

# 10 YEARS LATER, INFORMATION ASYMMETRY COULD LAUNCH ANOTHER WAR

Ten years ago, the Bush Administration was planning the last details of the new product announcement it would roll out in September, a new product announcement that would lead to an expensive, illegal war that killed hundreds of thousands of Iraqis.

A key part of that product rollout was the manipulation of information asymmetry: the leaking of out-of-context classified information to Judy Miller. After she published it on the front page of the NYT, the warmongers pointed back to it as the complete truth. Yet because the information was classified—because it was illegal for experts to counter the claims made by Judy’s sources—the other side barely came out. It wasn’t until well into the war that enough of the Iraq NIE was declassified to reveal that the warmongers had presented a completely imbalanced picture of Iraq’s WMD program and that dissenters had rightly debunked some of the warmongers claims.

Which is worth remembering as you read this piece from Jeffrey Lewis (of ArmsControlWonk fame). While I think Jim would have issue with some of the claims Lewis makes on technical grounds, but Lewis addresses recent Israeli claims about new intelligence on Iran’s nuke program to argue for reading NIEs and other WMD intelligence with some nuance (you can click through to read his nuanced take, both on the 2007 Iran NIE and the purportedly new piece of intelligence). But one of several reasons why we’re not getting that nuance, Lewis argues, is because Congress and others are cracking down on responsible, nuanced communication.

Unfortunately, the White House’s

concerted campaign to criminalize national security discourse has prevented officials from discussing the estimate with journalists, allowing the most alarmist conjecture to dominate public debate.

Among other things, DiFi has proposed curtailing background briefings that could provide the kind of nuanced reading Lewis speculates at here. In addition, DOD has reportedly made a top secret request for staffers to identify whether they've spoken with one of the journalists who has covered this issue most closely (for better and worse), David Sanger.

In short, even assuming the leak witch hunts are in good faith, they may well bring us to war just as surely as the leaks to Judy Miller did a decade ago.

Apparently, we haven't even figured out how to avoid being snookered into war by AI cutouts.