

Fighting for Their Lies: The Deadly Delusions of America's Troops

By [Chris Floyd](#)

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While much has been made of the recent poll showing that a majority of U.S. troops on the ground in Iraq think we should get out – heartening news for all those who oppose Bush’s bloodsoaked war crime – the poll contained another revelation that should disturb anyone – anti-war or pro-war – who still believes in American democracy: the fact that some 85 percent of US forces in Iraq believe they are fighting to avenge Saddam Hussein’s role in the September 11 attacks. (Alex Sabbeth at Consortiumnews.com has more on this, and on Bush’s broader propaganda war, in [America Anesthetized](#).)

Saddam Hussein played no role in the September 11 attacks, of course; even the Warmonger-in-Chief has been forced to admit this indisputable fact, in public. It has also been confirmed by multiple investigations by the intelligence services, and even by the whitewashing, Bush-run, see-no-evil-unless-it-speaks-Arabic 9/11 Commission. Yet American troops have been thoroughly inculcated with this false notion – no doubt deliberately.

The dangers of infecting the armed forces with such partisan propaganda are immense. First, think of how this notion has skewed the reaction of American soldiers to the Iraqi people, especially anyone accused or suspected – for whatever reason, or none at all – of being an insurgent, or a “Baathist diehard,” etc. To an American soldier blinded by the deliberate Bush lies, such people would appear to be nothing but evil terrorists complicit in the murder of thousands of innocent Americans. And in fact, all Iraqis would be tarred by this brush: for how could a soldier out on patrol distinguish which of the seething mass of foreigners surrounding him had been a supporter of the man who (supposedly) attacked America?

Putting deluded soldiers in such a position, fed with such lies, is a formula certain to produce atrocities and abuse. No wonder we have seen so many cases of [American soldiers being quick on the trigger, quick with the boot and the fist, belligerent and brutal in tumultuous house searches](#), eager to “soften up” prisoners for CIA interrogators, and so on. Most of them believe they are there to avenge murdered Americans, and that anyone who opposes their presence – or even looks at them wrong – must be part of the system that (supposedly) produced 9/11.

The evil of this deliberate policy is great in itself; but the broader implications are perhaps even worse. For consider this: if American troops can be propagandized to believe such a transparent lie about Iraq’s non-existent connection to 9/11 – what can’t they be manipulated into believing?

And remember, this mass military delusion has been manufactured in an age when soldiers

have far more access to outside information than ever before (despite the Pentagon's strenuous efforts to clamp down on anything Don Rumsfeld doesn't want them to hear). Can they be made to believe that, say, the government of Hugo Chavez is directly tied to al Qaeda and must be overthrown? Can they be made to believe that Saddam's non-existent weapons of mass destruction are actually parked in Damascus and must be seized by force? Can they be made to believe that Iran is sending agents across the Iraqi border to kill them and is about to nuke their loved ones in the Homeland as well?

(The latter is in fact the latest propaganda campaign from the Bushists: [Rumsfeld rolled out the Iranian infiltration line](#) just yesterday, despite its utter and transparent foolishness: why would the Iranians seek to destabilize an Iraqi regime that, thanks to Bush, is now dominated by Shiite factions that were nurtured, armed, trained and financed by Tehran itself? And of course, this week both Dick Cheney and John "I'm Not Foaming at the Mouth, It's a Moustache" Bolton were [pounding the war drums](#) over [the Iranian nuclear "threat"](#) - at about the same time their boss was rewarding India for its own secret nuclear arms program, with a deal that guarantees the dangerous proliferation of nuclear weapons in one of the world's most volatile regions.)

But why stop with new foreign aggression? If American soldiers can be manipulated into believing the non-existent connection between Saddam and al Qaeda - why not a non-existent connection between some domestic faction and terrorism? What if you convinced the troops that, say, some Democratic leader was a traitor in league with terrorists? Or the anti-war movement in general? Or environmentalists? Or Muslims? Or Mexicans? Or Jews? Or any other group that some president down the line - armed with the dictatorial powers seized by Bush under the rule of the "unitary executive" - decides to eliminate?

We have, once again, crossed a dangerous Rubicon. If American soldiers can now be deliberately manipulated into fighting a war based on a transparent and publicly proven lie, in the service of the political ambitions and personal fortunes of a partisan faction, then we are well and truly through the looking-glass. We have reached the same pitch of civic degradation as the late Roman Republic, where the legions became the tools of ruthless warlords, jockeying for dominance, despoiling whole peoples and slaughtering thousands in the process. Once unlimbered, this weapon will be used again and again. With each passing day, the Bush Factionists - and all their many sycophants and enablers, in both parties, throughout the Establishment - are sowing a monstrous future for America, and the world.

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