



Allan Moulton takes an eclectic look at life with an Australian twist

G'day cobbers

FEBRUARY 21, 2003

THE BOTTOM LINE ON IRAQ

An interesting take on the "The Bottom Line On Iraq" by Arianna Huffington .

No one in the administration embodies this bottom line mentality more than Dick Cheney. The vice president is one of those ideological purists who never let little things like logic, morality, or mass murder interfere with the single-minded pursuit of profitability.

His on-again, off-again relationship with the Butcher of Baghdad is a textbook example of what modern moralists condemn as "situational ethics," an extremely convenient code that allows you to do what you want when you want and still feel good about it in the morning. In the Cheney White House (let's call it what it is), anything that can be rationalized is right.

The two were clearly on the outs back during the Gulf War, when Cheney was Secretary of Defense, and the first President Bush dubbed Saddam "Hitler revisited."

Then Cheney moved to the private sector and suddenly things between him and Saddam warmed up considerably. With Cheney in the CEO's seat, Halliburton helped Iraq reconstruct its war-torn oil industry with \$73 million worth of equipment and services -- becoming Baghdad's biggest such supplier. Kinda nice how that worked out for the vice-president, really: oversee the destruction of an industry that you then profit from by rebuilding.

And in 2000, just months before pocketing his \$34 million Halliburton retirement package and joining the GOP ticket, Cheney was lobbying for an end to U.N. sanctions against Saddam.

Clearly, our national interest runs a distant second when pitted against the rapacious desires of special interests and the politicians they buy with massive campaign contributions. Oil and gas companies donated \$26.7 million to Bush and his fellow Republicans during the 2000 election and another \$18 million in 2002. So does it really come as any surprise that Cheney's staff held secret meetings in

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