**Hooray for Tony Snow:** On Fox News Sunday, Sen. Jay Rockefeller attacked President Bush for alleging that there was an imminent threat to the United States from Iraq.

Snow, then confronted the senator with a clip from this year's *State of the Union address*, where President Bush said:

Some have said we must not act until the threat is imminent. Since when have terrorists and tyrants announced their intentions, politely putting us on notice before they strike? If this threat is permitted to fully and suddenly emerge, all actions, all words, and all recriminations would come too late.

Rockefeller's response:

Rockefeller: Tony, if you listen to that as an average American person would, you, at least myself included, that is talking about the danger of an immediate attack. And in fact, the intelligence committee, the one thing they did not say was that there was, we were in danger of being attacked in this country.

Snow: I'm sorry. We've done a lot of research on this, and the president never said, and we've been looking for it, because a lot of you and your colleagues have said he talked about an imminent threat. And he never did. As a matter of fact, the key argument, was it not, that you can't wait for it to become an imminent threat because then it's too late.

Rockefeller: No. The argument, Tony, was based upon, I was there and I heard the speech, very close, and he was talking about weapons of mass destruction -- biological, chemical and nuclear -- and that was more or less signed off on by the intelligence community. Which raises a whole 'nother set of questions. And the whole problem was that there was a danger of attack. If the word "imminent threat" wasn't used, that was the predicate, that was the feeling that was given to the American people. And to the Congress whose vote the president clearly was trying to argue, or to convince during the course of that State of the Union message.

So, it doesn't matter what the president said, all that matters is that we (the American people and, apparently, much of the Senate) suffer from extremely poor comprehension skills. Yeah, he didn't say there was a threat was imminent, but he used the word, so we were confused.

Of course, Fox News' crack researchers didn't stop there. Rockefeller digs himself a deeper hole after Snow dug up an Oct. 10, 2002 speech by Rockefeller himself.

There has also been some debate over how "imminent" a threat Iraq poses. I do believe that Iraq poses an imminent threat, but I also believe that after September 11, the question is increasingly outdated. It is in the nature of these weapons, and the way they are targeted against civilian populations, that documented capability and demonstrated intent may be the only warning we get. To insist on further evidence could put some of our fellow Americans at risk. Can we afford to take that chance? We cannot!

Back to Snow:

Snow: What made you change your mind?

Rockefeller: That's correct. And that's what I felt at the time I cast that vote based upon the intelligence community's analysis of the situation. Particularly weapons of mass destruction. And what the president said in his speech. But the situation turns out not to have been quite like either the intelligence community or the president indicated. And that would be a vote that I would probably not make today based upon the revelations that there don't appear, at least to this point, to be any weapons of mass destruction. I've heard David Kay a number of times now. He has not indicated that. He's talking about perhaps they were all burned up or gotten rid of.

Work your mind around that one. Rockefeller didn't change his mind, but he did. But he didn't. But he was deceived. But it didn't matter. But... But....

That's more flip-flops than you'd see on a summer day at any San Diego beach.

But it gets better. Snow quotes again from the same Rockefeller speech.

But this isn't just a future threat. Saddam's existing biological and chemical weapons *capabilities* pose a very real threat to America now. Saddam has used chemical weapons before... He is working to develop delivery systems like missiles and unmanned aerial vehicles that could bring these deadly weapons against U.S. forces and U.S. facilities in the Middle East.
Well, at least that much is true, isn't it? Nope, Rockefeller continues the backpedaling.

Snow: And that, indeed, is what David Kay reported to Congress last week, is it not?

Rockefeller: No. It is not. David Kay did not report that degree of possibility at all to the Congress. And he actually was very clear in his public statements, forget his intelligence committee statements, he was very clear about that. He was not certain about it. He said we had a lot more work to do. It's going another six to nine months to find out if he had these weapons of mass destruction or not.

But as Andrew Sullivan pointed out after Kay made his first report to Congress and the public, it is 100 percent true.

From Sullivan's blog:

* A clandestine network of laboratories and safehouses within the Iraqi Intelligence Service that contained equipment subject to UN monitoring and suitable for continuing CBW research.

* A prison laboratory complex, possibly used in human testing of BW agents, that Iraqi officials working to prepare for UN inspections were explicitly ordered not to declare to the UN.

* Reference strains of biological organisms concealed in a scientist's home, one of which can be used to produce biological weapons.

* New research on BW-applicable agents, Brucella and Congo Crimean Hemorrhagic Fever (CCHF), and continuing work on ricin and aflatoxin were not declared to the UN.

* Documents and equipment, hidden in scientists' homes, that would have been useful in resuming uranium enrichment by centrifuge and electromagnetic isotope separation (EMIS).

* A line of UAVs not fully declared at an undeclared production facility and an admission that they had tested one of their declared UAVs out to a range of 500 km, 350 km beyond the permissible limit.

* Continuing covert capability to manufacture fuel propellant useful only for prohibited SCUD variant missiles, a capability that was maintained at least until the end of 2001 and that cooperating Iraqi scientists have said they were told to conceal from the UN.

* Plans and advanced design work for new long-range missiles with ranges up to at least 1000 km - well beyond the 150 km range limit imposed by the UN. Missiles of a 1000 km range would have allowed Iraq to threaten targets throughout the Middle East, including Ankara, Cairo, and Abu Dhabi.

* Clandestine attempts between late-1999 and 2002 to obtain from North Korea technology related to 1,300 km range ballistic missiles --probably the No Dong -- 300 km range anti-ship cruise missiles, and other prohibited military equipment.

Snow is much too nice. Rockefeller is either a liar or an idiot. I'd bet on liar. Seriously, what else can be said about this man's statements?

There are issues here that can be debated, and then there are simple truths.

The simple truth is that Iraq's WMD capabilities were there and were hidden -- and that David Kay reported just that.

The simple truth is that Iraq was working on UAVs and missiles that could threaten his neighbors and U.S. forces in the region -- and David Kay reported just that.

To deny these facts and to attack the president based on that willful deceit is outrageous. Sen. Rockefeller is placing partisan politics above the security of the United States and the troops on the ground in Iraq.

*UPDATE* Fox News' official transcript can be found here.