

WHEN MCCAIN SAYS “VICTORY” IN IRAQ, IS HE LYING ABOUT THAT, TOO?

It's now apparent that the McPalin campaign will lie about anything: earmarks, foreign travel, crowd size, even who paid for Meghan's Prius. As the Obama campaign asked today, "is there anything the McCain campaign isn't lying about?"

Is it possible that McCain's bravado about how well Iraq is going is all a lie, too? According to Bob Woodward, that may well be the case.

Woodward's latest book about the Iraq war, "The War Within," portrays McCain as offering a rosy assessment to the public about the surge's progress while privately telling U.S. officials he thought the country was on the brink of losing the war.

The book describes McCain's press conference after visiting the Shorja market in Baghdad in early April of 2007. After touring the market – protected by more than 100 soldiers – McCain said, "Things are getting better in Iraq, and I am pleased with the progress that has been made."

McCain was widely mocked for those statements later after television crews showed the level of protection surrounding him at the market.

But what was not known at the time was how different his private assessment of the war was.

According to Woodward, McCain was invited to visit with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice after he publicly made the positive comments at the market. "Rice had expected him to reiterate his

optimism, but after some pleasantries, he let loose," Woodward writes.

"We may be about to lose the second war in my lifetime," Woodward quotes McCain as saying to Rice. Woodward writes that McCain "launched into a full-throated critique of the State Department's role" in the war effort. [my emphasis]

Now, after the WaPo published this story this morning, the McCain campaign issued a rebuttal.

McCain campaign senior advisor Mark Salter sought to clarify McCain's position Saturday afternoon. "Senator McCain returned from Iraq and met with Secretary Rice to discuss the concerns of U.S. officials in Iraq that the personnel the State Department had sent to Iraq were too few and too junior," he said. "He expressed to Secretary Rice the same opinion of the surge's prospects he had expressed in public. It would be tough, but it was the last and only chance for the U.S. to succeed in Iraq."

Of course, given the McCain campaign's pathological inability to tell the truth, there's no reason to believe Salter's refutation in any case. But note what Salter didn't do: fundamentally challenge the story that McCain "let loose" with Condi.

Remember—Woodward has been known to tape important interviews.