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Remembrance of quotes past

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AUSTIN - At the beginning of the summer, several of us who are not exactly upbeat about our prospects in Iraq urged the administration to Do Something before it was too late -- like, by the end of the summer.

Now what? Our people are over there like staked goats in the desert; the administration won't send more troops; and the NGOs are pulling out. There was no apparent connection between Iraq and al Qaeda before this war, but there sure is now. We have already lost more soldiers in the "peace" than we did during the war.

And still no weapons of mass destruction. I realize all the good little boys and girls are supposed to "get over" the missing weapons of mass destruction, but I cannot brush this aside with the careless elan of the neo-con hawks ("doesn't matter," "makes no difference," "who cares?"). Public officials need to be held to some standard of accountability for what they say.

In a separate column, I will try to Be Constructive about our plight, but I think it is important to remember how we got here. May I remind you of what we were repeatedly told?

- "Simply stated, there is no doubt that Saddam Hussein now has weapons of mass destruction." -- Vice President Dick Cheney, Aug. 26, 2002.
- "Right now, Iraq is expanding and improving facilities that were used for the production of biological weapons." -- President Bush, Sept. 12, 2002.
- "The Iraqi regime possesses and produces chemical and biological weapons. It is seeking nuclear weapons." -- Bush, Oct. 7, 2002.
- "We've also discovered through intelligence that Iraq has a growing fleet of manned and unmanned aerial vehicles that would be used to disperse chemical or biological weapons across broad areas. We're concerned that Iraq is exploring ways of using the UAVs for missions targeting the United States." -- Bush, Oct. 7, 2002.
- "The evidence indicates that Iraq is reconstituting its nuclear weapons program. Saddam Hussein has held numerous meetings with Iraqi nuclear scientists, a group he calls his 'nuclear mujahideen' -- his nuclear holy warriors. Satellite photographs reveal that Iraq is rebuilding facilities at sites that have been part of its nuclear program in the past."-- Bush, Oct. 7, 2002.
- "We know for a fact there are weapons there." -- White House spokesman Ari Fleischer, Jan. 9, 2003.
- "Our intelligence officials estimate that Saddam Hussein had the materials to produce as much as 500 tons of Sarin, mustard and VX nerve agent." -- Bush, Jan. 28, 2003.
- "We know that Saddam Hussein is determined to keep his weapons of mass destruction, is determined to make more." -- Secretary of State Colin Powell, Feb. 5, 2003.
- "Intelligence gathered by this and other governments leaves no doubt that the Iraq regime continues to possess and conceal some of the most lethal weapons ever devised." -- Bush, March 17, 2003.
- "Well, there is no question that we have evidence and information that Iraq has weapons of mass destruction, biological and chemical particularly." -- Fleischer, March 21, 2003.

- "I have no doubt we're going to find big stores of weapons of mass destruction." -- Kenneth Adelman, Defense Policy Board, March 23, 2003.
- "We know where they are. They are in the area around Tikrit and Baghdad." -- Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, March 30, 2003.
- "We'll find them. It'll be a matter of time to do so." -- Bush, May 3, 2003.
- "I never believed that we'd just tumble over weapons of mass destruction in that country." -- Rumsfeld, May 4, 2003.
- "U.S. officials never expected that we were going to open garages and find weapons of mass destruction." -- National security adviser Condoleezza Rice, May 12, 2003.
- "They may have had time to destroy them, and I don't know the answer." -- Rumsfeld, May 27, 2003.
- "We based our decisions on good, sound intelligence, and the -- our people are going to find out the truth. And the truth will say that this intelligence was good intelligence. There's no doubt in my mind." -- Bush, July 17, 2003.

To quote Bill O'Reilly of Fox News: "And I said on my program, if, if the Americans go in and overthrow Saddam Hussein and it's clear he had nothing, I will apologize to the nation, and I will not trust the Bush administration again." -- March 18, 2003.