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WEDNESDAY, JULY 20, 2005

NYT: Going To War On A Hunch Okay By Themby Michael in New York on [7/20/2005 11:57:00 AM](#)

I can't let Tuesday's New York Times editorial pass without comment. (I was travelling and couldn't post earlier.) Titled "[A Jar of Red Herring](#)," it tried to clarify the issues surrounding Rovegate. The NYT defended its reporter Judith Miller, made clear the "waivers" were worthless and stated unequivocally that Joseph Wilson had been honest and straightforward in his July 2003 op-ed column and been vindicated. As they reiterated, Wilson investigated a report that Iraq had tried to buy uranium in Niger, found no evidence and went public when Bush made that claim anyway in his State of the Union address in the weeks leading up to the war. Ultimately, those 16 words were repudiated, people offered to resign and Wilson was proven 100% right. All fine.

Then the NYT loses its mind. It writes:

What really bothered Mr. Rove was Mr. Wilson's view that the administration had deliberately twisted the intelligence on Iraq and that Mr. Bush had misled Americans about the need for war. **We don't know whether top officials heard about Mr. Wilson's findings and ignored them, or whether the findings never reached the upper levels** - at the time, dissenting views on Iraq were not getting much of an airing in the administration. There's a lot we don't know about this case.

That's absurd on numerous levels. First, we know that when officials were unhappy with Wilson's report (they were desperate for some evidence to justify invading Iraq), they launched another investigation into the claim about Hussein buying uranium in Niger. That too came back with a flat "No go." So they launched a THIRD investigation. Again, the report said the rumour simply didn't hold water. Then Bush tried to include the inflammatory charge in a speech anyway and the CIA strenuously objected. The charge was removed. Finally, after three investigations and a tug of war between the White House and the CIA over an earlier speech, the fateful 16 words **making a claim they couldn't back up** was put in the State of the Union. Bush lied to the American people and soon we were invading Iraq. It wasn't until months later when Wilson bravely came forward that we discovered that claim wasn't true.

Now the NYT wants to try and give Bush the benefit of the doubt and say, "Okay, his administration tried three different times to prove this rumour was true and couldn't. Then it tried to make the claim anyway and the CIA objected heatedly. Then Bush put the charge into his State of the Union address, so maybe he had NO IDEA that three different investigations concluded the rumour wasn't true and that the CIA had strenuously objected to its inclusion in an earlier speech."

This would be gross incompetence on a massive scale and boggles the mind -- any reasonable person would say giving so much benefit of the doubt was absurd. But who wants to underestimate the incompetence of the Bush administration?

But the New York Times is forgetting one simple, obvious fact. The President of the United States --in the weeks leading up to war -- told the American people that Hussein was trying to buy uranium in Niger and HE DIDN'T KNOW IF IT WAS TRUE. We have every reason to

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