

GENERAL PETRAEUS IS THE NEW JUDY MILLER

General Petraeus, lying to Congress is a crime.

Let's just repeat that fact over and over. Because that's what Petraeus is planning on doing on Monday, as Karen DeYoung (in an article buried on page A16) explains clearly. Go read the whole article, closely, for a description of the many methods of the Administration's hocus pocus. But I'd like to focus on one particular tactic.

Reductions in violence form the centerpiece of the Bushadministration's claim that its war strategy is working. Incongressional testimony Monday, Army Gen. David H. Petraeus, the top U.S. commander in Iraq, is expected to cite a 75 percent decrease in sectarian attacks.

[snip]

When Petraeus told an Australian newspaper last week that sectarianattacks had decreased 75 percent "since last year," the statistic wasquickly e-mailed to U.S. journalists in a White House fact sheet. Asked for detail, MNF-I said that "last year" referred to December 2006, when attacks spiked to more than 1,600.

By March, however – before U.S. troop strength was increased underBush's strategy – the number had dropped to 600, only slightly lessthan in the same month last year. That is about where it has remainedin 2007, with what MNF-I said was a slight increase in April and May"but trending back down in June-July."

Petraeus's spokesman, Col. Steven A. Boylan, said he was certain thatPetraeus

had made a comparison with December in the interview with the Australian paper, which did not publish a direct Petraeus quote. No qualifier appeared in the White House fact sheet.

The approach is reminiscent of something BushCo did to get us into this failing war. They had Judy Miller interview Adnan al-Haideri, who had allegedly already failed a lie detector test. The, the White House cited Miller's article when they cited Haideri's claims.

In 2001, an Iraqi defector, Adnan Ihsan Saeed al-Haideri, said he had visited twenty secret facilities for chemical, biological and nuclear weapons. Mr. Saeed, a civil engineer, supported his claims with stacks of Iraqi government contracts, complete with technical specifications. Mr. Saeed said Iraq used companies to purchase equipment with the blessing of the United Nations " and then secretly used the equipment for their weapons programs.¹

¹ "Secret Sites: Iraqi tells of Renovations at Sites for Chemical and Nuclear Arms," The New York Times, December 20, 2001

Similarly, here, they've put the 75% reduction in violence in Petraeus' mouth (itself a big gimmick of numbers). And then they've cited it, rather than their own numbers, so they can pretend they don't know how deceptive the numbers are.

But here's the thing. Judy Miller, as far as we know, was never on the government payroll. She never gave testimony under oath that her stories were accurate. General Petraeus, fulfilling a requirement laid out by Congress, is going to go before Congress and present his bogus numbers as the truth.

As I said, lying to Congress is a crime.

[Oh, and I almost forgot to mention the fact that General Petraeus is the guy who helped Judy Miller override a military officer's order. So it's perhaps just a neat irony that he has now turned into Judy Miller.]