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***Who lost Iraq? We've met the enemy – it's our own
propaganda machine***

**From the bestselling authors of *Weapons of Mass Deception*,
a compelling new book offers a hard-hitting, factual dismantling
of the Bush Administration's claims about the Iraq War,
from its inception to the latest debacles:**

THE BEST WAR EVER

Lies, Damned Lies, and the Mess in Iraq

by Sheldon Rampton and John Stauber

'What do we do with Iraq?' is the biggest question facing the United States today in its global war on terror. But before we can begin to formulate a solution to the current mess, we must understand what went wrong. In **THE BEST WAR EVER** (Tarcher/Penguin; On sale: September 14, 2006; \$11.95), Sheldon Rampton and John Stauber, authors of the bestselling *Weapons of Mass Deception*, reveal the potent cocktail of deceit, arrogance, and wishful thinking that got us where we are today. With careful research and thoroughly documented evidence, the authors show how American leaders came to believe their own propaganda, manipulated (or manufactured) the facts to fit their beliefs, and plunged the U.S. into a disastrous conflict that grows more bloody by the hour. And they reveal the way in which the media, by refusing to question some of the information coming from the administration, played a significant role.

In 2003, exactly three years ago, Rampton and Stauber published the *New York Times* bestselling *WEAPONS OF MASS DECEPTION: The Uses of Propaganda in Bush's War on Iraq*. At a time

when the U.S. government was still insisting that Saddam had indeed stockpiled WMDs and that we would find them in Iraq, Rampton and Stauber revealed—headline by headline, news show by news show, press conference by press conference—the deliberate, aggressive, and highly successful public relations campaign that sold the Iraqi war to the American public.

Now that public opinion has turned against the war, and even military generals and leading Republicans are calling Iraq a lost cause, the finger pointing has begun. The news media, poor planning, bad intelligence, US atrocities and torture—all these are being blamed for the mess in Iraq. But the truth is that the United States defeated itself, by believing its own propaganda. Yes, lies were told by the Bush Administration, but it fooled no one more than itself.

“We’re no longer a superpower,” former House Majority Leader Tom Delay told a Fox News correspondent a few months before the war began. “We’re a super-duper-power...When we lead, others will follow.” For Delay, and many others like him, the preemptive war on Iraq did indeed look like the best war ever—a “cakewalk,” a “slam-dunk,” a chance for an invincible America to flex its muscles and show the world how to spread freedom and democracy in the Middle East.

From the fraudulent “intelligence” used to support the assertion that Saddam had WMD, to the deliberate efforts to discredit, silence, and punish critics of the White House, to the total lack of post-war planning, **THE BEST WAR EVER** lays bare the fallacies and follies behind the Iraq war—including not just the lead-up to the war but also the continued mishandling of operations in Iraq.

THE BEST WAR EVER sheds new light on:

- The politicizing of intelligence gathering and the administration’s dismissal of any analysis that didn’t confirm the White House’s preconceived conclusions about Iraq;
- The lead-up to the decision to invade Iraq, including the uncritical acceptance by over 40 prominent American newspapers of the assertion that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction, and the administration’s refusal to accept the reports of UN Weapons inspectors in Iraq who stated that they had found no signs of biological or chemical weapons;
- The administration’s reliance on untrustworthy sources for information about Iraq, such as the now discredited Ahmed Chalabi and the notorious “Curveball,” a man German intelligence officers had described as to US officials as “insane”;
- The role Judith Miller played, under the guise of “journalistic integrity,” in protecting the most powerful men in government so that they could continue to deceive the public;

- The Pentagon's refusal to consider 2,000 pages of reports compiled by experts, many of them former Iraqis, about how to manage post-war Iraq;
- The Defense Department's spending of hundreds of millions of dollars on third party PR firms, whose attempts to manage public opinion included planting pro-coalition "news" stories in the Iraqi press;
- The staggering number of civilian and military deaths in Iraq since the war began, estimated at over 100,000—and the administration's attempts to cover up the number of casualties and to keep images of injured and deceased soldiers out of the news;
- The mounting chaos in Iraq, where the risk of death by violence is 58 times higher now than before the war

Through detailed research and carefully documented evidence, **THE BEST WAR EVER** offers a devastating critique of the Iraq War. Not only do Rampton and Stauber prove that the entire war has been predicated upon willful misinformation and propaganda, with disastrous consequences – they also teach the American public how to wake up and not be misled again.

THE AUTHORS:

Sheldon Rampton and **John Stauber** are the bestselling authors of *Banana Republicans*, *Weapons of Mass Deception*, *Toxic Sludge Is Good for You!*, and *Trust Us, We're Experts!* Stauber is the founder and director of the Center for Media & Democracy. Rampton is the founder of the website www.SourceWatch.org. Stauber and Rampton write and edit the quarterly PR Watch: Public Interest Reporting on the PR/Public Affairs Industry. They both live and work in Madison, Wisconsin, for the Center for Media and Democracy.

For more information visit www.prwatch.org.

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Sheldon Rampton and John Stauber

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