

# Mission Not Accomplished

✘ On May 1, 2003, President George W. Bush flew onto the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln anchored off the coast of San Diego and announced an end to “major combat operations” in Iraq. As if that wasn’t bad enough given the years of war that followed those words, the president was standing beneath a giant banner on the ship’s superstructure that read: “Mission Accomplished.”

The vast majority of casualties in Iraq, both military and civilian, came after that speech.

“Mission Accomplished” became a kind of punch line that stood in for all the mistakes Mr. Bush and his team made in Iraq. President Bush standing under that sign was proof to his many liberal critics that he was a dolt, the worst president ever.

Never mind that five years later, in November 2008, President Bush told CNN: “To some, it said, well, ‘Bush thinks the war in Iraq is over,’ when I didn’t think that. It conveyed the wrong message.” Never mind that in January 2009, Mr. Bush said, “Clearly, putting ‘Mission Accomplished’ on an aircraft carrier was a mistake.”

Too late, Mr. President. Liberals (and some others) had already rendered their verdict: You’re really stupid and you don’t have a clue!

What could be more embarrassing than a president of the United States declaring – even though he never actually uttered the words – mission accomplished in Iraq?

Well, how about ...

On October 21, 2011, this headline appeared on the official White House Web site: “President Obama Has Ended the War in Iraq.”

Or how about in December 2011, when the U.S. troops were about to come home from Iraq, President Obama gave a speech at Fort Bragg in which he noted this “moment of success” and claimed that America was leaving behind a “sovereign, stable and independent Iraq.”

Or on November 1, 2012, Mr. Obama, running for re-election, said in a stump speech, “Thanks to sacrifice and service of our brave men and women in uniform, the war in Iraq is over ...”

Scott Wilson, a political reporter with the Washington Post, wrote this about Mr. Obama in 2012: “For much of that election year, Obama had included a line of celebration in his standard stump speech, one that among an electorate exhausted by more than a decade of war always drew a rousing applause: ‘Four years ago, I promised to end the war in Iraq,’ Obama proclaimed in Bowling Green, Ohio, in September 2012, and did nearly every day after until the election. ‘We did.’”

No we didn’t, Mr. President.

It’s true that the president never spoke beneath a banner proclaiming “Mission Accomplished” but the banner was all that was missing from his message. A “sovereign, stable and independent Iraq” ... “the war in Iraq is over” ... “President Obama Has Ended the War in Iraq” ... “I promised to end the war in Iraq” and “we did.”

It sure sounds like “Mission Accomplished.” ISIS, the army of terrorists waging war in Iraq while President Obama is, in the words of one journalist, engaging in Operation Martha’s Vineyard, never got the “war is over” memo. But somehow, the president who goes golfing while the world around him is on fire is spared the ridicule that W could never escape.

And they said Reagan was the Teflon president.