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DEFEND OUR MARINES

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Murtha Still Lying After All These Years

Continues to Misrepresent His Haditha Motives

October 18, 2008--Congressman John Murtha (D-PA) suckered reporters yet again about the motives behind his "Cold-Blooded Killer Media Blitz" of May 2006.

Murtha told reporters at the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review* that the Marine Corps was sitting on its hands, doing nothing, when the first news of the so-called Haditha incident was published in *Time* magazine.

In fact, three investigations had already been launched.

Here is the timeline...

February 10, 2006: *Time* magazine reporter, Tim McGirk, contacts military sources in Baghdad about the circumstances of the Haditha incident.

General Peter Pace, chairman of the Joints Chiefs, [later told CNN](#): "To my recollection, the first we knew about it back here in D.C. was around the 10th of February. And the very next day is when the investigations began. So, from my perspective, as soon as we found out that there were allegations, the investigations began."

February 14: Army Lt. Gen. Peter W. Chiarelli, commander of multinational forces in Iraq, appoints Army Col. Gregory Watt to head a preliminary investigation into the Haditha deaths.

March 3: Col. Watt completes his [preliminary report](#), which concludes there is no evidence of wanton murder or a cover-up but recommends further investigation.

March 9: Lt. Gen. Chiarelli receives the findings of Col. Watt's preliminary report and directs further review.

March 16: The Marine Corps officially requests an investigation into the incident at Haditha. The probe began immediately. Within 24 hours, three Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS) agents in Iraq went to Haditha to investigate.

March 16: The existence of a criminal investigation into the deaths in Haditha is reported in the media.

March 17: At a press conference, Lt. General Peter W. Chiarelli summarizes the events at Haditha and the preliminary investigation into Marine involvement in the deaths. He says, "We take these allegations of potential misconduct seriously, and they will be thoroughly investigated."

March 19: After receiving final recommendations from Colonel Watt, Lt. General Chiarelli appoints Army Maj. General Eldon Bargewell to investigate two major aspects of what happened in Haditha: training and preparation of Marines prior to the engagement and the reporting of the incident at all levels of the chain of command.

March 19: Time magazine prints the first major [Haditha story](#): "Collateral damage or civilian massacre in Haditha?"

May 17: Congressman Murtha [charges](#) Marines with cold blooded murder in Haditha

Truth is that Murtha used Haditha to boost his standing with the Democrat base, the anti-war Left. His position on Iraq was cited later that year by the newly-minted Speaker Nancy Pelosi in [her endorsement of Murtha](#) as House Majority Leader after the Democrats' victory in November 2006. And Murtha coveted that position.

It can only be hoped that the [slander suits](#) proceeding against Murtha will at last bring out the truth.

Transcript of interview with the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*, October 15, 2008

Congressman John Murtha on the Haditha Incident | interview with the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*, October 15, 2008.

See the video at the [link](#).

MURTHA: I was in Haditha in August. This happened in November. And for months nobody knew anything about it. Time magazine had an article and I asked the Marine Corps and nothing happened.

I said, "You can't do this. This hurts our troops when something like this happens. The Iraqis turn against us. You hurt our troops."

And brought the commandant in. Commandant agreed with me. He went out to all the FM forces [Fleet Marine Forces] and said, "You can't do this anymore. This, you know, he tried to be as careful as he could be that you can't use overwhelming force. You got to be, Rules of Engagement are clear."

So, at any rate, and it's changed.

I went to Iraq at first, I saw shortages of body armor, shortages of these jammers, all these things, and came back and we changed it. We put the money in for it. I saw people that have an emotional problem, PTSD, we put in \$450 million in. I put \$450 million in for brain damage because we weren't doing enough of that. So, I get my ideas from going to the field and listening but when I see a problem I speak out about it if I can, if they don't react then I speak out. That's my damn job. And I don't apologize for it.

REPORTER: Given that all but one of those implicated in Haditha have been cleared, do you think you spoke too stridently about the matter? Do you have any regrets about how you approached that matter given...

MURTHA: Well, I had three brothers in the Marine Corps and I was in the Marine Corps Reserves and regular for 37 years.

I felt like nothing was happening. I had to speak out. This happened three years ago. I know how things work. So, no, I don't think I could have done anything else. I don't think I'd have gotten the reaction that I needed to get.

Twenty-four people, kids, people in wheelchair, no arms were found, no nothing. And the investigation by NCIS, the commandant put a two-star general in charge of the investigation, and NCIS come up with the same conclusion I did. *[Note: By "two-star general", Murtha may be referring to Major General R.C Zilmer, Commanding General MNF-W].*

So that's hard—listen, they've gone through hell. And I said this at the press conference. Let me tell you, I understand what happens. This kid got blown up outside. I understand how it happens. I understand the pressure on these guys. Nobody—I get PTSD myself from going to the damn hospitals and seeing these kids. I mean, it breaks my heart seeing them. And the families...I see women who can't look at their husbands because he's so disfigured. I see burn victims who are just---I mean...

And I know that if you kill people, you're going to make enemies. If you make enemies, you're not going to solve, in this kind of war, we got to be careful.



