



## **ElBaradei Blasts Bush Administration Over Iraq War**

Monday, April 25, 2011

The former head of the International Atomic Energy Agency in his new memoir lashed out at the Bush administration for instigating "a needless war" in Iraq, indicating he believes that former top officials in Washington should face an international criminal inquiry, the Associated Press reported on Friday (see [GSN](#), Nov. 4, 2010).

The March 2003 invasion demonstrated that "deliberate deception was not limited to small countries ruled by ruthless dictators," according to "The Age of Deception," which is set for release on Tuesday.

The Bush administration made Iraq's suspected possession of weapons of mass destruction a key component of its case for invasion. In the months leading up to the war, U.N. inspectors performed roughly 700 checks of dozens of possible arms installations in Iraq, but uncovered nothing to verify Washington's assertions, AP reported. No evidence of ongoing WMD programs or operational stockpiles have turned up since the invasion.

ElBaradei led the U.N. nuclear watchdog from 1997 to 2009. In his book, he noted an October 2002 meeting with then-chief U.N. weapons inspector Hans Blix and Bush administration Secretary of State Colin Powell and national security adviser Condoleezza Rice. The U.S. officials wanted the U.N. inspections effort to become "cover for what would be, in essence, a United States-directed inspection process," ElBaradei wrote.

While the Bush administration claimed that aluminum tubes being delivered to Iraq were intended for enriching uranium to weapon-usable levels, U.N. inspectors on the ground determined they would be used to fire rockets, according to ElBaradei.

He delivered that information to the U.N. Security Council on January 27, 2003. One day later, Bush reaffirmed the U.S. stance on the tubes' intended use during his State of the Union address, ElBaradei noted.

There were similar differences over Iraq's alleged attempts to acquire uranium from Niger and over a claim from the since-discredited source known as "Curveball" that the Hussein regime possessed mobile biological weapons laboratories (see [GSN](#), Feb. 15).

"I was aghast at what I was witnessing," ElBaradei wrote. He characterized the invasion as "aggression where there was no imminent threat" and said he believes hundreds of thousands of Iraqi citizens have died in conflict over the last eight years.

The question of the war's legality should be submitted to the World Court, ElBaradei stated. That being the case, "should not the International Criminal Court investigate whether this constitutes a 'war crime' as determine who is accountable?"

Such an inquiry appears unlikely, according to AP. Still, ElBaradei asked whether "we, as a community of nations, have the wisdom and courage to take the corrective measures needed, to ensure that such a tragedy will never happen again?"

Bush addressed the Iraq invasion in his own memoir, released last November. He said that an "intelligence failure" was the cause for incorrect assertions regarding Iraq's unconventional weapons capabilities and that he had a "sickening feeling" as the situation became clear. However, the former president defended his decision to unseat "homicidal dictator" Saddam Hussein.

Meanwhile, ElBaradei also called for Washington to take a more open approach to resolving the standoffs over the nuclear programs of Iran and North Korea. While such diplomatic efforts can be "tedious, wrenching," they are also necessary, he wrote.

"All parties must come to the negotiating table," stated ElBaradei, who after leaving the nuclear agency became a key figure in the opposition movement that earlier this year unseated Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak (Associated Press/[Washington Post](#), April 22).

## **ELBARADEI CALLS FOR PROBE**

Sun, 2011-04-24 00:55 — editor

S.H.Moulana in Riyadh

Nobel Laureate Mohamed El Baradei suggests that US leaders during Bush's administration should be probed for war crimes. He condemns the grotesque distortion in the run-up to the 2003 Iraq invasion.

The former chief United Nations nuclear inspector in his new memoir says that Bush administration officials should face international criminal investigation for the needless war in Iraq.

Freer to speak now than he was as an international civil servant, El Baradei accused US leaders of deliberate distortion of the truth when they claimed that Iraq possessed doomsday weapons despite contrary evidence collected by him and other arms inspectors inside the country.

A law scholar and the head of the IAEA from 1997 to 2009 El Baradei was a rallying figure during the recent Egyptian uprising.

In his 321 page memoir, he tells of an October 2002 meeting he and the UN chief arms inspector, Hans Blix had with then Secretary of State Colin Powell, National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice and others, at which the American leaders sought to convert the UN mission into a cover what would be, in essence, a United States directed inspection process.

The UN officials resisted, and their teams went on to conduct some 700 inspections of scores of potential weapons sites in Iraq, finding absolutely no evidence to support the US claims of weapons of mass destruction. El Bardei says that he was aghast to see the US attitude before the March 2003 invasion, which he calls aggression where there was no imminent threat, a war in which he accepts estimates that hundreds of thousands of Iraqi civilians were killed and created 4.5 million refugees, still languishing in neighboring countries in makeshift arrangements.

A country which takes the leading role to initiate probes on war crimes and human rights violations in other countries, why it is reluctant to do the same in its own backyard and when it comes to its closest ally in the Middle East, Israel.

### **EX-INSPECTOR ELBARADEI SUGGESTS WAR CRIMES PROBE OF BUSH TEAM FOR DELIBERATE DECEPTION ON IRAQ**

By Charles J. Hanley, The Associated Press – April 23, 2011

NEW YORK, N.Y. — Former chief U.N. nuclear inspector Mohamed ElBaradei suggests in a new memoir that Bush administration officials should face international criminal investigation for the "shame of a needless war" in Iraq.

Freer to speak now than he was as an international civil servant, the Nobel-winning Egyptian accuses U.S. leaders of "grotesque distortion" in the run-up to the 2003 Iraq invasion, when then-President George W. Bush and his lieutenants claimed Iraq possessed doomsday weapons despite contrary evidence collected by ElBaradei's and other arms inspectors inside the country.

The Iraq war taught him that "deliberate deception was not limited to small countries ruled by ruthless dictators," ElBaradei writes in "The Age of Deception," being published Tuesday by Henry Holt and Company.

The 68-year-old legal scholar, head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) from 1997 to 2009 and recently a rallying figure in Egypt's revolution, concludes his 321-page account of two decades of "tedious, wrenching" nuclear diplomacy with a plea for more of it, particularly in the efforts to rein in North Korean and Iranian nuclear ambitions.

"All parties must come to the negotiating table," writes ElBaradei, who won the Nobel Peace Prize jointly with the IAEA in 2005. He repeatedly chides Washington for reluctant or hardline approaches to negotiations with Tehran and Pyongyang.

He is harshest in addressing the Bush administration's 2002-2003 drive for war with Iraq, when ElBaradei and Hans Blix led teams of U.N. inspectors looking for signs Saddam Hussein's government had revived nuclear, chemical or biological weapons programs.

He tells of an October 2002 meeting he and Blix had with Secretary of State Colin Powell, National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice and others, at which the Americans sought to

convert the U.N. mission into a "cover for what would be, in essence, a United States-directed inspection process."

The U.N. officials resisted, and their teams went on to conduct some 700 inspections of scores of potential weapons sites in Iraq, finding no evidence to support the U.S. claims of weapons of mass destruction.

In his own memoir, published last November, Bush still insisted it was right to invade to remove a "homicidal dictator pursuing WMD." But the ex-president also wrote of a "sickening feeling" when no arms turned up after the invasion, and blamed an "intelligence failure" for the baseless claim, a reference to a 2002 U.S. intelligence assessment contending WMD were being built.

But that assessment itself offered no concrete evidence, and Bush and his aides have never explained why the U.S. position was not changed as on-the-ground U.N. findings came in before the invasion.

ElBaradei cites examples, including the conclusion by his inspectors inside Iraq that certain aluminum tubes were designed for artillery rockets, not for uranium enrichment equipment to build nuclear bombs, as Washington asserted.

The IAEA chief reported this conclusion to the U.N. Security Council on Jan. 27, 2003, and yet on the next day Bush — in a "remarkable" response — delivered a State of the Union address in which he repeated the unfounded claim about aluminum tubes, ElBaradei notes.

Similar contradictions of expert findings occurred with the claim, based on a forgery, that Iraq had sought uranium from Niger, and an Iraqi exile's fabrication that "mobile labs" were producing biological weapons.

"I was aghast at what I was witnessing," ElBaradei writes of the official U.S. attitude before the March 2003 invasion, which he calls "aggression where there was no imminent threat," a war in which he accepts estimates that hundreds of thousands of Iraqi civilians were killed.

In such a case, he suggests, the World Court should be asked to rule on whether the war was illegal. And, if so, "should not the International Criminal Court investigate whether this constitutes a 'war crime' and determine who is accountable?"

Formidable political and legal barriers would seem to rule out such an investigation. But ElBaradei, citing the war-crimes prosecution of Serbia's Slobodan Milosevic, sees double standards that should end.

"Do we, as a community of nations, have the wisdom and courage to take the corrective measures needed, to ensure that such a tragedy will never happen again?" he asks.

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