

One Person Can Make a Difference

MEMORANDUM FOR: Colleagues in Intelligence

FROM: Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity

SUBJECT: One Person Can Make a Difference

Our most recent open appeal to you, "Now It's Your Turn," was made on August 22, 2003. On that same day, it turns out, former Australian intelligence analyst Andrew Wilkie testified before a parliamentary committee examining the justification given by Prime Minister John Howard for Australia's decision to join the war in Iraq. Wilkie had been a senior analyst in Australia's premier intelligence agency, the Office of National Assessments (ONA). Of all the Australian, British, and American intelligence analysts with direct knowledge of how intelligence was abused in the run-up to the war, Wilkie was the only one to resign in protest and speak truth to power.

Those who dismiss such efforts as an exercise in futility should know that on October 7 the Australian Senate, in a rare move, censured Howard for misleading the public in justifying sending Australian troops off to war. The Senate statement of censure noted that Howard had produced no evidence to justify his claims last March that Iraq had stockpiles of biological and chemical weapons, and castigated him for suppressing Australian intelligence warnings that war with Iraq would increase the likelihood of terrorist attacks. One senator accused Howard of "unprecedented deceit."

This important story received little attention in the US media. We call it to your attention as a reminder of what one honest person can do. Thanks to the courage and determination of Andrew Wilkie, much of the Australian populace understands much better that the reasons adduced for war on Iraq were cooked in Washington and served up by Australian leaders all too willing to give unquestioning support to the Bush administration. Those Australian leaders are now being held accountable.

As some of you know, VIPS invited Andrew Wilkie here to Washington in July to speak at a briefing in the House Rayburn Building. (Wilkie, of course, is out of a job; so mutual Australian friends paid for his flight, and we in VIPS passed the hat to cover his expenses here.) After his well-received presentation on July 14, we strongly encouraged him to keep throwing light on this dark chapter of history. We also voiced our hope that US intelligence analysts who have also watched the deceit close-up would soon join him in speaking out. With a wan smile Wilkie shook his head and pointed to the cost, including the character assassination to which he had already been subjected at the hands of

his government. Integrity and thick skin are what it takes, but a little outside encouragement helps. The month after Wilkie was here, he laid out his case before parliament.

Wilkie testified that the attack on Iraq had little to do with weapons of mass destruction (WMD) or terrorism. We single out one particularly telling paragraph:

"Please remember the Government was also receiving detailed assessments on the US in which it was made very clear the US was intent on invading Iraq for more important reasons than WMD and terrorism. Hence all this talk about WMD and terrorism was hollow. Much more likely is the proposition the Government deliberately exaggerated the Iraq WMD threat so as to stay in step with the US."

In the wake of Wilkie's testimony, Australian pundits have become more critical of Australia's current leaders' continuing refusal to acknowledge that, as one journalist put it, they were "conned by master manipulators masquerading as purveyors of objective intelligence." We include Wilkie's testimony below, with a reminder that

You too can make a difference.

Gene Betit

Ray Close

Pat Lang

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