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Double Standards

by **Janet Jagan**

Reuter's news service recently reported on a Congressional hearing in Washington DC dealing with a Center for Public Integrity report which accuses the Bush administration of making 935 false statements about the invasion of Iraq. One of the members of the congressional panel accused US Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice of making 56 false statements to the American people about the charge that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction. Her reply was that she did not, at any time, make a statement that she knew to be false.'

Rice was national security adviser in the Bush administration at the time of the invasion of Iraq in March 2003. I am not as smart or as well educated or ever held such a prestigious position as Condoleeza Rice, but I knew and wrote in this column three months before the invasion of Iraq that there was no evidence of either weapons of mass destruction or ties with bin Laden, the two facts that Bush said caused him to declare war on Iraq.

However, don't construe the previous statement with self praise. What I knew, millions of other people in various parts of the world already knew. Hans Blix and his team of weapons inspectors had been sent to Iraq months before by the UN and could find no trace of any weapons of mass destruction. However, that did not stop the USA from its massive military build-up in the Gulf region long before the invasion.

In the latter part of January 2003, two months before the US invasion of Iraq there were strong demonstrations in many countries, including the USA, against any US invasion of Iraq. Hans Blix and his team of weapon inspectors kept calling for more time to complete their weapons inspection in Iraq. But, as we all know, Bush and his team in the White House couldn't wait another minute and rushed into the most disastrous war in US history, even worse than Vietnam.

There is no doubt about the indisputable fact that President Bush lied to the joint session of Congress when he declared war. It is now a proven fact that even the White House no longer denies, that there were no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq and that Saddam Hoosein had no contact with bin Laden.

What does a country do when its President is caught lying? Well, when President Bill Clinton lied about his affair with a woman, he was impeached. If the impeachment process found him guilty of a serious offence against the State, he would be removed as President. As we know the impeachment proceedings failed to find Mr Clinton guilty.

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Compare the nonsense of that impeachment trial with US history and with the present situation. What Clinton did was no worse than what some well known and respected US presidents before him did, and no one uttered a squeak. President F.D. Roosevelt, much beloved by those who lived in his time and after, died in the arms of the woman he loved, not his wife Eleanor.

President John F. Kennedy was not only a notorious womanizer – it is said that the number of girlfriends he had are uncountable – was left to do what he wanted to do untroubled by the media. (Our local media could keep that in mind)

Yet President Bush whose lies have caused the deaths and terrible injuries to thousands of US soldiers and tens of thousands of Iraqis and the exodus of millions of Iraqis is untouched. When one compares his lies with those of former President Bill Clinton, one can only wonder at the double standards that exist in the USA. After all, Clinton did what tens of thousands of American men do who cheat on their wives – when confronted with the truth, he denied it. No one says that is excusable, but it surely was not an offence that called for impeachment. Why the different standards used on these two presidents? A lot has to do with the inner workings in Washington – the real rulers of America! The local bloodhounds who bark about the lack of democracy in Guyana should take a closer look at the grandfather of all democracies – the USA!

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