



THE WHITE HOUSE
PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH

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The Washington Post's Reckless Reporting On WMD Claims

[Setting the Record Straight](#)

"I will point out that the reporting I saw this morning was simply reckless and it was irresponsible. The lead in The Washington Post left the impression for the reader that the President was saying something he knew at the time not to be true. ... The President's statements were based on the joint assessment of the CIA and DIA that was publicly released the day before [the President made his statements]."

-Scott McClellan, White House Press Briefing
April 12, 2006

The Washington Post Implies President Bush Made Iraqi WMD Claims He Knew Had Already Been Proven False

The Washington Post: "On May 29, 2003, 50 days after the fall of Baghdad, President Bush proclaimed a fresh victory for his administration in Iraq: Two small trailers captured by U.S. and Kurdish troops had turned out to be long-sought mobile 'biological laboratories.' He declared, 'We have found the weapons of mass destruction.' The claim, repeated by top administration officials for months afterward, was hailed at the time as a vindication of the decision to go to war. But even as Bush spoke, U.S. intelligence officials possessed powerful evidence that it was not true." (Joby Warrick, "Lacking Biolabs, Trailers Carried Case For War," The Washington Post, 4/12/06)

- **Then, ABC News Irresponsibly Mischaracterizes The Washington Post's Report:** "They'd found a couple trailers that he said actually were the mobile biological laboratories that he said showed that they were indeed developing WMD, and The Washington Post has a story today that says the President knew at the time that was not true." (ABC's "Good Morning America," 4/12/06)

But The CIA And DIA Had Jointly Assessed At The Time That The Labs Were For Producing Biological Weapons

The President's Comments Followed The Intelligence Assessment Of The CIA And The DIA That Was Publicly Released Just One Day Earlier.

- **CIA/DIA Report (May 28, 2003):** "Coalition forces have uncovered the strongest evidence to date that Iraq was hiding a biological warfare program. ... US forces in late April also discovered a mobile laboratory truck in Baghdad. The truck is a toxicology laboratory from the 1980s that could be used to support BW or legitimate research. The design, equipment, and layout of the trailer found in late April is strikingly similar to descriptions provided by a source who was a chemical engineer that managed one of the mobile plants." ("Iraqi Mobile Biological Warfare Agent Production Plants," Central Intelligence Agency And Defense Intelligence Agency, 5/28/03)

- **View The Entire CIA/DIA Report At:** http://www.cia.gov/cia/reports/iraqi_mobile_plants/paper_w.pdf.

- **U.S. Intelligence Official:** "'We are highly confident that the coalition forces in Iraq have discovered ... a mobile biological production plant,' a U.S. intelligence official, not identified by the CIA, said via conference call." (Michelle Mittelstadt, "U.S. Officials 'Confident' Mobile Labs Were Intended For Biological Weapons Production," The Dallas Morning News, 5/29/03)

The CIA/DIA Report Was Only Later Determined To Be Wrong By The Robb/Silberman WMD Commission And The Iraq Survey Group. (Commission On The Intelligence Capabilities Of The United States Regarding Weapons Of Mass Destruction, "Report To The President," 3/31/05)

The Administration Has Repeatedly Acknowledged Intelligence Problems And Has Taken Multiple Steps To Address Them

The President Supported The Work Of The 9/11 Commission And The Robb/Silberman Commission. The White House provided the 9/11 Commission with unprecedented access, including providing close to 1,000 interviews with Administration officials and making available 2.3 million pages of documents for the Commission's review.

The Administration Has Taken Action On Most Of The 9/11 Commission's Recommendations That Apply To The Executive Branch.

- **Appointing The Director Of National Intelligence.** President Bush signed into law the landmark Intelligence Reform and Terrorism

Prevention Act of 2004, which overhauls the intelligence community, mandating a range of reforms and centralizing in one office key authorities. The Director of National Intelligence (DNI) serves as President Bush's principal intelligence advisor and the leader of the Intelligence Community.

The Washington Post Bases Its Claim On A Defense Department Field Report

The Washington Post: "A secret fact-finding mission to Iraq - not made public until now - had already concluded that the trailers had nothing to do with biological weapons. Leaders of the Pentagon-sponsored mission transmitted their unanimous findings to Washington in a field report on May 27, 2003, two days before the president's statement." (Joby Warrick, "Lacking Biolabs, Trailers Carried Case For War," The Washington Post, 4/12/06)

But The Defense Department Field Report Was A Preliminary Finding"

U.S. Intelligence Official: "You Don't Change A Report That Has Been Coordinated In The [Intelligence] Community Based On A Field Report." "A U.S. intelligence official, speaking to Reuters on condition of anonymity, confirmed the existence of the field report cited by the Post, but said it was a preliminary finding that had to be evaluated. 'You don't change a report that has been coordinated in the [intelligence] community based on a field report,' the official said. 'It's a preliminary report. No matter how strongly the individual may feel about the subject matter.'" ("White House Hotly Denies Report On Iraq WMD," Reuters, 4/12/06)

The Washington Post Cites Iraqi WMD Evidence As The Only Reason Offered By President Bush For Unseating Saddam Hussein

The Washington Post: "The trailers - along with aluminum tubes acquired by Iraq for what was claimed to be a nuclear weapons program - were primary pieces of evidence offered by the Bush administration before the war to support its contention that Iraq was making weapons of mass destruction." (Joby Warrick, "Lacking Biolabs, Trailers Carried Case For War," The Washington Post, 4/12/06)

But The President Provided Many Other Reasons For Liberating Iraq

1. Saddam Hussein Violated United Nations Security Council Resolutions.

- **President Bush Says The United Nations Must Hold Saddam Hussein Accountable.** PRESIDENT BUSH: "No, he's a threat. And that's why I went to the United Nations. I went to the United Nations because, I said to that august body, you need to hold this man to account." (President Bush, Remarks In South Dakota Welcome, Sioux Falls, SD, 11/3/02)
- **PRESIDENT BUSH:** "The United States Is Also Showing Our Commitment To Effective International Institutions." "In confronting Iraq, the United States is also showing our commitment to effective international institutions. ... We believe in the Security Council - so much that we want its words to have meaning. ... High-minded pronouncements against proliferation mean little unless the strongest nations are willing to stand behind them - and use force if necessary." (President Bush, Remarks On The Future Of Iraq, Washington, D.C., 2/26/03)

2. Patrolling The UN-Mandated No-Fly Zone, U.S. And Coalition Forces Were Regularly Attacked.

- **PRESIDENT BUSH: "A Regime That Fires Upon American And British Pilots Is Not Taking The Path Of Compliance."** (President Bush, Remarks At Signing Of The National Defense Authorization Act, Arlington, VA, 12/2/02)

3. Saddam Hussein Brutalized Iraq's Civilian Population.

- **PRESIDENT BUSH: The United States Must Not Leave Saddam Hussein's "Torture Chambers And Poison Labs In Operation."** (President Bush, Remarks On The Future Of Iraq, Washington, D.C., 2/26/03)

4. Saddam Hussein Supported And Harbored Terrorist Organizations.

- **President Bush Said That By Ending Saddam Hussein's Support For Terrorism, The United States Would Help "Begin A New Stage For Middle Eastern Peace" And "Deprive Terrorist Networks Of A Wealthy Patron That Pays For Terrorist Training, And Offers Rewards To Families Of Suicide Bombers."** (President Bush, Remarks On The Future Of Iraq, Washington, D.C., 2/26/03)

5. Saddam Hussein Had A History Of Pursuing And Using WMD.

- **President Bush Cites Saddam Hussein's Use Of Weapons Of Mass Destruction Against His Own People.** PRESIDENT BUSH: "Fifteen years ago, Saddam Hussein's regime ordered a chemical weapons attack on a village in Iraq called Halabja. With that single order, the regime killed thousands of Iraq's Kurdish citizens. ... The chemical attack on Halabja - just one of 40 targeted at Iraq's own people - provided a glimpse of the crimes Saddam Hussein is willing to commit, and the kind of threat he now presents to the entire world." (President Bush, Radio Address, 3/15/03)

6. Removing Saddam Hussein Brought Freedom To The Heart Of The Middle East.

- **PRESIDENT BUSH: "Acting Against The Danger Will Also Contribute Greatly To The Long-Term Safety And Stability Of Our World. The Current Iraqi Regime Has Shown The Power Of Tyranny To Spread Discord And Violence In The Middle East. A Liberated Iraq Can Show The Power Of Freedom To Transform That Vital Region, By Bringing Hope And Progress Into The Lives Of Millions. America's Interests In Security, And America's Belief In Liberty, Both Lead In The Same Direction: To A Free And Peaceful Iraq."** (President Bush, Remarks On The Future Of Iraq, Washington, D.C., 2/26/03)

Numerous Democrats Agreed Iraq Possessed WMD And Saw Saddam Hussein As A Threat

Sen. Hillary Clinton (D-NY): "In the four years since the inspectors left, intelligence reports show that Saddam Hussein has worked to rebuild his chemical and biological weapons stock, his missile delivery capability, and his nuclear program. He has also given aid, comfort, and sanctuary to terrorists, including al-Qaeda members ... It is clear, however, that if left unchecked, Saddam Hussein will continue to increase his capacity to wage biological and chemical warfare, and will keep trying to develop nuclear weapons." (Sen. Hillary Clinton, Congressional Record, 10/10/02, p. S10288)

Sen. John Kerry (D-MA): "When I vote to give the president of the United States the authority to use force, if necessary, to disarm Saddam Hussein because I believe that a deadly arsenal of weapons of mass destruction in his hands is a real and grave threat to our security...." (Sen. John Kerry, Congressional Record, 10/9/02, p. S10174)

- **Sen. John Kerry (D-MA):** "[W]ithout question, we need to disarm Saddam Hussein. He is a brutal, murderous dictator, leading an oppressive regime ... He presents a particularly grievous threat because he is so consistently prone to miscalculation ... And now he is miscalculating America's response to his continued deceit and his consistent grasp for weapons of mass destruction. So the threat of Saddam Hussein with weapons of mass destruction is real." (Sen. John Kerry, Remarks At Georgetown University, Washington, DC, 1/23/03)

Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-MA): "We have known for many years that Saddam Hussein is seeking and developing weapons of mass destruction." (Sen. Edward Kennedy, Remarks At The Johns Hopkins School Of Advanced International Studies, 9/27/02)

Sen. Robert Byrd (D-WV): "The last UN weapons inspectors left Iraq in October of 1998. We are confident that Saddam Hussein retains some stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons, and that he has since embarked on a crash course to build up his chemical and biological warfare capabilities. Intelligence reports indicate that he is seeking nuclear weapons..." ("Threats And Responses," The New York Times, 10/4/02)

Sen. Jay Rockefeller (D-WV): "There is unmistakable evidence that Saddam Hussein is working aggressively to develop nuclear weapons and will likely have nuclear weapons within the next five years ... We also should remember we have always underestimated the progress Saddam has made in development of weapons of mass destruction." (Sen. Jay Rockefeller, Congressional Record, 10/10/02, p. S10305)

Sen. Carl Levin (D-MI): "We begin with the common belief that Saddam Hussein is a tyrant and a threat to the peace and stability of the region. He has ignored the mandated of the United Nations and is building weapons of mass destruction and the means of delivering them." (Sen. Carl Levin, Committee On Armed Services, U.S. Senate, Hearing, 9/19/02)

Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-CA): "Saddam Hussein has been engaged in the development of weapons of mass destruction technology which is a threat to countries in the region and he has made a mockery of the weapons inspection process. The responsibility of the United States in this conflict is to eliminate weapons of mass destruction, to minimize the danger to our troops and to diminish the suffering of the Iraqi people." (Rep. Nancy Pelosi, "Statement On U.S. Led Military Strike Against Iraq," Press Release, 12/16/98)

Former President Bill Clinton: "One way or the other, we are determined to deny Iraq the capacity to develop weapons of mass destruction and the missiles to deliver them. That is our bottom line." ("US: Clinton Says Diplomatic Solution Preferable In Iraq," AAP Newsfeed, 2/5/98)

Former Vice President Al Gore: "We know that he has stored secret supplies of biological and chemical weapons throughout his country." (Former Vice President Al Gore, Remarks At The Commonwealth Club, San Francisco, CA, 9/23/02)

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