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**HEADLINE:** Murtha jumps gun on Haditha

**BODY:**

Democrat Rep. John Murtha thinks he knows the truth about Haditha -- and he has been blabbing it to every last cable show host that will host him.

The loose-lipped former Marine has accused troops of wantonly killing some two dozen civilians, including children, "in cold blood" in the terrorist stronghold in Iraq last November. There are two ongoing military investigations into the incident itself and the actions of higher-ups in the Haditha aftermath.

Let me repeat that: The investigations are ongoing. Not complete. Official reports aren't expected for several weeks.

I do not know the truth about Haditha. Neither do Murtha and the media outlets calling the alleged massacre a massacre before all the facts are in. It would be helpful if they could handle these grave charges without serving as al Jazeera satellite offices. GOP Sen. John Warner, who like Murtha also served in the Marines, struck the right tone over the weekend -- refusing, unlike Murtha, to render a verdict against the Marines before trial and avoiding Bush Derangement Syndrome, but also taking the allegations very seriously.

I do know this. Children are dead. Other children have been orphaned. There are pictures of bullet holes and bloodied homes. There are evolving stories about what happened last Nov. 19 and serious allegations of a possible cover-up.

I also know this: Lance Cpl. Miguel Terrazas, the Marine who was killed by a roadside IED (improvised explosive device) that day, followed a proud family tradition of military service. He had received a commendation for bravery on his first tour of duty in Iraq in 2004. One of his fellow Marines said Terrazas's body was split in two by the bomb explosion that rocked his Hummer while on patrol that morning.

And there's this: Haditha is crawling with terrorists. The Associated Press points out that "in just three days last August, six Marine snipers were killed in Haditha and 14 Marines died in nearby Parwana in the deadliest roadside bombing of the war." Most-wanted al Qaeda leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi is reported to have lived in Haditha. The Washington Post quoted a military lawyer noting that Nov. 19 was the Marine 3rd Battalion's "hottest day" in Iraq.

"In addition to drone surveillance that day," the paper reported, "AV-8 Harriers were dropping bombs, helicopters were evacuating wounded, and a large firefight occurred about one-third of a mile from the site of the civilian shootings, said several people familiar with the investigation." Audio of radio traffic that day reportedly contradicts Rep. Murtha's claim that the Marines did not come under small-arms fire after the roadside explosion, according to one of the Post's military sources.

We know this, too: Naval Criminal Investigative Service officials have not turned their backs. Time magazine, which initially broke the story of survivors' accounts that prompted the military probe, reports that Haditha residents -- who have yet to be visited by any of Iraq's own officials - - "were gratified by the investigation's thoroughness" and "were especially impressed by the NCIS investigators" conducting three separate enquiries.

Finally, there is this incontrovertible fact: There are anti-war zealots on the American Left rooting for failure. They believe the worst about the troops. They've blindly embraced frauds who've lied about their military service and lied about wartime atrocities. They've allied themselves with socialist kooks and coddled murderous dictators. They are looking for any excuse to pull out, abandon military operations and reconstruction, and impeach the president.

They insist on giving suspected foreign terrorists more benefit of the doubt than our own men and women in uniform.

And that, I know, I am not willing to do.

I will wait. I will pray. And I will remind you that while the murder of civilians is and remains an anomaly in American military history, it is the jihadists' way of life.