

# **Neglecting Intelligence, Ignoring Warnings**

*A chronology of how the Bush Administration repeatedly and deliberately refused to listen to intelligence agencies that said its case for war was weak*



*Former weapons inspector David Kay now says Iraq probably did not have WMD before the war, a major blow to the Bush Administration which used the WMD argument as the rationale for war. Unfortunately, Kay and the Administration are now attempting to shift the blame for misleading America onto the intelligence community. But a review of the facts shows the intelligence community repeatedly warned the Bush Administration about the weakness of its case, but was circumvented, overruled, and ignored. The following is year-by-year timeline of those warnings.*

## **2001: WH Admits Iraq Contained; Creates Agency to Circumvent Intel Agencies**

*In 2001 and before, intelligence agencies noted that Saddam Hussein was effectively contained after the Gulf War. In fact, former weapons inspector David Kay now admits that the previous policy of containment – including the 1998 bombing of Iraq – destroyed any remaining infrastructure of potential WMD programs.*

**OCTOBER 8, 1997 – IAEA SAYS IRAQ FREE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS:** “As reported in detail in the progress report dated 8 October 1997...and based on all credible information available to date, the IAEA's verification activities in Iraq, have resulted in the evolution of a technically coherent picture of Iraq's clandestine nuclear programme. These verification activities have revealed no indications that Iraq had achieved its programme objective of producing nuclear weapons or that Iraq had produced more than a few grams of weapon-usable nuclear material or had clandestinely acquired such material. Furthermore, there are no indications that there remains in Iraq any physical capability for the production of weapon-usable nuclear material of any practical significance.” [Source: IAEA Report, [10/8/98](#)]

**FEBRUARY 23 & 24, 2001 – COLIN POWELL SAYS IRAQ IS CONTAINED:** “I think we ought to declare [the containment policy] a success. We have kept him contained, kept him in his box.” He added Saddam “is unable to project conventional power against his neighbors” and that “he threatens not the United States.” [Source: State Department, [2/23/01](#) and [2/24/01](#)]

**SEPTEMBER 16, 2001 – CHENEY ACKNOWLEDGES IRAQ IS CONTAINED:** Vice President Dick Cheney said that “Saddam Hussein is bottled up” – a confirmation of the intelligence he had received. [Source: Meet the Press, [9/16/2001](#)]

**SEPTEMBER 2001 – WHITE HOUSE CREATES OFFICE TO CIRCUMVENT INTEL AGENCIES:** The Pentagon creates the Office of Special Plans “in order to find evidence of what Wolfowitz and his boss, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, believed to be true—that Saddam Hussein had close ties to Al Qaeda, and that Iraq had an enormous arsenal of chemical, biological, and possibly even nuclear weapons that threatened the region and, potentially, the United States...The rising influence of the Office of Special Plans was accompanied by a decline in the influence of the C.I.A. and the D.I.A. bringing about a crucial change of direction in the American intelligence community.” The office, hand-picked by the Administration, specifically “cherry-picked intelligence that supported its pre-existing position and ignoring all the rest” while officials deliberately “bypassed the government's customary procedures for vetting intelligence.” [Sources: New Yorker, 5/12/03; Atlantic Monthly, [1/04](#); New Yorker, [10/20/03](#)]

## **2002: Intel Agencies Repeatedly Warn White House of Its Weak WMD Case**

*Throughout 2002, the CIA, DIA, Department of Energy and United Nations all warned the Bush Administration that its selective use of intelligence was painting a weak WMD case. Those warnings were repeatedly ignored.*

**JANUARY, 2002 – TENET DOES NOT MENTION IRAQ IN NUCLEAR THREAT REPORT:** “In CIA Director George Tenet’s January 2002 review of global weapons-technology proliferation, he did not even mention a nuclear threat from Iraq, though he did warn of one from North Korea.” [Source: The New Republic, [6/30/03](#)]

**FEBRUARY 6, 2002 – CIA SAYS IRAQ HAS NOT PROVIDED WMD TO TERRORISTS:** “The Central Intelligence Agency has no evidence that Iraq has engaged in terrorist operations against the United States in nearly a decade, and the agency is also convinced that President Saddam Hussein has not provided chemical or biological weapons to Al Qaeda or related terrorist groups, according to several American intelligence officials.” [Source: NY Times, [2/6/02](#)]

**APRIL 15, 2002 – WOLFOWITZ ANGERED AT CIA FOR NOT UNDERMINING U.N. REPORT:** After receiving a CIA report that concluded that Hans Blix had conducted inspections of Iraq’s declared nuclear power plants “fully within the parameters he could operate” when Blix was head of the international agency responsible for these inspections prior to the Gulf War, a report indicated that “Wolfowitz ‘hit the ceiling’ because the CIA failed to provide sufficient ammunition to undermine Blix and, by association, the new U.N. weapons inspection program.” [Source: W. Post, [4/15/02](#)]

**SUMMER, 2002 – CIA WARNINGS TO WHITE HOUSE EXPOSED:** “In the late summer of 2002, Sen. Graham had requested from Tenet an analysis of the Iraqi threat. According to knowledgeable sources, he received a 25-page classified response reflecting the balanced view that had prevailed earlier among the intelligence agencies--noting, for example, that evidence of an Iraqi nuclear program or a link to Al Qaeda was inconclusive. Early that September, the committee also received the DIA’s classified analysis, which reflected the same cautious assessments. But committee members became worried when, midway through the month, they received a new CIA analysis of the threat that highlighted the Bush administration’s claims and consigned skepticism to footnotes.” [Source: The New Republic, [6/30/03](#)]

**SEPTEMBER, 2002 – DIA TELLS WHITE HOUSE NO EVIDENCE OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS:** “An unclassified excerpt of a 2002 Defense Intelligence Agency study on Iraq’s chemical warfare program in which it stated that 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.’” The report also said, “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 (United Nations Special Commission) actions.” [Source: Carnegie Endowment for Peace, [6/13/03](#); DIA report, [2002](#)]

**SEPTEMBER 20, 2002 – DEPT. OF ENERGY TELLS WHITE HOUSE OF NUKE DOUBTS:** “Doubts about the quality of some of the evidence that the United States is using to make its case that Iraq is trying to build a nuclear bomb emerged Thursday. While National Security Adviser Condi Rice stated on 9/8 that imported aluminum tubes ‘are only really suited for nuclear weapons programs, centrifuge programs’ a growing number of experts say that the administration has not presented convincing evidence that the tubes were intended for use in uranium enrichment rather than for artillery rocket tubes or other uses. Former U.N. weapons inspector David Albright said he found significant disagreement among scientists within the Department of Energy and other agencies about the certainty of the evidence.” [Source: UPI, 9/20/02]

**OCTOBER 2002 – CIA DIRECTLY WARNS WHITE HOUSE:** “The CIA sent two memos to the White House in October voicing strong doubts about a claim President Bush made three months later in the State of the Union address that Iraq was trying to buy nuclear materials in Africa.” [Source: Washington Post, [7/23/03](#)]

**OCTOBER 2002 — STATE DEPT. WARNS WHITE HOUSE ON NUKE CHARGES:** The State Department’s Intelligence and Research Department dissented from the conclusion in the National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq’s WMD capabilities that Iraq was reconstituting its nuclear weapons program. “The activities we have detected do not ... add up to a compelling case that Iraq is currently pursuing what INR would consider to be an integrated and comprehensive approach to acquiring nuclear weapons.” INR accepted the judgment by Energy Department technical experts that aluminum tubes Iraq was seeking to acquire, which was the central basis for the conclusion that Iraq was reconstituting its nuclear weapons program, were ill-suited to build centrifuges for enriching uranium. [Source, Declassified Iraq NIE released [7/2003](#)]

**OCTOBER 2002 – AIR FORCE WARNS WHITE HOUSE:** “The government organization most knowledgeable about the United States’ UAV program -- the Air Force’s National Air and Space Intelligence Center -- had sharply disputed the notion that Iraq’s UAVs were being designed as attack weapons” – a WMD claim President Bush used in his October 7 speech on Iraqi WMD, just three days before the congressional vote authorizing the president to use force. [Source: Washington Post, 9/26/03]

## **2003: WH Pressures Intel Agencies to Conform; Ignores More Warnings**

*Instead of listening to the repeated warnings from the intelligence community, intelligence officials say the White House instead pressured them to conform their reports to fit a pre-determined policy. Meanwhile, more evidence from international institutions poured in that the White House's claims were not well-grounded.*

**LATE 2002-EARLY 2003 – CHENEY PRESSURES CIA TO CHANGE INTELLIGENCE:** “Vice President Dick Cheney's repeated trips to CIA headquarters in the run-up to the war for unusual, face-to-face sessions with intelligence analysts poring over Iraqi data. The pressure on the intelligence community to document the administration's claims that the Iraqi regime had ties to al-Qaida and was pursuing a nuclear weapons capacity was ‘unremitting,’ said former CIA counterterrorism chief Vince Cannistraro, echoing several other intelligence veterans interviewed.” Additionally, CIA officials “charged that the hard-liners in the Defense Department and vice president's office had ‘pressured’ agency analysts to paint a dire picture of Saddam's capabilities and intentions.” [Sources: Dallas Morning News, 7/28/03; Newsweek, 7/28/03]

**JANUARY, 2003 – STATE DEPT. INTEL BUREAU REITERATE WARNING TO POWELL:** “The Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR), the State Department's in-house analysis unit, and nuclear experts at the Department of Energy are understood to have explicitly warned Secretary of State Colin Powell during the preparation of his speech that the evidence was questionable. The Bureau reiterated to Mr. Powell during the preparation of his February speech that its analysts were not persuaded that the aluminum tubes the Administration was citing could be used in centrifuges to enrich uranium.” [Source: Financial Times, 7/30/03]

**FEBRUARY 14, 2003 – UN WARNS WHITE HOUSE THAT NO WMD HAVE BEEN FOUND:** “In their third progress report since U.N. Security Council Resolution 1441 was passed in November, inspectors told the council they had not found any weapons of mass destruction.” Weapons inspector Hans Blix told the U.N. Security Council they had been unable to find any WMD in Iraq and that more time was needed for inspections. [Source: CNN, [2/14/03](#)]

**FEBRUARY 15, 2003 – IAEA WARNS WHITE HOUSE NO NUCLEAR EVIDENCE:** The head of the IAEA told the U.N. in February that “We have to date found no evidence of ongoing prohibited nuclear or nuclear-related activities in Iraq.” The IAEA examined “2,000 pages of documents seized Jan. 16 from an Iraqi scientist's home -- evidence, the Americans said, that the Iraqi regime was hiding government documents in private homes. The documents, including some marked classified, appear to be the scientist's personal files.” However, “the documents, which contained information about the use of laser technology to enrich uranium, refer to activities and sites known to the IAEA and do not change the agency's conclusions about Iraq's laser enrichment program.” [Source: Wash. Post, [2/15/03](#)]

**FEBRUARY 24, 2003 – CIA WARNS WHITE HOUSE ‘NO DIRECT EVIDENCE’ OF WMD:** “A CIA report on proliferation released this week says the intelligence community has no ‘direct evidence’ that Iraq has succeeded in reconstituting its biological, chemical, nuclear or long-range missile programs in the two years since U.N. weapons inspectors left and U.S. planes bombed Iraqi facilities. ‘We do not have any direct evidence that Iraq has used the period since Desert Fox to reconstitute its Weapons of Mass Destruction programs,’ said the agency in its semi-annual report on proliferation activities.” [NBC News, [2/24/03](#)]

**MARCH 7, 2003 – IAEA REITERATES TO WHITE HOUSE NO EVIDENCE OF NUKES:** IAEA Director Mohamed ElBaradei said nuclear experts have found “no indication” that Iraq has tried to import high-strength aluminum tubes or specialized ring magnets for centrifuge enrichment of uranium. For months, American officials had “cited Iraq's importation of these tubes as evidence that Mr. Hussein's scientists have been seeking to develop a nuclear capability.” ElBaradei also noted said “the IAEA has concluded, with the concurrence of outside experts, that documents which formed the basis for the [President Bush's assertion] of recent uranium transactions between Iraq and Niger are in fact not authentic.” When questioned about this on Meet the Press, Vice President Dick Cheney simply said “Mr. ElBaradei is, frankly, wrong.” [Source: NY Times, [3/7/03](#); Meet the Press, 3/16/03]

**MAY 30, 2003 – INTEL PROFESSIONALS ADMIT THEY WERE PRESSURED:** “A growing number of U.S. national security professionals are accusing the Bush administration of slanting the facts and hijacking the \$30 billion intelligence apparatus to justify its rush to war in Iraq. A key target is a four-person Pentagon team that reviewed material gathered by other intelligence outfits for any missed bits that might have tied Iraqi President Saddam Hussein to banned weapons or terrorist groups. This team, self-mockingly called the Cabal, ‘cherry-picked the intelligence stream ‘in a bid to portray Iraq as an imminent threat, said Patrick Lang, a official at the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA). The DIA was "exploited and abused and bypassed in the process of making the case for war in Iraq based on the presence of WMD," or weapons of mass destruction, he said. Greg Thielmann, an intelligence official in the State Department, said it appeared to him that intelligence had been shaped ‘from the top down.’” [Reuters, 5/30/03]

**JUNE 6, 2003 – INTELLIGENCE HISTORIAN SAYS INTEL WAS HYPED:** “The CIA bowed to Bush administration pressure to hype the threat of Saddam Hussein's weapons programs ahead of the U.S.-led war in Iraq, a leading national security historian concluded in a detailed study of the spy agency's public pronouncements.” [Reuters, [6/6/03](#)]