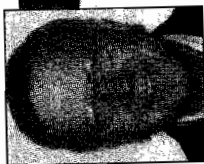


## Hugh's News



# A bad choice for Augusta National

by Hugh Turley

Last month, the Augusta National Golf Club ended a 75-year tradition as an all-male club, ad-

mitting former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and business executive Darla Moore as the first women members.

In announcing the decision, Au-

gusta National Chairman Billy Payne said, "It will be a proud moment when we present Condoleezza and Darla with their green jackets."

Not everyone agrees.

"It would be more appropriate for Rice to be presented with an orange jumpsuit at the International Court of Justice in The Hague," said Joan Stallard, a local coordinator of Code Pink: Women for Peace. "There are many deserving women Augusta National could have selected for membership without the criminal past of Condoleezza Rice."

Stallard was referring to Rice's role in the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq.

In the build-up for the invasion, Rice said in 2002, "We don't want the smoking gun to be a mushroom cloud."

The same threat of a nuclear weapon was repeated by Vice President Dick Cheney and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld to scare the American people. Cheney warned that Saddam Hussein would have a nuclear weapon "fairly soon." Rumsfeld added that the Iraqi president was "trying to acquire the pieces for the nuclear weapon."

In 2003, after the invasion, National Security Advisor Rice said, "Let us be very clear about why we went to war against Saddam Hussein. [His] regime posed a threat to the security of the United States and the world. This was a regime that had pursued, had used, and possessed weapons of mass destruction." When questioned she continued, maintaining that "[Saddam's] regime was a threat, that it was pursuing a nuclear weapon."

In 1950, the Nuremberg Tribu-

nal defined crimes against peace as the "planning, preparation, initiation or waging of a war of aggression or a war in violation of international treaties, agreements or assurances," or conspiring to accomplish any of these.

Iraq never was a threat to attack the United States. Estimates of Iraqi deaths from the U.S. invasion top one million; the toll in human suffering, torture, human rights abuses and loss of property are incalculable. The Iraqi people's lives were destroyed.

Yet no official in the previous administration has been held accountable for misleading the American people into the Iraq War, which was based on non-existent weapons of mass destruction and the threat of a nuclear attack. Tolerating the mistakes of the past invites more of the same.

Despite President Obama's promised "change," his Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, the successor to Rice, has the same bellicose tone. Clinton, who advocates overthrowing the Syrian government, has said, "We will use all elements of American power to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon."

As Condi Rice prepares to play golf at Augusta, our leaders continue to call for regime change, sanctions and no-fly zones. War can have unintended consequences. Innocent people are slaughtered.

Syria and Iran do not have nukes. But their allies, Russia and China, do. Is the American military, which has been unable to defeat the poorly armed Taliban for 11 years or occupy Iraq, ready for more powerful enemies?