



## The War Crimes That Don't Get Punished

Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-Calif.) found himself in hot water recently over comments he made in defense of Navy SEAL Edward Gallagher, who faces war crimes charges over his alleged conduct while serving in combat overseas. Gallagher is charged with stabbing a 15-year-old ISIS member while in custody, of taking photos posing with the corpse of the teen, and with killing several civilians.

Defending Gallagher recently, Hunter put his own record up next to the SEAL to suggest that he's an elected Congressman who has done worse things in battle than Gallagher.

That's where Hunter's defense earned him some perhaps unwanted attention. While participating in the first "Battle of Fallujah" in early 2007, by Hunter's own account he and his fellow soldiers killed hundreds of innocent civilians, including women and children. They fired mortars into the city and killed at random.

In the sanitized world of US mainstream media reporting on US wars overseas, we do not hear about non-combatants being killed by Americans. How many times has there been any reporting on the birth defects that Iraqis continue to suffer in the aftermath of US attacks with horrific weapons like depleted uranium and white phosphorus?

Rep. Hunter described his philosophy when fighting in Iraq:

"You go in fast and hard, you kill people, you hit them in the face and then you get out...We're going to hurt you and then we're going to leave. And if you want to be nice to America, we'll be nice to you. If you don't want to be nice to us, we're going to slap you again."

This shows how much Duncan Hunter does not understand about war. When he speaks of hitting people in the face until they are nice to America, he doesn't seem to realize that the people of Fallujah — and all of Iraq — never did a thing to the US to deserve that hit in the face. The war was launched on the basis of lies and cooked-up intelligence by many of the people who are serving in the current Administration.

And that brings us to the real war criminals. Rep. Duncan Hunter and his fellow soldiers may have killed hundreds of innocent civilians and even felt justified. Their superior officers, after all, established the rules of engagement. Above those superior officers, going up and beyond to the policymakers, the lie was sold to the American people to justify a war of choice against a country that could not have



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threatened us if it wanted to.

Vice President Dick Cheney knew what he was doing when he kept returning to the CIA headquarters, strong-arming analysts to make the intelligence fit the chosen policy. John Bolton and the other neocons knew what they were doing when they made claims about Iraq's weapons of mass destruction they knew were false. The Pentagon's Office of Special Plans played its role in selling the lie. So did the media.

Edward Gallagher will face trial and possibly jail for his actions. Rep. Duncan Hunter may even face punishment — though perhaps only at the ballot box — for his admitted crimes. But until those at the top who continue to lie and manipulate us into war for their own gain face justice, the real criminals will continue to go free and we will continue pursuing a suicidal neocon foreign policy.

*Ron Paul is a former U.S. congressman from Texas. This article originally appeared at the [Ron Paul Institute for Peace and Prosperity](#) and is reprinted here with permission.*



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