

US media ignores damning Pentagon report

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10 December 2004

News of the report by the Defense Science Board's Task Force on Strategic Communication did not surface until late November, two months after the report was completed. The document was suppressed during the election campaign period, when its conclusions would undoubtedly have created serious problems for the Bush administration. (See "Pentagon report exposes lies of Bush administration").

The report has received only the most minimal media coverage, and no one within the political establishment—either Republican or Democrat—has made an issue of its findings.

The first article to appear in the press was a small *New York Times* piece published on page 14. Under the headline "US Fails to Explain Policies to Muslim World, Panel Says," the story appeared on November 24, one day before the report was posted on the Pentagon web site of the Defense Science Board.

The Associated Press picked up the story under the title "Pentagon Panel Says Stature of Radical Islamists has Risen Since 9/11 Attacks." Every major news outlet in the US subscribes to the AP and was therefore aware of the report of its damning findings.

A decision was obviously made by the TV and radio networks and virtually every newspaper to bury the story. The *Washington Post* failed to publish an article on the report, as did the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Boston Globe* and other major newspapers in the US. The *Los Angeles Times* mentioned it briefly toward the end of a longer piece published December 1 ("PR Meets Psy-Ops in War on Terror"). As far as this author was able to determine from a search of the internet, none of these newspapers even carried the AP story.

Michael Getler, the ombudsman for the *Washington Post*, thought the newspaper's omission so glaring, he felt obliged to note the story himself in his weekly column ("What Readers Saw, and Didn't See," published December 5). Getler pointed out that the

report came amidst constant talk from President Bush that Iraqis were resisting the American forces in their country because "they hate us. And they hate freedom."

A column by former Clinton aide Sidney Blumenthal ("You Call This Liberation") appeared on the web site *Salon.com*. It was also published in the British newspaper, the *Guardian*, but not in the US press.

Predictably, one of the most comprehensive reports on the board's findings came from abroad. The *Sunday Herald* of Scotland published an extensive piece on December 5: "US Admits the War for 'Hearts and Minds' in Iraq is Now Lost" by Neil Mackay.

As far as the American media is concerned, this is a non-story. Its deafening silence is echoed by the Democratic Party.



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