

*How did the U.S. government lead its people to war?*

## Bush Administration Claims vs. The Facts

### No mobile biological weapons labs were found in Iraq

#### Pre-War Claims:

Senior members of the Bush administration claimed that Iraq possessed truck-mounted and train-mounted mobile biological weapons laboratories.

#### Facts:

There is no evidence of the existence of mobile bioweapons laboratories.

The chief source for the Bush administration's claim was an Iraqi defector, codenamed "Curveball." Prior to the invasion of Iraq, British intelligence, German intelligence, and analysts from the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency and the CIA determined that Curveball was a fabricator, and was therefore completely unreliable as an intelligence source. Three other Iraqi defectors who corroborated Curveball's claims were also found to be fabricators.

By May 2002, the Defense Intelligence Agency issued an official "fabrication notice" instructing other intelligence agencies to disregard the defector's information as unreliable.

#### Overview:

Although Curveball and a former Iraqi intelligence service defector, who corroborated Curveball's story, were both determined to be fabricators by multiple intelligence agencies before the war – and despite the fact that the Bush administration was briefed on this – Bush, Powell and other senior officials persisted in citing Curveball's fictitious claims about the existence of mobile bioweapons labs as solid facts.

A Mechanism for War

Rhetoric and Spin

War Through Rose-Colored Glasses

Abuses and Misuses of Intelligence

A Mythic Reality

Items of Note

Bush Administration Claims vs. The Facts

No weapons of mass destruction found

● No mobile biological weapons labs

Iraq did not seek to acquire yellowcake uranium

Aluminum tubes not for nuclear weapons

Mohamed Atta did not meet with Iraqis

Iraq did not provide training to al-Qaeda

No collaboration between Iraq and al-Qaeda

Iraq was not involved in the attacks of 9/11

The Costs of War



### Two trailers found in Mosul and Irbil after the invasion were not mobile biological weapons labs

[\[link to story and timeline\]](#)

Two trailers were found in Iraq in late April 2003, five weeks after the war began, which the Bush administration contended were mobile bioweapons labs – proof of Iraq's possession of WMD. They held onto this position for eight months, despite the May 2003 conclusion of British, U.S. and U.N. bioweapons inspectors that these trucks were used to generate hydrogen for weather balloons.

**January 2000 – September 2001** [\[reported at a later date\]](#)

**The Los Angeles Times** (reported on November 20, 2005) [\[link to source\]](#)

An Iraqi defector, codenamed "Curveball," is extensively debriefed by Germany's Federal Intelligence Service. He claims that, starting in 1995, he worked for Iraq's Military Industrial Commission, building bio-warfare vehicles. He names "six sites where Iraq might be hiding biological warfare vehicles," and says that three are already in operation.

German Intelligence officials cannot verify Curveball's claims. Moreover, Curveball never claimed to have been involved in the production of biological agents, nor witnessed anyone producing such agents.

**September 2001** [\[reported at a later date\]](#)

**The Los Angeles Times** (reported on November 20, 2005) [\[link to source\]](#)



The CIA learns that British intelligence "is not convinced that Curveball is a wholly reliable source" and that "elements of [his] behavior strike us as typical of ... fabricators."

"British intelligence also warned that spy satellite images taken in 1997 when Curveball claimed to be working at Djerf al Nadaf [an alleged bio-laboratory work site] conflicted with his descriptions."

**May 2002** [\[reported at a later date\]](#)

**The New York Times** (reported on February 13, 2004) [\[link to source\]](#) [\[link to source\]](#)

Three Iraqi defectors corroborated Curveball's story; however, the most important defector, a former major in the Iraqi intelligence service, was deemed a fabricator.

"Defense Intelligence Agency officers detected inconsistencies in the defector's account and concluded that he had been 'coached by the I.N.C.' [Iraqi National Congress] to provide information about Iraq's illicit weapons program, one official said.

"That prompted the intelligence agency to issue a 'fabrication notification' in May of 2002, instructing other intelligence agencies to disregard the defector's information as unreliable."

**September 2002** [\[reported at a later date\]](#)

**The Los Angeles Times** (reported on November 20, 2005) [\[link to source\]](#)

"Tyler Drumheller, then the head of CIA spying in Europe, called the German Intelligence station chief at the German embassy in Washington in September 2002 seeking access to Curveball.

"Drumheller and the station chief met for lunch... The German officer warned that Curveball had suffered a mental breakdown and was 'crazy,'

" 'He said, first off, '[German Intelligence] won't let you [the CIA] see him,' ' Drumheller said. ' 'Second, there are a lot of problems. Principally, we think he's probably a fabricator.' "

"Drumheller, a veteran of 26 years in the CIA clandestine service, said he and several aides repeatedly raised alarms after the lunch in tense exchanges with CIA analysts working on the Curveball case.

"In one meeting, [a CIA] analyst fiercely defended Curveball's account, saying she had confirmed on the Internet many of the details... 'Exactly, it's on the Internet!' the [CIA] operations group chief for Germany... exploded in response. 'That's where [Curveball] got it too,' according to a participant at the meeting."

**September 18, 2002**

**Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, at the House Armed Services Committee hearing** [\[link to source\]](#)

"Many of his WMD capabilities are mobile and can be hidden to evade inspectors."

**January 28, 2003**

**President George W. Bush delivers his State of the Union Address** [\[link to source\]](#)

"From three Iraqi defectors we know that Iraq, in the late 1990s, had several mobile biological weapons labs. These are designed to produce germ warfare agents, and can be moved from place to a place to evade inspectors. Saddam Hussein has not disclosed these facilities. He's given no evidence that he has destroyed them."

**February 5, 2003**

**Secretary of State Colin Powell addresses the United Nations Security Council and presents a slideshow of elaborate drawings depicting mobile biological weapons labs** [\[link to source\]](#)

"Every statement I make today is backed up by sources, solid sources. These are not assertions."

"One of the most worrisome things that emerges from the thick intelligence file we have on Iraq's biological weapons is the existence of mobile production facilities used to make biological agents."

"Let me take you inside that intelligence file and share with you what we know from eye witness accounts. We have firsthand descriptions of biological weapons factories on wheels and on rails."

"The source was an eye witness, an Iraqi chemical engineer who supervised one of these facilities. He actually was present during biological agent production runs. He was also at the site when an accident occurred in 1998. Twelve technicians died from exposure to biological agents."

"His eyewitness account of these mobile production facilities has been corroborated by other sources."

"A second source, an Iraqi civil engineer in a position to know the details of the program, confirmed the existence of transportable facilities moving on trailers."

"A third source, also in a position to know, reported in summer 2002 that Iraq had manufactured mobile production systems mounted on road trailer units and on rail cars."

"Finally, a fourth source, an Iraqi major, who defected, confirmed that Iraq has mobile biological research laboratories...."



**The Los Angeles Times (reported on November 20, 2005)** [\[reported at a later date\]](#) [\[link to source\]](#)

**Los Angeles Times**

"The senior [German Intelligence] officer who supervised Curveball's case said he was aghast when he watched Powell misstate Curveball's claims as a justification for war."

"'We were shocked,' the official said. 'Mein Gott! We had always told them it was not proven.... It was not hard intelligence.'"

**February 8, 2003**

**President George W. Bush's weekly radio address** [\[link to source\]](#)

"Firsthand witnesses have informed us that Iraq has at least seven mobile factories for the production of biological agents – equipment mounted on trucks and rails to evade discovery."

**February 8, 2003** [\[reported at a later date\]](#)

**The Los Angeles Times (reported on November 20, 2005)** [\[link to source\]](#)

Team Bravo, a United Nations inspection team led by U.S. biological weapons experts, searches Djerf al Nadaf, Curveball's alleged former work site of mobile bio-weapons labs.

"On Feb. 8, three days after Powell's speech, the U.N.'s Team Bravo conducted the first search of Curveball's former work site. The raid by the American-led biological weapons experts lasted 3 1/2 hours. It was long enough to prove Curveball had lied."

"Boston microbiologist Rocco Casagrande ... tested ... samples for bacterial or viral DNA. He was searching for any signs that germs were produced at the site or any traces of the 1998 bio-weapons accident. Test results were all negative."

**February 16, 2003**

**National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice on NBC News' Meet The Press** [\[link to source\]](#)

"Iraq has many tests before it right now. It keeps failing these tests... We need to know what has become of the mobile biological weapons laboratories that, now repeated people have told us, exist in Iraq."



**March 7, 2003**

**Chief United Nations weapons inspector Hans Blix delivers a presentation to the U.N. Security Council** [\[link to source\]](#)



"Several inspections have taken place at declared and undeclared sites in relation to mobile production facilities. ...No evidence of proscribed activities have so far been found."

**March 19, 2003**

**The U.S. launches military strikes, commencing the Iraq War.**



**June 2003** [\[reported at a later date\]](#)

**The Los Angeles Times (reported on November 20, 2005)** [\[link to source\]](#)

"After U.S troops failed to find illicit Iraqi weapons in the days and weeks after the invasion, the CIA created the Iraq Survey Group to conduct a methodical search in June 2003.

"One CIA-led unit investigated Curveball himself. The leader was 'Jerry,' a veteran CIA bio-weapons analyst who had championed Curveball's case at the CIA weapons center. They found Curveball's personnel file in an Iraqi government storeroom. It was devastating.

"Curveball was last in his engineering class, not first, as he had claimed. He was a low-level trainee engineer, not a project chief or site manager, as the CIA had insisted.

"Most important, records showed Curveball had been fired in 1995, at the very time he said he had begun working on bio-warfare trucks. A former CIA official said Curveball also apparently was jailed for a sex crime and then drove a Baghdad taxi.

"Jerry and his team interviewed 60 of Curveball's family, friends and co-workers. They all denied working on germ weapons trucks. Curveball's former bosses at the engineering center said the CIA had fallen for 'water cooler gossip' and 'corridor conversations.'

"Curveball's motive, CIA officials said, was not to start a war. He simply was seeking a German visa."

**June 30, 2003**

**Secretary of State Colin Powell on NBC's The Today Show** [\[link to source\]](#)

"I reviewed that presentation that I made on the 5th of February a number of times, as you might imagine, over recent weeks, and it holds up very well. It was the solid, coordinated judgment of the intelligence community."



**October 2, 2003**

**Created in June 2003, the Iraq Survey Group (ISG) was a fact-finding mission organized by the Pentagon and the CIA, consisting of 1,400 Americans, Britons and Australians charged to find weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. David Kay, head of the ISG, reports to Congress, four months after his group began a methodical search for WMD in Iraq** [\[link to source\]](#)

"We have not yet been able to corroborate the existence of a mobile BW production effort."

**December 2003** [\[reported at a later date\]](#)

**The Los Angeles Times** (reported on November 20, 2005) [\[link to source\]](#)



"In December 2003, Kay flew back to CIA headquarters. He said he told Tenet that Curveball was a liar and he was convinced Iraq had no mobile labs or other illicit weapons. CIA officials confirm their exchange."

**May 2004** [\[reported at a later date\]](#)

**The CIA issues a burn notice to its stations worldwide** (reported by the *Los Angeles Times*, November 20, 2005) [\[link to source\]](#)

"Discrepancies surfaced regarding the information provided by ... Curveball in this stream of reporting, which indicate that he lost his claimed access in 1995. Our assessment, therefore, is that Curveball appears to be fabricating in this stream of reporting."

**May 16, 2004**

**Secretary of State Colin Powell on NBC News' Meet The Press** [\[link to source\]](#)



"When I made that presentation in February 2003, it was based on the best information that the Central Intelligence Agency made available to me. ...We looked at the sourcing in the case of the mobile trucks and trains.

"...It turned out that the sourcing was inaccurate and wrong and in some cases, deliberately misleading. And for that, I am disappointed and I regret it."

**July 9, 2004**

**The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence publishes the findings of its investigations into prewar intelligence, Report on the U.S. Intelligence Community's Prewar Intelligence Assessments on Iraq, page 188** [\[link to source\]](#)

"The statement in the National Intelligence Estimate that 'Baghdad has mobile transportable facilities for producing bacterial and toxin biological weapons agents,' overstated what the intelligence reporting suggested about an Iraqi mobile biologicals weapons effort and did not accurately convey to readers the uncertainties behind the source reporting."

"The Central Intelligence Agency withheld important information concerning ... CURVE BALL's reliability ... from many Intelligence Community analysts with a need to know the information."

**September 30, 2004**

**After 18 months of exhaustive investigations, the CIA-appointed Iraq Survey Group issues its final report** [\[link to source\]](#) [\[link to source\]](#)



"Debriefings and site visits have uncovered information that differs with pre-OIF [Operation Iraqi Freedom] reporting, including denials of the existence of the program from personnel allegedly involved.

"ISG has exhausted many leads and exploited many sites reportedly pertaining to Iraq's alleged mobile BW agent production capability and have obtained no additional evidence to corroborate the claim of the existence of a mobile BW program."

**November 20, 2005**

**The Los Angeles Times reports** [\[link to source\]](#)

"In a telephone interview, [former Secretary of State Colin] Powell said that George J. Tenet, then the director of central intelligence, and his top deputies personally assured him before his U.N. speech that U.S. intelligence on the mobile labs was 'solid.' Since then, Powell said, the case 'has totally blown up in our faces.'

"... The three sources the CIA said had corroborated Curveball's story... turned out to be frauds.

"The most important, a former major in the Iraqi intelligence service, was deemed a liar by the CIA and DIA

[Defense Intelligence Agency]. In May 2002, a fabricator warning was posted in U.S. intelligence databases.

"Powell said he was never warned, during three days of intense briefings at CIA headquarters before his U.N. speech [on February 5, 2003], that he was using material that both the DIA and CIA had determined was false. 'As you can imagine, I was not pleased,' Powell said. 'What really made me not pleased was they had put out a [burn notice](#) on this guy, and people who were even present at my [CIA] briefings knew it.'"

[\[link to a PDF of this page\]](#)