

# RealClear Politics

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## **”Anti-War” Poseurs: All Whine, No Spine**

*By Terry Michael*

With two-thirds of Americans mis-trusting George Bush’s handling of the Iraq war, and a solid majority telling pollsters we should never have picked this fight, when will liberal Democratic politicians find the courage to join the anti-war parade their constituents have organized?

It took a hawkish Vietnam veteran, from a blue collar Pennsylvania congressional district, to force a debate left-liberal legislators didn’t have the guts to pursue when it would have made a real difference, when it could have saved thousands of young American lives before the neo-conservatives led us into their elective war to make the world safe for democratically elected theocracies.

Almost to a man, and woman (wasn’t gender diversity supposed to yield motherly peace-makers?), Democrats in Congress continue to substitute whine for spine, in a side show produced by the Washington political and media culture as a substitute for a real debate about whether to stay or go.

We were fooled! We was robbed! If we had only known!

That’s as good as it gets from a crowd of liberal politicians who chose to be fooled three years ago, because it was the popular thing to do.

Quite simply, they are lying. They are trying to have it both ways, in true John Kerry fashion, posing as victims of Bush-Cheney deception. They are political poseurs, vamping against the war, trying not to spend real political capital by actually opposing it.

Weapons of mass destruction was always a marketing ploy, as admitted to by Paul Wolfowitz, one of the architects of the madness, rewarded by the political culture with the presidency of the World Bank. Dozens of evil-do-ing regimes have weapons that can be used for mass murder. An honest debate, then and now, would be about whether the outlaw state Iraq, with or without WMDs, really threatened us, or was just the paper tiger it was revealed to be in the first Gulf War; whether its brutal dictator, one of dozens in the world, was an associate of Osama bin Laden, or simply a secularist thug like Charles Taylor of Liberia; and whether, except in the neo-conservative imagination, you can impose pluralistic democracy in an Islamic tribal culture that virtually demands theocracy.

No, liberal Democrats were not fooled three years ago. They were silenced.

Silenced by neo-conservative marketers who used the chimera of WMDs as a post-9/11 pretext for a war they were determined to wage, in pursuit of their wacky reverse domino theory: that American military power could liberate one democratic domino in the middle east, and it would push up others.

Playing on homeland insecurity, the neo-cons conflated their grand geo-political design with the legitimate need to confront the big bad ideas of politicized Islamic fundamentalists. And they succeeded in getting the pre-emptive (“we’re powerful and can do anything we damn well please”) war they so badly wanted. Meanwhile, the actual bad guy who orchestrated 9/11 is still hiding in a cave somewhere that’s not Iraq.

It took six years after the American people lost faith in the Vietnam War in 1968 and tens of thousands more young American lives for the Washington political culture to end the madness it created in Southeast Asia.

But now, big political lies (some fact-based, some not) may be harder to tell in a digitally wired world, when policy-makers have a tougher time manipulating the truth with the help of conventional media that usually reflect, rather than challenge, the status quo.

The governing, draft-deferred politicians may be forced by the governed to join a debate — for which someone who actually saw combat, John Murtha, has been the unlikely catalyst.

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