"Were You Right Or Wrong, Senator?" The Legacy Of Wrong That Is Senator John McCain, A Small Sampling

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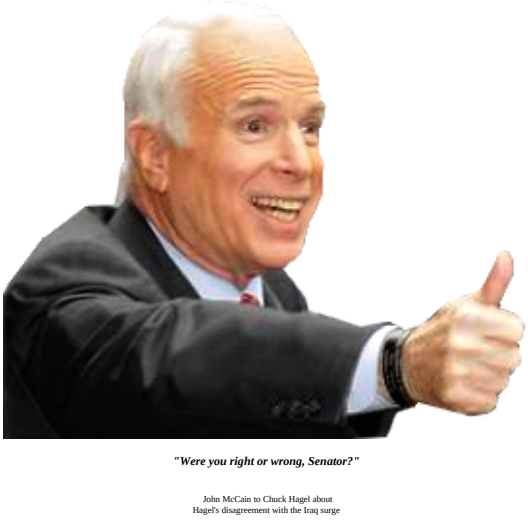
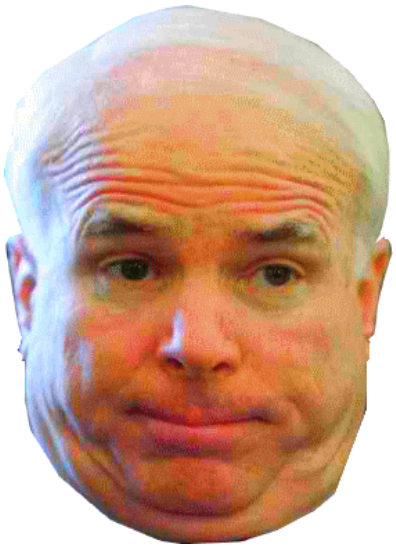


At the Senate "advise and consent" confirmation hearing yesterday John McCain had so little self-knowledge that he asked Chuck Hagel *"Were you right or wrong, Senator?"* about Hagel's lack of support for the Iraq military surges. As President George H.W. Bush said about Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait, "This shall not stand," so here's my small list drawn from of a huge number of examples of John McCain's wrongness legacy:

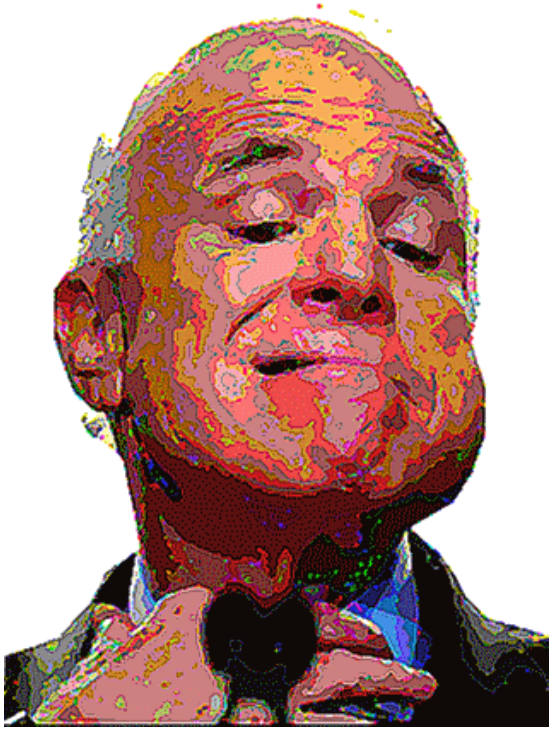
- *"Were you right or wrong, Senator?"*
    - "[Saddam Hussein] is hell-bent on acquiring these weapons of mass destruction in the view of any expert.
    - And, by the way, our intelligence has consistently not been accurate. Not in 1981, when the Iraqis bombed the reactor; not in 1991, when we were astonished at the degree of development that he had achieved in developing weapons of mass destruction, the stage of successes he had reached in that area. And so I don't know where he is in the stage of development, but there's very little doubt in my mind that he would use it." Face the Nation, September 2002
- *"Were you right or wrong, Senator?"*
    - "We're going to prevail and we will win and it'll be one of the best things that's happened to America and the world in a long time 'cause it'll reverberate throughout the Middle East." --on the Iraq war, "Meet the Press" interview, March 3, 2003
- *"Were you right or wrong, Senator?"*
    - "[T]here's no doubt in my mind that we will prevail and there's no doubt in my mind, once these people are gone, that we will be welcomed as liberators." March 24, 2003, edition of *Hardball* -- several days after the U.S.-led coalition had invaded Iraq
- *"Were you right or wrong, Senator?"*
    - “Nobody in Afghanistan threatens the United States of America.” Hannity & Colmes, April 10, 2003
- *"Were you right or wrong, Senator?"*
    - *"Well, then why was there a banner that said mission accomplished on the aircraft carrier?"* John McCain, responding to assertion by Fox News' Neil Cavuto that "many argue the conflict isn't over," June, 11, 2003
- *"Were you right or wrong, Senator?"*
    - Excerpts from *Past the Point of Justifying*, his Op-Ed, *The Washington Post*, John McCain, June 15, 2003:
    - Like many Americans, I am surprised that we have yet to locate the weapons of mass destruction that all of us, Republican and Democrat, expected to find immediately in Iraq. But do critics really believe that Saddam Hussein disposed of his



weapons and dismantled weapons programs while fooling every major intelligence service on earth, generations of U.N. inspectors, three U.S. presidents and five secretaries of defense into believing he possessed them, in one of the most costly and irrational gambles in history? ...

  - Critics today seem to imply that after seven years of elaborately deceiving the United Nations, Hussein precipitated the withdrawal of U.N. inspectors from his country in 1998, then decided to change course and disarmed himself over the next four years, but refused to provide any realistic proof that this disarmament occurred.
  - I am not convinced.
- *"Were you right or wrong, Senator?"*
  - The facts on the ground are we went to Afghanistan and we prevailed there." Wolf Blitzer Reports, April 1, 2004
- *"Were you right or wrong, Senator?"*
  - "Could I add, it was in Afghanistan, as well, there were many people who predicted that Afghanistan would not be a success. So far, it's a remarkable success**."** CNN, March 2, 2005
- *"Were you right or wrong, Senator?"*
  - "Afghanistan, we don't read about anymore, because it's succeeded**."** Charlie Rose Show, October 31, 2005
- *"Were you right or wrong, Senator?"*
  - "There are neighborhoods in Baghdad where you and I could walk through those neighborhoods today."
  - McCain also said that the US is "beginning to succeed in Iraq" and an early pull out would result in an "unmitigated disaster of incredible proportions," and "we will see chaos and genocide in the region and we will be back and they will follow us home." Bill Bennett's Morning in America radio show, March 26, 2007
- *"Were you right or wrong, Senator?"*

- McCain complimented "deputy commander-in-chief" Cheney's "hard-headed clear thinking" and guidance on Iraq **a**t a July 16, 2004, campaign rally in Lansing, Michigan. McCain continued: "We are very fortunate that our president in these challenging days can rely on the counsel of a man who has demonstrated time and again the resolve, experience, and patriotism that will be required for success and the hard-headed clear thinking necessary to prevail in this global fight between good and evil."



- *"Were you right or wrong, Senator?"*
  - "Make it a hundred...That would be fine with me." --to a questioner who asked if he supported President Bush's vision for keeping U.S. troops in Iraq for 50 years, Derry, New Hampshire, Jan. 3, 2008
- *"Were you right or wrong, Senator?"*
  - "He's (for) health for the mother. You know, that's been stretched by the pro-abortion movement in America to mean almost anything. That's the extreme pro-abortion position, quote, 'health.'" about President Obama's support for protection of a mother's health in abortion decisions, presidential debate, Long Island, New York, Oct. 15, 2008
- *"Were you wrong, Senator?"*
  - "I think she's most qualified of any that has run recently for vice president, tell you the truth." --on Sarah Palin, interview with Don Imus, Oct. 22, 2008
- *"Were you right or wrong, Senator?"*
  - "[Sarah Palin] knows more about energy than probably anyone else in the United States of America. ... And, uh, she also happens to represent, be governor of a state

that's right next to Russia." --after being asked about Sarah Palin's foreign policy experience, interview with WCSH-6, Portland, OR, Sept. 12, 2008

- *"Were you right or wrong, Senator?"*
    - "I also know, if I might remind you, that [Palin] is commander of the Alaska National Guard. In fact, you may know that on Sept. 11 a large contingent of the Alaska Guard deployed to Iraq and her son happened to be one of them. So I think she understands our national security challenges." touting Sarah Palin's foreign policy credentials, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Sept. 17, 2008

- *"Were you right or wrong, Senator?"*

    - "My friends, we've got them just where we want them." on Barack Obama and the state of the presidential campaign, Virginia Beach, Virginia, Oct. 13, 2008