

# Once Again: Saddam Had Wmd . . .

*Investor's Business Daily*, A; Pg. A12  
June 22, 2006  
708 words

We can thank Rep. Peter Hoekstra, chairman of the House Committee on Intelligence, and Sen. Rick Santorum, for these stunning new revelations. Tired of the exaggerations and distortions in the debate over Iraq, the two senators asked National Intelligence Director John Negroponte for "key points" from a recent intelligence report on chemical **weapons** in Iraq.

What the CIA revealed is alarming:

\*\* Since 2003 Coalition forces have found about **500 weapons** armed with mustard or sarin nerve agents -- that is, WMD.

\*\* More WMD are likely to be found.

\*\* Pre-Gulf War chemical **weapons** could be sold on the black market, and might be used outside of Iraq.

\*\* It's likely that missiles containing both sarin -- so potent, one drop can kill a human -- and mustard gas remain.

\*\* Though "degraded," the **weapons** that were found "remain hazardous and potentially lethal."

\*\* Terrorists and Iraqi insurgent groups want to acquire and use chemical **weapons**.

Any rational observer would have to admit the claim that "Bush lied" about WMD no longer holds water. Indeed, among the many rationales for going to war against Saddam Hussein (see editorial below), WMD now look to be among the most easily proved.

Yet, despite what appear to be substantial amounts of WMD in Iraq, opponents of the war and their media allies won't be deterred.

Along with more documentation of Saddam's WMD program comes a new spin, perfectly summed up in a blase Washington Post report Thursday: "Last night, intelligence officials reaffirmed that the shells were old and were not the suspected **weapons** of mass destruction sought in Iraq after the 2003 invasion."

Let's be very clear: WMD are WMD. That these **weapons** can kill thousands, even millions, is what matters -- not what vintage they are. True, these were not of post-Gulf War vintage. But so what? Under the sanctions regime imposed by the United Nations, Saddam was required to report all WMD and decommission them. He didn't -- which was a big reason why we invaded.

Let's also be clear that this does not mean Saddam's only WMD were from the Gulf War era. Remember that the U.N., in a March 6, 2003, report on "unresolved" WMD issues with Saddam, said a massive amount of WMD material existed but was "unaccounted for."

The deadly trove included: 6,526 chemical bombs; 550 mustard gas shells; 2,062 tons of mustard gas precursors; 8,445 liters of anthrax; growth media for thousands and thousands of liters of germ agents such as anthrax, botulism and clostridium; 3.9 tons of VX nerve agent, and 15,000 chemical **weapons**. That's a lot of death, and it doesn't include Saddam's well-documented nuclear program, which was intended to build a workable bomb.

As we and others have said repeatedly, Saddam had these programs on cruise control and was just waiting for the end of sanctions --as many people were urging -- to resume production.

"Saddam pursued a strategy to maintain a capability to return to WMD production after sanctions were lifted by preserving assets and expertise," said the CIA's Duelfer Report, issued in 2004. "(W)e have clear evidence of his intent to resume WMD production as soon as sanctions were lifted."

That includes, by the way, ballistic missile and nuclear **weapons** research, all funded by Iraq's enormous oil wealth and fueled by Saddam's unbounded willingness to starve, murder and imprison his own people to achieve his dreams of military supremacy.

This isn't just our opinion, but that of former Iraqi Gen. Georges Sada. Sada claims Saddam spirited

WMD labs and material out of the country in early 2003, before the war began. He used a fleet of planes and trucks, and the logistical help of the Russians.

That Saddam had **weapons** of mass destruction, intended to use them and wanted to make more -- and deadlier -- ones is now beyond dispute. It's simply too well-documented.

With what we know now about WMD, it's high time for White House critics to retire their foolish "Bush lied" slogan. And while they're at it, they should stop calling for us to withdraw from a war we're actually winning.

Iraq War: The "Bush lied, people died" mantra used by the left as an all-purpose argument against the war looks pretty threadbare these days. Especially after the CIA revealed the U.S. has found **500** WMD in Iraq.

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