

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

Bush Administration Claims vs. The Facts

No weapons of mass destruction of any kind were found in Iraq



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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

Pre-War Claims:

Senior members of the Bush administration made repeated claims that Iraq possessed chemical, biological and nuclear weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and WMD programs, and was a grave and imminent threat to the security of the United States and the world.

Facts:

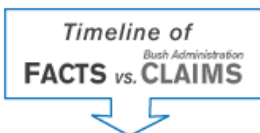
Following the invasion of Iraq in March 2003, many months of exhaustive investigations found no stockpiles of chemical, biological or nuclear weapons. No evidence of active WMD programs was found.

Iraq's nuclear program ended in 1991 following the first Gulf War, and was never reconstituted. Iraq destroyed its chemical weapons stockpile in 1991. Its biological weapons were destroyed in 1991 and 1992. Through 1998, U.N. weapons inspectors repeatedly checked suspected facilities, and had installed cameras to monitor activity at these sites.

Overview:

Despite many reports from U.S. and foreign intelligence agencies, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and other groups, questioning whether Iraq had WMD stockpiles or active development programs, the Bush administration continued to assert, without qualification, that Iraq definitely possessed WMDs.

Although Iraq's alleged possession of WMD programs was used as a justification for preemptive war, Iraq, in fact, did not possess any WMDs or active WMD programs.



January 29, 2002

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



"Iraq continues to flaunt its hostility toward America and to support terror. The Iraqi regime has plotted to develop anthrax, and nerve gas, and nuclear weapons for over a decade. ... By seeking weapons of mass destruction, these regimes pose a grave and growing danger.

"We'll be deliberate, yet time is not on our side. I will not wait on events, while dangers gather. I will not stand by, as peril draws closer and closer. The United States of America will not permit the world's most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world's most destructive weapons."

February 13, 2002

Knight Ridder newspapers report [\[link to source\]](#)

"President Bush has decided to oust Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein from power and ordered the CIA, the Pentagon and other agencies to devise a combination of military, diplomatic and covert steps to achieve that goal, senior U.S. officials said Tuesday.

"No military strike is imminent, but Bush has concluded that Saddam and his nuclear, chemical and biological weapons programs are such a threat to U.S. security that the Iraqi dictator must be removed, even if U.S. allies do not help, said the officials, who all spoke on condition of anonymity.

"This is not an argument about whether to get rid of Saddam Hussein. That debate is over. This is ... how you do it,' a senior administration official said in an interview with Knight Ridder."

March 15, 2002 [\[reported at a later date\]](#)

London's Daily Telegraph (reported on November 18, 2004) [\[link to source\]](#)

"The latest Joint Intelligence Committee assessment, dated Friday, March 15 [2002], said information on Saddam's weapons of mass destruction was 'sporadic and patchy... There is no intelligence on any biological agent production facilities.'"

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

Knight Ridder newspapers (reported on February 6, 2004) [\[link to source\]](#)

"Dubious intelligence about Iraq's biological weapons programs found its way into the Bush administration's case for a pre-emptive invasion of Iraq despite the fact that officials warned in May 2002 that some of the information might be unreliable or fabricated."

March 24, 2002

Vice President Dick Cheney speaks with Wolf Blitzer on CNN's Late Edition [\[link to source\]](#)

"This is a man of great evil, as the President said. And he is actively pursuing nuclear weapons at this time..."

July 23, 2002 [\[reported at a later date\]](#)

On this day, Senior British officials meet with Prime Minister Tony Blair to discuss Iraq. Years later, the highly confidential minutes of this meeting, known as the Downing Street memo, would be leaked to the Sunday Times of London, which first reported on this memo on May 1, 2005 [\[link to source\]](#)



"Blair had made his fundamental decision on Saddam when he met President George W. Bush in Crawford, Texas, in April 2002.

"When the prime minister discussed Iraq with President Bush at Crawford in April,' states the paper, 'he said that the U.K. would support military action to bring about regime change.'

"Sir Richard Dearlove [the head of Britain's MI6 intelligence service] added ... his intelligence concerned his recent visit to Washington where he had held talks with George Tenet, director of the CIA.

"Military action was now seen as inevitable,' said Dearlove. 'Bush wanted to remove Saddam, through military action, justified by the conjunction of terrorism and WMD.'

"The Americans had been trying to link Saddam to the 9/11 attacks; but the British knew the evidence was flimsy or non-existent. Dearlove warned the meeting that 'the intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy.'

"It was clear from Dearlove's brief visit that the U.S. administration's attitude would compound the legal difficulties for Britain. The U.S. had no patience with the United Nations and little inclination to ensure an invasion was backed by the security council, he said.

"Nor did the Americans seem very interested in what might happen in the aftermath of military action...

"Amid all this talk of military might and invasion plans, one awkward voice spoke up. [U.K Foreign Secretary, Jack] Straw warned that, though Bush had made up his mind on military action, the case for it was 'thin...'

"A few weeks later the government would paint Saddam as an imminent threat to the Middle East and the world. But that morning in private Straw said: 'Saddam was not threatening his neighbours, and his WMD capability was less than that of Libya, North Korea or Iran.'

"It was a key point. If Saddam was not an immediate threat, could war be justified legally?...

"There were three possible legal bases for military action, said [Lord Peter] Goldsmith [Attorney General of England]. Self-defence, intervention to end a humanitarian crisis and a resolution from the U.N. Security Council.

"Neither of the first two options was a possibility with Iraq; it had to be a U.N. resolution. But relying, as some hoped they could, on an existing U.N. resolution, would be 'difficult.'"

August 26, 2002

Vice President Dick Cheney addresses the Veterans of Foreign Wars 103rd National Convention in Nashville, Tennessee [\[link to source\]](#)



"But we now know that Saddam has resumed his efforts to acquire nuclear weapons. Among other sources, we've gotten this from the firsthand testimony of defectors – including Saddam's own son-in-law, who was subsequently murdered at Saddam's direction. Many of us are convinced that Saddam will acquire nuclear weapons fairly soon.

"Simply stated, there is no doubt that Saddam Hussein now has weapons of mass destruction. There is no doubt he is amassing them to use against our friends, against our allies, and against us...

"As President Bush has said, time is not on our side. Deliverable weapons of mass destruction in the hands of a terror network, or a murderous dictator, or the two working together, constitutes as grave a threat as can be imagined. The risks of inaction are far greater than the risk of action..."

The *Washington Post* (reported on August 10, 2003) [\[reported at a later date\]](#) [\[link to source\]](#)

"[On Aug. 26, 2002, Cheney said:] 'We *now know* that Saddam has resumed his efforts to acquire nuclear weapons... Among other sources, we've gotten this from firsthand testimony from defectors, including Saddam's own son-in-law.'

"[Cheney's statement] was a reference to Hussein Kamel, who had managed Iraq's special weapons programs before defecting in 1995 to Jordan. But Saddam Hussein lured Kamel back to Iraq, and he was killed in February 1996, so Kamel could not have sourced what U.S. officials '*now know*.'

"And Kamel's testimony, after defecting, was the reverse of Cheney's description. In one of many debriefings by U.S., Jordanian and U.N. officials, Kamel said on Aug. 22, 1995, that Iraq's uranium enrichment programs had not resumed after halting at the start of the Gulf War in 1991."

In a commentary in the *Chicago Tribune* (published on September 10, 2002), former chief United Nations Special Commission in Iraq [UNSCOM] weapons inspector Scott Ritter challenges Vice President Cheney's August 26, 2002 claim that Saddam Hussein has resumed efforts to acquire nuclear weapons. Ritter points out that Cheney omitted a key part of Saddam's son-in-law, Hussein Kamal's story [\[link to source\]](#) [\[link to source\]](#)



"Throughout his interview with UNSCOM, a U.N. special commission, Hussein Kamal reiterated his main point—that nothing was left. 'All chemical weapons were destroyed,' he said. 'I ordered destruction of all chemical weapons. All weapons—biological, chemical, missile, nuclear—were destroyed. There is not a single missile left.'"



September 1, 2002

Scott Ritter, former Chief U.N. Weapons Inspector from 1991–1998, writes in the *Baltimore Sun* [\[link to source\]](#)

"From 1991 to 1998, U.N. weapons inspectors, among whom I played an integral part, were able to verifiably ascertain a 90 percent to 95 percent level of disarmament inside Iraq. This included all of the production facilities involved with WMD, together with their associated production equipment and the great majority of what was produced by these facilities."

Of the rest, Ritter told the U.K. *Guardian* three weeks later on September 19, 2002 [\[link to source\]](#)

"Iraq has destroyed 90 to 95% of its weapons of mass destruction... We have to remember that this missing 5 to 10% doesn't necessarily constitute a threat. It doesn't even constitute a weapons programme.

"We destroyed all the factories, all of the means of production. We couldn't account for some of the weaponry, but chemical weapons have a shelf-life of five years. Biological weapons have a shelf-life of three. To have weapons today, they would have had to rebuild the factories and start producing these weapons since December 1998."

And years earlier, on January 20, 1998, the United Nations Special Commission in Iraq [UNSCOM] released an internal working paper, entitled *Concealment Aspect – Chemical Weapons [CW]*. UNSCOM member and technical expert Igor Mitrokhin wrote [\[link to source\]](#)

"Taking into consideration the conditions and the quality of CW-agents and munitions produced by Iraq at that time, there is no possibility of weapons remaining from the mid-1980's."

September 7, 2002

President George W. Bush addresses the press with British Prime Minister Tony Blair at Camp David [\[link to source\]](#)



"I would remind you that when the inspectors ... went into Iraq ... a report came out of the Atomic- the IAEA- that they were six months away from developing a weapon. I don't know what more evidence we need.

In reference to this claim by President Bush, Joseph Curl reported three weeks later in the *Washington Times* (on September 27, 2002) [\[link to source\]](#) [\[link to source\]](#)

"The International Atomic Energy Agency says that a report cited by President Bush as evidence that Iraq in 1998 was "six months away" from developing a nuclear weapon does not exist.

"There's never been a report like that issued from this agency," Mark Gwozdecky, the IAEA's chief spokesman, said yesterday in a telephone interview from the agency's headquarters in Vienna, Austria.

"In October 1998, just before Saddam kicked U.N. weapons inspectors out of Iraq, the IAEA laid out a case opposite of Mr. Bush's Sept. 7 declaration.

"There are no indications that there remains in Iraq any physical capability for the production of weapon-usable nuclear material of any practical significance," IAEA Director-General Mohammed Elbaradei wrote in a report to U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

"Mr. Gwozdecky said... 'I don't know where they have determined that Iraq has retained this much weaponization capability because when we left in December '98 we had concluded that we had neutralized their nuclear-weapons program. We had confiscated their fissile material. We had destroyed all their key buildings and equipment,' he said.

"Mr. Gwozdecky said there is no evidence about Saddam's nuclear capability right now — either through his organization, other agencies or any government."

September 8, 2002

Secretary of State Colin Powell speaks on *Fox News Sunday* [\[link to source\]](#)

"There is no doubt that he has chemical weapons stocks... There's no question that he has these weapons. But even more importantly, he is striving to do even more, to get even more."

September 12, 2002

President George W. Bush speaks at the United Nations General Assembly, New York

[\[link to source\]](#)



"U. N. inspectors believe Iraq has produced two to four times the amount of biological agents it declared, and has failed to account for more than three metric tons of material that could be used to produce biological weapons. Right now, Iraq is expanding and improving facilities that were used for the production of biological weapons.

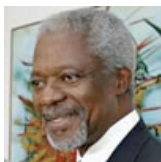
"United Nations' inspections also revealed that Iraq likely maintains stockpiles of VX, mustard and other chemical agents, and that the regime is rebuilding and expanding facilities capable of producing chemical weapons...

"With every step the Iraqi regime takes toward gaining and deploying the most terrible weapons, our own options to confront that regime will narrow. And if an emboldened regime were to supply these weapons to terrorist allies, then the attacks of September the 11th would be a prelude to far greater horrors."

September 16, 2002

A letter from Iraq's minister of foreign affairs, Naji Sabri, is hand-delivered to U.N. Secretary-General Kofi

Annan, stating that Iraq is allowing the return of U.N. weapons inspectors "without conditions" [\[link to source\]](#)



"I am pleased to inform you of the decision of the Government of the Republic of Iraq to allow the return of United Nations weapons inspectors to Iraq without conditions..."

"The Government of the Republic of Iraq has based its decision concerning the return of inspectors on its desire to complete the implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions and to remove any doubts that Iraq still possesses weapons of mass destruction..."

"To this end, the Government of the Republic of Iraq is ready to discuss the practical arrangements necessary for the immediate resumption of inspections."

September 18, 2002

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld testifies before the House Armed Services Committee hearing

[\[link to source\]](#)

"[Hussein's] regime has amassed large clandestine stocks of biological weapons, including anthrax and botulism toxin and possibly smallpox. His regime has amassed large stockpiles of chemical weapons, including VX and sarin and mustard gas."

September 20, 2002

Vice President Dick Cheney speaks at a GOP fundraiser in Casper, Wyoming, as recorded by the Associated Press [\[link to source\]](#)



"We now have irrefutable evidence that he has once again set up and reconstituted his program to take uranium, to enrich it to sufficiently high grade, so that it will function as the base material as a nuclear weapon."

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

A Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) report is issued, stating (declassified by the Department of Defense, June 9, 2003) [\[link to source\]](#)



"A substantial amount of Iraq's chemical warfare agents, precursors, munitions, and production equipment were destroyed between 1991 and 1998 as a result of Operation Desert Storm and UNSCOM actions... There is no reliable information on whether Iraq is producing and stockpiling chemical weapons, or where Iraq has — or will — establish its chemical warfare agent production facilities."

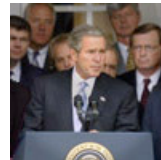
September 26, 2002

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld speaks to the press in the Pentagon Press Room [\[link to source\]](#)

"We know they have weapons of mass destruction. We know they have active programs. There isn't any debate about it."

September 26, 2002

President George W. Bush addresses the press in the White House Rose Garden [\[link to source\]](#)



"The danger to our country is grave... The Iraqi regime possesses biological and chemical weapons. The Iraqi regime is building the facilities necessary to make more biological and chemical weapons.

"According to the British government, the Iraqi regime could launch a biological or chemical attack in as little as 45 minutes, after the order were given."

Vanity Fair (reported in May 2004) [\[reported at a later date\]](#) [\[link to source\]](#)

"The MI6 [British Intelligence] chief, Sir Richard Dearlove, called on [Prime Minister Tony] Blair at Downing Street. He had the answer to the prime minister's prayers: a source inside Iraq saying Saddam had stocks of chemical and biological weapons which could be deployed within 45 minutes. There was no corroboration, and the source's contact with MI6 was not direct: his claim had been supplied via one of the I.N.C.'s [Iraqi National Congress's] rivals, the London-based Iraqi National Accord. There had been no attempt to run the claim by the acknowledged intelligence experts on W.M.D. 'You just never do this,' says one intelligence official."

October 1, 2002 [\[reported at a later date\]](#)

In the classified, 93-page [National Intelligence Estimate \(NIE\)](#) entitled *Iraq's Continuing Programs For Weapons of Mass Destruction*, the CIA asserts that Iraq is reconstituting its nuclear program.

Relegated as an alternative assessment within the NIE, the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) states (from the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence's *Report on the U.S. Intelligence Community's Prewar Intelligence Assessments on Iraq*, published on July 9, 2004) [\[link to source\]](#) [\[link to source\]](#)

"The Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research (INR) believes that Saddam continues to want nuclear weapons... The activities we have detected do not, however, add up to a compelling case that Iraq is currently pursuing what INR would consider to be an integrated and comprehensive approach to acquire nuclear weapons. Iraq may be doing so, but INR considers the available evidence inadequate to support such a judgment."

October 7, 2002

President George W. Bush outlines the Iraqi threat at the Cincinnati Museum Center [\[link to source\]](#)

"Saddam Hussein is a homicidal dictator who is addicted to weapons of mass destruction.

"We agree that the Iraqi dictator must not be permitted to threaten America and the world with horrible poisons, and diseases, and gasses, and atomic weapons.

"We've also discovered, through intelligence, that Iraq has a growing fleet of manned and unmanned aerial vehicles that could be used to disburse chemical or biological weapons across broad areas. We're concerned that Iraq is exploring ways of using these UAVs for missions targeting the United States.



"The evidence indicates that Iraq is reconstituting its nuclear weapons program.

"Satellite photographs reveal that Iraq is rebuilding facilities at sites that have been part of its nuclear program in the past.

"Iraq has attempted to purchase high-strength aluminum tubes and other equipment needed for gas centrifuges, which are used to enrich uranium for nuclear weapons.

"If the Iraqi regime is able to produce, buy, or steal an amount of highly enriched uranium a little larger than a single softball, it could have a nuclear weapon in less than a year.

"America must not ignore the threat gathering against us. Facing clear evidence of peril, we cannot wait for the final

proof, the smoking gun, that could come in the form of a mushroom cloud.”

November 7, 2002

President George W. Bush speaks to the press in the Presidential Hall [\[link to source\]](#)

“I think most people around the world realize that Saddam Hussein is a threat. And no one likes war, but they also don’t like the idea of Saddam Hussein having a nuclear weapon. Imagine what would happen. And by the way, we don’t know how close he is to a nuclear weapon right now. We know he wants one...”

November 8, 2002

The United Nations Security Council votes to adopt Resolution 1441. It states: [\[link to source\]](#) [\[link to source\]](#)



[The U.N. Security Council]... “*Decides*... to afford Iraq, by this resolution, a final opportunity to comply with its disarmament obligations ... and accordingly decides to set up an enhanced inspection regime with the aim of bringing to full and verified completion the disarmament process...

“*Decides* that, in order to begin to comply with its disarmament obligations... the Government of Iraq shall provide... a currently accurate, full, and complete declaration of all aspects of its programmes to develop chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons...

“*Decides* that Iraq shall provide [U.N. weapons inspectors] immediate, unimpeded, unconditional, and unrestricted access to any and all, including underground, areas, facilities, buildings, equipment, records...

“*Recalls*... that the Council has repeatedly warned Iraq that it will face serious consequences as a result of its continued violations of its obligations.”

November 13, 2002

Iraq responds to U.N. Security Council Resolution 1441 [\[link to source\]](#)

“In a letter to United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan, Iraq today indicated its willingness to accept the return of weapons inspectors to the country under the terms of a new Security Council resolution...”

November 27, 2002

UNMOVIC and IAEA weapons inspections begin in Iraq [\[link to source\]](#)

“The UNMOVIC and IAEA inspection teams conducted their first weapons inspections today...”

December 3, 2002

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld speaks in the Pentagon Press Room [\[link to source\]](#)

“The United States knows that Iraq has weapons of mass destruction. The U.K. knows that they have weapons of mass destruction. Any country on the face of the earth with an active intelligence program knows that Iraq has weapons of mass destruction.”



December 8, 2002

As required by U.N. Security Council Resolution 1441, Iraq needed to submit a “currently accurate, full, and complete declaration of all aspects of its programmes to develop chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons” by December 8, 2002. The New York Times reports: [\[link to source\]](#)

“Iraq today delivered a 12,000-page declaration on banned weapons to the United Nations, meeting a Security Council deadline with more than 24 hours to spare. Officials said the documents confirmed, in rebuttal of American and British claims, that Saddam Hussein’s government had no weapons of mass destruction and no current programs to develop them.”

January 18, 2003

Charles Hanley of the *Associated Press* reports [\[link to source\]](#)



"...International experts have uncovered no 'smoking guns' in Iraq in almost 400 inspections since late November." As the inspections failed to find any WMD, Bush officials challenged these outcomes, questioning once again the effectiveness of inspections."

[\[continue this timeline on page 2\]](#)

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