

The Worst of Intentions

by [Christopher S. Carson](#) (March 2010)

"Dr. Spertzel, it is not a lie when you are ordered to lie."

—Dr. "Germ" Rihab Taha, former head of Saddam's bioweapons program, in response to UNSCOM inspectors when asked why she continued to lie in the face of proof, 1995

Although it hardly made the American news, the Rt. Hon. Anthony Blair, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1997 to 2007, was called to the hot seat in London in February, testifying before Britain's Chilcot "Iraq Inquiry" in what was ubiquitously referred to as his "Day of Judgment." It seemed the political and media classes in Great Britain expected him to beat his breast in biblical lamentation for his vile sin of deposing Saddam Hussein's monstrous regime in 2003. Perhaps the media and political classes at least hoped to see him sweat, or even see him beg for forgiveness, the way Richard Clarke did when he testified histrionically before the 9-11 Commission just as his Bush-bashing book hit the stores.

A ferocious crowd of some 400 protesters, outside the front entrance of the Queen Elizabeth Centre, bayed for his blood like animals—yelling that he was a murderer and a liar. Blair's car slipped in the back entrance, in what the media all referred to as a "sneaky" maneuver. (Evidently Fleet Street thought it more honorable for him to be pelted with the fake blood and then lynched for real at the front doorway.)

The prospect of actually destroying Mr. Blair's life as he knows it is not as far-fetched as it might sound. Earlier, the Inquiry heard from two senior Foreign Office lawyers, Sir Michael Wood and Elizabeth Wilmshurst. They told the Iraq inquiry the invasion was against international law and amounted to a "crime of aggression". For his part, "Human rights lawyer" Sir Geoffrey Bindman yesterday said there was a case for taking action against Mr Blair for waging an unlawful war. He

said: "I would not be surprised if a prosecution were attempted in the UK. The difficulty would be to establish his personal responsibility for specific crimes against UK law." Sir Geoffrey added that there would be serious difficulties in making the case but these were not "insurmountable."

But Mr. Blair disappointed them all. "The decision I took – and frankly would take again – was if there was any possibility that he could develop weapons of mass destruction (WMD) we should stop him," he said. "That was my view then and that is my view now." Dressed in an impeccable suit, he used his considerable charm to tell the colorlessly verbose members of the Board that he had made the judgment that Britain should not "run the risk" of allowing Saddam to remain in power. "This isn't about a lie or a conspiracy or a deceit or a deception. It's a decision. And the decision I had to take was, given Saddam's history, given his use of chemical weapons, given the over one million people whose deaths he had caused, given 10 years of breaking UN resolutions, could we take the risk of this man reconstituting his weapons programmes or is that a risk that it would be irresponsible to take?" He went on: "I had to take the decision. I believed, and in the end the Cabinet believed – so did Parliament incidentally – that we were right not to run that risk."

Mr. Blair was his usual polite self, effortlessly addressing the Board members by their knightly titles and displaying a remarkable self assurance during his six hours of historical reckoning. Of course he was savaged for it—for not apologizing, for not groveling, for not admitting he had been wrong to ally his government with the hated Texan in 2003 over WMD and Iraq's ties to terrorists.

The savaging was universal, across all the newspapers and media outlets. Brian Reade of the *Daily Mirror* noted how Blair had "sneaked in the back gate" and lamented that his verbally challenged interlocutors "seemed unable to contradict him. Even though you found yourself internally screaming at him: "'Why don't you just own up and say a big Texan boy made me do it.'"

James Chapman, of the Tory *Daily Mail*, lamented that "despite the deaths of up to 700,000 Iraqis and 179 British troops, Mr Blair said he felt

'responsibility but not a regret'. Mr. Chapman did not feel the need to validate his outlandish Iraqi body count that of course was squarely the responsibility of Mr. Blair and George Bush. The 179 British troops over *six years of war* actually compares rather favorably to the 20,000 dead British Tommies on the *first day* of the Battle of the Somme (July 1st, 1916), but to hear the English media tell it, 179 fallen, volunteer soldiers over the entire history of the Iraq War constitute a veritable holocaust of bloody culpability.

John Kampfner of the *Daily Mail* derided Blair as "A man who creates his own truths," professing shock that "there appeared to be no link in Blair's mind between cause and effect: for neither Iraq's hostile neighbour nor Osama bin Laden's terrorist network had any foothold in Iraq before 2003. He seemed to forget that they gained popularity only after the invasion and the anger and frustrations among civilians that followed. Again, he was allowed to make his tendentious assertions unchallenged...he seems genuinely to believe all this."

Although Blair reminded the Inquiry that Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq, was actually in-country before the invasion, assisted by Saddam, neither Kampfner nor anyone else felt the slightest need to defend their received template of derision. (Inconveniently for Fleet Street, Zarqawi was a Jordanian and all his chief henchmen were foreigners, not Iraqi civilians angry and "frustrated" over their liberation.) I've always been confused by the liberal notion that al-Qaeda in Iraq was bred by Operation Iraqi Freedom—as if giving the people free elections and democracy would self-evidently lead to a strange mania for Youtube-beheadings and mass suicide bombings of schools, The Grand Ali Mosque and crowded marketplaces. This "logic" was of course slavishly followed by the New York Times. "Frustrated" by Americans in your country? Oh I know—let's blow up the Grand Ali Mosque.

Dominic Lawson of the venerable *Times* of London indulged in a bit of soft-option psychotherapy to explain the mysterious enigma of a man who really believed he was right in deposing the Baathist dictatorship:

"For although the former prime minister continues to make as

compelling a case as could be made for a war of choice based on gamma-minus intelligence, there remains the issue of character. Why did Tony Blair so ache to be the inseparable best buddy of George W Bush, and to join in a US campaign that was predicated on the imaginary idea that there was a connection between Saddam Hussein and the destruction of the World Trade Center? I once asked an old friend of Blair's a question along roughly these lines and received a stunningly cynical response. "Tony", he laughed, "is like a girl who wants to go to all the best dances."

Ah, so that's it. It was all about the White House China. That's why Britain went to war. Just ask Tony's "old friend."

It is a genuine sociological mystery why the British media of all political stripes simply assume, with the same unquestioning faith that they ascribe to the law of gravity, that Iraq had no WMD, that Saddam had no ties to terrorists, and that events subsequent to the Invasion have proved it all beyond doubt. It goes without saying that the American mainstream media share this autonomic nerve-response to the issues of Iraq.

For such a brave man, Mr. Blair spent six hours vastly understating his case, and to an uncomfortable extent, he shared the same assumptions of the confused knights across from him. Mr. Blair pointed to the "Duelfer Report" of the CIA's Iraq Survey Group as the definitive story and explanation for the relative paucity of Iraqi WMD found. In the words of Mr. Blair at the hearing:

"...Because the Iraq Survey Group, which is, in my view, an extremely important document, has actually resolved the conundrum and the riddle of what Saddam was up to, and we therefore can see what happened

"If you look at Iraq Survey Group report now, this report ... we will get to the detail of it a bit later, but this report is very, very important indeed, because what it is effectively is what Hans Blix could have produced, had Saddam cooperated with him. What

that report shows is actually the extent to which Saddam retained his nuclear, and, indeed, chemical warfare intent and intellectual know-how. Now, what Saddam could have done perfectly easily is to have provided the proper documentation and he could have cooperated fully in the interviews of the scientists [Saddam had refused to allow his scientists to be interviewed outside Iraq]...

"It is absolutely clear from the Iraq Survey Group, and indeed the Butler Report deals with this, that he was concealing material he should have delivered up to the UN, that he retained the intent, not merely in theory, but was taking action on, for example, dual-use facilities that were specifically in breach of the United Nations Resolutions."

All this was true, but only as far as it went. The Iraq Survey Group's conclusions were not and cannot be the final word on the fate of Saddam Hussein's WMD. Mr. Blair just uncritically accepted Mr. Duelfer's conclusions as final—as uncritically as Fleet Street and the rest of Britain's media class accepted the alternative notion that Saddam was no threat to anyone.

All this matters because history matters. The lessons people draw from history are inevitably distorted by the historians' consensus viewpoints. Repeat them often enough, and no matter how erroneous they are, generations of bad decisions based on them will result. Think about the "lessons" of Vietnam, memorably kicked off by Walter Cronkite in an infamous broadcast during the Tet Offensive of 1968. We are still unlearning them today. (Contrary to Cronkite's prognostications of doom, the Tet Offensive was a gigantic military defeat for the Communist cause, and in fact essentially destroyed the Viet Cong as a fighting force ever after).

Mr. Blair might have flummoxed the Board members to distraction if he had looked at the Duelfer Report more critically. I have previously written on this subject, long before two critical lines of evidence emerged. These new areas of evidence only bolstered my skepticism of Mr. Duelfer's theories, which were expressed before anyone else in my 2005

article “[What Charles Duelfer Missed.](#)”

Let’s review the key findings of The Iraq Survey Group. The most embarrassing, for the Bush and Blair Administrations, was this nugget:

“While a small number of old, abandoned chemical munitions have been discovered, ISG judges that Iraq unilaterally destroyed its undeclared chemical weapons stockpile in 1991. There are no credible Indications that Baghdad resumed production of chemical munitions thereafter, a policy ISG attributes to Baghdad’s desire to see sanctions lifted, or rendered ineffectual, or its fear of force against it should WMD be discovered.”

This finding, questionable as it was in the light of my article, was the only thing the American and British media ever reported on. But Mr. Duelfer had some important qualifications, too, and naturally these were ignored:

“Saddam never abandoned his intentions to resume a CW effort when sanctions were lifted and conditions were judged favorable: Saddam and many Iraqis regarded CW as a proven weapon against an enemy’s superior numerical strength, a weapon that had saved the nation at least once already—during the Iran-Iraq war—and contributed to deterring the Coalition in 1991 from advancing to Baghdad.”

This was particularly important. Inasmuch as it is possible to gauge the intent of criminal, secretive regime, Saddam made every effort to retain the technical know-how and structural ability to rapidly surge production of CW precursors and chemical weapons themselves. The sanctions regime was eroding, and the UN’s Oil-for-Food program turned out to be a personal gravy train for both Saddam’s regime (not, of course, his people) and the UN bureaucrats like Kofi Annan and the French government ministers who “administered” it.

As Duelfer put it:

“The way Iraq organized its chemical industry after the mid-1990s

allowed it to conserve the knowledge-base needed to restart a CW program, conduct a modest amount of dual-use research, and partially recover from the decline of its production capability caused by the effects of the Gulf war and UN-sponsored destruction and sanctions. Iraq implemented a rigorous and formalized system of nationwide research and production of chemicals...”

Duelfer added that site visits and debriefs revealed that Iraq maintained its ability for reconfiguring and ‘making-do’ with available equipment as substitutes for sanctioned items; he noted that Iraq at the time of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) probably had a capability to produce large quantities of sulfur mustard within three to six months.

A former nerve agent expert indicated that Iraq retained the capability to produce nerve agent *in significant quantities* within two years, given the import of required phosphorous precursors. However, ISG said that it had no credible indications that Iraq acquired or attempted to acquire large quantities of these chemicals through its existing procurement [networks](#) for sanctioned items. But Saddam kept strangely close tabs on the industries that employed dual-use process equipment. This provided Iraq, wrote Duelfer, “the ability to rapidly reallocate key equipment for proscribed activities, if required by the Regime.”

So on the subject of chemical weapons, according to Mr. Duelfer, Saddam very much was retaining a “just in time” capability that would enable him to ramp up production of these weapons when he was not under the hated sanctions regime any longer—a day not far off from September 11th, 2001. It was not so much that Saddam had WMD stockpiles on the eve of OIF—he was himself a weapon of mass destruction who could make or buy what chemicals he needed when he judged it appropriate to do so, according to Duelfer.

Then there were the secret weapons labs scattered around the country, under the control of the Iraqi Intelligence Service (IIS). These labs used human beings as gruesome test subjects for “various chemicals and poisons, primarily for intelligence operations,” in the words of the

Report. Neither Hans Blix nor any foreign intelligence service had ever heard about these labs. They only became known through the on-site exploitation of the ISG's men after the invasion.

Not surprisingly, Saddam's IIS henchmen, prior to the invasion, managed to dismantle, destroy and otherwise sanitize these secret sites, so that little hard proof could be gleaned about what the IIS was specifically up to. But as a veteran criminal defense attorney, I can tell you that nobody cleans up a hidden location unless they have something to hide there-like illegal weapons, or drugs, or whatever.

Duelfer's sources and witnesses bore this out, telling ISG that the IIS was "planning to produce several CW agents including sulfur mustard (mustard gas), nitrogen mustard, and Sarin" gas at those locations. Mr. Duelfer concluded:

"ISG uncovered information that the Iraqi Intelligence Service (IIS) maintained throughout 1991 to 2003 a set of undeclared covert laboratories to research and test various chemicals and poisons, primarily for intelligence operations. The network of laboratories could have provided an ideal, compartmented platform from which to continue CW agent R&D or small-scale production efforts, but we have no indications this was planned."

While I certainly appreciate Mr. Duelfer's academic modesty of expression here, common sense tells you that Saddam wouldn't be experimenting on live people, with special poisons and gasses, in secret undeclared labs, under the control of his intelligence service, no less, for the good of mankind. He wasn't working on vaccines or his famous "baby milk" formulas. He might actually have even been working on smallpox, for example, as Duelfer discusses in his Report. (Smallpox was the worst killer disease in the history of mankind before its supposed eradication in the early 1970's by the WHO.)

And it wasn't just the secret labs. Saddam wanted to keep his surge-production abilities in BW as well as in CW. As Duelfer described, a "break-out production capability" in BW existed at one site, the State

Company for Drug Industries and Medical Appliances, SDI, at Samarra. ISG judged that Saddam could surge production of Anthrax spores within *four months* if he so desired. Let us assume that four months is not exactly a safe timeframe for our intelligence community to both detect and disrupt the anthrax threat before a hand-off to the terrorist group. To put it mildly.

Maybe this is why Dr. David Kay, Duelfer's predecessor at ISG, [reported to Congress](#) in October 2003 that one scientist was ordered to conceal reference strains of BW organisms like anthrax, ricin and Crimean Congo Hemorrhagic Fever in his own refrigerator, which he turned over to ISG. The scientist knew of the location of other, much larger seed stockpiles, but these were unsurprisingly missing when ISG investigators showed up to collect them. Similarly, most of the hard drives, written reports, and lab samples suspected of being BW in refrigerators were deliberately and selectively vandalized and destroyed shortly before the coalition forces arrived, according to Dr. Kay.

Keep in mind: the real danger to Americans was not that Saddam would use chemical weapons in a final battle against American forces invading his country. Our forces can protect themselves against nearly every unconventional weapon with the gear and supplies they're trained to use. The real danger was that Saddam would hand over smaller quantities (not battlefield quantities) of his anthrax spores to the next Mohammed Atta, who would then rent a crop-duster plane in Cedar Rapids and spray the good stuff all over Des Moines at rush hour. That was the danger we went to war over. It doesn't take much more than one 155 millimeter shell filled with mustard gas to dump into the HEVAC system of the NBC Building in Chicago. Shortly before OIF, Hans Blix, of all people, found *fourteen* of these 155 mm shells filled with mustard gas, which totaled approximately 49 liters and was still at high purity (more than 90% concentrate). Blix's UNMOVIC also found, among other things:

Approximately 500 ml of [thiodiglycol](#)

Some 122 mm chemical warheads

Some chemical equipment

224.6 kg of expired growth media

50 Al-Samoud II missiles

Could these chemical shells be really just harmless relics from before the first Gulf War, more than twelve years earlier, if their purity was still over 90%? Don't the chemicals degrade over time, and if so, wouldn't this high purity mean that the shells were filled far more recently than 1991? Fleet Street, and it appears Mr. Blair, were not curious enough to even ask this question.

It wasn't as if the Regime didn't have plenty of these chemical shells lying around for the picking. On June 21st, 2006, Senator Rick Santorum and Rep. Pete Hoekstra convened a press conference. After playing various Senators' unqualified assertions *that very day* about the benign regime of Saddam:

Jack Reed: "We've heard the initial defenses of the approach to Iraq as we were going after weapons of mass destruction. There were none. They were not there."

Chris Dodd: "Mr. President, that if I had known then what I know now, namely that Saddam Hussein possessed no weapons of mass destruction, I would not have given the president my vote."

Patty Murray: "We looked for weapons of mass destruction and we found none."

Santorum and Hoekstra then released a declassified portion of a report written by the National Ground Intelligence Center, which stated in part:

"Since 2003, coalition forces have recovered approximately 500 weapons munitions which contain degraded mustard or sarin nerve agent. Despite many efforts to locate and destroy Iraq's pre-Gulf War chemical munitions, filled and unfilled pre-Gulf War chemical munitions are assessed to still exist."

But Santorum pointed out another interesting revelation that had not been

reported in the media, this time about the ISG:

“The Iraq Survey Group suspended field visits five months after they were there. So they stopped field visits in October of 2003. So what we’re now finding are our troops stumbling across these as they go into Iraq....The full-blown effort to discover these caches of chemical weapons stopped a year and a half ago. And this is the kind of stuff that we are still finding.”

In other words, the ISG of Kay and Duelfer, due to the deteriorating security situation, stopped exploiting field sites only “five months” after they arrived in a country the size of California. They spent the remaining 11 months of their tenure interviewing high-value detainees in jail, who might or might not have been lying to them. In his memoirs, Mr. Duelfer, for his part, seemed rather credulous about the veracity of the detainees like Saddam Hussein, Presidential secretary Abed Hamid Mahmud, Dr. Germ (Rihab Tahab) and the infamous Chemical Ali. After all, they had every reason to cooperate with us, now that they’re in custody, right? After all, they wanted things to go easier for them when the handover to Iraqi sovereignty occurred in mid-2004.

That was the state of the WMD evidence in 2005-2006. But in the four years since, additional facts have come to light.

The first line of evidence stems from a brief period of time in 2005-2006 when the US Department of Defense decided to dump the “DOCEX” files of thousands of captured Iraqi government documents onto the internet for the public at large to translate and publish. (The program was shut down, interestingly, when detailed plans for making an Iraqi nuclear bomb turned out to be among them. The *New York Times*, sensing that the amazingly damning revelations coming from these documents might retroactively justify Operation Iraqi Freedom, screamed to the Director of National Intelligence, John Negroponte, to shut it down. He did.)

But in this brief window of sunlight, one patriotic Lebanese American, Joseph Shahda, managed to download and translate more than 400 documents off the DOD’s DOCEX website. Dictatorships love record-keeping: it helps

keep the record keeper alive in the hierarchy of paranoia wherein he lives each day. Writing as "jveritas," Mr. Shahda, a Boston engineer by trade, found some amazing things in the flotsam and jetsum of the Baathist regime.

One of my personal favorites is a document from 2001, not 1991:

Beginning of Translation of page 5 of document CMPC-2003-016083:
In the Name of God the Most Merciful, The Most Compassionate

TOP SECRET

The Republic of Iraq

The Presidency of the Republic

The Military Industrialization Commission

Number 2/4/44

Date 13/1/2001

To: THE PRESIDENTIAL SECRETARIAT

Subject: Detection Equipment

Your top Secret letter number AA'/128 on 10/12/2000, we would like to show the following:

1. On 10/12/2000 a laboratory test was done on the new equipment and the results of the test was similar to the required quality compared with the Russian equipments

2. On the light of the above (1) a second equipment was received from the Ministry of Industry and Minerals and the total tests were done on it on 24/12/2000 using laboratory equipment to Chemical Detection Device (GSU-12) and with the presence of the Chemical Class representatives and the manufacturing party and **its success was proven from the perspective of detection and reaction to NERVE AGENTS.**

Please review... with regards

Signature

Ab'd Al'Twab Abdallah AL Mulah Huwaish

The Minister of Military Industrialization

13/1/2001

End of translation

In other words, not only were the nerve gas detectors working, but heck, the nerve gas ITSELF was working just fine. This was nine months before September 11th.

Another document, ISGQ-2004-00220151, is dated 2001 and talks about military contracts for manufacturing of Chemical Warfare Decontamination Trailers. The document noted that these trailers cannot be imported because of the blockade against Iraq, so the Iraqis decided to manufacture their own, against UN sanctions rules. Why did the Iraqi military need CW decontamination trailers? None of the Coalition forces had any deployable chemical weapons—so the primary purpose, by default, must have been to clean up messes that might occur if Iraq's own stockpiles went haywire or were hit by Coalition bombs. Another purpose was to hide the CW from the eyes and tests of Hans Blix's UNMOVIC.

In his speech to the UN in February 2003, Sec. Colin Powell pointed out that "In May 2002, our satellites photographed the unusual activity in this picture. Here we see cargo vehicles are again at this transshipment point, and we can see that they are accompanied by a decontamination vehicle associated with biological or chemical weapons activity."

Following the media's reports of the Duelfer Report, Mr. Powell repudiated his speech, claiming it was the worst point in his entire career. Unfortunately for Mr. Powell, he didn't then have this document confirming the existence of decontamination trailers for...decontamination.

The documents go on and on, describing Iraqi meetings with al-Qaeda officials, purchase orders for anthrax in 2000, orders from Saddam to restart his nuclear bomb program by secretly activating his "Simulation Reactor," and even private tapes of Saddam ordering the production of hydrogen plasma.

It seemed almost superfluous for Mr. Shahda to translate Iraqi document CMPC-2003-002284, which helpfully tells its readers where the WMD research was being conducted:

“It was clear that there is another branch committee from the Industrial Committee headed by Dr. Mahdi Shakr Ghali that currently evaluates the **Researches That Cannot Be Declared, Researches with relation to the previous Prohibited Programs...** This is an important subject and it is dangerous in case this information is leaked one way or another.”

That was a quote from General Housam Ahmad Amin, one of Saddam's top officials, on September 16th, 1998 obviously talking about secret programs related to WMD.

Funny, but I thought Scott Ritter, acting as the paid mouthpiece of Saddam's regime on the eve of war, told us that all these programs were dead, dead, dead by the time UNSCOM left Iraq in summer 1998 (contradicting his testimony to Congress at the time). I guess he didn't talk to the good chemical Doctor Ghali.

Joseph Shahda's translations confirmed the Regime's obsession with getting dual-use products for chemical weapons right up to the war. For example, included within various documents classified under “The Pharmaceutical and Pesticides Projects” are mentioned the production and research of materials like Potassium Cyanide and Sodium Cyanide, used to make Tabun nerve gas.

VX is the deadliest of all nerve gasses; Dicyclohexldialimide and Phosphorus Pentasulfide are used to make it. Phosphorus Oxychloride, Thiophosphoryl Chloride and Thionyl Chloride are used to make other kinds of chemical weapons. Helpfully for us, the pre-liberation production of all these CW precursors is listed in Iraqi secret documents **ISGQ-2003-00044424, CMPC-2003-013956, ISGQ-2005-00023243.**

I guess we were supposed to just trust that Saddam wouldn't just, oh once in a while, want to mix them. You know, just to see what would happen.

While doing so, he certainly had plenty of time, in the words of Colin Powell, "to keep, to hide from the inspectors." While Powell was repudiating his own UN speech to the media, the Pentagon released one of its DOCEX Project Harmony documents, **CMPC-2003-00011084-HT-DHM2A**.

This document is a letter from the Director of the Criminal Department, Na'man Ali Muhammad, to the Director of the Iraqi Intelligence Service, dated September 4, 1999. It stated in part:

"Mr. Muhammad indicated that the International Inspection Committee would be inspecting the Al-Rashad location, among other locations, looking for non-conventional weapons and other chemical agents. He added that the following procedures were implemented on the fifth month of this year [TC: May 1999] in order to prevent disclosure of the locations:

- 1- Relocate all I[raqi] I[n]telligence] S[ervice] documents
- 2- Relocate all IIS chemical materials and equipment**
- 3- Designate a group of employees from the Ministry of Health to replace the IIS employees
- 4- Relocate some of the officers and employees, whose job descriptions are not compatible with the Ministry of Health to Al-Rashidiah, **and implement other appropriate concealment procedures."**

In other words, in September 1999, Iraq was using its Intelligence Service to "relocate" all the good nerve gas to avoid it being found by the outside world. Was Mr. Blair troubled by the absence of a smoking gun found by the ISG? He needn't have been. It is here. It is this above.

In his 2009 memoir, [Hide and Seek, the Search for Truth in Iraq](#), Mr. Duelfer devotes some time to his dedicated and hard work from 1993 to 2000 as the Deputy Chairman of UNSCOM, the UN inspection regime tasked with disarming Iraq. But strangely, he impliedly slights the entire value of UNSCOM (and his work within it) by saying, on page 196, that "In the end, UNSCOM could only prove that Iraq was hiding something. We could not

prove that they were hiding WMD.” Yes, Mr. Duelfer, it was WMD they were hiding, not “chicken feed,” baby milk, or pesticides, as the regime variously claimed. (One “chicken feed plant,” the al-Hakan germ warfare center, was helpfully guarded by an array of anti-aircraft missile batteries when UNSCOM showed up and was denied entry by the regime. It must have been some powerful chicken feed).

On page 152 of his memoir, Duelfer almost seems to regret that his UNSCOM team tested warheads that were positive for VX nerve gas. The media-hound Scott Ritter, three years before he was bribed by Saddam for \$400,000 to become the Regime’s American publicist, told him that he had sent these results to Washington to ensure their publication by the *Washington Post*, which put it on the front page on June 23rd, 1998. Duelfer argues that the Post story was the last straw for Iraq, which “saw the story as an effort by Washington to cook the books.” Iraq would thus refuse its cooperation going forward. Tariq Aziz told him, “We have a simple choice. Iraq could have sanctions with inspectors or sanctions without inspections.” Duelfer writes that Saddam chose, naturally and logically: no inspections. He regrets that UNSCOM was asking Iraq to prove a negative, which to him happened to be true—that it didn’t have any banned weapons or programs. Duelfer implies that Scott Ritter and the blunt Chairman, Richard Butler, got UNSCOM kicked out of the country by giving Iraq no hope for an end to sanctions. This all sounds a little self-loathing, when you consider that the 1998 breakdown in Iraqi cooperation was prompted by a story concerning its non-cooperation (in warhead VX, no less).

But in 1998, Duelfer wasn’t so convinced of Iraq’s disarmament and he was quite supportive of his aggressive inspector, Scott Ritter. After the VX story flap, Ritter resigned from UNSCOM over the weak reaction by the Clinton Administration to Iraq’s defiance of UNSCOM and Iraq’s unending lies about its WMD. Duelfer blurted out in agreement, “Madeline Albright has blocked more inspections lately than Saddam Hussein.”

Why the change of heart? Duelfer is coloring his entire seven-year UNSCOM experience with Iraq with the dubious conclusions he drew from a few

months after the invasion.

In his memoir, he certainly seems to have a selective memory about his seven years leading UNSCOM. Still, it was hard to forget [Dr. Rihab "Germ" Taha](#). Dr. Taha was normally mild-mannered, but according to a 1999 DIA report, when UNSCOM inspectors asked her about the al Hakam bioweapon facility, she flew into a satanic rage, screaming that it only processed chickenfeed. She literally smashed and trashed the furniture the inspectors were sitting on. Al-Hakam was later blown up by UNSCOM in 1996 under Duelfer's overall direction, so I guess he didn't believe it was a chickenfeed plant at the time. Indeed, even two years later, he still didn't think it had been, and not just because of the the missiles he had drily observed defending it. The reason is this: In 1998 UNSCOM discovered a 1994 document which proved that the Regime was making "nozzles for spray dryers to be delivered to Al Hakam." Chickenfeed? You don't need spray dryer nozzles to make that. You do need them to make nice, freeze-dried Anthrax.

I think she was protesting too much. In 1995, UNSCOM's principal weapons inspector, Dr. Rod Barton from Australia, showed Taha documents that showed the Iraqi government had *just* purchased 10 tons of growth medium from a British company called Oxoid. (Growth media is a mixture of sugars, proteins and minerals that provides nutrients for microorganisms to grow. It can be used in hospitals and microbiology/molecular biology research laboratories.) In hospitals, swabs from patients are placed in dishes containing growth medium for diagnostic purposes.

The only trouble was this: Iraq's hospital consumption of growth medium was just 200 kg a year; yet in 1988, Iraq imported 39 tons of it. Shown this evidence by UNSCOM, Taha admitted to the inspectors that she had grown 19,000 litres of [botulism](#) toxin; 8,000 litres of [anthraxaflatoxins](#), which causes liver failure; [Clostridium perfringens](#), a bacterium that causes gas [gangrenericin](#), a castor-bean derivative which kills by cutting off your circulation. She also admitted conducting research into [cholera](#), [salmonella](#), [foot and mouth disease](#), and camel pox, a disease that uses the same growth techniques as [smallpox](#), but which is safer for researchers to work with. It was because of the discovery of

Taha's work with camel pox that the U.S. and British intelligence services feared Saddam Hussein may have been planning to weaponize the smallpox virus. Iraq had a smallpox outbreak in 1971 and the Weapons Intelligence, Nonproliferation and Arms Control Center (WINPAC) believed the Iraqi government retained contaminated material.

But wait—she claimed she did all this before the Gulf War, and after it, she claimed she destroyed all her evil handiwork. I guess Iraq's 1995 purchase of another 10 tons of growth media, four years after the Gulf War, was just to supply Iraq's hospitals— for the *next hundred years*. "We never intended to use [the weaponized agents]," she told journalist Jane Corbin of the BBC's Panorama program. "We never wanted to cause harm or damage to anybody." Duelfer now believes her.

Another problem for Dr. Germ's credibility long after the Gulf War was those pesky, primate-sized inhalation chambers at al-Haditha. Humans are primates, but Taha denied ever using monkeys or other non-human primates for biological experiments and no evidence of ape use was ever adduced. Actually Dr. Taha preferred people as her test subjects. According to Scott Ritter in his 1999 book *Endgame: Solving the Iraq Crisis*, UNSCOM learned that, between July 1 and August 15, 1995, 50 prisoners were transferred from Abu Ghraib to a base at al-Haditha. Dr. Ahmed Chalabi's INC reported that Dr. Taha's scientists sprayed the prisoners down with anthrax. During one experiment, the inspectors were told, 12 prisoners were tied to posts while shells loaded with anthrax were blown up nearby. Dr. Germ got to watch them wheeze and die.

Of course the trouble was that it had been Dr. Chalabi's organization, in touch with the relatives, that reported what happened at al-Haditha, and the CIA had always hated Chalabi. In his book, Duelfer seems to agree: Years later, in 2003, when the newly installed Duelfer learned that one of the ISG's sources of information was from the Chalabi organization, Duelfer immediately ordered that the cooperation be drastically limited. After all, you wouldn't want to get any information, however useful, from a man everybody knows has his "own agenda," to use Mr. Duelfer's phrase in *Hide and Seek*.

But back in 1995, Scott Ritter was more suspicious—not of Dr. Chalabi, but of Dr. Germ. He was convinced she was killing people with her germs. His team demanded to see documents from Abu Ghraib prison showing a prisoner count. Ritter discovered that the records for July and August 1995 were, of course, mysteriously missing. Asked to explain the missing documents, the Iraqi government angrily accused Ritter of working for the CIA and summarily denied UNSCOM access to the Baath Party headquarters. Mr. Duelfer doesn't mention any of this in his memoir, perhaps because it involved anthrax use after the Gulf War, and not before. It would upset his theory. [After resigning in protest from UNSCOM in 1998, Ritter told Congress and the media, "Iraq is not disarming," and "Iraq retains the capability to launch a chemical strike."]

Duelfer's memory of his fine work at UNSCOM seems almost to have evaporated. On September 17, 1997, while waiting for access to a site, his UNSCOM inspectors witnessed and videotaped Iraqi guards moving files, burning documents, and dumping waste cans into a nearby river. At the exact same time, a second UNSCOM team (UNSCOM 199/203), this one in central Baghdad, was barred entry to their own target facility for about an hour, all the while watching the exact same thing going on. Maybe this time the Iraqis were trying to conceal goat food.

But only one week later, Ritter had reason to believe that his ground teams' efforts were paying off. At least he was getting documents proving guilt. On September 25, 1997, UNSCOM inspected a "food laboratory." One of Duelfer's inspectors, Dr. Diane Seaman, entered the building, but this time she sidled through the back door. She caught several men running out with suitcases and started yelling for help. Ritter's men ran them down. It turned out that the suitcases contained "log books for the creation of illegal bacteria and chemicals. The letterhead comes from the president's office and from the Special Security Office (SSO)." UNSCOM immediately attempted to inspect the SSO headquarters but was of course blocked. Why was Iraq making "illegal bacteria and chemicals" in 1997? Somehow I don't think it was to feed all those herds of chickens and goats. But amazingly, this, or at least its moral equivalent, is what Duelfer seems now to believe.

Even the Iraqis, according to the UNSCOM reports from 1997, were fessing up to some things. Duelfer apparently forgot about the fact that he himself had been in overall charge of a major destruction of chemical weapons and related equipment the very next month, in October 1997. While UNSCOM arranged for the demolition, the Regime actually admitted that some of the exploding equipment had actually been used to produce VX nerve gas in May, 1997—not May 1990. By the spring of 1998, UNSCOM had physical confirmation of VX nerve gas in a hidden dump of undeclared missiles.

Interestingly, before he flew to Baghdad to begin his new job as director of the ISG in 2003, Duelfer made a point of NOT reading the classified 2002 National Intelligence Estimate concerning Iraq's WMD stocks. He didn't want to have any preconceptions when he began his investigation about what Iraq did or didn't have on the eve of the invasion. He wanted to have less information, rather than more, in the limited time he had to do his job before the transfer to Iraqi sovereignty in June 2004. Apparently he didn't want to hear about the sources and methods behind the satellite intercepts that Sec. Powell presented in his speech to the UN. This is where the Iraqi military was caught talking in 2002 about getting rid of the evidence of the "banned weapons" and the "nerve agents" so the inspectors couldn't find them.

Shortly before the release of Mr. Duelfer's memoir, on January 13, 2009, Iraq submitted its accession document to the United Nations and duly became the 186th Chemical Weapons Convention member nation on February 12th. One month later, Iraq declared a chemical weapons stockpile that included two bunkers with filled and unfilled chemical weapons munitions, some precursors, as well as five former chemical weapons production facilities (CWPFs). I guess Duelfer, Kay and Blix somehow missed this stockpile and the five CW production facilities.

OPCW spokesman Michael Luhan was quick to minimize the significance of the Declaration, so as not to justify the invasion retroactively. "These are legacy weapons, remnants," Luhan told Global Security Newswire, but mysteriously wouldn't say how many CW munitions were found or anything

else about them, for that matter. The production facilities, he opined, were “put out of commission” by airstrikes during the 1991 conflict. But you would think that if these CW factories were reduced to rubble during the Gulf War, there wouldn’t be any need to declare them, would you? Apparently Iraq’s democratic government thought they were more important than Mr. Luhan did, or than Duelfer does now.

Ryan Mauro, founder of Worldthreats.com, interviewed Mr. Duelfer on February 24th, 2009 after a talk by Duelfer at the Free Library of Philadelphia. [General George Sada](#), the former second-in-command of the Iraqi Air Force, explained in his 2006 book, *Saddam’s Secrets*, that he personally knows two Iraqi pilots who flew most of the WMD’s into Syria over the summer of 2002. Sada also said there was a ground shipment that followed afterwards, which was partly corroborated by the DOD’s National Imaging and Mapping Agency’s photographs of the convoys. Nizar Najoeef, a Syrian journalist who defected to France, told [De Telegraaf](#) on January 5, 2004 that his sources inside Syria identified the three locations where Iraq’s WMD had been shipped to.

Charles Duelfer was not terribly interested in this alternative theory to his own. “I did not interview the pilots nor did I speak with the Syrian journalist you mentioned,” Duelfer said. “We were inundated with WMD reports and could not investigate them all...To narrow the problem, we investigated those people and places we knew would have either been involved or aware of regime WMD activities.” Except that “narrowing the problem” evidently didn’t include reading the full 2002 NIE before tackling it. To his credit, however, Duelfer in *Hide and Seek* did confirm knowledge of Iraqi truck drivers working for a company linked to Uday Hussein transporting “sensitive” cargo into Syria shortly before the invasion started. He told Mauro that this was indeed a “loose end.” The truck drivers weren’t interviewed, however.

Duelfer figured that since none of the incarcerated Baathists he interviewed in Baghdad talked about such a transfer to Syria, it probably didn’t happen. “Someone among the people we interviewed would have described this,” he said to Ryan Mauro. But Don Bordenkircher, the national director of jail and prison operations in Iraq for two years,

informed Mauro that he spoke to about 40 Iraqis, either military personnel or civilians assigned to the military, who discussed the movement of WMD's to Syria and Lebanon, some of whom claimed to having actually been involved. I guess these guys didn't rate very highly on Duelfer's interview list either.

It was Saddam's nuke program that should really have garnered the highest interest by the ISG.

We know about it not from Saddam's jailhouse FBI interviews, where according to Duelfer's memoir Saddam steadfastly denied everything except an intention to re-acquire WMD when sanctions had eroded. We know about it from his own mouth, in captured tape **ISGQ-2003-M0007379**, in which Saddam is briefed on his secret nuclear weapons project. This meeting must have taken place in 2002 or 2003.

According to John Loftus of the Intelligence Summit, which unveiled the tape at its annual convention in February 2006, the tape "describes a laser enrichment process for uranium that had never been known by the UN inspectors to even exist in Iraq, and Saddam's nuclear briefers on the tape were Iraqi scientists who had never been on any weapons inspector's list. The tape explicitly discusses how civilian plasma research could be used as a cover for military plasma research necessary to build a hydrogen bomb."

Another document was translated by the Intelligence Summit, dated November 2002, describing an expensive plan to remove radioactive contamination from an isotope production building before UNMOVIC inspectors showed up on-site. But Charles Duelfer, strangely, doesn't mention any radioactive isotope production facilities in Saddam's Iraq in 2002, or any plans for making Hydrogen Bombs. Of these tapes, Duelfer hastily told CNN, "The tapes tend to reinforce, confirm, and to a certain extent, provide a bit more detail, the conclusions which we brought out in the report." Really.

The final line of evidence is David Gaubatz. Mr. Gaubatz was an officer in the US Air Force for 23 years, usually investigating murder, drug and

other criminal cases for the Office of Special Investigations. According to the New York Times, Gaubatz retired in 1999 and worked as an investigator for Target, the retail chain, but soon returned to the AFOSI as a civilian.

After 9-11, Mr. Gaubatz learned Arabic and shipped out to Iraq. He was stationed near Nasiriya, where he and a colleague headed out in a utility vehicle "at 6 a.m. each day and spent their time talking with anyone they saw – Bedouin tribesmen, farmers, hospital workers, former military officers, police officers and city bureaucrats," in the words of the [NYT article](#) by Scott Shane on June 23rd, 2006.

Iraqi civilians led him to four places where they said they had seen chemical weapons being hidden in underground bunkers or, in one case, under the Euphrates River in a submerged set of concrete bunkers. They risked their lives in doing so, given the general Sunni hostility to helping Americans at the time.

Excited, Gaubatz called the ISG "every other day," to no avail, pleading with them to send a team with heavy digging equipment. "They'd say, 'We're in a combat zone. We don't have the people or the equipment,' " recounted Mr. Gaubatz to the NYT reporter. The 75th Exploitation Task Force was also called regularly but likewise ignored Gaubatz's pleas for excavation.

Mr. Gaubatz's carefully cultivated Iraqi informants grew angry and frightened. "They said, 'We risked our lives and our families to help you, and nothing's happened,'" Mr. Gaubatz relayed. The sites were never searched. "I didn't imagine it would be a battle to get them to search," he said. "One of the primary reasons for going into combat was the W.M.D."

It was indeed. Tony Blair and Charles Duelfer had the best of intentions in their search for the truth about Saddam's secrets. They wanted to tell the truth, come what may. Unfortunately for history, Mr. Duelfer's theory, and Mr. Blair's uncritical acceptance of it, got in the way of the facts, and the facts remain ignored.

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