

“War is a racket...in which the profits are reckoned in dollars and the losses in lives.”  
--Major General Smedley Butler

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One would think that as the last foot soldier to be awarded two Medals of Honor, the late Major General Smedley Butler would have the utmost respect for the causes he was putting his life on the line for. This could not be farther from the truth. Butler once wrote, "War is a racket. .. in which the profits are reckoned in dollars and the losses in lives." In his book, War Is a Racket, Butler described his military experiences in China, Central America, and the Caribbean as nothing more than grooming locations for American businesses.

Sadly, more than sixty years after Butler's death, our current presidency has learned nothing from Butler's writings. On March 19, 2003, President George W. Bush announced that United States soldiers would invade Iraq. In his speech, Bush declared; "We [the United States of America] have no ambition in Iraq, except to remove a threat and restore control of that country to its own people." He later called Iraq "an outlaw regime that threatens the peace with weapons of mass murder." Today, almost five years later and after a thorough CIA investigation, no weapons of mass destruction have been found in Iraq.

So, why did Bush and his advisors insist that there were WMDs in Iraq? Butler answers this question when he wrote that American businesses take advantage of America's military operations in foreign countries. Iraq is known for its oil-rich land, which accounts for billions of dollars of sales to American oil companies annually. The largest of contracts awarded to an American oil company is with Halliburton. Ironically, Halliburton's former CEO is none other than Bush's right-hand man, Vice President Dick Cheney. Despite Cheney's denial, the Congressional Research Service reported that Cheney has retained ties to Halliburton. Cheney's remaining stock options with Halliburton strongly suggest that he would profit from his former employer's enormous oil contracts with Iraq.

With almost four-thousand Americans dead in Iraq since the war began in 2003 and the oil companies reaping the profits of Iraq's oil fields, it seems that the late Smedley Butler predicted the outcome of the Iraq War without even needing to hear about it. Hopefully, people around the world, especially youth, will see the mess that Bush and his cabinet have created in Iraq and learn that the profits from war are not worth its cost in lives. Now, I leave you with the last words that Major General Smedley Butler left his readers with...*TO HELL WITH WAR!*