

Grasping Reality with Both Hands: Brad DeLong's Semi-Daily Journal

Fair and Balanced Almost Every Day: A Reality-Based Look at Economics--
Mostly Macroeconomics and Economic History--and Many Other Topics...


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SCHEDULE**

**Spring 2007
Schedule:**

Economics 210a is
now back up and
running
Wednesdays 12-2.
The seminars,
Economics 211
and Economics
237 have started
up again. And I am

« Econ 210a: February 21:
Question: Why Isn't the
Whole World Developed? |
Main | Eddie Lazear Is a
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February 14, 2007

Why Is Michael Gordon Still Employed by the New York Times?

Why oh why can't we have a
better press corps? Yet another
New York Times edition. Judy

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FROM BRAD DELONG

**Menzie Chinn Calculates the Trade
Balance:**

giving some guest lectures for Marcia Parker's ["Trade and California"](#).

Let's do 2-4 on Wednesdays for office hours. Drop in (I should be in 601 or 611 Evans) or call 510 643 4027 or email delong@econ.berkeley.edu for an appointment.

[SHRILLBLO](#)

[Matthew Yglesias is shrill: Matthew Yglesias / pr...](#)

[Andrew Sullivan is shrill! The Daily Dish: In ...](#)

[Why oh why can't we have a better press corps? Ove...](#)

[Dan Froomkin Meets the Journalists: And in spite...](#)

[Arthur Silber is shrill: Once Upon a Time...: Thi...](#)

[More journalism! Irony is dead! Duncan Black](#)

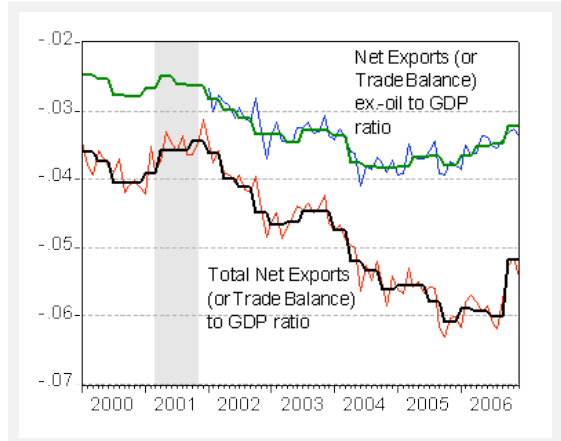
Miller doesn't work at the *New York Times* any more. Why does Michael Gordon?

[Democracy Now! | New York Times Trumpets Pentagon's Claims Over Iran Sending](#)

[Bombs to Iraq: AMY GOODMAN: The new accusations of Iranian-supplied bombs in Iraq first appeared in Saturday's New York Times. The article was headlined "Deadliest Bomb in Iraq is Made by Iran, US Says."](#)

Some media critics immediately compared the New York Times piece to its articles on Saddam Hussein's alleged weapons program that were used by the Bush administration to make the case for invading Iraq.

These critics have pointed out two similar features between

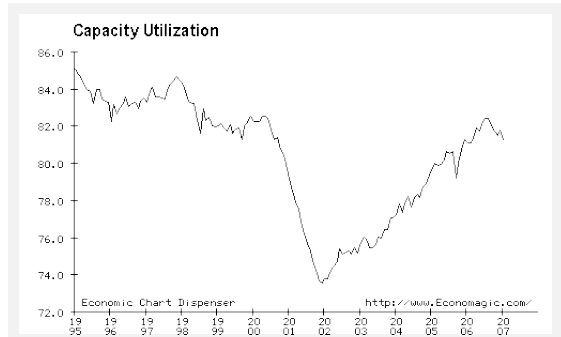


A Note on Comment Policy:

Trolling comments get deleted, usually. Other comments by trolls often get deleted too. I don't have time to moderate this properly, but I'm trying to keep it a discussion rather than a foodfight. Comments on the comment policy are welcome at:

<http://delong.typepad.com/sdj/2005/03/deali>

Capacity Utilization since 1995:



There are three things around here that you may not know about--unless, that is, you have sharp eyes:

1. My rotisserie-league political

[sen...](#)

[Stuart Taylor drives Chris Hayes and Prometheus 6](#)

...

[Each day that the Washington Post publishes Anne A...](#)

[Oliver Willis is shrill: David Broder Libels D...](#)

[Ex Majority Leader Dick Arme y is shrill: Arme y r...](#)

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["Aftathoughts on NAFTA," 15 minute edited version](#)

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[Aftathoughts on NAFTA, part 4](#)

[Aftathoughts on NAFTA, part 3](#)

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["Aftathoughts on NAFTA"](#)

Saturday's article and those before the war: near complete reliance on unnamed government sources and the byline of New York Times reporter Michael R. Gordon.

Gordon and former New York Times reporter Judith Miller co-authored the infamous September 8, 2002 piece, alleging Iraq attempted to purchase aluminum tubes towards developing nuclear weapons. The New York Times later singled out the article as part of its editor's note apologizing for its inaccurate coverage of Iraq and WMDs. Well, Michael Gordon appeared on Democracy Now! last March. During our interview, I asked him about his reporting in

magazine: [Egregious Moderation](#).

2. [My feed and webpage of economics-only material](#).
3. [My Main Home Page](#), which will always have my Berkeley schedule in the left column.

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the lead-up to the US invasion of Iraq.

MICHAEL GORDON: There was no agency in the American government that said Saddam was not involved in WMD. You know, the State Department, although it's turned out to be correct, certainly on the nuclear issue, did not turn out to be -- you know, didn't challenge the biological case, the chemical case, and I'm going to offer you this last

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thought, and

I'm happy to

respond to

any

questions

you have, but

you know,

there are a

number of

complicated

WMD issues

--

AMY

GOODMAN:

Let me just

ask

something on

that. Are you

sorry you did

the piece?

Are you sorry

that this

piece --

MICHAEL

GORDON:

No, I'm not. I

mean, what -

- I don't know

if you

understand

.....

Worth Reading/Worth Surfing

» [Nathan Newman: Amnesia on the Death of Reconstruction](#)

» [WHEELING STEEL CORP. V. GLANDER](#) , 337 U.S. 562 (1949). Dissent by Douglas and Black

» [Santa Clara County v. Southern Pacific Railroad](#), 118 U.S. 394 (1886)

» [Peter Bergen: "Paul Cruickshank of NYU's Center on Law and Security and I coauthored this attached study which we believe is the first attempt to measure the effect of the Iraq war on jihadist terrorism.](#)

[The headline-- a sevenfold increase in jihadist ter](#)

» [Residents cry fowl, bring in hired gun](#)

» [James Hamilton: Saudi oil production cuts: "But, if you'll indulge me in a bit of](#)

[cloak-and-daggerism, there are others who must know. This data cannot be something that would be that difficult for American or Russian intelligence](#)

[operatives to collect. S](#)

» [Israelis Are Gone, but Gaza Rebuilding Is Slow](#)

» [The Federalist #78: Hamilton: The Judiciary Department](#)

» [Celebrate George Washington's Birthday! Impeach George W. Bush: Scott Horton on Washington's treatment of prisoners](#)

» [Kevin Drum: "SCAIFE REPENTS....Bill Clinton's #1 attack dog during the 1990s was reclusive wingnut zillionaire Richard Mellon Scaife. But according to one of his close associates, he's had a change of heart..."](#)

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now

journalism

works, but

the way

journalism

works is you

write what

you know,

and what you

know at the

time you try

to convey as

best you can,

but then you

don't stop

reporting.

AMY

GOODMAN:

Well, let me,

let me --

MICHAEL

GORDON:

Can I answer

your

question,

since you

asked me a

question?

AMY

GOODMAN:

... ..

» Louis Uchitelle: Nafta Should Have Stopped Illegal Immigration, Right?» Gavin Kennedy: Adam Smith's Lost Legacy: Smith Did Not Have a LabourTheory of Value for Commercial Society» John McMillan: Reinventing the Bazaar:A Natural History of Markets» Fred Rodell: Rodell Revisited: Selected Writings of Fred Rodell» Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes: Perry vs. U.S., 1935» Time Magazine: Dec. 04, 1939: Justice McReynolds» Pietra Rivoli: The Travels of a T-Shirt in the Global Economy: An EconomistExamines the Markets, Power, and Politics of World Trade» Sean Masaki Flynn: Economics For Dummies» Lisa Margonelli: Oil on the Brain: Adventures from the Pump to the Pipeline» Seth Waxman: The Physics of Persuasion: Arguing the New Deal» Economagic» Bandwagon is a mind numbingly simple online iTunes backup (for Mac users)» Dean Baker: Bad Housing Data...» Time Magazine: Great Moment -- Monday, Feb. 25, 1935. Gold clause decision.» Time Magazine: Questions Without Answers -- Monday, Jan. 21, 1935. Gold clause cases.» Fred Rodell: Nine Men: A Political History of the Supreme Court of the United States from 1790 to 1955» Robert T. Swaine (1946). The Cravath Firm and Its Predecessors» Frederick H. Wood (1925): The Small Investor and Railroad Ownership and

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well, no, I wanted to get --

MICHAEL GORDON:

No, wait a second, if you ask me a question -- I'm happy to answer all your questions, but what I'm trying to explain to you is one thing. That was what I knew at the time. It's true that it was the key judgment. It's the same information they presented to Colin Powell, by the way, and it's what

Management

» [Time Magazine: Posthumous Egg -- Monday, Mar. 23, 1936. Frederick H. Wood](#)

» [Time Magazine: Security Challenged -- Monday, Nov. 23, 1936. Frederick H. Wood](#)

» [Frederick H. Wood. Partner, Cravath, de Gersdorff, Swaine, and Wood. The right-wing litigation strategy against the New Deal](#)

» [Robert Stern: The Commerce Clause and the National Economy, 1933-46: "the switch in time saved nine..."](#)

» [Dan Froomkin: A Shaky Briefing on Iran? "The administration finally unveiled its case this weekend, first in coordinated and anonymous leaks to a trusting New York Times reporter \[Michael Gordon\], then in an extraordinarily secretive military briefing at](#)

» [Bruce Bartlett sends us to Texas Monthly's March 2007 symposium on the historical legacy of George W. Bush: "The Test of Time"](#)

» [Ezra Klein: New Republic Beyond Self Parody Watch: "Elsewhere, Marty Peretz -- I swear to God -- criticizes George Soros for a spate of delayed JetBlue flights.](#)

[Could The Spine even get more awesome? I say no, my friends, I say no."](#)

» [Horses Mouth on David Brooks: This one sentence is worth dwelling on, because it perfectly captures our new DOPI -- pronounced "DOPEY." It shows that a pundit like Brooks, who did plenty of relentless cheerleading for the Iraq conflict, can freely operate](#)

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persuaded
him to go to
the United
Nations and
make the
case on the
nuclear
tubes. I wrote
the contrary
case, giving
the IAEA
equal time.
They
disputed it. I
don't have a
dog in this
fight. I didn't
know what
was the
ultimate truth.
When the
IAEA came
out in
January and
disputed it, I
reported it.
AMY
GOODMAN:
Michael
Gordon, let
me just

» [Making Light: Matthew 6: "Vanderslice's
unselfconscious remark, meant for her
own brand of religious insider, reeks of the
same kind of spiritual vanity we've seen all
too often from the self-anointed "religious
left." "The religious community c](#)
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Administration agree with that, others do
not, a](#)
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agreement that although some within the
administration may be pushing for war, a
strike on Iran would run significantly
counter to U.S. interests in the current
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respond. We don't -- we have limited time in the program, but I just --

MICHAEL GORDON: Well, then you should let me answer your questions.

AMY GOODMAN: I did.

MICHAEL GORDON: No, you haven't let me answer your question.

AMY GOODMAN: Are you sorry then, that the New York Times was sorry that this

» [Lawrence Wright: "Iraq brought \[Al Qaeda\] back to life.... The jihadis who went to Iraq will begin to return to their own countries, empowering the local cells, which have been proliferating in the Arab world and the west and which have only lacked a degr](#)

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» [Felix Salmon: Do hedge funds generate alpha? Yes: Rene Stultz: "The academic bottom line on hedge fund performance is captured well by these studies. If one picks randomly a hedge fund, one should have a positive insignificant alpha after fees."](#)

» [Fritz Stern: Five Germanys I Have Known](#)

» [Ogged: "Linkrot is perhaps the single most important issue facing humankind today. I was looking for something in the archives, and noticed that link after link is dead. For a while, I was caching the pages I linked to \(as here, where the cached pages are](#)

» [Matthew Yglesias: "To me, the striking thing is how infrequent it is to actually see non-critics of America's Israel policy make the argument that current policy serves the vital interests of the United States \(TNR's editorial line, for example, from whic](#)

» [Scott Rosenberg: Dreaming in Code: Two Dozen Programmers, Three Years, 4,732 Bugs, and One Quest for Transcendent Software](#)

sorry that this

piece

appeared as

it did on the

front page of

the New

York Times.

MICHAEL

GORDON: I

don't think

"sorry" is the

word the

New York

Times used.

AMY GOODMAN: That was the New York Times reporter Michael Gordon speaking on Democracy Now! last March. I'm joined in studio now by Rick MacArthur, publisher of Harper's....

RICK MACARTHUR:

...[W]hat's interesting about Michael Gordon is that when he did the reporting on the phony aluminum tube story with Judith Miller four years ago, he

» [Wonkette: Army Brass Beg 24: 'Stop Torturing Everybody': 'U.S. Army Brigadier General Patrick Finnegan has pleaded with the producers of a popular teevee show about torturing Arabs to please stop torturing everybody. With the military now forced to accep](#)

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» [Unqualified Offerings: 'Yesterday, the popular Republican blog Red State advocated war with Iran and embraced having it spread throughout the Middle East. Now, the respected \(look, he is, whether readers here like it or not\) law professor Glenn Reynolds i](#)

» [Dana Milbank - Star Character Witnesses at Libby Trial - 'Libby must believe himself to be in desperate legal straits to have six journalists serve as his character witnesses. And, indeed, the reporters' testimony appeared to do little to dent the prosecu](#)

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somehow escaped
unharmd and is now
thriving.... [H]e's going
around acting like he's
an expert on Iraq,
when, in fact, he's still
playing the role of
conduit for the official
line, the Army line or
the government line,
depending on who he's
talking to on what
day....

[W]hat's interesting is
the play that they gave
his story on Saturday....
They put it on the top of
the front page... the
lead story.... [N]ot far
down in the... Monday
story -- you find a
paragraph where they
say -- and this is very
interesting -- that they
don't have any real
evidence, any direct
evidence, that any of
this is true.... Newsday,
a perfectly respectable
newspaper, puts "US:
Iran is Arming Shia" on

page 22 on Monday....
They report what the
military officials [in
Washington] are
claiming, but in the
second paragraph, they
say the military
command in Baghdad
denied, however, that
any newly smuggled
Iranian weapons were
behind the five crashes
of US military
helicopters... shot down
by insurgent gunfire....
[T]hat is what
journalism is, contrary
to what Michael Gordon
says. It's putting the
story in perspective,
pointing out that the...
[insurgency is]
dominated by Sunni,
not by Shia.... [T]he
most damning
omission... is complete
lack of perspective on
who's fighting whom,
who's shooting at
whom in Iraq. Does the
Iranian government

really have an interest
in destabilizing what's
now a Shiite-dominated
government? Doesn't
make any sense....
[T]here's no logic to it...
just this massive
omission...

Posted by Brad DeLong on
February 14, 2007 at 12:48 PM in
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Why Michael Gordon? A
question I have asked for several
years, and I dearly love the New
York Times. Just understand
there are certain reporters who
are always suspect, as my
mother told me long ago about
Judith Miller before I

understood that Miller was simply incapable of proper reporting.

Posted by: anne | February 14, 2007 at 01:09 PM

What I need on Iraq has long come mainly from the astonishing Juan Cole.

Posted by: anne | February 14, 2007 at 01:21 PM

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/02>

February 15, 2007

A Prewar Slide Show Cast Iraq in Rosy Hues

By MICHAEL R. GORDON

WASHINGTON — When Gen. Tommy R. Franks and his top officers gathered in August 2002 to review an invasion plan for Iraq, it reflected a decidedly upbeat vision of what the country would look like four years after Saddam Hussein was ousted from power.

A broadly representative Iraqi government would be in place. The Iraqi Army would be working to keep the peace. And the United States would have as few as 5,000 troops in the

country.

Military slides obtained by the National Security Archive under the Freedom of Information Act outline the command's PowerPoint projection of the stable, pro-American and democratic Iraq that was to be.

The general optimism and some details of General Franks's planning session have been disclosed in the copious postwar literature. But the slides from the once classified briefing provide a firsthand look at how far the violent reality of Iraq today has deviated from assumptions that once laid the basis for an exercise in pre-emptive war.

The archive, an independent research institute at George Washington University, has posted the slides on its Web site, www.nsarchive.org.

August 2002 was an important time for developing the strategy. President Bush had yet to go to the United Nations to declare Saddam Hussein's supposed

weapons programs a menace to international security, but the war planning was well under way. The tumultuous upheaval that would follow the toppling of the Hussein government was known antiseptically in planning sessions as "Phase IV." As is clear from the slides, it was the least defined part of the strategy.

General Franks had told his officers that it was his supposition that the State Department would have the primary responsibility for rebuilding Iraq's political institutions.

"D.O.S. will promote creation of a broad-based, credible provisional government — prior to D-Day," noted a slide on "key planning assumptions." That was military jargon for the notion that the Department of State would assemble a viable Iraqi governing coalition before the invasion even began....

Posted by: anne | February 15, 2007 at 02:13 AM

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/>

[dyn/content/article/2007/02/09/A](http://delong.typepad.com/sdj/2007/02/why_is_michael_gordon.html)

February 11, 2007

Victory Is Not an Option: The Mission Can't Be Accomplished -- It's Time for a New Strategy
By William E. Odom -
Washington Post

The new National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq starkly delineates the gulf that separates President Bush's illusions from the realities of the war. Victory, as the president sees it, requires a stable liberal democracy in Iraq that is pro-American. The NIE describes a war that has no chance of producing that result. In this critical respect, the NIE, the consensus judgment of all the U.S. intelligence agencies, is a declaration of defeat.

Its gloomy implications -- hedged, as intelligence agencies prefer, in rubbery language that cannot soften its impact -- put the intelligence community and the American public on the same page. The public awakened to the reality of failure in Iraq last year and turned the Republicans

out of control of Congress to wake it up. But a majority of its members are still asleep, or only half-awake to their new writ to end the war soon.

Perhaps this is not surprising. Americans do not warm to defeat or failure, and our politicians are famously reluctant to admit their own responsibility for anything resembling those un-American outcomes. So they beat around the bush, wringing hands and debating "nonbinding resolutions" that oppose the president's plan to increase the number of U.S. troops in Iraq.

For the moment, the collision of the public's clarity of mind, the president's relentless pursuit of defeat and Congress's anxiety has paralyzed us. We may be doomed to two more years of chasing the mirage of democracy in Iraq and possibly widening the war to Iran. But this is not inevitable. A Congress, or a president, prepared to quit the game of "who gets the blame" could

begin to alter American strategy in ways that will vastly improve the prospects of a more stable Middle East.

No task is more important to the well-being of the United States. We face great peril in that troubled region, and improving our prospects will be difficult. First of all, it will require, from Congress at least, public acknowledgment that the president's policy is based on illusions, not realities. There never has been any right way to invade and transform Iraq. Most Americans need no further convincing....

Posted by: [anne](#) | [February 15, 2007 at 02:23 AM](#)

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