

The U.S. Has Repeatedly Lied About Satellite Photographs as a Justification for War

By [Washington's Blog](#)

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U.S. Busted Faking Satellite Photographs In Both Iraq Wars

U.S. government claims that satellite photographs prove that Russian separatists are responsible for the shutdown of the Malaysian airplane over Ukraine, and that Russia has fired artillery into Ukraine.

Russia claims that [the photos are fake](#).

While we don't have the necessary expertise to know who's right, it's worth noting that the U.S. government has repeatedly lied about satellite photos as a basis for war.

For example, in the run up to the Iraq war, the U.S. [claimed](#) that satellite images showed that Saddam possessed [bunkers and trucks](#) loaded with chemical weapons ... but none were found.

And the same thing happened in the first Gulf War. The Christian Science Monitor [reported](#) in 2002:

When George H. W. Bush ordered American forces to the Persian Gulf to reverse Iraq's August 1990 invasion of Kuwait part of the administration case was that an Iraqi juggernaut was also threatening to roll into Saudi Arabia.

Citing top-secret satellite images, Pentagon officials estimated in mid-September that up to 250,000 Iraqi troops and 1,500 tanks stood on the border, threatening the key US oil supplier.

But when the St. Petersburg Times in Florida acquired two commercial Soviet satellite images of the same area, taken at the same time, no Iraqi troops were visible near the Saudi border just empty desert.

"It was a pretty serious fib," says Jean Heller, the Times journalist who broke the story.

Shortly before US strikes began in the Gulf War, for example, the St. Petersburg Times asked two experts to examine the satellite images of the Kuwait and Saudi Arabia border area taken in mid-September 1990, a month and a half after the Iraqi invasion. The experts, including a former Defense Intelligence Agency analyst who specialized in desert warfare, pointed out the US build-up jet fighters standing wing-tip to wing-tip at Saudi bases but were surprised to see almost no sign of the Iraqis.

"That [Iraqi buildup] was the whole justification for Bush sending troops in there, and it just didn't exist," Ms. Heller says. Three times Heller contacted the office of Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney (now vice president) for evidence refuting the Times photos or analysis □ offering to hold the story if proven wrong.

The official response: "Trust us." To this day, the Pentagon's photographs of the Iraqi troop buildup remain classified.

"This administration is capable of any lie ... in order to advance its war goal in Iraq," says a US government source in Washington with some two decades of experience in intelligence, who would not be further identified.

(And see [this report](#) from the Guardian.)

Indeed, U.S. intelligence agencies have [REPEATEDLY lied](#) as a way to justify war, and on other issues of vital national concern.

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