

The Iraq War Was Based On Lies: Top Bush Era CIA Official

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by Claire Bernish

Twelve years after George W Bush initiated the illegal invasion of Iraq, ostensibly under the premise of preemptive self-defense, a stark [majority](#) — as many as 75% in 2014 — feel the so-called war was a mistake. As evidence rapidly accumulates that Bush's yearning to launch an aggressive attack was likelier due to a personal grudge than anything else, that number will surely swell. This past Tuesday, the former president's intelligence briefer lent yet more plausibility to that theory in an interview on MSNBC's Hardball, making an admission that the Bush White House misrepresented intelligence reports to the public on key issues.



Michael Morell's stint with the CIA included deputy and acting director, but during the time preceding the US invasion of Iraq, he helped prepare daily intelligence briefings for Bush. One of those briefings, from October 2002, is an infamous example in intelligence history as how not to compile a report. [This National Intelligence Estimate](#), titled "Iraq's Continuing Programs for Weapons of Mass Destruction", was the ostensibly flawed intelligence cited continuously by Bush supporters as justification to pursue a war of aggression against Iraq. However, this claim is dubious at best, and serves more as a smokescreen to lend credence to a president who was otherwise hellbent on revenge against Saddam Hussein, as evidenced in his [statement](#) a month before the report, "After all, this is the guy who tried to kill my dad."

In the [Hardball interview](#), host Chris Matthews asked Morell about Cheney's notorious statement in 2003:

"We know he [Saddam Hussein] has been absolutely devoted to trying to acquire

nuclear weapons. And we believe he has, in fact, reconstituted nuclear weapons."

The following is the conversation that ensued:

MATTHEWS: Was that true?

MORELL: We were saying—

MATTHEWS: Can you answer that question? Was that true?

MORELL: That's not true.

MATTHEWS: Well, why'd you let them get away with it?

MORELL: Look, my job Chris—

MATTHEWS: You're the briefer for the president on intelligence, you're the top person to go in and tell him what's going on. You see Cheney make this charge he's got a nuclear bomb and then they make subsequent charges he knew how to deliver it...and nobody raised their hand and said, "No that's not what we told him."

MORELL: Chris, Chris Chris, what's my job, right? My job—

MATTHEWS: To tell the truth.

MORELL: My job—no, as the briefer? As the briefer?

MATTHEWS: Okay, go ahead.

MORELL: As the briefer, my job is to carry CIA's best information and best analysis to the president of the United States and make sure he understands it. My job is to not watch what they're saying on TV.

Discussion continued:

MATTHEWS: So you're briefing the president on the reasons for war, they're selling the war, using your stuff, saying you made that case when you didn't. So they're using your credibility to make the case for war dishonestly, as you just admitted.

MORELL: Look, I'm just telling you—

MATTHEWS: You just admitted it.

MORELL: I'm just telling you what we said—

MATTHEWS: They gave a false presentation of what you said to them.

MORELL: On some aspects. On some aspects.

And the host pushed just a little further:

MATTHEWS: That's a big deal! Do you agree? If they claimed they had a [nuclear] weapon, when you know they didn't.

MORELL: It's a big deal. It's a big deal.

He's absolutely right, of course, and even further to that point, Morell made another admission of a direct misrepresentation: *"What they were saying about the link between Iraq and Al Qaeda publicly was not what the intelligence community" had found. "I think they were trying to make a stronger case for the war."* Which the administration had to do, considering no such case existed. As a matter of fact, Cheney's statement directly conflicts with what the [NIE actually stated](#), which is that the intelligence community only found a *"[lack of] persuasive evidence that Baghdad has launched a coherent effort to reconstitute its nuclear weapons program."* Which is in line with the [International Atomic Energy Agency report](#) that came to the same conclusion: *"[W]e have to date found no evidence that Iraq has revived its nuclear weapons program."*

All of this solidifies what former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan resolutely [stated](#) about the US invasion of Iraq in 2004: *"I have indicated it was not in conformity with the UN charter. From our point of view and from the charter point of view it was illegal."*

The question most deserving an answer, and increasingly posed by the populace at large: If George W Bush, Dick Cheney, and others in the administration, deliberately misled the public on false pretenses, directly contradicted intelligence information through misrepresentation, and ultimately initiated a wholly illegal invasion of Iraq that led to the deaths of well over 1 million civilian, non-combatants; *WHY have they not been charged with war crimes?*

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