, seriously injuring al-Qaida and destroying the regime. He worked effectively to secure the cooperation of Pakistan critical to our success against al-Qaida. He encouraged other friends to recognize the peril that terrorism posed for them, and won their help in apprehending many of those who would attack us again, and in helping to freeze the assets they used to fund their bloody work.

Source: 2004 Republican Convention Speech Aug 30, 2004

Our adversaries express a hatred for all good in humanity

Our adversaries are weaker than us in arms and men, but weaker still in causes. They fight to express a hatred for all that is good in humanity. We fight for love of freedom and justice, a love that is invincible. Keep that faith. Keep your courage. Stick together. Stay strong. Do not yield. Do not flinch. Stand up. Stand up with Bush and fight. We're Americans. We're Americans, and we'll never surrender.

Source: 2004 Republican Convention Speech Aug 30, 2004

2000: Warned against radical Islamic terrorism

During the 2000 campaign, McCain had frequently called the Clinton administration's response to terrorist attacks "a feckless photo-op foreign policy, for which we may pay a heavy price in American blood & treasure." He also said frequently, "We've known for a long time that terrorist groups are not only planning but also have committed attacks against the US." He had warned then that the rise of radical Islamic fundamentalism and that terrorist groups were trying to develop WMDs were threats to the US.

Source: Citizen McCain, by Elizabeth Drew, p.134 May 7, 2002

2001: No pinprick responses to 9/11; it's a long haul

[The day after 9/11, McCain] began to say that the fight against terrorism "will be a long struggle," that the US

was up against "a veritable network [of terrorism] in that part of the world." He was beginning to try to prepare the American people for a new kind of struggle and to persuade them to be patient. "Just launching a bunch of cruise missiles, so-called pinprick responses, that we employed before is not going to do it, and everybody knows that."

In his radio and television interviews, he was trying to prepare the public for the consequences of the latest terror attack: "It's going to take a lot of work, a lot of effort, a lot of American treasure and perhaps some American blood." McCain says in a phone interview, "first of all the message from America is that we are coming after you," and he points out, "There is a broad variety of responses that can be deployed quickly--cruise missiles, ground troops, special forces operations will take longer." He adds, "We're in this for the long haul."

Source: Citizen McCain, by Elizabeth Drew, p.134-135 May 7, 2002

2001: Nuclear weapons unnecessary against terrorists

[In September 2000, Secretary of State Donald] Rumsfeld had suggested that the US might use nuclear arms: "The United States, to my knowledge, has never ruled out the first use of nuclear weapons."

McCain replied that he thought "it's not necessary. We have precision weapons and of the kind that would probably address this kind of threat, which is specific small groups of people in remote places, without having to use nuclear weapons. And very frankly, nuclear weapons have a connotation associated with them that, it seems to me, if you can't rule it out you should certainly say that it is highly unlikely that this requirement would ever arise."

Asked whether it was beyond the capabilities of the United States to combat terrorism, McCain said, "I'm absolutely convinced that it's in the capabilities of this country."

Source: Citizen McCain, by Elizabeth Drew, p.148 May 7, 2002

Palestine: Against declaration of statehood

McCain co-sponsored a resolution (S.CON.RES.5) expressing congressional opposition to the unilateral declaration of a Palestinian state and urging the President to assert clearly United States opposition to such a unilateral declaration of statehood.

Source: Senate statement, "Palestine" Feb 4, 1999

John McCain on Iran

Don't wait for UN if Iran attacks Israel

Q: If, despite your best diplomatic efforts, Iran attacks Israel, would you be willing to commit US troops in support and defense of Israel? Or would you wait on approval from the UN Security Council?

McCAIN: We obviously would not wait for the United Nations Security Council. I think the realities are that both Russia and China would probably pose significant obstacles. And our challenge right now is the Iranians continue on the path to acquiring nuclear weapons, and it's a great threat. It's not just a threat to the state of Israel. It's a threat to the stability of the entire Middle East. If Iran acquires nuclear weapons, all the other countries will acquire them, too. The tensions will be ratcheted up.

OBAMA: We cannot allow Iran to get a nuclear weapon. And I will do everything that's required to prevent it. And we will never take military options off the table. And it is important that we don't provide veto power to the UN or anyone else in acting in our interests.

Source: 2008 second presidential debate against Barack Obama Oct 7, 2008

FactCheck: Obama did declare Republican Guard terrorists

McCain repeated the false insinuation that Obama opposed naming Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as a terrorist organization. McCain said, "There is the Republican Guard in Iran, which Senator Kyl had an amendment in order to declare them a sponsor of terror. Senator Obama said that would be provocative." Obama replied, "I believe the Republican Guard of Iran is a terrorist organization. I've consistently said so. What Senator McCain refers to is a measure in the Senate that would try to broaden the mandate inside of Iraq, to deal with Iran."

Obama has in fact said that the IRGC should be named a terrorist group. He was a cosponsor of the Iran Counter-Proliferation Act, which, among other things, named the IRGC a terrorist organization What he voted against was the Kyl-Lieberman amendment, which also called for the terrorist group distinction. But Obama said that he opposed the amendment on the grounds that it was "saber-rattling."

Source: FactCheck.org on 2008 first Presidential debate Sep 26, 2008

Strategic bombing of Iran OK only if imminent threat

Q: In what circumstances without imminent threat would the president have constitutional authority to bomb Iran without authorization from Congress?

A: Well he doesn't. But if there is an imminent threat, the president has to act in America's security interest.

Q: But in terms of a strategic bombing, then he's got to go to Congress?

A: He should, absent an imminent threat. But in the event of an imminent threat, the President has a constitutional obligation to protect the American people.

Source: Boston Globe questionnaire on Executive Power Dec 20, 2007

Congress can only declare war; not micromanage wars

Q: Does the Constitution empower the president to disregard a congressional statute limiting the deployment of troops--either by capping the number of troops that may be deployed to a particular country or by setting minimum home-stays between deployments? Is that beyond Congress' authority?

A: It's beyond Congress's authority to micromanage wars. Congress has the power of the purse and the power to declare wars; the President is responsible for leading the armed forces as Commander in Chief

Source: Boston Globe questionnaire on Executive Power Dec 20, 2007

Keep military option open against Iran, even if no nukes

Q: The new National Intelligence Estimate indicated that back in 2003, Iran halted its nuclear weapons program, although it has continued enriching uranium. Does that basically now take the military option off the table?

A: The military option is always the ultimate last option, but I don't believe that it's "off the table." I would remind you that enrichment is a longer process. Weaponization can be done rather rapidly. Iran remains a nation dedicated to the extinction of the state of Israel. Iran continues to export the most lethal explosive devices into Iraq, killing Americans. They continue to be a state sponsor of terror in the case of Hamas and Hezbollah. And they continue to seek to exert influence throughout the entire region and the age-old ambition of Persian hegemony, including their increasing influence in the Basra area in southern Iraq. So I think they remain a significant threat and challenge, and so, no, I wouldn't take the option "off the table."

Source: Fox News Sunday: 2007 "Choosing the President" interviews Dec 9, 2007

No direct talk with Iran; talk is over-rated

Q: What about directly negotiating with Iran without preconditions?

A: The most over-rated aspect of our dialogue about international relations is direct face-to-face talks. BlackBerries work. Emissaries work. There's many thousands of ways to communicate. The question is are you going to have direct talks, and does that enhance the prestige of the president of Iran, who has said all these things about us, and has announced his country's continued distinction to the extinction of the state of Israel, or does it reach a successful conclusion? That's the question you have to ask when you talk about "face-to-face talks. "I'd remind you that when we stopped the bombing in Vietnam, we were going to talk in Paris. It took 2.5 years because of the shape of the table. Bombing started of Hanoi. And guess what? Negotiations started again.

Source: Fox News Sunday: 2007 "Choosing the President" interviews Dec 9, 2007

Iran & Syria must not get nukes; they'll exterminate Israel

Q: Mohamed ElBaradei, the director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, said about Iranian nukes, "Confrontation would lead absolutely to a disaster. I see no military solution. The only durable solution is through negotiation & inspection. I know you are pretty strong in your conviction that the Iranians are building a nuclear bomb.

A: I wonder if Mohamed ElBaradei knew that the Syrians were, with the help of North Korea, building a facility that would be used for the construction of nuclear weapons. The facts are that if Iran acquires a nuclear weapon, the other countries in the region will acquire them as well. If they acquire a nuclear weapon, they have dedicated themselves to the extermination of the state of Israel. That's their statement, not mine. We need to get the Europeans, who they seem to be interested in joining us in meaningful sanctions, whether it be diplomatic trade, economic & others, and put enormous pressures on Iran. Iran cannot have nuclear weapons.

Source: CNN Late Edition: 2007 presidential series with Wolf Blitzer Nov 4, 2007

Iran is state sponsor of terrorism; no more evidence needed

Q: The Iranians deny that their nuclear program is designed for nuclear weapons. They say it's for peaceful purposes. The IAEA's Mohamed ElBaradei, before the war in Iraq, was rejecting this notion that the Iraqis under Saddam Hussein had revived their nuclear program [as he's saying now with Iran]. ElBaradei turned out to be right.

A: Well, he turned out to be right, and he is going to turn out to be wrong on Iran, as he has been wrong on others. The evidence is overwhelming that they are on the path to acquiring nuclear weapons. They are arming Hezbollah in southern Lebanon, as we speak. They have supported Hamas and other terrorist organizations. There is no question about that, no matter what Mr. ElBaradei says. And so, they are a state sponsor of terror. And that's agreed to by most people in the world. And that's my position. I have enough information, my own knowledge and background and information that they are a nation of state-sponsored terror.

Source: CNN Late Edition: 2007 presidential series with Wolf Blitzer Nov 4, 2007

Congressional consultation before attacking Iran's nukes

Q: If you were president, would you need to go to Congress to get authorization to take military action against Iran's nuclear facilities?

A: We're dealing of course with hypotheticals. If the situation is that it requires immediate action to ensure the security of the United States of America, that's what you take your oath to do when you're inaugurated as president of the United States. If it's a long series of build-ups, where the threat becomes greater and greater, of course you want to go to Congress; of course you want to get approval if this is an imminent threat to our security. So it obviously depends on the scenario, but I would, at minimum, consult with the leaders of Congress because there may become a time where you need the approval of Congress, and I believe that this is a possibility that is maybe closer to reality than we are discussing tonight.

Source: 2007 Republican debate in Dearborn, Michigan Oct 9, 2007

Sanctions to prevent Iranian nukes; but don't count on UN

Q: Would you go to war with Iran if they developed nuclear weapons & threatened Israel?

A: At the end of the day, we cannot allow Iran to have nuclear weapons. Now, I believe that we can do a lot of things. We can have a league of democracies to impose sanctions and to cut off many of the things and benefits that the Iranians are now getting from other democracies. I think it's clear that the United Nations Security Council will not act effectively with Russia and China behaving as they are. We need to work together with our allies, but at the end of the day, it's the United States that will make the final decision. In January of 1981, Ronald Reagan came to power and raised his hand as president of the United States of America. By more than coincidence, the Iranian hostages returned on that same day. I would employ some of his methods.

Source: 2007 GOP debate at UNH, sponsored by Fox News Sep 5, 2007

Iran is sponsor of terrorism; US strike if they get nukes

Q: Has Iran already committed acts of war?

A: Iran is a state sponsor of terrorism. We all know that. Iran continues their efforts to build nuclear weapons. Iran is now exporting lethal IEDs & jihadists and suicide bombers into Iraq, killing American soldiers. The Iranians encouraged Hezbollah to attack Israel from Lebanon recent. Iran poses one of the greatest threats to the security of the world, and in the Middle East. We have to work together. If the Russians & the Chinese are not helpful to us, then we had better figure out a way to put additional pressures, encouraging democracy and freedom within Iran.

Q: What's your tripwire for a U.S. strike in Iran?

A: My greatest fear is the Iranians acquire a nuclear weapon and give it to a terrorist organization. And there is a real threat of them doing that. The trip wire is that if they acquire these weapons. But I want to emphasize, there's lots of additional efforts that can be made and must be made before we consider that option.

Source: 2007 GOP primary debate, at Reagan library, hosted by MSNBC May 3, 2007

John McCain on Iraq War

Bring our troops home with victory and with honor

If we had done what Sen. Obama wanted done in Iraq, and that was set a date for withdrawal, then we would have had a wider war, we would have been back, Iranian influence would have increased, al Qaeda would have

re- established a base.

There was a lot at stake there, my friends. And I can tell you right now that Sen. Obama would have brought our troops home in defeat. I'll bring them home with victory and with honor and that is a fundamental difference.

Source: 2008 second presidential debate against Barack Obama Oct 7, 2008

FactCheck: Bush vetoed troop bill that Obama voted against

McCAIN: "Obama, after promising not to vote to cut off funds for the troops, [voted to] cut off funds for the troops in Iraq & Afghanistan."

FACT CHECK: Obama did vote against a 2007 spending bill that did not include language calling for withdrawing troops from Iraq, but voted for the version that did. That version was vetoed by Pres. Bush, though McCain does not say Bush cut off funding for the troops. Overall, Obama voted yes on at least 10 other war-funding bills prior to the single no vote.

Source: FactCheck.org on 2008 first presidential debate-Boston Globe Sep 26, 2008

We now have a great strategy & are winning in Iraq

Q: What do you see as the lessons of Iraq?

A: I think the lessons of Iraq are that you cannot have a failed strategy that will cause you to lose a conflict. We went in to Baghdad and everybody celebrated. Then the war was badly mishandled. I went to Iraq in 2003 and came back and said, we've got to change this strategy. This strategy requires additional troops, it requires a fundamental change and I fought for it. Finally, we came up with a great general and a strategy that has succeeded.

We are winning in Iraq. We will come home with victory and honor. Now we will see a stable ally in the region and a fledgling democracy.

The consequences of defeat would have been increased Iranian influence. It would have been increase in sectarian violence. It would have been a wider war.

There was a lot at stake. And thanks to this great general, David Petraeus, and the troops who serve under him, they have succeeded. We will come home as we have when we have won other wars and not in defeat.

Source: 2008 first presidential debate, Obama vs. McCain Sep 26, 2008

The next president has to decide how and when to leave Iraq

McCAIN: The next president of the United States is not going to have to address the issue as to whether we went into Iraq or not. The next president of the United States is going to have to decide how we leave, when we leave, and what we leave behind. That's the decision of the next president of the us. Sen. Obama said the surge could not work, said it would increase sectarian violence, said it was doomed to failure. Recently on a television program, he said it exceed our wildest expectations. But yet, after conceding that, he still says that he would oppose the surge if he had to decide that again today.

OBAMA: The violence has been reduced as a consequence of the extraordinary sacrifice of our troops. But understand, that was a tactic designed to contain the damage of the previous four years of mismanagement of this war. At the time when the war started, you said it was going to be quick and easy. You were wrong. You said we knew where the WMDs were. You were wrong.

Source: 2008 first presidential debate, Obama vs. McCain Sep 26, 2008

FactCheck: Admiral did not call Obama's plan dangerous

Obama contradicted McCain about what Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Admiral Mike Mullen's said regarding "Obama's plan" for troop withdrawals. McCain claimed, "Admiral Mullen suggests that Senator Obama's plan is dangerous for America." Obama countered, "That's not the case. What he said was a *precipitous* withdrawal would be dangerous."

Admiral Mullen did say in a Fox News interview that having a time line for withdrawal would be dangerous. On July 20, Mullen said, "I think the consequences could be very dangerous in that regard. I'm convinced at this point in time that making reductions based on conditions on the ground are very important." However, interviewer Chris Wallace had just told Mullen to take Obama out of the equation. So strictly speaking Mullen was not talking specifically about "Obama's plan." He did say a rigid timetable could have dangerous consequences.

Source: FactCheck.org on 2008 first Presidential debate Sep 26, 2008

Obama would lose a war to win a political campaign

Q: And it's the first time I've had a chance to talk to you since you said about Barack Obama, "He would rather

lose a war in order to win a political campaign." Do you stand by that?

A: Sure. I mean, it's very clear that he lacks the judgment [on Iraq].

Q: It's not judgment you talked about. You made a very declarative statement, "He would rather lose a war."

A: And I'll make a very declarative statement that he went to the left of his party, refusing to acknowledge the success of the surge today. No rational observer would deny that we've succeeded, and he refuses to do so, because he won the nomination by going to the far left of his political base and that was against the war. And that's a fact.

Q: But you didn't say judgment when you said that.

A: I'm saying that what he did was motivated by political reasons. He took the position that he did for political reasons to get the far left of his party's support and win the nomination of his party.

Source: ABC News: 2008 election interview with Charlie Gibson Sep 3, 2008

Quoting "100 years in Iraq" is out-of-context

Q: You said Obama "doesn't understand national security, has no background, no experience on these issues." Putting aside your differences on issues, straight talk, is Obama qualified to be president?

A: If the voters decide that, absolutely. I believe that my talent and my background and my experience qualifies me more. Let me just say again that was in response--when I said he was inexperienced and does not have the background--to the charge of this "100 years in Iraq." It was obvious when you read the whole quote: I said, "It could be 100 years, but it's a matter of US casualties, and we have presence in countries like South Korea, Japan," etc. So it's very clear. And Senator Obama and anyone who reads that knows that I didn't think we were in a 100-year war.

Q: But on the bigger issue…

A: You could make an argument maybe that Jack Kennedy was not "qualified" in 1960 as opposed to Richard Nixon. The voters decided on Jack Kennedy. So I can't dictate what the voters will decide.

Source: 2008 Fox News interview: "Choosing the President" series Apr 6, 2008

Despite deserters & Basra loss, Iraqi military doing better

Q: You acknowledge you were surprised by the recent Iraqi offensive in Basra. Doesn't that raise serious questions about the continued weakness of the central government in Baghdad?

A: The [Sadr militia] do control the port of Basra now. But the Iraqi military performed pretty well. Eight or nine months ago, it would have been unthinkable for Maliki to act this way.

Q: We heard this week that 1,000 soldiers refused to fight or deserted.

A: And there were many, many thousands who are fighting there. Compare that with two years ago when the army was basically unable to function in any way effectively. I've always said this is long and hard and tough. We're paying a huge penalty for four years of a failed strategy that I fought hard against, and I believe this strategy has succeeded and will succeed and can succeed. But it's long and hard and tough.

Source: 2008 Fox News interview: "Choosing the President" series Apr 6, 2008

Costs will be far greater should we fail in Iraq

I intend to win the war, and trust in the proven judgment of our commanders there and the courage and selflessness of the Americans they have the honor to command. I share the grief over the terrible losses in its prosecution. There is no other candidate for this office who appreciates more than I do just how awful war is. But the costs in lives and treasure we would incur should we fail in Iraq will be far greater than the heartbreaking losses we have suffered to date. I will not allow that to happen.

Source: Speeches to 2008 Conservative Political Action Conference Feb 7, 2008

Not a matter of how long in Iraq, but a matter of casualties

Q: On the war: Senator Clinton says she'll get us out in 60 days. You're going to have us there 100 years.

A: Well, the key is success, and the key is American casualties. We are succeeding. But as I've said many times, Al Qaida is on the run. They are not defeated. But this strategy is succeeding. And I believe that if we had set a date for withdrawal or if we do set a date for withdrawal, Al Qaida will then win and we'll see chaos and genocide in the region. That's another significant difference that Senator Clinton and I have, and I look forward to discussing it. It's not a matter of how long Americans stay. It's a matter of American casualties. Those casualties are coming down, and we can eliminate them. Look, we're in Kuwait right next door to Iraq. We're in Turkey. We're in Bosnia. We're all over the world. One of the obligations, unfortunately, of being a great superpower is that we have to take care of the world's security.

Source: 2008 Fox News interview: "Choosing the President" series Feb 3, 2008

Don't let enemy lay in the weeds until we leave

Q: [To Romney]: Sen. McCain has said that you supported a timetable for a phased withdrawal from Iraq. Is that true?

ROMNEY: Unequivocably, absolutely no. I have never, ever supported a specific timetable for exit from Iraq. Sen. McCain pointed to an interview when I said that our president and their prime minister should have timetables and milestones. [When asked what I'd do with a bill with] a date specific to withdraw, I said I'd veto it.

McCAIN: Well, of course, he said he wanted a timetable. In April 2007, the buzzword was "timetables." Governor, the right answer to that question was "no," not what you said, that Maliki and the president should enter into some kind of agreement for, quote, "timetables."

ROMNEY: Why don't you use the whole quote, Senator?

MCCAIN: The actual quote is, "We don't want them to lay in the weeds until we leave."

ROMNEY: What does that mean?

MCCAIN: It means a timetable until we leave. If we weren't leaving, how could the enemy lay in the weeds?
Source: [Xref Romney] 2008 Republican debate at Reagan Library Jan 30, 2008

Support the surge and bring troops home with honor

We are going to be there for some period of time, but it's American casualties, not American presence. We've got troops right next door in Kuwait. We'll probably have them there for a long time. We have troops in Bosnia. We've had troops in South Korea for some 50 years. We need to protect America's national security interest. We are succeeding. We're going to support this surge. We're not going to talk about timetables or anything else; we're going to talk about winning and what's necessary to win. I'm the only one that said that Rumsfeld had to go and the Petraeus strategy is the one that can succeed. That's because I have the experience, the knowledge, and the judgment. It's not American presence, because America, as the world's superpower, is going to have to be a lot of places in the world. It's how they come home. As president, I will follow in this tradition of sticking to my principles no matter what and bring our troops home with honor.
Source: 2008 Republican debate at Reagan Library in Simi Valley Jan 30, 2008

Timetable for withdrawal is a white flag of surrender

Q: You said "Gov. Romney has hedged, equivocated." What are you talking about specifically?

A: I'm talking specifically about whether we should have maintained the surge in Iraq and, in April 2007, whether we had to have timetables. Gov. Romney said there had to be timetables, although they had to be secret.

Q: Gov. Romney said he never suggested a specific timetable, you're being dishonest.

A: When he was asked should there be a timetable for withdrawing the troops, he said, quote, "There's no question [the US & Iraq] have to have a series of timetables."

Q: When Sen. Clinton suggested timetables, you said was waving the white flag of surrender. Is Gov. Romney waving the white flag?

A: What Sen. Clinton said was that you would set a timetable, within 60 days, of complete withdrawal from Iraq. To me that's surrender.

Q: Is Gov. Romney suggesting surrender?

A: I don't believe that Gov. Romney's statement indicated anything but that we were going to have a timetable for withdrawal
Source: Meet the Press: 2008 "Meet the Candidates" series Jan 27, 2008

Staying for 100 years OK, if US casualties are low

Q: The latest survey says 32% of Americans believe the Iraq War was "worth it"; 59% believe "not worth it." You're saying the war was a good idea, it was worth the price, and we're going to stay forever or 100 years, you even suggested. Is that a winning formula in a presidential election?

A: I understand the frustration and the sorrow of the American people over the sacrifice that has been made. It was badly mishandled for nearly four years. And some people talk about the impatience of the American people. I'm proud, frankly, of the patience. But on the issue of how long we stay there, I think that's a false argument. The point is, how many Americans are going to be harmed there? Right next door in Kuwait, we have military bases. We have troops in South Korea & Bosnia. It's not a matter of American troop presence, it's a matter of American casualties. And I believe that by next November, I can show the American people significant more progress & significant withdrawals. We have to succeed there.

The Iraq war was worth the price in blood and treasure

Q: Was the war a good idea, worth the price in blood and treasure?

A: It was a good idea. It was not worth the failures that happened, but it is worth it at the end of the day because we will have peace and success in the Middle East, and our men and women will return, and return with honor, and they won't have to go back and fight al Qaeda there.

Ok with American presence in Iraq for 100 years

Q: You were asked, "President Bush has talked about our staying in Iraq for 50 years." You answered, "Maybe 100. We've been in South Korea for 50 years or so. That'd be fine with me, as long as long as Americans are not being injured or harmed or wounded or killed, then it's fine with me."

So you'd be all right with having US troops in Iraq for the next 100 years?

A: Most importantly, so would the American people if Americans aren't dying. We have a base in the neighboring country of Kuwait. We have a base in Turkey. We have a base in Japan, Germany. We've had bases there. It's not American presence that bothers the American people, it's American casualties. And if Americans are safe wherever they are in the world, the American people don't mind that. So what I believe we can achieve is a reduction in casualties to the point where the Iraqis are doing the fighting and dying, we're supporting them, and, over time, then it'll be the relation between the two countries.

FactCheck: Yes, criticized Rumsfeld, but not before invasion

In his rush to criticize Donald Rumsfeld's defense strategy, Sen. John McCain did some rewriting of his personal history. McCain said, "I strongly disagree with the strategy employed by Secretary Rumsfeld, and by the way, I'm the only one here that disagreed at the time. And I said at the time I had no confidence in the then-secretary of defense."

It's true that McCain was an early critic of Rumsfeld's strategy in Iraq, as early as Nov. 2003. And it's also true that McCain refused to offer Rumsfeld a vote of confidence when President Bush reappointed Rumsfeld as secretary of defense following his 2004 reelection.

But McCain's expression of no confidence came in December 2004--well into the Iraq war. Rumsfeld's decision to invade with a much smaller force than the one suggested by his more traditional generals--the famous "shock and awe" strategy--was implemented in March 2003.

Help Maliki government move forward as rapidly as possible

Q: What would you do as president to repair the image of America in the eyes of the Muslim world?

A: The first and most important and vital element is to continue this surge which is succeeding and we are winning the war in Iraq. Secondly, I would make sure that we do what we can to help reconstruct the country, to help the Maliki government move forward as rapidly as possible to train the police.

I would much rather lose a campaign than lose a war

Q: The biggest issue between Hillary and you clearly is the war in Iraq. You strongly support the troop surge. She wants to start pulling the troops out. Is that a winner for Republicans in 2008?

A: I don't know. And I can't be concerned. Because I know too many brave young Americans that are serving and sacrificing in Iraq, as we speak. I would much rather lose a campaign than lose a war.

Stategy in Iraq: defeat al-Qaeda; limit Iran's influence

Q: [to McCain]: What should be the US strategy in Iraq for the next year?

McCAIN: The US strategy in Iraq should be to defeat al-Qaeda, to reverse the increasing influence of Iran in Iraq, & to move towards the goal of military security & a functioning government.

Q: General Petraeus testified that in order to do that we will lose, on the average, two US men or women per day, 15 will be wounded per day, at a cost of $300 million per day. Is it worth it?

McCAIN: The strategy that we've now adopted is now succeeding. If we abandon it and go, the consequences will be genocide, and chaos in the region

KERRY: The Bush-McCain strategy of escalating our troops in the middle of a civil war has no relationship directly to what you need to do to resolve the civil war. A policy of putting more troops in and staying is a policy for staying. It is not a policy for winning or for changing the equation. This is making us weaker in the war on terror. It is emboldening Iran, empowering Hamas & Hezbollah.

Source: Meet the Press: 2007 "Meet the Candidates" series Sep 16, 2007

Iraq is now the central front in the war against al-Qaeda

Q: What about a phased withdrawal over the course of the next year?

McCAIN: The consequences of a set date for a withdrawal would cause us to have severe national security implications not only in Iraq but the region.

KERRY: On the word "withdrawal:" [McCain implies that] a fixed date withdrawal is somehow going to abandon Iraq. We're not talking about abandoning Iraq. We're talking about changing the mission & adjusting the mission so that the bulkier combat troops are withdrawn, within a year, but that you are continuing to provide the basic backstop support necessary to finish the training, so they stand up on their own, and you are continuing to chase al-Qaeda. There was no al-Qaeda in Iraq before we attacked. So we are in Iraq today on false pretenses, in the middle of a civil war.

McCAIN: You are advocating going back to the failed tactic of before. And whether al-Qaeda was there before or not, al-Qaeda is there now. Iraq is now the central front in the war against al-Qaeda.

Source: Meet the Press: 2007 "Meet the Candidates" series Sep 16, 2007

Americans want to win; bin Laden thinks he's winning now

Q: If a majority of the Congress & the American people want a different policy in Iraq, can you sustain a war without their support?

A: Not forever. The majority of Americans were opposed to [the US military presence in] Korea. Thanks to a very brave president named Harry Truman, at least South Korea is now free today. I hear from hundreds of men and women, all the time. They want us to win.

Q: When you say win, how do you define win?

A: The same way you succeed in any counterinsurgency. The government functions effectively, there's an environment of security. But, basically, you continue to progress and to bring a free and open and democratic society and fight back [against any long-term conflict]. Look, this is an evil influence. They think they're winning. If you listen to bin Laden & Zarqawi, they say they drove us out of Beirut, they drove us out of Mogadishu, they hit the USS Cole, they attacked our embassies, and they're saying, "We'll drive them out of Iraq, and we will succeed.

Source: Meet the Press: 2007 "Meet the Candidates" series Sep 16, 2007

Democrats proposing failure in Iraq by withdrawing

KERRY: [to McCain]: Bin Laden is able to [claim success against America] because this administration took their eye off of him and chose to go to war in a place that had nothing to do with the war on terror. Al-Qaeda loves our being in Iraq. If you want to put al-Qaeda off balance then change the equation. And Iran loves the fact that we're in Iraq. And Iran is getting stronger.

McCAIN: Iran loves to be in Iraq, and they are in Iraq. And al-Qaeda is in Iraq. If we don't continue to beat them back, they will be a major influence, and have training bases. I hope we can also point out the consequences of failure, which is what the Democrats are proposing now.

KERRY: We've had four and a half years of failure. We are not proposing failure. We're proposing a way to, in fact, make Iraq successful to the degree that it can be by playing to the real undercurrents of their cultural and historical divisions. Nothing in the surge addresses the question of Shia & Sunni divide [or other political issues]

Source: Meet the Press: 2007 "Meet the Candidates" series Sep 16, 2007

Reducing military presence has never in history won a war

KERRY: [to McCain]: We're not talking about abandoning the place. Why do the Republicans have a complete inability to envision a foreign policy, as we used to have, which plays to our strengths and builds alliances with other countries? Bring the United Nations back in. Bring the neighbors into this. Have a standing summit in a standing conference where we resolve these differences as best as can be. The US can't do it alone. And we have to change the equation so we regain leverage and initiative. That's not walking away, that's walking forward and

putting us in a stronger posture.

McCAIN: In my study of military history, I never heard of a withdrawal and a reduction of military presence as being a winning strategy. The fact is that we are succeeding. That's the thing that the Democrats won't realize. And of course I'm saying it's a recipe for failure. Of course history teaches that if we announce withdrawal, we will fail and we will see catastrophic consequences.

Source: Meet the Press: 2007 "Meet the Candidates" series Sep 16, 2007

Bring troops home the right way: home with honor

The surge is working and we have to rally the American people. People are saddened and frustrated and angry over our failures in Iraq. I share their anger, their frustration at failure, and I want them home too. But I want them home for the right reasons. I want our troops home with honor. Otherwise, we will face catastrophe and genocide in the region.

Source: 2007 GOP debate at UNH, sponsored by Fox News Sep 5, 2007

Surge is working; let it continue until it succeeds

Q: [to Romney]: You have suggested that US troops in Iraq move to a support phase after the surge, and a standby phase after that in Kuwait & Qatar. Does that begin in 2008?

ROMNEY: I don't have a time frame that I've announced. The surge is apparently working. If the surge is working, then we're going to be able to start bringing back our troops levels slowly but surely, and play more of a support role over time.

MCCAIN: Governor, the surge is working.

ROMNEY: That's just what I said.

MCCAIN: It is working. No, not "apparently"; it's working. It's working because we've got a great general. We've got a good strategy. The Maliki government is not doing the things we want it to do, the police are not functioning the way we want them to do, but we are succeeding. And the great debate is not whether it's apparently working or not, the great debate is going to be whether we set a date for withdrawal, which will be a date for surrender, or whether we will let this surge continue and succeed.

Source: 2007 GOP debate at UNH, sponsored by Fox News Sep 5, 2007

Tragic mistake of Iraq: no plan to deal with success

A large part of the reason the US invaded Iraq was our confidence that Saddam Hussein possessed chemical and biological weapons and was making significant progress in developing nuclear weapons. That confidence was in part based on information from previously unreliable or questionable sources.

The political and military mistakes we have made in Iraq offer a variety of examples of insufficient awareness. An important part of awareness is anticipating the decisions you will have to make if your initial decision proves successful.

For instance, we designed a force and an operational plan to dispense with the Iraqi army and Saddam quickly. But we did not plan for or have the force ready to deal with our success. We didn't know what would happen in Iraq if we achieved our initial objective by the means we employed, and we were very slow in realizing what was needed when it did happen. That proved to be a very serious and tragic mistake.

Source: Hard Call, by John McCain & Mark Salter, chapter 1 Aug 14, 2007

Support the surge even if benchmarks are not met

Q: It's written into the law right now benchmarks that the Iraqi government has to meet. It is also very clear that they are not going to meet those benchmarks by September. If they fail, will you still continue to support the surge?

A: Of course. They are making progress & we are winning on the ground. And there are political solutions being arrived at all over Iraq today, not at the national level. I'm disappointed that the Maliki government has not done what they need to do. But it's not only in the national interest of the Iraqis, it's an American national interest. We are winning. We must win. If we lose, there'll be catastrophic consequences and genocide, and we will be back. This is a seminal moment in American history. We must succeed. There will be a big debate coming up in September on the floor of the Senate. We will win that debate because the American people understand the consequences of failure. Morale is good amongst our military. We will not set a date for surrender.

Source: 2007 GOP Iowa Straw Poll debate Aug 5, 2007

Did not read NIE before war vote, but was fully briefed

Q: Arguably, going to war is the most important decision a member of the Senate can make. Did you read the National Intelligence Estimate, which included all the caveats, on whether or not there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq?

McCAIN: I did not read that particular document. I received hundreds of briefings, hundreds of hours of study and background and information on it. And the fact is, that the sanctions were breaking down.

Q: Gov. Gilmore, you chaired the commission on Iraq. Do you think it was appropriate that members of Congress would authorize the president to go to war without reading that NIE?

GILMORE: I think the people who are in Congress who are responsible for sending this country to war, with the enormous dangers that it has geopolitically and strategically, ought to read at least that kind of material. I know they get a lot of stuff and they can't read everything.

Source: 2007 GOP debate at Saint Anselm College Jun 5, 2007

If new strategy not working by Sept., we still must succeed

Q: If General Petraeus' strategy is not working so far in September, what do you do then?

A: Then you have to examine the options. And I'll tell you the options. One is the division [of Iraq into three parts by ethnicity]. You would have to divide bedrooms in Baghdad, because Sunni and Shi'a are married to each other. You have 2 million Sunni and 4 million Shi'a living in Baghdad together. You withdraw to the borders and watch genocide take place inside Baghdad. You watch the destabilization of Jordan. You see further jeopardy of Israel because of the threats of Hezbollah and Iranian hegemony in the region. All of the options I could run through with you; none of them are good. That's why we must succeed and give it a chance to succeed.

Source: 2007 GOP debate at Saint Anselm College Jun 5, 2007

Willing to be last man standing for US involvement in Iraq

Q: You say that you are willing to be the last man standing for US involvement in Iraq. But the Iraqi government has failed to meet one political benchmark after another. Why should Americans continue to fight and die?

A: We have to continue because it's not just the Iraqi vital national security interests that are at stake here, it's America's vital national security interests. If we fail in Iraq, we will see Iraq become a center for al Qaeda, chaos, genocide in the region, & they'll follow us home

Source: 2007 Republican Debate in South Carolina May 15, 2007

Consequences of failure: regional chaos & we must come back

Q: In 2005, you said, "If we can't retain the support of the American people, we will have lost this war as soundly as if our forces were defeated on the battlefield." Haven't they lost the support of the American people?

A: If we can show the American people some successes in Iraq and if people like me do a better job of explaining the consequences of failure. The consequences of failure are that there would be chaos in the region. Some people say partition. You'd have to partition bedrooms in Baghdad because Sunni and Shia are married. This is a very difficult situation, but the consequences of failure, in my view, are unlike the Vietnam war where we could leave and come home and it was over, that these people will try to follow us home and the region will erupt to a point where we may have to come back or we will be combating what is now, to a large degree, al-Qaeda, plus many other factors of sectarian violence, in the region.

Source: Meet the Press: 2007 "Meet the Candidates" series May 13, 2007

In hindsight, Iraq invasion was still justified

Q: In hindsight, was it a good idea to go into Iraq?

A: You know, in hindsight, if we had exploited the initial success, which was shock and awe, and we succeeded, and we had done the right things after that, all of us would be applauding what we did. We didn't. It was terribly mismanaged. If we had succeeded, then all of us would be very happy that one of the most terrible, cruel dictators in history was removed from power. Now, because of our failures, obviously we have paid a very heavy price in American blood and treasure and a great sacrifice.

Q: So it was a good idea to go in?

A: I think at the time, given the information we had. Every intelligence agency in the world, not just US, believed that Saddam had weapons of mass destruction. The sanctions were breaking down. If we'd have known we were going to experience the failures we experienced, obviously it would give us all pause. Yet the information & the knowledge & the situation at the time, I think that it was certainly justified.

Source: Meet the Press: 2007 "Meet the Candidates" series May 13, 2007

Timetable would be catastrophe, even if Iraq wants it

Q: What about a timetable for withdrawal?

A: This is long and hard and difficult, and it's no last throes, it's no mission accomplished. But to do what the Democrats want to do, and that's set a date for withdrawal, even those who opposed the war from the beginning don't think that that would lead to anything but an enormously challenging situation as a result.

Q: But a majority of the Iraqi parliament has signed a petition asking for a date certain for withdrawal of American troops. If the Iraqi parliament wants it, & a majority in the Congress want it, then why do you say, "No, you can't have it"?

A: Because it's my job to give my best estimate to the American people, no matter what the political calculations may be, as to what's the best in our nation's national security interest. It's also my obligation to tell the American people and my constituents in Arizona that I represent, what the consequences of failure will be; and I believe they will be catastrophic.

Source: Meet the Press: 2007 "Meet the Candidates" series May 13, 2007

Advocated leaving Somalia, but no comparison to Iraq

Q: Let me show you something said with soldiers overseas: "There's no reason for the US to remain. The American people want them home. I believe the majority of Congress wants them home. What should be the criteria is our immediate, orderly withdrawal. And if we do not do that and other Americans die then I say that the responsibilities for that lie with the Congress who did not exercise their authority under the Constitution." You hear those kinds of words, right?

A: Sure I do. My response is, What happens after we leave? Far greater casualties, far greater dislocation, far greater threats to our national security. That's my response to that heartfelt statement.

Q: Well, those are your words from 1993 about Somalia.

A: Mm-hmm.

A: Many Americans now are echoing your words about Iraq, because they see no end in sight.

A: I don't see any comparison between Somalia & Iraq except that there was chaos in the streets of Mogadishu, [while in Iraq it's] vital national security interests.

Source: Meet the Press: 2007 "Meet the Candidates" series May 13, 2007

War has been mismanaged, but we are now on the right track

Q: What would you need, as commander in chief, to win the war in Iraq?

A: I would need the support of the American people. I would need to be able to show them some success in Iraq, both on the battlefield as well as with the government. We have a new general; we have a new strategy. That strategy can succeed. But when the majority leader of the US Senate says we've lost the war, then who won? Did al Qaeda win? When on the floor of the House of Representatives they cheer--they cheer!--when they pass a withdrawal motion that is a certain date for surrender, what were they cheering? Surrender? Defeat? We must win in Iraq. If we withdraw, there will be chaos; there will be genocide; and they will follow us home.

Q: Do you need anything, beyond what the president has now, to win the war?

A: Now I think it's on the right track. The war was terribly mismanaged. The war was terribly mismanaged and we now have to fix a lot of the mistakes that were made. But we have a new strategy and a new general.

Source: 2007 GOP primary debate, at Reagan library, hosted by MSNBC May 3, 2007

War in Iraq has not gone well: dire but not hopeless

The war in Iraq has not gone well. American soldiers have fought well and sacrificed bravely there, as they always do. But we failed early on to recognize that we faced both an indigenous and foreign insurgency in Iraq, to make the necessary changes in our tactics and force levels to combat it, and to prevent a growing sectarian conflict that threatens to turn Iraq into a wasteland of chaos and almost unimaginable bloodshed, and potentially destabilize the entire Middle East. The situation has been correctly described as dire, but it is not hopeless. The probable consequences of our defeat there, which could include genocide and a wider Middle East war, require us to make every effort to prevent that nightmare scenario from occurring.

General Petraeus was ordered to Baghdad to execute a new strategy that realistically addresses the threats we face there, and he has been assured he will have the forces necessary to do so. It is long overdue. The hour is late. But we must try. We must.

Source: 2007 IAFF Presidential Forum in Washington DC Mar 14, 2007

Al Qaeda may take over Iraqi oilwells

[If we withdraw from Iraq] Al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations would be strengthened and encouraged to attack us everywhere we are vulnerable, including here at home. Whatever your views at the outset of the war on whether war in Iraq was part of the war against terror, it is obvious that it has become so. Al Qaeda fighters are there in strength. Should they gain control over part of the country they very well might gain control over some of the oil revenues produced there, which would strengthen there ability to attack us elsewhere. Sectarian divisions in Iraq between Sunni, Shia and Kurd might grow so extreme that other countries in the region would feel compelled to intervene directly in the conflict to support one side or another, and the war could spread. These are sobering possibilities, and they should cause us to consider the situation and our responsibilities there soberly rather than use Iraq as an opportunity for partisan posturing.

Source: 2007 IAFF Presidential Forum in Washington DC Mar 14, 2007

Prefers more troops for surge, but 20,000 is sufficient

Q: The Economist magazine's intelligence unit say: "Unless their mission is very well-defined, 20,000 troops are probably too few to make a significant difference. Adding around 20,000 to the 132,000 currently there will increase US capabilities, but not enough to stabilize the country." You agree with that?

A: I am concerned about it, whether it is sufficient numbers or not. I would have liked to have seen more. I looked General Petraeus in the eye and said, "Is that sufficient for you to do the job?" He assured me that he thought it was and that he had been told that if he needed more he would receive them. I have great confidence in General Petraeus. I think he's one of the finest generals that our military's ever produced, and he wrote the new Army counterinsurgency manual. But do I believe that if it had been up to me would there have been more? Yes, but one of the keys to this is get them over there quickly rather than feed them in piecemeal as some in the Pentagon would like to do today.

Source: Meet the Press: 2007 "Meet the Candidates" series Jan 21, 2007

Bush now has the right strategy, and it's our last chance

Q: Why should the American people, after they voted the midterm elections and have a Congress that says no to the president, why shouldn't they be listened to?

A: I understand their frustration and sometimes anger over the lack of success and lack of progress, particularly coupled with optimistic statements made time after time when things were not going well and deteriorating. Americans are frustrated, they are angry, and they are fed up. And what we need to do is show them a path to success. Also I think we need to make them more aware of the consequences of failure, which would be chaos in the region. And sooner or later, I think Americans might have to return. So I understand their frustration, I believe that Pres. Bush now has the right strategy. I've been deeply disappointed in the strategy in the past, as is well known, and I think this is our last chance. Will it succeed? I can't guarantee that. I think we have a good chance of it, but I guarantee the catastrophic results of failure.

Source: Meet the Press: 2007 "Meet the Candidates" series Jan 21, 2007

Generals advising "no more troops" was a failed policy

Q: Why didn't the president listen to his generals when they advised no more troops?

A: Because it was clearly a failed policy. From the beginning, many of us knew that it was a failed strategy. It was based on the mistaken belief that the Iraqi army and police would be able to take over the responsibilities far more quickly than they were able to.

Q: Failed policy. Prime Minister Maliki of Iraq met with Pres. Bush on Nov. 30th, and said "no more American troops." If the Iraqis didn't want more troops, why are we sending them?

A: I think we've convinced Prime Minister Maliki then, as the situation continues to deteriorate, that we need to do that.

Q: Is Maliki's government is on borrowed time?

A: I think the whole situation in Iraq is on borrowed time, because of the continued deterioration of the security situation, particularly in Baghdad and Anbar province. You cannot have this kind of situation exist in a capital of any nation.

Source: Meet the Press: 2007 "Meet the Candidates" series Jan 21, 2007

McCain Principle: Committing troops means completing mission

Q: Democrats are now referring to the increase in American troops, the so-called surge, as the McCain doctrine. Do you accept that?

A: Well, there's a McCain principle, and that is that when you raise your hand and you vote to send young Americans into harm's way that you will commit yourself and your efforts to completing that mission successfully. I don't know how lightly others may take that vote, but that's the principle that I've operated under, but not everybody gets a doctrine

named after them.

Q: MoveOn.org has an advertisement saying , "The McCain plan to escalate, going from bad to worse. " What do you think?

A: I'm trying to convince my fellow citizens in Arizona that this strategy can succeed and it can prevent chaos in the region. I really believe that those who oppose this policy have some obligation to propose an alternative strategy besides withdrawal in four to six months. That's not a strategy; that's a retreat.

Source: Meet the Press: 2007 "Meet the Candidates" series Jan 21, 2007

If we leave Iraq, terrorists will follow us home

Q: The percent of Americans who support the war is in the 30s. Could this be perceived as a vote of no confidence in Bush?

A: I think we are all responsible, including me. But I believe that it is a frustration that Americans feel that we have not succeeded. We raised their expectations with comments like "stuff happens" and "last throes" and all of that rhetoric that went on, including predictions by our military commanders over there that things were going well.

Q: How is this different from Vietnam?

A: When we left Vietnam and came home, the Vietnamese didn't want to follow us. If we leave Iraq, I am convinced that al-Qaeda and terrorist organizations will want to follow us home.

Q: If in nine months, the situation in Iraq does not improve, would you then say we gave it our best shot, it's time to come home?

A: I think it would depend on the situation on the ground at the time. I hope that we can set up some benchmarks so that we can know whether we're achieving some success.

Source: Meet the Press: 2007 "Meet the Candidates" series Jan 21, 2007

Send in a heavy wave of troops to Iraq to establish order

The Arizona senator has warned that any pullout of troops could be disastrous. Instead, he has pushed the president to send in a heavy wave of troops to quell the violence and establish order.

Source: People's Daily (China), "Contenders views on the war" Nov 23, 2006

Looting, terrorism in Iraq a result of US mistakes

We made serious mistakes right after the initial successes by not having enough troops there on the ground, by allowing the looting, by not securing the borders. There was a number of things that we did. Most of it can be traced back to not having sufficient numbers of troops there.

Source: Josh White, Washington Post Sep 20, 2004

The Iraqi war was necessary after years of failed diplomacy

After years of failed diplomacy & limited military pressure to restrain Saddam, Bush made the difficult decision to liberate Iraq. Those who criticize that decision would have us believe that the choice was between a status quo that was well enough left alone and war. But there was no status quo to be left alone. The years of keeping Saddam in a box were coming to a close. The international consensus that he be kept isolated and unarmed had eroded to the point many critics of military action had decided the time had come again to do business with Saddam, despite his near daily attacks on our pilots and his refusal, until his last day in power, to allow the unrestricted inspection of his arsenal. Our choice wasn't between a benign status quo and the bloodshed of war. It was between war and a graver threat. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise. Not our critics abroad. Not our political opponents. And not a disingenuous film maker who would have us believe that Saddam's Iraq was an oasis of peace.

Source: 2004 Republican Convention Speech Aug 30, 2004

Saddam would have acquired terrible weapons again

Whether or not Saddam possessed the terrible weapons he had and used, he would have acquired them again. The central security concern is to keep such devastating weapons beyond the reach of terrorists who can't be dissuaded from using them by the threat of mutual destruction. We couldn't afford the risk posed by an unconstrained Saddam in these dangerous times. By destroying his regime we gave hope to people long oppressed that if they have the courage to fight for it, they may live in peace and freedom

Source: 2004 Republican Convention Speech Aug 30, 2004

The Iraqi war was necessary, achievable and noble

The mission was necessary, achievable and noble. For his determination to undertake it, and for his unflagging resolve to see it through to a just end, Bush deserves not only our support, but our admiration. We are safer than we were on 9/11, but we're not yet safe. We are still closer to the beginning than the end of this fight. We need a leader with the experience to make the tough decisions and the resolve to stick with them; a leader who will keep us moving forward even if it is easier to rest.

Source: 2004 Republican Convention Speech Aug 30, 2004

The cause of the Iraqi war was just

Although the guerrilla war that followed in its aftermath has proved tougher and lasted longer than expected, the destruction of Saddam's armed forces was quick and decisive. The enemy was vastly overmatched. But the cause was just, and I believe necessary, and our soldiers fought as bravely and as competently and as humanely as they were asked. They earned their honor. Their heroism was no less distinguished because they enjoyed an overwhelming advantage in high-tech weaponry.

Source: Why Courage Matters, p. 23 Apr 1, 2004

1991: Urged formally declaring war on Iraq over Kuwait

On November 29, 1991, the United Nations Security Council gave the allied forces permission "to use all necessary means" to get out of Kuwait if Iraq had not withdrawn by January 15, 1992.

Four days before the cutoff date, McCain went to the floor of the Senate to argue that sanctions would not keep carrying out "naked aggression of the most heinous and disgraceful kind." McCain said: "Who are the ones who would suffer as a result of sanctions? In my view, it is the innocent civilians."

The cutoff date came and went. On Thursday, January 17, President bush requested Congress's permission to conduct military operations in the Persian Gulf. The Senate voted 99-0 to approve the president's request. Not only did McCain vote in favor of the request, but before the vote, he had proposed that the Congress should adopt a declaration of war---a move much more severe than simply committing troops to the region.

Source: Man of the People, by Paul Alexander, p.144-145 Jan 19, 2004

John McCain on Voting Record

Congress has no authority to cut off funds for Iraqi use

Q: Senator Hillary Clinton says we should not cut off funding for American troops, but cut off funding for the security for Iraqi government officials and cut off funding for the Iraqi army because they simply have not measured up. Would you support her in that effort?

A: I don't see any place in the Constitution where that kind of authority is granted to the Congress. The Congress can cut off funding. And if my colleagues believe that they're going to send young Americans to die in an unwinnable situation, it seems to me that their conscience would dictate that they cut off the funding for the entire effort. This resolution is basically a vote of no confidence in the men and women we are sending over there. We're saying, "We're sending you-we're not going to stop you from going there, but we don't believe you can succeed and we're not willing to support that." I don't think the troops would find that an expression of support.

Source: Meet the Press: 2007 "Meet the Candidates" series Jan 21, 2007

Voted NO on redeploying non-essential US troops out of Iraq in 9 months.

Vote to transition the missions of US Forces in Iraq to a more limited set of missions as specified by the President on September 13, 2007: S.AMDT.3875 amends S.AMDT.3874 and underlying bill H.R.2764:

- The President shall commence the safe, phased redeployment of members of the US Armed Forces from Iraq who are not essential to the [new limited mission].
- Such redeployment shall begin not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.
- No funds under any provision of law may be expended to continue the deployment in Iraq of members of the US Armed Forces after 9 months.

Proponents support voting YES because:

Sen. LEVIN: "The amendment requires redeployment be completed within 9 months. At that point, funding for the war

would be ended, with four narrow exceptions:"

1. Security for US Government personnel and infrastructure
2. Training Iraqi security forces
3. Equipment to US service men and women to ensure their safety

Targeted operations against members of al-Qaida.

Opponents recommend voting NO because:

Sen. McCAIN: "This year, after nearly 4 years of mismanaged war, our military has made significant gains under the so-called surge. Overall violence in Iraq has fallen to its lowest level since [2003]. Improvised explosive device blasts now occur at a rate lower than at any point since September 2004.

"Al-Qaida's leadership knows which side is winning in Iraq. It may not be known in some parts of America and in this body, but al-Qaida knows. We are succeeding under the new strategy.

"Given these realities, some proponents of precipitous withdrawal from Iraq have shifted their focus. While conceding, finally, that there have been dramatic security gains, they have begun seizing on the lackluster performance of the Iraqi Government to insist that we should abandon the successful strategy and withdraw U.S. forces. This would be a terrible mistake."

Reference: Safe Redeployment Of US Troops From Iraq Amendment; Bill S.AMDT.3875 to H.R.2764 ; vote number 2007-437 on Dec 18, 2007

Voted NO on redeploying troops out of Iraq by July 2007.

Voting YEA on this amendment would establish a timetable for withdrawal from Iraq. Voting NAY would keep the current situation without a timetable. The amendment states:

1. The President shall redeploy, commencing in 2006, US forces from Iraq by July 1, 2007, leaving only the minimal number of forces that are critical to completing the mission of standing up Iraqi security forces and conducting specialized counterterrorism operations.
2. The President should maintain an over-the-horizon troop presence to prosecute the war on terror and protect regional security interests.
3. Within 30 days, the administration shall submit to Congress a report that sets forth the strategy for the redeployment of US forces from Iraq by July 1, 2007.

   Opponents of the Resolution say:
- This amendment would withdraw American forces from Iraq without regard to the real conditions on the ground.
- The consequences of an American retreat would be terrible for the security of the American people at home.
- Our commitment is not open-ended. It is conditional on the Iraqis moving toward self-government and self-defense.

   Supporters of the Resolution say:
- Congress talks almost incessantly about the situation in Iraq as if on 9/11 the situation involved Iraq. Of course, it didn't. We were attacked by al-Qaida operating out of Afghanistan on 9/11.
- One of the theories we hear is that somehow staying in Iraq is necessary because all the terrorists will come into Iraq, and then they wouldn't be able to attack us anywhere else. Some call this the roach-motel theory. The fact is, al-Qaida is operating in 60 to 80 countries. Yet our resources are only heavily focused on this Iraq situation.
- In terms of differences from other Iraq amendments: This is binding, not just a sense of the Senate.
- Secondly, we have a date; other amendments are open-ended.
- Thirdly, this has an over-the-horizon force specifically to protect our security interests.

Reference: Kerry Amendment to National Defense Authorization Act; Bill S.Amdt. 4442 to S. 2766 ; vote number 2006-181 on Jun 22, 2006

Voted NO on investigating contract awards in Iraq & Afghanistan.

To establish a special committee of the Senate to investigate the awarding and carrying out of contracts to conduct activities in Afghanistan and Iraq and to fight the war on terrorism. Voting YES would: create Senate special committee to investigate war contracts, taking into consideration: bidding, methods of contracting, subcontracting, oversight procedures, allegations of wasteful practices, accountability and lessons learned in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Reference: Committee to Investigate War Contracts; Bill S Amdt 2476 to S 1042 ; vote number 2005-316 on Nov 10, 2005

Voted YES on requiring on-budget funding for Iraq, not emergency funding.

Amendment to express the sense of the Senate on future requests for funding for military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. A YES vote would:

- Request all future funding for ongoing military operations overseas, especially in Afghanistan and Iraq, be included in the President's annual fiscal year budget proposal
- Call for the President to submit to Congress by Sept. 1, 2005, an amendment to his annual fiscal budget, that

details estimated costs for ongoing military operations overseas.
- Ask that all future funding requests for ongoing military operations overseas appear in the appropriation bills in which such expenditures are normally included.

Reference: Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act; Bill S.AMDT.464 to H.R.1268 ; vote number 2005-96 on Apr 20, 2005

Voted YES on $86 billion for military operations in Iraq & Afghanistan.

Vote to pass a bill that would appropriate $86.5 billion in supplemental spending for military operations and reconstruction in Iraq and Afghanistan, in Fiscal 2004. The bill would provide $10.3 billion as a grant to rebuild Iraq. This includes:

- $5.1 billion for security
- $5.2 billion for reconstruction costs
- $65.6 billion for military operations and maintenance
- $1.3 billion for veterans medical care
- $10 billion as a loan that would be converted to a grant if 90% of all bilateral debt incurred by the former Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein, would have to be forgiven by other countries.

Reference: FY04 Emergency Supplemental for Iraq and Afghanistan; Bill S1689 ; vote number 2003-400 on Oct 17, 2003

Voted YES on authorizing use of military force against Iraq.

H.J.Res. 114; Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002. The administration would be required to report to Congress that diplomatic options have been exhausted before, or within 48 hours after military action has started. Every 60 days the president would also be required to submit a progress report to Congress.

Reference: Bill H.J.RES.114 ; vote number 2002-237 on Oct 11, 2002

Voted NO on allowing all necessary force in Kosovo.

Majority Leader Trent Lott motioned to kill the resolution that would have authorized the president to "use all necessary forces and other means," in cooperation with U.S. allies to accomplish objectives in Yugoslavia.
Status: Motion to Table Agreed to Y)78; N)22

Reference: Motion to table S. J. Res. 20; Bill S. J. Res. 20 ; vote number 1999-98 on May 4, 1999

Voted YES on authorizing air strikes in Kosovo.

Vote to adopt a resolution to authorize the President to conduct military air operations and missile strikes in cooperation with NATO against Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro).

Reference: Bill S.Con.Res 21 ; vote number 1999-57 on Mar 23, 1999

Voted YES on ending the Bosnian arms embargo.

Ending the Bosnian arms embargo.
Status: Bill Passed Y)69; N)29; NV)2

Reference: Bosnia Herzegovina Self-Defense Act of '95; Bill S. 21 ; vote number 1995-331 on Jul 26, 1995

Supports $48 billion in new spending for anti-terrorism.

McCain adopted the Republican Main Street Partnership issue stance:

The Republican Main Street Partnership (RMSP), the largest group of moderate GOP elected officials in the nation, applauds President Bush's call for $48 Billion in new defense spending to win the war on terrorism, provide for homeland defense and modernize the U.S. military.

Main Street Moderates, also offer support for the President's "Homeland Defense" initiative that strengthens border security ($2.1 Billion Increase), bulks up INS and Customs inspectors and agents (focusing on the northern border), and proposes a 500% increase in "Bio-Terrorism" spending. These were part of the RMSP Anti-Terrorism Policy proposed by key Main Street members Sen. Olympia Snowe (R-ME), Rep. Christopher Shays (R-CT) and others shortly after Sept. 11th. Sen. Snowe called "the President's proposals to boost funding for the Coast Guard, border security and customs right on target." "By focusing on these issues (Defense and Homeland Security), he's clearly in touch with what's most important to the American people," said fellow Main Street member Rep. Sherwood Boehlert (R-NY).

Source: Republican Main Street Partnership press release 01-RMSP5 on Jan 30, 2002

CIA assessments ib Iraqi WMDs were all wrong.

McCain signed the Report of the Commission on Intelligence on WMDs:

As war loomed, the U.S. Intelligence Community was charged with telling policymakers what it knew about Iraq's nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons programs. The Community's best assessments were set out in an October 2002 National Intelligence Estimate, or NIE. These assessments were all wrong.

- **Overall Commission Findings:** The Intelligence Community's performance in assessing Iraq's pre-war weapons of mass destruction programs was a major intelligence failure. The failure was not merely that the Intelligence Community's assessments were wrong. There were also serious shortcomings in the way these assessments were made and communicated to policymakers.
- **Nuclear Weapons :** The Intelligence Community seriously misjudged the status of Iraq's alleged nuclear weapons program in the 2002 NIE and other pre-Iraq war intelligence products. This misjudgment stemmed chiefly from the Community's failure to analyze correctly Iraq's reasons for attempting to procure high-strength aluminum tubes.
- **Biological Warfare:** The Intelligence Community seriously misjudged the status of Iraq's biological weapons program in the 2002 NIE and other pre-war intelligence products. The primary reason for this misjudgment was the Intelligence Community's heavy reliance on a human source--codenamed "Curveball"--whose information later proved to be unreliable.
- **Chemical Warfare** The Intelligence Community erred in its 2002 NIE assessment of Iraq's alleged chemical warfare program. The Community's substantial overestimation of Iraq's chemical warfare program was due chiefly to flaws in analysis and the paucity of quality information collected.
- **Regime Decisionmaking** The Intelligence Community, because of a lack of analytical imagination, failed even to consider the possibility that Saddam Hussein would decide to destroy his chemical and biological weapons and to halt work on his nuclear program after the first Gulf War.

Source: Report to the President on WMDs, p. 46-147 05-WMD-02 on Mar 31, 2005

Belief in Iraqi nukes was poor analysis of aluminum tubes.

McCain signed the Report of the Commission on Intelligence on WMDs:

Nuclear Weapons Finding 1

The Intelligence Community's judgment about Iraq's nuclear program hinged chiefly on an assessment about Iraq's intended use for high-strength aluminum tubes it was seeking to procure. Most of the agencies in the Intelligence Community erroneously concluded these tubes were intended for use in centrifuges in a nuclear program rather than in conventional rockets. This error was, at the bottom, the result of poor analytical tradecraft--namely, the failure to do proper technical analysis informed by thorough knowledge of the relevant weapons technology and practices.

Nuclear Weapons Finding 2

In addition to citing the aluminum tubes, the NIE's judgment that Iraq was attempting to reconstitute its nuclear weapons program also referred to additional streams of intelligence. These other streams, however, were very thin, and the limited value of that supporting intelligence was inadequately conveyed in the October 2002 NIE and in other Intelligence Community products.

Nuclear Weapons Finding 3

The other indications of reconstitution--aside from the aluminum tubes--did not themselves amount to a persuasive case for a reconstituted Iraqi nuclear program. In light of the tenuousness of this other information, DOE's argument that the aluminum tubes were not for centrifuges but that Iraq was, based on these other streams of information, reconstituting its nuclear program was a flawed analytical position.

Nuclear Weapons Finding 4

The Intelligence Community failed to authenticate in a timely fashion transparently forged documents purporting to show that Iraq had attempted to procure uranium from Niger.

Source: Report to the President on WMDs, p. 66-76 05-WMD-03 on Mar 31, 2005

Belief in Iraqi BWs was based on one unreliable person.

McCain signed the Report of the Commission on Intelligence on WMDs:

Biological Warfare Finding 1

The DIA's Defense HUMINT Service's failure even to attempt to validate Curveball's [a code-named human source who later proved unerliable] reporting was a major failure in operational tradecraft.

Biological Warfare Finding 2

Indications of possible problems with Curveball began to emerge well before the 2002 NIE. The analysts' resistance to any information that could undermine Curveball's reliability suggests that the analysts were unduly wedded to a source that supported their assumptions about Iraq's BW programs.

Biological Warfare Finding 3

The October 2002 NIE failed to communicate adequately to policymakers both the Community's near-total reliance on Curveball for its BW judgments, and the serious problems that characterized Curveball as a source.

Biological Warfare Finding 4

Beginning in late 2002, some operations officers within *the regional division* of the CIA's Directorate of Operations that was responsible for relations with the liaison service handling Curveball expressed serious concerns about Curveball's reliability to senior officials at the CIA, but these views were either (1) not thought to outweigh analytic assessments that Curveball's information was reliable or (2) disregarded because of managers' assessments that those views were not sufficiently convincing to warrant further elevation.

Biological Warfare Finding 5

CIA management stood by Curveball's reporting long after post-war investigators in Iraq had established that he was lying about crucial issues.

Biological Warfare Finding 6

In addition to the problems with Curveball, the Intelligence Community--and, particularly, the Defense HUMINT Service--failed to keep reporting from a known fabricator out of finished intelligence on Iraq's BW program in 2002 and 2003.

Source: Report to the President on WMDs, p. 80-108 05-WMD-04 on Mar 31, 2005

Belief in Iraqi CWs was based on flawed imagery.

McCain signed the Report of the Commission on Intelligence on WMDs:

Chemical Warfare Finding 1

The Intelligence Community relied too heavily on ambiguous imagery indicators identified at suspect Iraqi facilities for its broad judgment about Iraq's chemical warfare program. In particular, analysts leaned too much on the judgment that the presence of "Samarra-type" trucks (and related activity) indicated that Iraq had resumed its chemical weapons program.

Chemical Warfare Finding 2

Analysts failed to understand, and collectors did not adequately communicate, the limitations of imagery collection. Specifically, analysts did not realize that the observed increase in activity at suspected Iraqi chemical facilities may have been the result of increased imagery collection rather than an increase in Iraqi activity.

Chemical Warfare Finding 3

Human intelligence collection against Iraq's chemical activities was paltry, and much has subsequently proved problematic.

Chemical Warfare Finding 4

Signals intelligence collection against Iraq's chemical activities was minimal, and much was of questionable value.
Source: Report to the President on WMDs, p.112-131 05-WMD-05 on Mar 31, 2005

Iraq never had delivery systems to attack US mainland.

McCain signed the Report of the Commission on Intelligence on WMDs:

Delivery Systems Summary Finding 1

The Intelligence Community incorrectly assessed that Iraq was developing unmanned aerial vehicles for the purpose of delivering biological weapons strikes against U.S. interests

Delivery Systems Summary Finding 2

The Intelligence Community correctly judged that Iraq was developing ballistic missile systems that violated United Nations strictures, but was incorrect in assessing that Iraq had preserved its Scud missile force.

Delivery Systems Finding 1

The Intelligence Community made too much of an inferential leap, based on very little hard evidence, in judging that Iraq's unmanned aerial vehicles were being designed for use as biological warfare delivery vehicles and that they might be used against the U.S. homeland.

Delivery Systems Finding 2

The Intelligence Community failed to communicate adequately to policymakers the weak foundations upon which its conclusions were based.

Delivery Systems Finding 3

The Intelligence Community failed to give adequate consideration to other possible uses for Iraq's UAVs or to give due credence to countervailing evidence.

Delivery Systems Finding 4

The Intelligence Community was generally correct in assessing that Iraq was continuing ballistic missile work that violated United Nations restrictions, but erred in many of the specifics.
Source: Report to the President on WMDs, p.132-145 05-WMD-06 on Mar 31, 2005

CIA never questioned assumption that Saddam had WMDs.

McCain signed the Report of the Commission on Intelligence on WMDs:

Collection Management and Analysis: Conclusion 11

Recognizing that it was having problems collecting quality intelligence against Iraq, the Intelligence Community launched an effort to study ways to improve its collection performance. This process was hampered by haphazard follow-up by some agencies; in particular, NSA failed to follow-up promptly on the Intelligence Community's recommendations.

Conclusion 12

Analysts skewed the analytical process by requiring proof that Iraq did not have WMD.

Conclusion 13

Analysts did not question the hypotheses underlying their conclusions, and tended to discount evidence that cut against those hypotheses.

Conclusion 14

The Community made serious mistakes in its technical analysis of Iraq's unconventional weapons program. The National Ground Intelligence Center in particular displayed a disturbing lack of diligence and technical expertise.

Conclusion 15

Analysis of Iraqi weapons programs was also flawed by "layering," with one individual assessment forming the basis for additional, broader assessments that did not carry forward the uncertainties underlying each "layer."

Conclusion 16

Analysis of Iraq's weapons programs took little account of Iraq's political and social context. While such a consideration would probably not have changed the Community's judgments about Iraq's WMD, the failure even to consider whether Saddam Hussein had elected to abandon his banned weapons programs precluded that possibility.

Conclusion 17

The Community did not adequately communicate uncertainties about either its sources or its analytic judgments to policymakers.

Conclusion 18

The Community failed to explain adequately to consumers the fundamental assumptions and premises of its analytic judgments.

Source: Report to the President on WMDs, p.166-176 05-WMD-08 on Mar 31, 2005

Conclusions on Iran and North Korea are all classified.

McCain signed the Report of the Commission on Intelligence on WMDs:

IRAN AND NORTH KOREA: MONITORING THE DEVELOPMENT OF NUCLEAR CAPABILITIES

The Commission carefully studied the Intelligence Community's capability to assess accurately the nuclear programs of Iran and North Korea. In doing so, we reviewed numerous intelligence reports and conducted interviews with Intelligence Community analysts, collectors, and supervisors, as well as policymakers and non-governmental regional and weapons experts. Because even the most general statements about the Intelligence Community's capabilities in this area are classified, the Commission's assessments and eleven specific findings cannot be discussed in this report. The Commission has, however, incorporated the lessons learned from its study of Iran and North Korea in all of our recommendations for reform of the Intelligence Community.

Source: Report to the President on WMDs, p.305 05-WMD-13 on Mar 31, 2005

Support the completion of the US mission in Iraq.

McCain sponsored supporting the completion of the US mission in Iraq

A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that the Commander of Multinational Forces-Iraq and all United States personnel under his command should receive from Congress the full support necessary to carry out the United States mission in Iraq. Expresses the sense of the Senate that:

1. Congress should ensure that General David Petraeus have the necessary resources to carry out their mission in

Iraq; and
2. the government of Iraq must make visible progress toward meeting the political, economic, and military benchmarks enumerated in this Resolution.

Source: S.RES.70 & H.RES.150 2007-SR70 on Feb 5, 2007

Move the US Embassy to Jerusalem.

McCain co-sponsored the Jerusalem Embassy Act

Declares it to be U.S. policy that:
- Jerusalem remain an undivided city in which the rights of every ethnic religious group are protected;
- Jerusalem be recognized as the capital of the State of Israel;
- the U.S. Embassy in Israel be established in Jerusalem no later than May 31, 1999.
- Makes specified amounts of such funds available until expended in FY 1996 and 1997 only for construction and other costs associated with relocating the U.S. Embassy Jerusalem.

Corresponding House bill is H.R.1595. Became Public Law No: 104-45.
Source: Bill sponsored by 77 Senators and 78 Reps 95-S1322 on Oct 13, 1995

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GOP: Sen.John McCain
GOP V.P.: Gov.Sarah Palin
Democrat: Sen.Barack Obama
Dem.V.P.: Sen.Joe Biden

Third Parties:
Constitution: Chuck Baldwin
Libertarian: Rep.Bob Barr
Constitution: Amb.Alan Keyes
Liberation: Gloria La Riva
Green: Rep.Cynthia McKinney
Socialist: Brian Moore
Independent: Ralph Nader

John McCain on other issues:

Abortion
Budget/Economy
Civil Rights
Corporations
Crime
Drugs
Education
Energy/Oil
Environment
Families/Children
Foreign Policy
Free Trade
Govt. Reform
Gun Control
Health Care
Homeland Security
Immigration
Infrastructure/Technology
Jobs
Principles/Values
Social Security
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War/Iraq/Mideast
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