



Joseph Wilson

Former Senior United States Diplomat

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The last American official to confront Saddam Hussein before the start of the 1990 Gulf War, Joe Wilson was the acting U.S. Ambassador in Iraq throughout Operation Desert Shield. During his 20-plus year career in international relations, he held numerous senior government appointments, including Special Assistant to President Clinton and Senior Director for African Affairs at the National Security Council. President George H.W. Bush called Wilson "a true American hero" for his efforts to free more than 100 American hostages in Iraq after Saddam invaded Kuwait in 1990.

Wilson's highly decorated diplomatic career also includes service as Political Adviser to the Commander in Chief of U.S Armed Forces in Europe during the military activities in former Yugoslavia; and as the first President Bush's Ambassador to Gabon and to the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe.

In 2002, the Bush Administration asked Wilson to investigate reports that Saddam was seeking to acquire uranium from the West African nation of Niger for Iraq's nuclear program. Wilson reported back to Washington that there was no truth to the claims. Notwithstanding Wilson's report, President Bush asserted in his 2003 State of the Union address that "Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa," identifying the British as the source of this bogus intelligence.

In a *New York Times* article in July, 2003, Wilson publicly stated his conclusions resulting from his trip to Niger, and charged that the Bush Administration skewed the British intelligence to exaggerate the threat of Iraqi nuclear weapons development. Eight days later, as retaliation for his article, his wife's identity as a covert CIA officer was revealed by senior White House and State Department officials. The betrayal of Valerie Plame's identity was a crime, and resulted in the conviction of Vice President Dick Cheney's Chief of Staff on four counts of perjury, lying to federal investigators, and obstruction of justice.

At the podium, the former ambassador discusses his experiences in the world of international diplomacy, including riveting tales of his time in Baghdad with Saddam Hussein. He offers his views on U.S. policy towards Iraq and the Middle East, including his critique of the war in Iraq and viable options to be pursued in the future. He also addresses the CIA leak controversy in an incisive and enlightening presentation that takes the audience into the swamp that is American politics. Drawing from his 2004 memoir, "The Politics of Truth," he recounts his two decades in world political affairs--from facing down Saddam to

challenging the source of the White House leaks. Wilson also discusses foreign affairs and international relations in a post-9/11 society as a frequent commentator for national and international news media.

AT A GLANCE: Joe Wilson was a member of the U.S. Diplomatic Service from 1976-98. Serving the administrations of both parties during this time, he held posts throughout Africa, including Ambassador to Gabon and to Sao Tome and Principe. From 1988-91, he was the Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, Iraq. During the first Gulf War, he was the acting U. S. Ambassador to Iraq and the last American diplomat to confront Saddam Hussein.

Among Ambassador Wilson's many awards are the Physicians for Social Responsibility Peacemaker Award (2007), and the ACLU's National Civil Liberties Award (2007). In October 2003, Wilson received the Ridenhour Truth-Telling Prize (which is awarded to an individual or organization that has brought an important issue to light) from the Fertel Foundation and the Nation Institute. Wilson's additional honors include: the Department of Defense Distinguished Service Award, the Department of State Superior and Meritorious Honor Awards, the University of California/Santa Barbara Distinguished Alumnus Award and the American Foreign Service Association William R. Rivkin Award.

A California native and graduate of UC-Santa Barbara, Wilson manages JC Wilson International Ventures, a consulting firm specializing in strategic management and international-business development. He resides in Santa Fe, New Mexico, with his wife and their two children.

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