

BUSHCO DROPS ALL CHARGES AGAINST ANDY CARD'S COUSIN

Just five days before the end of his term, Bush's DOJ has dropped all charges against Andy Card's cousin—Susan Lindauer—whom they had accused of being an unregistered agent for Saddam Hussein's Iraq. By dropping the charges at this time, the Administration:

- Prevents Lindauer from proving at a trial that she was an intelligence asset working on behalf of the United States (though she says she'll sue for damages)
- Declines to try to prove that she was working on behalf of Saddam—and not the US—when she warned against invading Iraq
- Succeeds in preventing embarrassing information (both because of the link to Card, and because it included solid warnings against Iraq) from coming out while Bush was still in office

Basically, this appears to be a story about an intelligence op that got too embarrassing, so the Administration first accused Lindauer of working for Saddam, and then, when she talked about her ties to US intelligence, they accused her of being crazy and got her committed. And now, they are attempting to avoid a public trial in which she could prove her case.

The bulk of the charges against Lindauer depend on this letter she sent to Andy Card (and copied to Colin Powell) on January 8, 2003, when BushCo was ratcheting up the pressure for war. In it she listed the concessions she believed she could negotiate with Iraq:

... what specific actions can be taken by Baghdad, so that President Bush can declare victory without going to War. What do you need? Cooperation on terrorism, including interviewing authority for the FBI? Does the U.S. want the Lukoil Contract?

[snip]

[hand-written addition] The U.S. would come away with full democratic reforms—free elections, free opposition newspapers, and free student organization at Universities.

Given the build up, you could declare a great victory from a formidable position of strength. You could keep U.S. troops in place for 6 months to monitor compliance. And you could do it all without war.

Even more than her promises to negotiate an agreement short of war (because I'm a little skeptical about all those "free elections" under Saddam) are her warnings:

But this War with Iraq will hurt us, too. In six weeks or six months, it won't matter. Because when it hits, it will hit so fard it will not matter that there was ever a delay—The Iraqi people hate Americans, no matter what they think of Saddam. When I was in Baghdad last March, more than one Imam swore to me their people would tear off the arms and the legs of American soldiers and decapitate them, and drag their bodies through the streets.

[snip]

Above all, you must realize that if you go ahead with this invasion, Osama bin Laden will triumph, rising from his grave of seclusion. His network will be swollen with fresh recruits, and other charismatic individuals will seek to build on his model, multiplying those networks.

I can imagine that would be embarrassing for BushCo to admit receiving.

In any case, as I suggested, Lindauer seems prepared to sue for damages for having been committed, so we might yet get public testimony on these issues.