



**Traprock Peace Center**

103A Keets Road, Deerfield, MA 01342 (413) 773-7427 [www.traprockpeace.org](http://www.traprockpeace.org)

*Together We Explore Nonviolence, Foster Community, Work to end war, Promote Communication & Take Initiatives on Environmental and Justice issues*

Traprock Home Page - <http://traprockpeace.org>

See Traprock's previous work with Scott Ritter -  
<http://traprockpeace.org/rittercampaign.html>

See also Index of Glen Rangwala's analyses of WMD claims about Iraq-  
<http://traprockpeace.org/glenrangwalaindex.html>

And see the audio source of the following transcript -  
<http://traprockpeace.org/audio/ritter.mp3>

## International Press Conference

with **Scott Ritter**,

former Officer of the US Marines and UNSCOM Weapons Inspector in Iraq

hosted and organized by [Traprock Peace Center](http://www.traprockpeace.org)

Deerfield, MA

July 9, 2003

Participating Press: Bob Paquette, WFCR public radio new director and Diane Broncaccio of the Greenfield Recorder were on site. Kimiko Aoki, Japanese Public Broadcasting; Andrew Stelzer, KBOO, Portland, OR; Adrian Glamorgan, a writer in Australia; Mike Zmolek, <http://www.endthewar.org> in D.C.; Michael Rivaro, <http://www.WhatReallyHappened.org> in Hawaii; with a question forwarded by Judith Monachina, The Advocate, Lenox and North Adams, MA. Sunny Miller, Executive Director, Traprock Peace Center, served as Moderator.

Miller: Here we are at Traprock Peace Center in Deerfield, MA. We are very honored to have Scott Ritter as our guest. We've done several programs with Scott throughout the northeast and the mid-west, bringing him to Indianapolis, Wichita, Baltimore, and happily he's gone on to many other locations. We're very pleased you could join us, Scott, for our conference call and press conference today, which is from Australia to

Hawaii. We'd like to begin just with a brief introduction if you would, to your long history in Iraq from 1991 to 1998, and I know that there are references to this at our web site, traprockpeace.org. We invite you to see Scott's work there. Scott, can you just give us that brief history, please, for background?

Ritter: Well, I guess my experience in Iraq dates back to even prior to the weapons inspection issue. I was an active duty Marine Corps officer who participated in the first war with Iraq, Operation Desert Storm. In September, 1991, I was invited by the United Nations to join the weapons inspection process and to serve as a weapons inspector on 52 inspections from 1991 until August, 1998, 14 of those as Chief Inspector.

Miller: Wonderful. We've heard your analysis of the situation in Iraq and seen that you have a great understanding of the many characters and the whole range of intelligence gathered during the weapons inspection process. I think it gives you a unique perspective on the weapons production, the weapons destruction, and the weapons use during this entire decade past. I guess I'd like to begin with my first question, which is historically based, and it is what was the point at which weapons inspections ceased, and why did it cease in 1998?

Ritter: Weapons inspections from the standpoint of total activity ceasing in Iraq was in mid December, 1998 because the executive chairman of the weapons inspection process, Richard Butler, ordered the weapons inspectors to leave Iraq on the eve of a military campaign, Operation Desert Fox, which was mounted by the United States and Great Britain without Security Council sanction, meaning that it was an illegitimate activity from the standpoint of international law. Richard Butler ordered the inspectors out because he was told by the United States; he received a phone call from Peter Burleigh, who was the deputy ambassador of the United States to the United Nations. Peter Burleigh said, 'we will be beginning these air strikes, and you need to get your inspectors out,' and Richard Butler did so without going to the Security Council for permission, so the widely held conception, in this case misconception, that Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi government kicked the inspectors out, is patently false. They were ordered out by Richard Butler at the behest of the United States government without any sanction of the United Nations Security Council.

Miller: Thank you for that clarity. I wonder, are there other major misperceptions that still prevail regarding the historic weapons inspection process?

Ritter: I think the big thing that people have to take into account when

you consider the disarmament process isn't just that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction. I find it curious that today we have the Bush administration and the Blair government saying 'why are these people saying these weapons don't exist? Of course they existed.' Well, no one is making the claim that these weapons never existed. I'm stating right now, they existed. That's why the weapons inspectors went to Iraq in 1991, to disarm Iraq in accordance with the mandate, the resolutions passed by the Security Council. No one's trying to say that Iraq was the perfect host for the inspectors. We know that, in 1991, Iraq chose to retain more than 50% of their Weapons of Mass Destruction capability in violation of Security Council resolutions. We know that Iraq had an active program of deceiving the inspectors, concealing this material. No one's making the case that Iraq is not culpable in violating the law. Of course they are. But what I am saying is that, if you're going to hold Iraq accountable for the rule of law, as you should, and I have been a proponent of this from the very beginning, never once did I say, 'let Iraq off the hook.' I have always said that Iraq must abide by its obligation to disarm. But if you're going to hold Iraq accountable, you also have to ensure that those who are holding Iraq accountable, i.e. the weapons inspectors, likewise operate within the framework of the law, meaning that the job of the inspectors is to disarm Iraq. The inspectors work for the Security Council. The Council's 15 members consist of ten rotating members and five permanent members, and the true power of the council resides in these five permanent members. When you have two out of the five permanent members of the Security Council who voted for the resolutions calling for disarmament at the same time embarking on unilateral policies of regime removal, eliminating Saddam Hussein, there is no Security Council mandate for the elimination of Saddam Hussein. Indeed, regime removal by itself is an act which is prohibited under the charter of the United Nations, and the United States and Great Britain are signatories to this charter. I'm not too up-to-speed on British law, but I do know the constitution of the United States, and Article VI is quite clear. When the United States enters into a treaty or an international commitment that has been ratified by 2/3 of the United States Senate, that is the law of the land here in America. We signed the United Nations charter. Therefore, we should abide by our undertakings, and, yet, since 1991, the United States has maintained a policy in regards to Iraq of regime removal, elimination of Saddam Hussein. Now I'm not here to defend Saddam Hussein. He's a brutal, tyrannical dictator, and I think, you know, the world should rejoice that this man is no longer able to torture the citizens of Iraq, but the question is, is it the role of the United States of America to get rid of Saddam Hussein? And when the United States votes for a resolution calling for the disarmament of Iraq, empowers weapons inspectors to go into Iraq to implement this mandate, and still carries on an illegal

policy of regime removal that uses the inspection process for the purpose of gathering information that facilitates regime removal, it's the United States that has corrupted the integrity of the process of investigation, and this is what people need to realize. The facts are clear. By 1996, this isn't speculation. It's documented fact in the documents possessed by the weapons inspectors. 90-95% of Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction capability was eliminated. There is no debate about this. The remaining 5-10% we don't know what the final disposition of this material is. It doesn't mean Iraq retains it. In fact, we have no evidence of Iraq retaining it, none whatsoever. We monitor the totality of Iraq's industrial infrastructure, and never once did we detect any evidence of either retained capability, prohibited capability or reconstituted prohibited capability. We couldn't account, for instance, for all the anthrax that Iraq produced, but, you know, we don't need to account for it because science takes care of it. Iraq produced liquid bulk anthrax. Liquid bulk anthrax has a shelf life of three years under ideal storage conditions. The last known batch of liquid bulk anthrax came out of the Al-Kahim state establishment in 1991. We blew the establishment up in 1996, together with its production equipment, so in 2002-2003, with the Bush administration saying that Iraq potentially could have 25000 liters of Anthrax, that's garbage. They never produced 25,000 liters. They produced 8.9 thousand liters. They had the potential of producing 25,000 liters, and they couldn't document what happened to everything, so we assume a potential production of 25,000 liters, but no matter how much they produced, it isn't viable today. The same holds true of chemical weapons. Their chemical weapons deteriorate rapidly. The VX Nerve Agent that everybody's worried about loses its viability in a period of 1-8 days after production. I'll say it again for those who might be hard of hearing; one to eight days. So, unless you have an on-going process of producing VX nerve agent, and this isn't something that's done in a basement or a cave, it's done in a modern industrial facility that's easily detectable (and the inspectors never detected this), you can't have a VX capability, and, yet, the Bush administration claimed that there was. So the point I try to make is when inspectors showed up at a facility after 1996, and I led the bulk of these inspections that ran into the confrontations, a lot of people would assume that, when the Iraqis obstructed the work of the inspectors, it's because they were hiding Weapons of Mass Destruction. Not so. 98% of the inspections run by the weapons inspection team from 1996 through 1998 got the full cooperation of the Iraqi government. A very small percentage, primarily the ones I led, were obstructed. Why? Because we were going to sites that were affiliated with Presidential security, Presidential palaces, and intelligence services. The Iraqis obstructed us not because they were hiding weapons. I'm here to tell you, as the person who planned these inspections; we never thought weapons were there. We were looking

for the potential of documentation that might help us clear up outstanding questions as to what the final disposition of material was. We weren't looking for weapons, so when they blocked us, you can't just jump to the conclusion that there were weapons in there. Why did they block us? Because Scott Ritter, a former intelligence officer with the United States marine corps, was leading a team that was stock to the gills with CIA operators, with British intelligence operators, people from the intelligence services of two nations sworn to remove Saddam Hussein in violation of international law. And the Iraqis didn't totally block us. They just said, 'we want to know why you want to come to these sites. What guarantees can you give us that the information you gather at these sites won't be use to go after our President?' And, you know, no matter how many times I told them, 'trust me, I work for the United Nations,' they were misled, not by me directly but by my authorities. Because when the United States bombed Iraq in December, 1998, of the 112 targets struck, 96 were intelligence targets related to the security of Saddam Hussein. They were derived solely from the inspection process. And I think people need to understand that. When President Bush says that the Iraqis have a record of obstructing inspections, no. The United States has a record of using the inspection process for purposes other than that mandated by the Security Council. I'm not trying to get Iraq off the hook. I believe the weapons inspectors should have been given a chance to do their job. But when you speak of going to war with Iraq because of a threat posed to the security of the United States of America, you simply can't back that up with anything that is derived from the inspection experience.

Miller: Thank you so much. You're listening to Scott Ritter at Traprock Peace Center, and online we have many questioners, many reporters from Australia to Hawaii and Tampa, Florida, I believe. Let's take one more question of a historic level. Is anyone there online ready with a question on the deep history of weapons inspections? ... Scott, I want to know, in the history of weapons inspection, you worked on weapons inspection in the Soviet Union as well, Russia, and you've worked extensively in Iraq, and you've been looking at the corruption of the process. I see this as a moment in history when we need to make a clear choice between disarmament and war. You seem to be saying that disarmament works. What's your view of how well war has worked and how well disarmament has worked historically?

Ritter: In order to answer that question, let's go back to the concept of war. Why do we have a United Nations? The purpose of the United Nations is to prevent war, to put in place a framework of law so that the international community wouldn't fall in on a suicidal path of self-destruction similar to what we experienced in World War II. The charter

doesn't reject war. It says that we understand that there's a real world out there, and you can be attacked, and you need to defend yourself, and we have a concept of collective security. But the whole concept of the United Nations and the rule of law is to prevent what happened in the Second World War. The United Nations charter forswears war is a means of resolving disputes between nations. So anybody who says that war is the ideal method for disarming a potential threat is saying that the United Nations is no longer a viable concept, that the concept of international law serving as a brake towards nations fighting one another, is no longer a viable concept. I reject that. I think that, as a man who has spent a considerable time in the military, twelve years as an active duty officer, who has fought in a war for my country, war is not an option. Anybody who thinks that war is a viable option has never been to war. Unfortunately, most of the people who populate the upper echelons of the Bush administration have never been to war. Most of them never wore a uniform of the United States of America. Yet, they feel free to commit their citizens to the horrors of war. No, disarmament carried out through a process of law, a process of treaties, is the best option. Now, it's tricky. Some people will say, 'you know, the only way you can be absolutely certain that Iraq has disarmed is if you go in, eliminate Saddam Hussein, put in place a government that is to our liking, one that obeys us, then we'll have certainty of knowledge.' Do you think we have certainty of knowledge in Baghdad today? Do you think we know anything that's going on outside the areas that American troops physically occupy? No. Iraq is chaos. Iraq is anarchy. That's not stability. To have disarmament, you need stability. Again, I'm not condoning the regime of Saddam Hussein, but I am saying that, from the standpoint of disarmament, we fundamentally disarmed the Iraqi regime by 1996. There is nothing left. One of the reasons why we're not finding weapons in Iraq today is because there are no weapons in Iraq to find. They were simply eliminated by the weapons inspectors. So disarmament does work, but it doesn't work unless it's backed up by a framework of law, and one of the things that we see arising out of this war is that the United States, by invading Iraq without the mandate of the Council, basically shredded international law, shredded the viability of the United Nations, destroyed the concept of multilateral, treaty-based disarmament. We now live in a world that is ruled by anarchy. The same anarchy that you see taking place in Iraq will spread globally if there isn't something put in place to stop it, and that something isn't the unilateral power of the United States of America. That something must be something that the entire world recognizes, like the United Nations, the charter of the United Nations. So it's imperative that we re-embrace the charter. The United Nations is an organization that has significant flaws. I'm not saying it's perfect. I'm not saying the charter's perfect. The charter was written in 1945. Maybe it needs to be updated to reflect new

realities, such as the harmful effect of five nations possessing vetoes, have on national stability. Maybe the United States, Great Britain, Russia, France, and China shouldn't have the ability to dictate to the world how they live, how they interact. Maybe that needs to be looked at. I don't know, but I do know this. As long as we have an international community that is dedicated to the concept of avoiding global conflict, it's going to be very difficult to have global conflict. Remove that, and you're going to see global conflict, and this war on terror that President Bush is currently waging is nothing more than global conflict.

Miller: Thank you for your broad perspective, as usual, with great depth of detail to back it up. I want to ask now from Mike from Hawaii, Mike Rivero with [whatreallyhappened.com](http://whatreallyhappened.com), are you ready with a question? We'll open up to any of your concerns now.

Rivero: The editorial take on my web site is that the Constitution of the United States does not exclusively grant the right of any of our political leaders to lie to the people and to use deceptions, and I realize historically this has always happened, but we are dealing with a situation in which the American public is finally having to confront the fact that our leadership actually did use lies and deception to try and create a war, and the issue is no longer, from my point of view, whether Iraq has any Weapons of Mass Destruction left to be found. The point is that, at the point that Bush stood up at the State of the Union speech and claimed to have proof that Saddam was in violation of UN resolutions regarding disarmament, that he did not, in fact, had that proof, and the same would have to apply to Collin Powell when he presented to the United Nations, claiming to have proof of such weapons, that he did not, in fact, have that proof, and, ultimately, I think the American people are still emotionally, as it were, coming to grips with that reality, that our President has been caught in a bull-faced lie and deception, and all the pretty little euphemisms the mainstream media is using right now really cannot dilute that. That's what we're dealing with. We're dealing with an absolute lie, and I don't know what Scott's reaction to that was.

Ritter: First of all, I agree totally that we are dealing with the concept of an absolute lie. The question is, what do we, the people of the United States of America, do about this? There's a difference between a politician coming out and saying "I promise not to raise taxes" and raise taxes. You can't say that that's an absolute lie. You can say that he maybe misled, but it's politics as usual. It's not something I would condone; I think we have to hold our elected officials accountable for what they do in our name, but politics is a funny business, and I

think people have become used to the concept of the shading of the truth. We're talking about a fundamental issue here. We're talking about the defense of the nation. We're talking about putting the lives of American service members at risk. We're talking about putting the security of our country at risk. So we have to up this to a different plain. We have to separate this from politics as usual. Now the Constitution is something that's interpreted by the legal system of the United States of America. The final arbiters are the Supreme Court, and the Supreme Court has pretty much said through a series of precedents, not necessarily in the court but through various lower courts, that it's not the prerogative of the judiciary to interfere in matters pertaining to foreign policy and national security, that that is a matter between the executive branch, legislative branch, and the people. However, what I would say is this. The Constitution is very clear about certain terminology. For instance, they speak of high crimes and misdemeanors. Those are words used to describe things that can be used to justify the impeachment of the President of the United States. We're all very familiar with these words because the President prior to Bush was impeached; Bill Clinton, for high crimes and misdemeanors involving his refusal or his inability to tell the truth to a grand jury. Now he lied about other issues, issues that didn't deal with national security. President Bush, by standing before the American people during the State of the Union address and telling them that Iraq posed a threat to the security of the United States because it was seeking to restart a nuclear weapons program and that part of the evidence used to sustain this, intelligence from Great Britain that shows that Iraq was trying to procure uranium from Niger, he lied. Now this isn't a matter of him saying, 'I thought it was true at the time.' We now know that everybody in the intelligence community knew this to be false. We know that the Vice President's office sent somebody to Africa to investigate, and that finding was sent back to the Vice President. The President lied. Now, a government official lied in the conduct of carrying out the responsibilities of his office. That's fraud, and fraud, under federal statutes, is a felony. And felony is a perfect definition of high crime and misdemeanor. So the President has committed an impeachable offense. Now are we going to impeach the President? I don't know at this point in time. Not when you have a Republican-dominated senate. Not when you have a Republican-dominated congress. Not when you have a media that is as culpable as our elected representatives in sustaining the mythology of the Iraqi threat in the lead up to the war. Remember, the media is to blame as much as anybody else for feeding the lies that the government told to the American public. The media never once stood up and questioned the President and his administration in a meaningful fashion in their build-up to this war. So the media is culpable. So don't wait for the media to do the right thing. Ultimately, we've got to go back on

what America is about. You know that Constitution we all speak about so proudly begins, "we, the people of the United States of America," and the Supreme Court has found, in looking at the constitution, that it is the people's Constitution. It is a document of the people. The people have to hold the President accountable if we are to sustain the reality that we are a democratic Republic. There must be an accounting. If we can't impeach the President, and I believe that he has committed an impeachable offense, one greater in terms of the scope and scale of what he's done than anything Bill Clinton ever did, but if we can't impeach the President, then we darn sure can make sure that he doesn't have the honor and privilege of representing the people of the United States of America after November, 2004, and he can be voted out of office. Either way, the lie that this man and his administration have told must be explained to the American people. They must know the truth, and we must, by being exposed to the truth, be given the opportunity to act on the truth. The plain fact is the President told a lie, but not just about the uranium in Africa, but about every aspect. Donald Rumsfeld just came out and said, 'you know, we didn't have any new intelligence on Iraq.' He's all but admitted. The British defense department has come out and said the same thing: 'we don't have anything new about Iraq that dates after 1995-1996.' What he said is 'what we've done is in post September 11, we have re-evaluated this information, this old information, through a new prism, a new prism of reality,' which is, what, what reality? That Al-Qaeda attacked the United States? What link is there between Iraq and Al-Qaeda? None whatsoever. It hasn't been sustained. What's the other prism of reality? That September 11 was used by the Bush administration to facilitate implementation of a national security strategy of global hegemony, global domination. That's the reality. So we now have the Secretary of Defense all but admitting that he lied to the American people, because he's the one who said he knows, he has bulletproof evidence that Iraq has weapons. And, yet, now he's saying, no, that evidence wasn't really that bulletproof; it dates back from 1995. We're just looking at it through a new prism. But the new prism is a very politically charged prism that has nothing to do with the legitimate national security interests of the United States of America or any real threat posed to the security of the United States of America and everything to do with implementing a neo-conservative agenda of American domination of the world.

Miller: I'm afraid that involves great economic benefit as well. I'd like to ask a follow-up question on behalf of Judith at The Advocate in North Adams. She asks, "in what way can people effectively communicate their concern about unnecessary wars and the incredible pace of new arms manufacturing, with its going on?"

Ritter: The best way is at the election booth. But you need to understand that, if you wait until November when you step into that booth, you're going to be given a range of options that you may not have any control over. So take control of the Democratic process now. Select who you want to represent you. Make sure that, when you step into the election booth, that there's a name up there that you believe in, that you support. Democracy is a 24-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week, 365-day-a-year job. It's not something that happens once on an election day. Democracy is a full-time job. Be a citizen, not a consumer. A citizen is somebody who is actively engaged in their community, whether it be a local community, a county community, a state community, or the national community, or the global community, but be a citizen. Educate yourself. Educate others. It's not an easy task. It's a full-time job. But no one said democracy is going to be easy. If you don't want to participate in democracy, understand the risk. Others will. And what happens when you have a great majority of American withdraw from the Democratic process? You no longer have a democracy. You have an oligarchy where power is concentrated in the hands of a few. And that, sadly, is what we have in America today. We have a power elite that's stepped into the vacuum created by the apathy of the general American populace. Look at how many Americans participate in the American process, how many people went out and actually pulled a lever last election? 36-37% of eligible voters or registered voters. That's not democracy. The people that did vote, the results aren't reflective of the overall population's input. What you get now is a heavy influence of corporate funding, corporate money, corporations' money buys the candidate, unions' money buys the candidates, special interests buy the candidates. That's oligarchy, and when you combine oligarchy with what's happening in the post-9/11 America, you get a slide towards fascism, and that's a rough word to use, but what is fascism? Benito Mussolini, the father of fascism, said that fascism is about rejection of pacifism. Well, look at what the Bush administration and the Neo-cons have done. They've attacked the peace movement. They've attacked anybody who proposes an alternative other than war. Why? Because, according to the proponents of fascism, the only way that a nation shows its virility as a nation is through war and the warlike spirit, and a fascist government is a confluence of corporate interests and national interests, national interests which are concentrated in the hands of a few, an oligarchy who perpetrate perpetual warfare. And that's what we have right now; perpetual warfare. We're at war everywhere. We have a war on terror. We have a Homeland Security department that has a national mood ring that the President and his national advisors can upper and lower whenever they want to. They don't even have to explain why they're doing it. We're at yellow. We're at orange. We're at red. We can go any direction. The people don't know what's going on. They're just told to be afraid. Why do they want them

fearful? Because fear, combined with ignorance, creates an environment in which the President can sell the lies that he's already sold the American people and the lies he's going to sell to the American people down the road. There are four words that the American people need to familiar themselves with: democracy, republic, oligarchy, fascism. We're supposed to live in a democratic republic. We don't. We live in an oligarchy, and we're sliding towards fascism, so what can the people do? Reinvigorate the concept of representative government. Make sure that you get the right people in office. Make sure that you participate in the electoral process. Make sure that, when you put somebody in office, you hold him or her accountable for what they do in your name.

Miller: I'd like to ask if Andrew Seltzer is online from KBOO in Oregon. Andrew, do you have a question?

Stelzer: Mr. Ritter, I've been reading that you voted for President Bush in the last election, and now your sentiment seems to be not very supportive of President Bush, so what could we possibly learn from you changing the electorate's point of view using the information, you know, the changing, expanding internet media. Maybe your personal experience could shed some light on how some constructive solutions to changing who gets elected happen.

Ritter: I have to say right up front that my background is that of a Marine Corps officer and a weapons inspector with the United Nations. I'm not a political activist. I'm not somebody who's running for office or has ever participated in supporting the campaign of someone who is running for office. I voted for President Bush in a way that I think many Americans vote for many candidates. I was given two options: Bush or Gore. I didn't participate in the lead-up to that election. I didn't sit there and say, 'is there another alternative?' In November, I was given two choices: Bush or Gore. Now as a weapons inspector who had spent time in Iraq under the Clinton-Gore years, I knew the feeling of betrayal, having had a President tell me that they were going to support the inspection process 100%, so I go into Iraq with a team of inspectors. We put our lives on the line. We have guns put to our head. We have our lives threatened. And then we are abandoned by Clinton and Gore. So there was no way I was voting for Gore, not because I studied the issues, not because I was intimately familiar with his entire platform, but because I had a gun put to my head, and Gore told me he'd back me up, and he didn't, so he's a liar ... I took it very personal. I voted for Bush for very shallow reasons. He wasn't Gore. I voted for Bush because he's someone who said that he was a compassionate conservative. Those words sounded pretty neat to me. I like the concept of compassionate conservatism. I don't know exactly what it meant, but

it sounded good. He ... told me that nation building wasn't what the United States was about, that we weren't going to get involved in that kind of activity around the world. I liked that idea. He said that we would exercise the power we had with humility. We would be humble in the exercise of power. I liked that idea. And then I found out after he was elected that he lied, just like Clinton and Gore did, and I took it personally. I voted for this guy, and I realized that, man, I don't even know anything about this guy who I voted for. What is it about President Bush that makes him tick? And the more I studied, the more I empowered myself with knowledge and information, the more I realized that I had made a mistake. And now here's the other part of democracy ..., if you voted for somebody and you find out that they misled you, you found out you made a mistake, there has to be accountability. There has to be holding that person accountable. You can't have democracy without that. We don't vote into power absolute dictators. We vote into power representatives of the people. The President is the representative of the people. Therefore, he must be held accountable. And on issues of Weapons of Mass Destruction, I'm not one who can hold the President accountable for his economic policies. I'm not an economist. I mean, I know generally speaking that the economy is doing well because TV tells me it's doing badly or not so badly. But on weapons issues, on war with Iraq, I'm already empowered with the information. I'm probably one of the leading experts on Iraq. I'm not saying that from a standpoint of bragging. It's just a statement of fact. So when I hear the President say things about Iraq that I know to be false, I have no choice but to speak out. And I think that, if all Americans who were truly experts behaved as I tried to behave in regards to Weapons of Mass Destruction, when we have people hear the President speak of health care, let's get the experts on health care have the courage to come forward and say no. It's up to the American people to empower themselves with knowledge so they can differentiate between true experts and political ideologues, those who will come out and support a President's position for purely political reasons. The key thing here is education. Now you're not going to get it from the media. Sadly, the mainstream media today is corporate controlled, and the corporations, let's take a look at their political donations. They tend to split their money almost evenly between the Republican Party and the Democratic Party. So don't think by voting Democrat you're certainly freeing yourself from corporate influence. You're not. You need to get proper information. This is where the Internet comes in to play, especially in this day and age. The Internet is a very useful vehicle for gathering information that you're not going to get on mainstream media, but you have to be careful about the Internet because there is no quality control filter there. You're totally dependent upon those who post the information to filter out bad information, filter out stuff that isn't true, and to put into position

stuff that is accurate. You don't know who the Webmaster is. You don't know what their political preferences are. The bottom line is it's going to come down to your gut feeling. Is this right, or is this wrong? Do you feel this is representative of what America should stand for, what your own personal vision of what America should be? And if you agree with it, support it. If you don't agree with it, do something to change it.

Miller: Thank you. We have about four or five other callers on the line, and we're going to be shortening our questions and answers here to accommodate everyone. ... From the Japanese public broadcasting, we're joined by Kimiko Aoki Do you have a question? I know that the U.S. imposed Article IX on Japan after World War II, and your military was constrained to only domestic defense issues. I wonder how all of this seems from your point of view and what question comes to mind for you.

Aoki: I would like to go back to the Weapons of Mass Destruction. It's rather going back on what maybe you've already concluded, but one question is, was there no information that is in any way credible or could have credibility that points to existence of the Weapons of Mass Destruction, either before or during the war, that came out that you see, Mr. Ritter? Secondly, have you ever either called upon or had the chance to volunteer your expertise, either in congress or any public venue, that would contribute to the policy of the administration, either, before, during, or after the war?

Ritter: Well, first of all, when you say, 'was there any information existing that might point to credible information, that might point to the fact that Iraq had weapons,' yes, I ran intelligence programs for the weapons inspections team from 1991 to 1998, and, as I testified before congress, I had a full stack full of leads that I was investigating. But those leads don't constitute proof. Those leads constitute suspicions. And I need to do investigating to put those suspicions aside. But none of these leads represented hard, factually based evidence that showed Iraq was in violation. Indeed, all the facts we had showed that Iraq was actually cooperating, that Iraq was disarming, but we had a history of non-cooperation that made us want to investigate every lead possible to make sure that we've exhausted every potential for Iraqi non-compliance before we passed a finding of compliance. Let's take a look at what's coming out of Iraq today. They're not finding any weapons programs. They're not finding anything at all. And even these nuclear parts that come out of a rose garden in the front yard of some Iraqi scientist, that story falls apart under close scrutiny. How do I know? I lead the investigation into Madi Ubadi. I spent dozens of hours interrogating this man and going to these sites, and, as I've told CNN, their story

just doesn't hold up under anything that closely resembles close scrutiny, but CNN refuses to go on air with that. One of the problems that people have with me is that I have the facts. I have the facts at my fingertip. It isn't second-hand information or third-hand. It's first-hand information. There's not an Iraqi official who dealt with Weapons of Mass Destruction that I haven't personally interviewed, personally interrogated. I ran the intelligence program, so I'm familiar with every aspect of the Iraqi programs. This is why the United States congress doesn't want to call me forward, because I'd make a fool out of Senator Joe Biden. I'd make a fool out of Senator Kerry. I'd make a fool out of every one of these Senators who voted for the war. We tried, the Traprock Peace Center and myself, tried last summer to get a campaign forward, to get Kerry and Biden and others to invite myself and other dissenting voices to testify before congress. They refused to do so. Instead, they held a kangaroo court, a sham performance which had a pre-ordained outcome of guilt on the part of Iraq. The same holds true with the British government. I volunteered my services to go over to England and testify before the on-going investigation. They don't want to deal with me because they don't want to deal with the facts. Facts are a hard thing. They're there. You can't dismiss them once they're put on the table, so people would prefer not to put them on the table. So I will continue to do what I can as a private citizen to speak out in venues such as this and others to bring the facts to the American people so that they can make a decision for themselves.

Aoki: Are there any other inspectors that have been speaking up the same way?

Ritter: I think you're going to find more and more that inspectors are going to start coming out, and Hans Blix has had a change of heart, apparently, from the fence-sitting he did before the war. Now he's coming out and making statements that reflect the reality that he had no evidence Iraq retained Weapons of Mass Destruction. You've seen German inspectors. You've seen some French inspectors, some Swedish inspectors come out and speak out. Here in the United States, it is a very difficult thing for people to come out and speak out. You can incur the wrath of a very vengeful neoconservative movement, not just the government but an entire apparatus behind the government that, again, avoids the facts and seeks to distract by raising issues that are either fabrications or have nothing to do whatsoever with the matter pertaining, which is, does Iraq have Weapons of Mass Destruction, and was there justification to go to war. So I think anybody who has a modicum of sanity who has seen what has happened to me, for instance, for speaking out, would hesitate to come forward themselves, especially if they have a wife and kids who, as I've learned, pay as heavy or even heavier a price

for incurring the wrath of this neoconservative movement.

Miller: Thank you. And from Australia, we have a writer who was short-listed by the United Nations' association for the media peace prize, Adrian Glamorgan, do you have a question?

Glamorgan: Could you spell out a little bit about the Australian connection, particularly your opinions about what Richard Butler did that was wrong ... and where Australia is today in this whole process?

Ritter: I think we have to separate the two, between Richard Butler the person and the Australian government. Richard Butler was not the ideal pick by the Australian government to be the executive chairman. In fact, when Kofi Annan nominated him in 1997, the Australian government was ambivalent, to say the least. They finally acceded, but it wasn't as though the Australian government pulled Richard Butler forward. So I think you always have to recognize that there was a divergence between Richard Butler, the man, and the Australian government. Richard Butler was more influenced by the United States government when the American policies of regime removal than he was by any Australian policy. Indeed, from 1997 to 1998, what I found was that the Australian government was very supportive of the weapons inspection process and maintaining the credibility of the inspection process. They provided us with outstanding inspectors. Roger Hill, who is probably well known in Australia, was my deputy. I have tremendous respect for Roger Hill. The Australian government provided him. They provided many others who served the inspection process proudly. What did Richard Butler do wrong? He failed to implement the mandate of the United Nations. He works for the United Nations. He didn't work for the United States. And, yet, when given a choice of deciding whether or not he was going to be an objective, impartial implementer of Security Council mandate or somebody who did the bidding of the United States, he chose doing the bidding of the United States, and that is a fatal flaw in an international civil servant, which he was. He lied. He continued to lie after he resigned. This is a man who said he knows Iraq had these weapons. Not that Iraq could, or possibly, he said he knows from his position of executive chairman that Iraq retained these weapons. That's a boldface lie. There is no United Nations document that says Iraq has these weapons that's dated post-1995. I know because I helped draft these documents. They don't exist. And, yet, Richard Butler continued to testify up until December, 2002 to the United States congress that Iraq retained these weapons. That's a lie. That's what he did wrong. What did the Australian government do wrong? They forgot what it meant to be a member of the United Nations. They, and many other nations, fell victim to the pressure put on them by the United States government, who held out the false promise that, if you

cooperate with America, you have a major role to play in this new world order that President Bush is imposing on the world. That walk-away from the United Nations, that failed system of international law, and instead come and be with the force of good. That's what Australia did wrong. They blindly supported the Bush administration assertions. I mean, you're Prime Minister Howard is still doing this to this day. He claims that he's comfortable with the decision to go to war based on the presumption that Iraq had these Weapons of Mass Destruction. He shows no embarrassment that even his own intelligence services have distanced themselves from the finding. He's a pure political beast that serves one master, and that is the Bush administration, and if I were an Australian citizen, I would be insulted by having a representative who is supposed to represent the will of the people but instead does the bidding of the United States of America.

Miller: Thank you. ... And how about Mike Zmolak of the National Network to End the War against Iraq? Do you have a question, Mike?

Zmolak: Scott, I saw you on TV some time during the war when the U.S. troops were getting kind of bogged down in southern Iraq, and the media was making quite a big noise about your speech that I think you gave in Portugal, saying that the U.S. was going to be leaving Iraq with its tail between its legs, and I'm just wondering what the context of that statement was, whether you actually meant at the time that the U.S. was not actually going to take Baghdad and so forth or whether you were talking more about a long-term situation in which the U.S. occupation of Iraq would be a disaster.

Ritter: The statement I made was that the United States would be able to win every tactical invasion it fights, which means every time we go face-to-face with an Iraqi military threat, we will prevail. We will prevail on the outskirts of Baghdad, we will prevail in Baghdad, and we will prevail throughout Iraq. But we will lose the war. We will leave Iraq with our tail between our legs. The analogy that I've used many times is that Afghanistan and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, where they were able to successfully take Kabul, take the palace, take every major urban center in Afghanistan, and yet, after nearly ten years, they left Afghanistan with their tail between their legs. They got beat. Because war isn't simply a matter of putting troops on the ground and closing with and destroying the enemy through fire power maneuvering. War is an extension of politics. We have an objective in Iraq of liberating Iraq. You can't liberate a people that don't want to be liberated. Whatever honeymoon period we might have had in the aftermath of the demise of Saddam Hussein's regime has long since passed. The people that are resisting us in Iraq today are not only the supporters of Saddam Hussein

but also people who were in opposition to Saddam Hussein. We are a few moments away, whether you measure it in days, weeks, or a month, from the Shiite community, 60% of the population, rejecting the American occupation of Iraq and declaring a Fatwa or religious edict calling for a jihad. When we have 60% of the population turned against us, we're not going to be losing Americans at the rate of 1 or 2 a day. We're going to be losing at a rate of 5, 6, 10, 20 a day, and you can't win a war that's unwinnable. What is the purpose of this war? Is it to occupy Iraq? How long will the American people put up with this? We already see the public chafing at the bit about the fact that, although Bush declared war over on 1 May, we're still very much involved in on-going combat operations. Rumsfeld has said that we're going to be rotating troops out, not rotating occupation troops, rotating combat troops. We're going to withdraw the third division and put in another combat division. Why? Because we're still at war in Iraq. We haven't won this war. We're not going to win this war. And that is exactly what I meant by that statement.

Miller: Thank you. Diane Broncaccio of the Recorder here in Greenfield. Do you have a question, Diane?

Broncaccio: Given what you mentioned about the Republican-dominated congress and the unlikelihood of an impeachment, is there anything that the United Nations can do, because, after all, the U.S. has sort of violated the charter about regime change and maybe misled the U.N. and the need for what they've done, so what clout does the U.N. have to take a different action?

Ritter: The U.N. has already missed its window of opportunity. The U.N. has no clout whatsoever. The United Nations is a collection of sovereign states. It's a club, and the U.N. only works if all the members of the club agree to abide by the rules. Now, you can have a situation where one or more members say 'we don't agree' and violate the rules, and that's where the Security Council can determine whether or not that violation of the rules represents a threat to international peace and security and impose a Chapter 7 resolution which seeks to resolve this, but this requires a unanimous vote of the Security Council and no vetoes. So the Security Council isn't going to hold the United States accountable because the United States runs the Security Council. This is the fact that we have to face up to. As long as the United States maintains its current policy of global domination in total disregard to international law, the United Nations has no viability whatsoever. The United Nations can only be viable if the United States wants to be a meaningful member. And the analogy I like to have Americans reflect on is at the end of the Revolutionary War; George Washington was the head of

the continental army. He was a man who had just evicted the British, and a grateful continental army gave him the opportunity to be king of America. They said, 'the power is yours. One man be our king.' When George III, the king of England, heard of this, he said, 'if Washington rejects this, he's the greatest man in history.' And, you know, Washington did reject that. He stepped away from total power, and he gave power to the people, the people of America. Today, the United States has total power. There is not a nation or group of nations in the world that can match it, military or economically. And now we're at a decision that we, the people, have to make. Do we step forward and assume the mantle of absolute power, total domination of the globe in disregard to the United Nations, or do we step back and transfer this power to the global community? If we reject the power, we're the greatest nation the world's ever seen. We'll be the first nation to ever stand up to that test and pass it. If, as it appears we're going to do, we assume the mantle of absolute power, we're going to go down in history as just another empire, and all empires die of the same disease: indigestion. They try to consume the world, and the world consumes them. So the American people really do have a fundamental decision to make in November, 2004. Where do we go as a people?

Miller: We're just about to wrap up.. Bob Paquette, who is director of WFCR in Amherst, Massachusetts. Do you have a question?

Paquette: I have two. Very early on, you talked about 96 of the buildings that were bombed were part of the inspection process. In other words, part of the buildings that you were involved in inspecting. So do you come away from this feeling that you were aiding and abetting the bombing effort because of the work you were doing back then?

Ritter: That's a fair question. Again, let's go back to 91. The Iraqis lied. The Iraqis held on to weapons they weren't supposed to have. The Iraqis put in place a mechanism of concealment. I was brought in as an intelligence officer to break through that wall of concealment and find out where they were hiding the weapons. Get in to the United Nations phone book and look up the intelligence service of the United Nations, and you won't find it. So I was brought in to create a capability that the United Nations didn't have to sustain or support. The United Nations is a collection of member states. Therefore, it is totally correct for a United Nations organization to turn to member states for assistance. The best intelligence services in the world were turned to: the CIA, the GIA, the British MI6 (their defense intelligence), the Israeli intelligence services, French intelligence services, Russian intelligence services, German, Kuwaiti, Jordanian. I went to them all. I worked with them, and we gathered information. Now, remember, we're working in support of a

Security Council resolution that all these nations said they support. So when I go to the CIA with the permission of the United Nations, I'm entering into a relationship with the CIA. I'm doing it to support a resolution calling for the disarmament of Iraq. The CIA, however, has a different mandate. You see, since 1991, every President has signed a covert finding authorizing the CIA to use lethal means to remove Saddam Hussein from power. So the CIA is carrying out its own secret war, which is to get rid of Saddam Hussein. So the CIA supports me. I go into Iraq. I gather information. That information makes it back not because the CIA is stealing it from the inspectors; we're giving it to them. Why? Because we're engaged in a process of joint cooperation. They give me a lead, I investigate the lead, I bring the lead back, I sit down with their analysts, and we flush it out. I take away from that that which sustains disarmament. They take away from that that which sustains their policy. Was I used? Yes. Did I know I was being used? Yes. And that's why I fought the CIA from day 1. The CIA didn't want me to come in and create an independent intelligence organization. The CIA wanted to be the soul vehicle for passing U.S. intelligence to the United Nations. We were in a damned-if-you-do, damned-if-you-don't situation. If we walk away from the CIA, we walk away from the United States government, which means we lose our political base, and we can't work in Iraq without the U.S. government. All I could do is ensure that everything I was involved in, everything my inspectors were involved in, pertained to disarmament. It's up to the members of the United Nations; it's up to the members of the Security Council. I'm not there to police the Security Council. It's up to the members to police themselves. It's up to the United States to make sure that, when it says it supports a disarmament process, that is what it supports. That's why I am very critical of congress, for not stepping forward and saying, 'what is it we want to do in Iraq?' Congress supported a resolution to disarm. Then why does congress turn around and support a domestic resolution to remove Saddam Hussein from power? Congress, make up your mind. Where do you want to go? I can't make that decision. As a weapons inspector, I'm an implementer of the mandate of the Council. I did so in a fair, objective, and balanced fashion.

Paquette: What happens when the Bush administration eventually gets to the point of where it's been asked so many times about Weapons of Mass Destruction, 'where are they? Where are they?' that they finally turn and say, 'are the American people safer now than they were before Saddam Hussein was in power? Are the Iraqi people better off than they were when Saddam Hussein was in power?'

Ritter: Let's take that one step at a time. Are the American people better off today than they were when Saddam Hussein was under power?

During the period of non-violence, and, remember, we were always at war with Iraq. We bombed Iraq in the no-fly zones, etc. How many American troops came home in body bags? It's a simple question to ask. None. Americans are dying on almost a daily basis right now. Around the world, we are vilified. We are hated. We are engendering responses that will manifest themselves violently in the future. No, American is not safer today than we were before the invasion. We are at greater risk, because we've walked away. We are not only killing Americans. Remember, it's not Iraqis killing Americans. It's President Bush killing Americans. He put them in harm's way. This was an elective war. This wasn't a defensive war. This wasn't storming the beach at Omaha to go in and rid the world of Nazi Germany that declared war on us, or to go in to Okinawa and get rid of fascist Japan who bombed Pearl Harbor. This is an elective war. We chose to go to war. We aren't defending ourselves. We're waging an illegal war of aggression. So we're to blame for the deaths of not just Americans but Iraqis. And, remember, it's not just Iraqis who are dying as a result of this war. What about economic sanctions? Americans seem to have forgotten about economic sanctions. There were 1.5 million Iraqis who died during economic sanctions, and their families aren't forgetting it. Why did we starve these people to death? Why did we subject them to malnutrition and disease? Because Iraq had Weapons of Mass Destruction. That is what we used to sustain the economic sanctions. We now know that that was a lie. So who is to blame for the deaths of the Iraqi people? Not just the on-going deaths and the deaths that are going to occur in the future, but the ones in the past. 1.5 million. The blood is on the hands of the United States of America. Three successive Presidential administrations that sustained economic sanctions in the face of irrefutable fact that Iraq no longer had Weapons of Mass Destruction to pose a threat to the United States of America. Now, I can probably make a case that George Herbert Walker Bush didn't have all the data necessary, so he kept sanctions moving forward. Okay. President Clinton up until 1995 maybe sustained that policy because he didn't have the data. After 1995, there was no excuse on the part of any administration, any government official, to say that Iraq has Weapons of Mass Destruction and poses a threat to the United States of America, Iraq has Weapons of Mass Destruction that justify the continuation of sanctions that we know are only killing innocent civilians. They have nothing to do with impeding the President of Iraq, Saddam Hussein. Look how quickly we've unilaterally deposed of sanctions. Look how quickly we walked away from no-fly zones; no-fly zones that we said were authorized by the United Nations. Did we go to the United Nations and get permission to shut down the no-fly zones? No, we unilaterally walked away from them. Why? Because the United Nations had nothing to do with their creation. They were illegal implementation of violations of Iraqi sovereignty by the United States and Great

Britain. Economic sanctions, I think, will go down in history as a quasi-genocidal act carried out by the United States in pursuit of a policy of regime removal that is illegal. There's a reason why Thomas Jackson, the Supreme Court justice, stared German politicians and generals in the face in 1946 and said, 'you're going to die.' He found them guilty. Guilty of what? Waging a war of aggression. He said, 'you know, you're before us not because you lost the war but because you started the war.' And the United States, by invading Iraq in March of this year, puts ourself on the same page of history as the Germans when they invaded Poland in 1939 and with Saddam Hussein when he invaded Kuwait in August, 1990. And the American people need to ask themselves, is that the page that we want our history written on?

Miller: Thank you. You've been listening to Scott Ritter at Traprock Peace Center. Thank you for putting the facts on the table on behalf of Iraqi families, American families, and families worldwide who seek peace and prosperity. We appreciate all the participating media who help us see the facts far and wide, from Australia to Japan to Florida, and I thank you all for participating. Are there any further questions online? We'll just take one or two more, if anyone didn't get to ask a question.

Rivero: You were saying before that we should look forward to 2004 and start preparing now to perhaps change our leadership, but I was wondering if you were aware of a story that's breaking out of New Zealand the last two days on Scoop Media regarding the discovery of a very large security hole in the Diebold voting machines, the touch-screen systems, and the story has not been picked up by the U.S. media yet, but it is starting to make its way around the world that the machines may, in fact, be extremely easy to compromise.

Ritter: I'm not aware of that story. I think, again, the electoral process is big. We have to ensure that not only we go out and vote but that the laws regarding our right to vote, you know, tampering with the electoral process is a huge crime in America. So if people have voting machines where security can't be guaranteed, then if there's a process out there of taking advantage of that security hole to manipulate the results, that's something the American people need to be involved in. If this story is accurate, or even if it's not accurate, again, we need to be involved in the process starting right now. We need to make sure that there is never again a chad disaster like we saw in Florida, that every voter who wants to vote who's qualified to vote gets an opportunity to vote, and, you know, that didn't happen in 2000. We have to make sure it happens in 2004.

Miller: Thank you all. I want to thank Mike for that last question of whatreallyhappened.com and refer you to further resources on war and peace issues at traprockpeace.org. Especially please take note of Glen Rangwala's research regarding false claims that support the same sort of ideas as yours, Scott. Thank you so much, Scott Ritter. We look forward to your next statements. Year after year, we are very grateful for the wisdom you bring.

Ritter: Well, thanks. I'm not someone who peddles his own material, but at the end of this week, I have a new book out, "FRONTIER JUSTICE, WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION, AND THE BUSHWACKING OF AMERICA," which covers much of the ground that we just discussed, and one of the reasons why I wrote the book is to provide something that enables people to empower themselves with information. It doesn't claim to be the bible for all data, but what it is is it provides an alternative point of reference than that which you are getting from the media. So take advantage and read the book. You don't all have to buy a copy; maybe one person will buy it and pass it around. But the purpose of the book was to educate, and I certainly hope that it succeeds in doing that.

Miller: We'll refer to that book at our web site, traprockpeace.org. Thank you so much. Thank you everyone.

Page created July 17, 2003 by [Charlie Jenks](#)

**Traprock Peace Center**  
103A Keets Road, Woolman Hill  
Deerfield, MA 01342

Phone: (413) 773-7427; Fax:(413)773-7507; [contact by email](#)