

# **CLAIMS & FACTS**

*Rhetoric, Reality and the War in Iraq*

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# CLAIMS & FACTS: Iraq-Al Qaeda Connections

## SADDAM-AL QAEDA CONNECTION

**CLAIM:** “The regime of Saddam Hussein cultivated ties to terror while it built weapons of mass destruction.” – President Bush’s UN speech, [9/23/03](#)

**CLAIM:** “Iraq [is] the central front in the war on terror.” – President Bush’s UN speech, [9/23/03](#)

**CLAIM:** “You can’t distinguish between al-Qaida and Saddam.” – President Bush, [9/25/02](#)

**CLAIM:** “There’s no question that Saddam Hussein had al Qaeda ties.” – President Bush, [9/17/03](#)

**CLAIM:** “There was a relationship between Iraq and al-Qaeda.” – Vice President Cheney, [9/14/03](#)

**FACT:** No evidence exists to substantiate the claim that Saddam Hussein and Al Qaeda had any connections. In fact, most intelligence points to the contrary.

**FACT:** Under the headline “Allies Find No Links Between Iraq, Al Qaeda,” the LA Times reported on [11/4/02](#) that U.S. allies fighting Al Qaeda in Europe found no evidence of an Iraqi-Qaeda connection.

**FACT:** On [12/18/01](#), the London Telegraph reported a story under the headline “Iraq link to Sept 11 attack and anthrax is ruled out” detailing how key assertions made by the Administration were unfounded.

**FACT:** The NY Times in June reported, “The chairman of the monitoring group appointed by the United Nations Security Council to track Al Qaeda told reporters that his team had found no evidence linking Al Qaeda to Saddam Hussein.” [6/27/03]

**FACT:** The bipartisan September 11<sup>th</sup> commission report “undercuts Bush administration claims before the war that Hussein had links to Al Qaeda.” [LA Times, 7/19/03].

**FACT:** The New York Times reported “since the fall of Baghdad, coalition forces have not brought to light any significant evidence demonstrating the bond between Iraq and Al Qaeda...Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and Abu Zubaydah, the two highest-ranking Qaeda operatives in custody, have told investigators that Mr. bin Laden shunned cooperation with Saddam Hussein.” [NY Times, 7/20/03].

**FACT:** National Journal reported on 8/9/03, that “three former Bush Administration officials who worked on intelligence and national security issues said the prewar evidence tying Al Qaeda was tenuous, exaggerated and often at odds with the conclusions of key intelligence agencies.”

## SADDAM-9/11 CONNECTION

**CLAIM:** “We have never claimed that Saddam Hussein ... had either direction or control of 9/11.” – National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice, [9/16/03](#)

**FACT:** President Bush sent a letter to Congress on [3/19/03](#) saying that the Iraq war was permitted specifically under legislation that authorized force against “nations, organizations, or persons who planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001.”

**FACT:** Vice President Cheney said on [9/14/03](#) “I think it’s not surprising that people make that connection” between Saddam and 9/11- with no evidence to back up his claim.

**FACT:** Two days after Cheney made that statement, Reuters reported on [9/18/03](#) that “President Bush distanced himself from the comments.”

# CLAIMS & FACTS: Terror "Threats" and Responses

## WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

**CLAIM:** "We found the weapons of mass destruction."  
– President Bush, [5/29/03](#)

**CLAIM:** "We know where the WMDs are."  
– Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, 3/30/03

**CLAIM:** "The people of the United States and our friends and allies will not live at the mercy of an outlaw regime that threatens the peace with weapons of mass murder."  
– President Bush, [3/19/03](#)

**FACT:** No WMD have been found. According to Reuters on [9/15/03](#), the Administration's hand picked weapons inspector has come up with no WMD on his visit to Iraq. "A draft report on the search for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq provides no solid evidence that Iraq had such arms when the United States invaded the country in March." (Note: the chemical weapons Bush was referring to at the time never materialized.)

**FACT:** Despite the claim that Iraq's supposed WMD posed an imminent threat to the U.S., Secretary of State Colin Powell said on [2/24/01](#) that Saddam Hussein "has not developed any significant capability with respect to weapons of mass destruction."

## THE IRAQI "THREAT"

**CLAIM:** "The president knew that [Iraq] was a threat."  
– National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice, [9/24/03](#)

**CLAIM:** On [10/7/02](#), Bush gave a speech entitled "President Bush Outlines Iraqi Threat." He said, "Tonight I want to take a few minutes to discuss a grave threat to peace, and America's determination to lead the world in confronting that threat. The threat comes from Iraq. America must not ignore the threat gathering against us."

**FACT:** Vice President Cheney said on [9/16/01](#) that Saddam Hussein was not a threat. He said, "Saddam Hussein is bottled up."

**FACT:** Powell said on [2/23/01](#), "I think we ought to declare [the containment policy] a success. We have kept him contained, kept him in his box." He then said on [2/24/01](#), "[Saddam] is unable to project conventional power against his neighbors" and that "he threatens not the United States."

## IRAQ NUCLEAR WEAPONS

**CLAIM:** "The British government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa."  
– President Bush, [1/28/03](#)

**CLAIM:** "We believe Saddam has, in fact, reconstituted nuclear weapons." – Vice President Cheney, 3/16/03

**FACT:** On 7/8/03, the W. Post reported the Administration admitted the Iraq-Nuclear allegation was false. "Revelations by officials at the CIA, the State Department, the UN, in Congress and elsewhere" made clear that the White House knew the claim was false before making the allegation [7/20/03]. In fact, "CIA Director George Tenet successfully intervened with White House officials to have the reference" removed from a Bush speech in Oct. of 2002. [W. Post, 7/13/03]

**FACT:** The UN reported on [9/8/03](#) that Iraq was not capable of pursuing an active nuclear weapons program after 1991. The report said "No indication of post-1991 weaponization activities was uncovered in Iraq."

**FACT:** Voice of America reported on [9/16/03](#) that, "A senior official in Iraq's new science ministry says the country never revived its nuclear program after inspectors dismantled it in the 1990's." The scientist, now a member of the U.S.-backed administration in Iraq, "says Iraqi scientists had no way to re-start the program because the inspectors took away all the necessary resources."

## WAR ON TERROR/BUSH DOCTRINE

**CLAIM:** "All governments that support terror are complicit in a war against civilization." – President Bush's UN speech, [9/23/03](#)

**CLAIM:** "We have made clear the doctrine which says, if you harbor a terrorist, if you feed a terrorist, if you hide a terrorist you're just as guilty as the terrorist. We're holding regimes accountable for harboring and supporting terror." – President Bush, [9/10/03](#)

**FACT:** The Administration continues its close ties with the Saudis. But the LA Times reported on [8/2/03](#) that the bipartisan commission investigating 9/11 found the Saudi government "not only provided significant money and aid to the suicide hijackers but also allowed potentially hundreds of millions of dollars to flow to Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups through suspect charities and other fronts."

# CLAIMS & FACTS: Pre-War Assertions vs David Kay's Report

## NUCLEAR WEAPONS

**CLAIM:** "Evidence indicates that Iraq is reconstituting its nuclear weapons program...Iraq could have a nuclear weapon in less than a year." - President Bush, [10/7/02](#)

**CLAIM:** "[Saddam] is actively pursuing nuclear weapons at this time."- VP Cheney, [3/24/02](#)

**CLAIM:** "We believe Saddam has, in fact, reconstituted nuclear weapons." - VP Cheney, [3/16/03](#)

**CLAIM:** "We do know that [Saddam] is actively pursuing a nuclear weapon."- National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice, [9/10/02](#)

**CLAIM:** "Iraqis were actively trying to pursue a nuclear weapons program." - National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice, [7/11/03](#)

"We have not uncovered evidence that Iraq undertook significant post-1998 steps to actually build nuclear weapons or produce fissile material."

- Bush Administration Weapons Inspector David Kay, [10/2/03](#)

## MOBILE BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS LAB

**CLAIM:** "We found the weapons of mass destruction. We found biological laboratories." -President Bush, on locating the mobile biological weapons labs, [5/29/03](#)

**CLAIM:** "We know where the [WMD] are." - Don Rumsfeld, [3/30/03](#)

**CLAIM:** "Iraq has at least seven mobile factories for the production of biological agents - equipment mounted on trucks and rails to evade discovery." -President Bush, [2/8/03](#)

**CLAIM:** "I'm absolutely sure that there are weapons of mass destruction there and the evidence will be forthcoming. We're just getting it now." - Colin Powell, [5/4/03](#)

"We have not yet been able to corroborate the existence of a mobile biological weapons production effort... Technical limitations would prevent any of these processes from being ideally suited to these trailers."

- Bush Administration Weapons Inspector David Kay, [10/2/03](#)

## CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL CAPABILITY

**CLAIM:** "There can be no doubt that Saddam Hussein has biological weapons and the capability to rapidly produce more, many more... Our conservative estimate is that Iraq today has a stockpile of between 100 and 500 tons of chemical weapons agent. That is enough agent to fill 16,000 battlefield rockets." - Colin Powell, [2/5/03](#)

**CLAIM:** "[Saddam has] amassed large, clandestine stockpiles of biological weapons, including Anthrax, botulism, toxins and possibly smallpox. He's amassed large, clandestine stockpiles of chemical weapons, including VX, Sarin and mustard gas." -Don Rumsfeld, [9/19/02](#)

**CLAIM:** "Simply stated, there is no doubt that Saddam Hussein now has weapons of mass destruction. There is no doubt that he is amassing them to use against our friends, against our allies, and against us." -Vice President Cheney, [8/26/02](#)

**CLAIM:** "The Iraqi regime possesses biological and chemical weapons... And according to the British government, the Iraqi regime could launch a biological or chemical attack in as little as 45 minutes." -President Bush, [9/26/02](#)

**CLAIM:** "Our intelligence officials estimate that Saddam Hussein had the materials to produce as much as 500 tons of sarin, mustard and VX nerve agent." -President Bush, [1/28/03](#)

**CLAIM:** "His regime has large, unaccounted-for stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons -- including VX, sarin, cyclosarin and mustard gas; anthrax, botulism, and possibly smallpox -- and he has an active program to acquire and develop nuclear weapons." - Don Rumsfeld, [1/20/03](#)

"Iraq did not have a large, ongoing, centrally controlled chemical weapons program after 1991... Iraq's large-scale capability to develop, produce, and fill new chemical weapon munitions was reduced - if not entirely destroyed - during Operations Desert Storm and Desert Fox, 13 years of UN sanctions and UN inspections." - Bush Administration Weapons Inspector David Kay, [10/2/03](#)

# CLAIMS & FACTS: War Costs & Post-War Planning

## PRE-WAR COST ESTIMATES

**CLAIM:** Iraq will be “[an affordable endeavor](#)” that “[will not require sustained aid](#)” and will “be in the range of [\\$50 billion to \\$60 billion](#).” – Budget Director Mitch Daniels [Forbes 4/11/03, W. Post 3/28/03, NY Times 1/2/03, respectively]

**CLAIM:** “Costs of any such intervention would be very small.” - Top White House Economist Glen Hubbard [CNBC, 10/4/02]

**CLAIM:** Paul Wolfowitz “dismissed articles in several newspapers this week asserting that Pentagon budget specialists put the cost of war and reconstruction at \$60 billion to \$95 billion in this fiscal year.” [NY Times, [2/28/03](#)]

**CLAIM:** “In terms of the American taxpayers contribution, [1.7 billion] is it for the US. The rest of the rebuilding of Iraq will be done by other countries and Iraqi oil revenues...The American part of this will be 1.7 billion. We have no plans for any further-on funding for this.” – USAID Director Andrew Natsios, [4/23/03](#)

**FACT:** The Bush Administration has requested approximately \$166B – including \$87B in Sept. 2003 - for operations in Iraq, despite firing top economic adviser Lawrence Lindsey for suggesting (accurately) before the war that a war in Iraq would cost at least \$100 to \$200 billion of dollars.

**FACT:** The Bush Administration has requested \$20 billion for reconstruction in Iraq – despite the pledge that the U.S. would only fund \$1.7 billion.

**FACT:** Wolfowitz contradicted his 2/28/03 statement on [9/10/03](#), saying “No one said we would know anything other than this would be very bloody, it could be very long and by implication, it could be very expensive.”

**FACT:** Only on 9/22/03 – months after the war - did the Administration acknowledge that, under international law, the U.S. will inherit “roughly \$200 billion in debt” from Iraq. [CongressDaily]

## PRE-WAR OIL REVENUE ESTIMATES

**CLAIM:** “The oil revenues of Iraq could bring between \$50 and \$100 billion over the course of the next two or three years...We’re dealing with a country that can really finance its own reconstruction, and relatively soon.” – Paul Wolfowitz, [Congressional Testimony, 3/27/03]

**CLAIM:** “Iraq, unlike Afghanistan, is a rather wealthy country. Iraq has tremendous resources that belong to the Iraqi people. And so there are a variety of means that Iraq has to be able to shoulder much of the burden for their own reconstruction.” – White House Spokesman Ari Fleischer, [2/18/03](#)

**FACT:** International Oil Daily reported on [9/23/03](#) that Paul Bremer said that current and future oil revenues will be insufficient for rebuilding Iraq – despite the Administration’s pre-war promises.

**FACT:** The WSJ reported on 9/5/03 that the Administration’s oil estimates were “predicated on aggressively optimistic assumptions.”

**FACT:** While Bremer told Oil Daily that “Iraqi oil infrastructure was much worse than we thought,” a [March 2000](#) report by the U.N. clearly said Iraq oil would be insufficient. The report said the Iraqi oil industry was “lamentable” and that the decline was “accelerating.” Roger Dwan of PFC Energy told NPR on 9/11/03 that the U.N. study the “made very clear that actually the facilities and the capacity to produce oil in Iraq” were far less than the Administration was portraying.

**FACT:** The NY Times reported on [10/5/03](#) “The Bush administration’s optimistic statements earlier this year that Iraq’s oil wealth, not American taxpayers, would cover most of the cost of rebuilding Iraq were at odds with a bleaker assessment of a government task force secretly established last fall to study Iraq’s oil industry.”

## POST-WAR PLANNING

**CLAIM:** “I think has been fairly significant success in terms of putting Iraq back together again...and certainly wouldn’t lead me to suggest or think that the strategy is flawed or needs to be changed.” – Vice President Cheney, [9/14/03](#)

**FACT:** The Wash Times White House officials “acknowledge that their post-Saddam plan for rebuilding Iraq has been substantially flawed on the security front. Some officials said privately that the plan for security after Baghdad’s fall has been an utter failure.” [8/28/03]

**FACT:** “A secret report for the Joint Chiefs of Staff blames setbacks in Iraq on a flawed and rushed war-planning process” in which “officials, , conceded in recent weeks that the Bush administration failed to predict the guerrilla war against American troops in Iraq.” [W. Times, [9/3/03](#)]

## RECONSTRUCTION CONTRACTS

**CLAIM:** In response to questions about whether his tenure as CEO of Halliburton had to do with the company winning billions worth of no-bid contracts, VP Cheney said “I have no financial interest in Halliburton of any kind and haven’t had now for over three years.” [9/14/03](#)

**FACT:** Cheney receives up to [\\$1 million a year from Halliburton](#) and a [\\$20 million retirement package](#) from Halliburton. [UK Guardian, NY Times]

# CLAIMS & FACTS: War Predictions

## LENGTH OF MILITARY OPERATIONS

**CLAIM:** “Major combat operations in Iraq have ended.” – President Bush, 5/1/03

**CLAIM:** The war “could last six days, six weeks. I doubt six months.” – Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld [2/7/03]

CLAIM “We will, in fact, be greeted as liberators. . . . I think it will go relatively quickly... (in) weeks rather than months.” – Vice President Cheney [3/16/03]

**FACT:** The war in Iraq is still going on, and more American troops have been killed after “major combat operations” supposedly ended than before.

## TROOP DEPLOYMENT NEEDS

**CLAIM:** “What is, I think, reasonably certain is the idea that it would take several hundred thousand U.S. forces I think is far from the mark.” – Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld [2/27/03](#)

**CLAIM:** “The notion that it would take several hundred thousand American troops just seems outlandish.” Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, [3/4/03](#)

**FACT:** The nonpartisan CBO reported on [9/3/03](#) that “The Army does not have enough active-duty component forces” to do what is required in Iraq – meaning the U.S. needs to increase its deployment above the 150,000 currently in Iraq. That confirms [General Erik Shinseki’s](#) estimate that it would take “several hundred thousand troops.” [2/25/03]

**FACT:** The Administration is trying to stretch the current deployment too thin. As reported on [8/24/03](#), for the first time since Vietnam, the military will “have to start serving back-to-back overseas tours of up to a year.”