



Media Reality ✓ Check **QUICK TAKE**

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HOW TO BUILD A "CREDIBILITY GAP" BEFORE WAR EVEN BEGINS

CNN-USA TODAY POLL SUGGESTS: COLIN POWELL WILL LIE TODAY

All the evidence of the last 12 years points to the fact that Saddam Hussein and his regime have continuously lied to the world about his manufacturing and concealment of weapons of mass destruction. But yesterday, CNN and *USA Today* presumed the liars would be President Bush and other "gung-ho" hawks.

In a poll of 1,003 adults from last Friday to Sunday, the CNN/*USA Today* /Gallup poll asked "How likely is the Bush administration to do the following during Wednesday's U.N. presentation?" First, "Present some evidence it knows is not accurate." They found 49 percent said very or somewhat likely, while 48 percent said not very likely or not at all likely. Second, "Conceal evidence that goes against its position." On that, 58 percent said very or somewhat likely, and only 39 percent said it was not.

CNN political analyst Bill Schneider touted the results on yesterday's *Inside Politics*, reporting "**there's evidence that people are concerned the President is a little too gung-ho for war. About half the public believes the Bush administration is likely to present evidence it knows is not accurate in order to make its case against Iraq. Fifty-eight percent believe it's likely the administration would conceal evidence that goes against the President's position.**" Implication? The American public does not entirely trust the Bush administration on Iraq."

The pollsters also tried to create a fissure within the administration, asking "Who do you trust more when it comes to U.S. policy toward Iraq, Colin Powell or the President?" They found 63 percent said Powell, 24 percent said Bush. *USA Today* touted that result on its front page yesterday: "Powell trusted most when it comes to Iraq." Are their policies even different? Did they ask this about Madeleine Albright and Bill Clinton?

USA Today printed other findings showing that 85 percent of those polled would be convinced that war was justified if they saw evidence that "Iraq has biological or chemical weapons," and 76 percent would be convinced for war if they saw "Iraq is obstructing the U.N. weapons inspectors," both key elements of Powell's presentation today. CNN's Schneider left these numbers out.