

Stop Calling the Iraq War a “Mistake”: Dennis Kucinich

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As Iraq descends into chaos again, more than a decade after “Mission Accomplished,” media commentators and politicians have mostly agreed upon calling the war a “mistake.” But the “mistake” rhetoric is the language of denial, not contrition: it minimizes the Iraq War’s disastrous consequences, removes blame, and deprives Americans of any chance to learn from our generation’s foreign policy disaster. The Iraq War was not a “mistake” — it resulted from calculated deception. The painful, unvarnished fact is that we were lied to. Now is the time to have the willingness to say that.

In fact, the truth about Iraq was widely available, but it was ignored. There were no WMD. Saddam Hussein had nothing to do with 9/11. The war wasn’t about liberating the Iraqi people. I said this in Congress in 2002. Millions of people who marched in America in protest of the war knew the truth, but were maligned by members of both parties for opposing the president in a time of war — and even leveled with the spurious charge of “not supporting the troops.”

I’ve written and spoken widely about this topic, so today I offer two ways we can begin to address our role:

1) President Obama must tell us the truth about Iraq and the false scenario that caused us to go to war.

When Obama took office in 2008, he announced that his administration would not investigate or prosecute the architects of the Iraq War. Essentially, he suspended public debate about the war. That may have felt good in the short term for those who wanted to move on, but when you’re talking about a war initiated through lies, bygones can’t be bygones.

The unwillingness to confront the truth about the Iraq War has induced a form of amnesia which is hazardous to our nation’s health. Willful forgetting doesn’t heal, it opens the door to more lying. As today’s debate ensues about new potential military “solutions” to stem violence in Iraq, let’s remember how and why we intervened in Iraq in 2003.

2) Journalists and media commentators should stop giving inordinate air and print time to people who were either utterly wrong in their support of the war or willful in their calculations to make war.

By and large, our Fourth Estate accepted uncritically the imperative for war described by top

administration officials and congressional leaders. The media fanned the flames of war by not giving adequate coverage to the arguments against military intervention.

President Obama didn't start the Iraq War, but he has the opportunity now to tell the truth. That we were wrong to go in. That the cause of war was unjust. That more problems were created by military intervention than solved. That the present violence and chaos in Iraq derives from the decision which took America to war in 2003. More than a decade later, it should not take courage to point out the Iraq war was based on lies.

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