

Biden Claims that He Voted for Iraq War and Then “Immediately” Opposed It

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For those of us who opposed the war resolution on Iraq, the later spins by presidential candidates John Kerry and Hillary Clinton left us incensed. At the time, many of us criticized the 2002 Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq as a blank check to President Bush that jettisoned the responsibilities given to them by the Framers. When they voted for the war, it was popular and that seemed the only determinative factor. When thousands died or were wounded and hundreds of billions of dollars wasted, they followed the polls in belatedly opposing their own prior positions. Kerry and Clinton later insisted that they were tricked about the resolution despite such objections in the press. Now we can add presidential candidate Joe Biden who is [raising objections over his insistence that he never really supported the war and that he “immediately” opposed it.](#)

In a NPR interview, Biden said that he was misled on the war but then opposed it. First, he recounted a story that Bush’s people have flatly denied. He says that he went to the Oval Office and was expressly told that Bush had no intention to invade:

“[Bush] looked me in the eye in the Oval Office. He said he needed the vote to be able to get inspectors into Iraq to determine whether or not Saddam Hussein was engaged in dealing with a nuclear program. He got them in and before you know it, we had ‘shock and awe.’”

However, Biden’s insistence that he “immediately” has been challenged across the media. Nevertheless, Biden continues to maintain:

“That moment it started, I came out against the war at that moment.”

Biden is on record (and videotape) supporting the war before and after the passage of the 2002 Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq. When the invasion was being planned and reported publicly, Biden told *Face the Nation* that “If the covert action doesn’t work, we better be prepared to move forward with another action, an overt action. And it seems to me that we can’t afford to miss.”

More importantly, months after the invasion, Biden told CNN:

“I, for one, thought we should have gone in Iraq.” Later than that, he said at a hearing “I voted to go into Iraq, and I’d vote to do it again.”

Still later, he expressly stated that “we have always known” about the war in Iraq, namely that troops “would have to stay there in large numbers for a long period of time.” He also stated publicly (again after the invasion) that “[c]ontrary to what some in my party might think, Iraq was a problem that had to be dealt with sooner rather than later. So I commend the president. He was right to enforce the solemn commitments made by Saddam. If they were not enforced, what good would they be?”

Biden has been challenged on the veracity of other stories or factual assertions that he has used on the campaign trail. That has been a long-standing problem with Biden. However, this is about his record in supporting an unnecessary and unwarranted war that costs thousands of lives and ultimately over a trillion dollars. Like Kerry and Clinton, Biden cast the popular rather than the right vote. No level of revision of history will change the cost of that war for thousands of families or the country.

These denials and revisions are precisely why the Framers wisely insisted on declarations of war — a constitutional requirement that has been effectively removed from the Constitution by our politicians.

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