

6-13-2003

## Trends. Public Discourse on Iraqi WMD

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### Recommended Citation

Editor (2003) "Trends. Public Discourse on Iraqi WMD," *International Bulletin of Political Psychology*: Vol. 14 : Iss. 18 , Article 6.  
Available at: <https://commons.erau.edu/ibpp/vol14/iss18/6>

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International Bulletin of Political Psychology

Title: Trends. Public Discourse on Iraqi WMD

Author: Editor

Volume: 14

Issue: 18

Date: 2003-06-13

Keywords: Iraq, Weapons of Mass Destruction, WMD

Abstract: The author discusses the viability of changing one's opinion regarding weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in Iraq over time (pre-war and post-war).

A salient theme in the public discourse on the presence or absence of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction (WMD) during events leading up to and after the United States Government (USG)-led invasion of Iraq comprises assertions of allegedly inconsistent logic. For example, the USG insisted that war had to occur because no more time could be expended in the ongoing United Nations (UN)-sponsored search for Iraqi WMD but is now demanding more time to find WMD in the post-war context. Another example is that supporters of the UN-sponsored search demanded more time to find WMD, but now do not support allowing the USG more time to find WMD. Ascriptions of hypocrisy are being made towards anyone who does not manifest consistency on the value of time both before and after the war.

In actuality, the pre-war and post-war logics are neither necessarily inconsistent nor reflective of hypocrisy. From the USG perspective, once the Iraqi government has been changed, time may no longer be a luxury because there is no longer imminent threat. Thus, time can be embraced. From the perspective of supporters of ongoing, UN-led, pre-war inspections, the change in Iraqi government—which was alleged to have engaged in deceptive practices—suggests that no more time should be necessary to find WMD because there is no one left to hide them.

Sure, there are many participants in public discourse who have agendas varying from defending or attacking the war and those who defended or attacked the war. But one should be able to take differing positions on time before and after the war without deserving ad hominem attacks. (See Brice, L. (2002). Deliberative discourse enacted: Task, text, and talk. *Theory & Research in Social Education*, 30, 66-87; Clarke, V. (June 8, 2003). Iraq's weapons. *The New York Times*, <http://www.nytimes.com>; Gavey, N. (2002). I. To and beyond the discursive constitution of subjectivity. *Feminism & Psychology*, 12, 432-438; Schiffrin, D. (2001). Language, experience and history: 'What happened' in World War II. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 5, 323-351.) (Keywords: Iraq, Weapons of Mass Destruction, WMD.)