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Satellite Photos Support Testimony That Iraqi WMD Went to Syria

Posted By [Ryan Mauro](#) On June 6, 2010 @ 12:08 am In [. Feature 01, Iraq, Middle East, Syria](#) | [No Comments](#)

Ha'aretz has [revived](#) ^[1] the mystery surrounding the inability to find weapons of mass destruction stockpiles in Iraq, the most commonly cited justification for Operation Iraqi Freedom and one of the most embarrassing episodes for the United States. Satellite photos of a suspicious site in Syria are providing new support for the reporting of a Syrian journalist who briefly rocked the world with his reporting that Iraq's WMD had been sent to three sites in Syria just before the invasion commenced.

The newspaper reveals that a 200 square-kilometer area in northwestern Syria has been photographed by satellites at the request of a Western intelligence agency at least 16 times, the most recent being taken in January. The site is near Masyaf, and it has at least five installations and hidden paths leading underneath the mountains. This supports the reporting of Nizar Nayouf, an award-winning Syrian journalist who [said](#) ^[2] in 2004 that his sources confirmed that Saddam Hussein's WMDs were in Syria.

One of the three specific sites he mentioned was an underground base underneath Al-Baida, which is one kilometer south of Masyaf. This is a perfect match. The suspicious features in the photos and the fact that a Western intelligence agency is so interested in the site support Nayouf's reporting, showing that his sources in Syria did indeed have access to specific information about secret activity that is likely WMD-related. Richard Radcliffe, one of my co-writers at [WorldThreats.com](#), ^[3] noticed that Masyaf is located on a road that goes from Hamah, where there is an airfield sufficient to handle relatively large aircraft, into Lebanon and the western side of the Bekaa Valley, another location said to house Iraqi weapons.

It seems to be commonly accepted that Iraq did not have WMDs at all. The intelligence was obviously flawed, but the book has not been closed on what actually happened. The media blasted the headline that Charles Duelfer, the head of the Iraq Survey Group tasked with finding out if Saddam had WMDs, concluded that a transfer did not occur. In reality, his report [said](#) ^[4] they were "unable to complete its investigation and is unable to rule out the possibility that WMD was evacuated to Syria before the war" due to the poor security situation.

Although no conclusion was made, Duelfer has since said that he is "convinced" that no WMD went to Syria. He is a competent and credible individual, but there is evidence that key information on this possibility was not received by the Iraq Survey Group, which had many of its own problems.

On February 24, 2009, I went to see a talk Duelfer gave at the Free Library of Philadelphia to promote his [book](#) ^[5]. He admitted there were some "loose ends" regarding the possibility that Iraqi WMD went to Syria, but dismissed them. Among these "loose ends," Duelfer said, was the inability to track down the Iraqis who worked for a company connected to Uday Hussein that sources said had driven "sensitive" material into Syria. A Pentagon document [reveals](#) ^[6] that an Iraqi dissident reported that 50 trucks crossed the border on March 10, 2003, and that his sources in Syria confirmed they carried WMD. These trucks have been talked about frequently and remain a mystery.

During the question-and-answer period and during a follow-up interview, Duelfer made several interesting statements to me that reinforced my confidence that such a transfer occurred, although we can not be sure of the extent of it.

General Georges Sada, the former second-in-command of the Iraqi Air Force, claimed in his 2006 [book](#) ^[7] that he knew two Iraqi pilots that flew WMD into Syria over the summer of 2002, which came before a later shipment on the ground. I asked Duelfer if Nizar Nayouf or the two Iraqi pilots were spoken with.

"I did not interview the pilots nor did I speak with the Syrian journalist you mentioned," he 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."

He then told me that the lack of testimony about such dealings is what convinced him that "a lot of material went to Syria, but no WMD." He cited the testimony of Naji Sabri, the former Iraqi foreign minister, in particular.

"I knew him very well, and I had been authorized to make his life a lot better, or a lot worse," he told me.

He said that Sabri's position would make him aware of any such deal between the two countries. However, in his book, Duelfer said that Sabri had nothing to do with any of Iraq's WMD efforts at any time. "His statements on WMD from an intelligence perspective would have been irrelevant," Duelfer wrote.

"Someone among the people we interviewed would have described this," Duelfer said. However, such testimony does exist. Don Bordenkircher, who served as the national director of jail and prison operations in Iraq for two years, [told me](#) ^[8] that he spoke to about 40 Iraqis, either military personnel or civilians assigned to the military, who talked about the WMDs going to Syria and Lebanon, with some claiming they were actually involved. Their stories matched and were not contradictory, he said. Another military source of mine [related](#) ^[9] to me how an Iraqi intelligence captain in Al-Qaim claimed to have witnessed the movement of suspicious convoys into Syria between February and March 2003.

I also asked Duelfer if he was aware of the intelligence provided by the Ukrainians and other sources that the Russians were in Iraq helping to cleanse the country shortly before the invasion. His facial expressions before I even finished the question showed he genuinely had never even heard of this.

As explained in detail in Ken Timmerman's book [Shadow Warriors](#) ^[10], high-level meetings were held on February 10-12, 2004, involving officials from the U.S., the UK, and Ukraine. Among the attendees were Deputy Undersecretary of Defense John A. Shaw, the head of MI6, and the head of Ukrainian intelligence, Ihor Smeshko. The Ukrainians provided all the details of the Russian effort, including the dates and locations of meetings to plan the intervention and even the names of the Russian Spetsnaz officers involved. Shaw also worked with a British source that ran an intelligence network in the region and provided substantiation and additional details.

The former head of Romanian intelligence during the Cold War, Ion Pacepa, has [provided](#) ^[11] supporting testimony. He says that he had personal knowledge of a Soviet plan called "Operation Sarindar" where the Russians would cleanse a rogue state ally of any traces of illicit activity if threatened with Western attack. The plan's purpose was to deny the West of any evidence incriminating Russia or its ally. The [presence](#) ^[12] of Russian advisors in Iraq shortly before the invasion, some of whom received medals from Saddam Hussein, is a strong indication that this plan was followed.

Dave Gaubatz, who was the first civilian federal agent deployed to Iraq, [told me](#) ^[13] that he saw intelligence that "suggested that some WMD had been moved to Syria with the help of Russian intelligence." Iraqis personally confirmed to him that there was a Russian presence before the American soldiers arrived.

Amazingly, Duelfer seems to have never been informed of this intelligence. "This does not mean ... that it was not passed on to ISG [Iraq Survey Group]," he said to me later. The fact that the head of the WMD search was never even made aware of this indicates something went seriously wrong. In Timmerman's book, Shaw says that Smeshko complained about the CIA's station chief in Kiev not being cooperative. Timmerman researched the station and chief and found that he was very close with other people in the intelligence community who were doing their best to fight Bush administration policies.

Duelfer actually provides information that supports this account. He confirmed that Russia was helping Iraq's illegal ballistic missile program and had close ties to Saddam's regime.

"Russians were present in Iraq for many activities. ... Russian officials regularly met with Iraqi officials. ... Russian KGB officers were in regular contact with the regime at very senior levels. ... Russian businessmen were all over Baghdad trying to secure a variety of deals. And of course Russians, including very senior Russians, were in receipt of lucrative oil allocations under the UN Oil-For-Food Program," Duelfer told me.

The theory that Iraq's WMD went to Syria is not a fringe conspiracy theory. John Loftus, a former Justice Department prosecutor known for his wide-ranging contacts in the intelligence community, said in an [interview](#) ^[14] we did that "every senior member of a Western, European or Asian intelligence service whom I have ever met all agree that the Russians moved the last of the WMDs out of Iraq in the last few months before the war."

General Tommy Franks and General Michael DeLong, the top two officials in CENTCOM when the invasion began, have spoken of credible intelligence supporting the theory. General James Clapper, President Obama's pick to replace Dennis Blair as director of national intelligence, has previously [stated](#) ^[15] his belief that the weapons went to Syria and took part in the meetings organized by Shaw.

Much more evidence exists that the WMD went to Syria, as documented [here](#) ^[16]. Obviously, it is impossible to prove and we do not know exactly what went to Syria, but the history books on this issue shouldn't be written just yet.

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[1] revived: <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/what-is-assad-hiding-in-his-backyard-1.292935>

[2] said: <http://www.worldthreats.com/?p=68>

[3] [WorldThreats.com](http://www.worldthreats.com/): <http://www.worldthreats.com/>

[4] said: http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/report/2005/isg-addendums_mar2005.pdf

[5] book: http://www.amazon.com/Hide-Seek-Search-Truth-Iraq/dp/B002DYJKL6/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1275710192&sr=1-1

[6] reveals: <http://www.worldthreats.com/?p=60>

[7] book: http://www.amazon.com/Saddams-Secrets-Georges-Hormuz-Sada/dp/1595553304/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1275710159&sr=8-1

[8] told me: <http://www.wnd.com/index.php?fa=PAGE.view&pageId=71076>

[9] related: <http://www.worldthreats.com/?p=88>

[10] *Shadow Warriors*: http://www.amazon.com/Shadow-Warriors-Traitors-Saboteurs-Surrender/dp/0307352102/ref=sr_1_2?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1275710268&sr=8-2

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[12] presence: <http://www.gazeta.ru/2003/04/02/Wedidntflyto.shtml>

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[14] interview: <http://97.74.65.51/readArticle.aspx?ARTID=4255>

[15] stated: <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2010/jun/4/likely-intel-chief-clapper-held-disputed-wmd-view/>

[16] here: <http://www.worldthreats.com/?cat=19&paged=5>

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