

Kerry's Endorsement of Biden Fits: Two Deceptive Supporters of the Iraq War

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Global Research, December 09, 2019

[Common Dreams](#) 6 December 2019

Region: [Middle East & North Africa, USA](#)

Theme: [History, US NATO War Agenda](#)

In-depth Report: [IRAQ REPORT](#)

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On Thursday afternoon, the *Washington Post* sent out a news alert headlined “John Kerry Endorses Biden in 2020 Race, Saying He Has the Character and Experience to Beat Trump, Confront the Nation’s Challenges.” Meanwhile, in Iowa, Joe Biden was also touting his experience. “Look,” Biden said as he [angrily lectured](#) an 83-year-old farmer at a campaign stop, “the reason I’m running is because I’ve been around a long time and I know more than most people know, and I can get things done.”

But Kerry and Biden don’t want to acknowledge a historic tie that binds them: Both men were important supporters of the Iraq war, voting for the invasion on the Senate floor and continuing to back the war after it began. Over the years, political winds have shifted—and Biden, like Kerry, has [methodically lied](#) about his support for that horrendous war.

The spectacle of Kerry praising Biden as a seasoned leader amounts to one supporter of the Iraq catastrophe attesting to the character and experience of another supporter of the same catastrophe.

The FactCheck.org project at the Annenberg Public Policy Center has [pointed out](#):

“Kerry agreed that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction and should be overthrown, and defended his war authorization vote more than once—including saying in a May 2003 debate that Bush made the ‘right decision to disarm Saddam Hussein.’ . . . Kerry also told reporters in August 2004 that he would have voted for the resolution even if he had known that the U.S. couldn’t find any weapons of mass destruction.”

As for Biden, he can’t stop lying about his major role in pushing the war authorization through the Senate five months before the March 2003 invasion. [During his current presidential campaign](#), more than 16 years after the invasion, Biden has continued efforts to conceal his pro-war role while refusing to admit that he was instrumental in making possible the massive carnage and devastation in Iraq.

Three months ago, during a debate on ABC, Biden claimed that he voted for the war

resolution so it would be possible to get U.N. weapons inspectors into Iraq—saying that he wanted “to allow inspectors to go in to determine whether or not anything was being done with chemical weapons or nuclear weapons.” But that’s totally backwards.

It was [big news](#) when the Iraqi government [announced](#) on September 16, 2002—with a letter hand-delivered to U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan—that it would allow the U.N. weapons inspectors back in “without conditions.” The announcement was a full 25 days before Biden joined with virtually every Republican and most Democratic senators voting to approve the Iraq war resolution.

That resolution on October 11 couldn’t rationally be viewed as a tool for leverage so that the Iraqi government would (in Biden’s words) “allow inspectors to go in.” Several weeks earlier, the Iraqi government had already agreed to allow inspectors to go in.

Biden keeps trying to wriggle out of culpability for the Iraq war. But he won’t be able to elude scrutiny so easily. In a mid-October debate, when Biden boasted that he has a record of getting things done, Bernie Sanders (who I actively support) made this response:

“Joe, you talked about working with Republicans and getting things done. But you know what you also got done? And I say this as a good friend. You got the disastrous war in Iraq done.”

Indeed, Biden—as chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee—[presided over one-sided hearings](#) that greased the war-machine wheels to carry the war resolution forward. He was the single most pivotal Senate Democrat for getting the Iraq invasion done. While sometimes grumbling about President George W. Bush’s diplomatic performance along the way, Biden backed the invasion with [enthusiasm](#).

Now, dazzled by Kerry’s endorsement of Biden, mainstream news outlets are calling it a major boost. Media hype is predictable as Kerry teams up with Biden on the campaign trail.

“The Kerry endorsement is among Mr. Biden’s most significant to date,” the *New York Times* [reports](#). “His support provides Mr. Biden the backing of the Democratic Party’s 2004 presidential nominee and a past winner of the Iowa caucuses.” Kerry praised Biden to the skies, [declaring](#) that “I believe Joe Biden is the president our country desperately needs right now, not because I’ve known Joe so long, but because I know Joe so well.”

This year, many progressives have become accustomed to rolling their eyes at the mention of Biden’s name. A facile assumption is that his campaign will self-destruct. But that may be wishful thinking.

The former vice president has powerful backers in corporate media, wealthy circles and the Democratic Party establishment. Deceitful and hidebound as he is, Joe Biden stands a good chance of becoming the party’s nominee—unless his actual record, including support for the Iraq war, catches up with him.

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