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## The New Lie About Iraq

**What we knew in 2003 didn't make the case for war—a campaign of hype and deceit did.**

By JON BASIL UTLEY

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The newest lie about the Iraq war is that the truth about Iraq was not known before the American attack in 2003. One needs only to search for “lies about Iraq” to see all the many links explaining evidence from before the war started that showed the Bush/Cheney/neoconservative claims to be false.

That false narrative is important to know because many of the same people are now promoting war with Iran, as they were before with Syria. Republican candidates are also stumbling over the

question of whether they would have invaded Iraq because it undermines their present, ongoing promotion of an interventionist foreign policy.

Take just one example of such a false claim, which even reached Bush's 2003 State of the Union address to Congress: "Saddam has attempted to purchase high-strength aluminum tubes suitable for nuclear weapons production." It was a lie from the beginning. Bush had been informed that the Department of Energy and State Department intelligence had analyzed the tubes and found them to be useless for a nuclear program, rather being for conventional rockets.

I was very active in reporting on the lies, writing at the time for Antiwar.com, which every day had articles, news reports, and analyses exposing the misinformation. An article I wrote in 2002, well before the war started, "Eight Washington Lies About Iraq," was at the top of a Google search for lies for 7 years. Even today it explains, with links, many of the lies made.

Iraq's weaknesses were in fact easy to comprehend after nearly nine years of U.S. economic blockade following the First Gulf War. Iraq had been decimated by American bombing of its electricity, sanitation, irrigation, and transportation systems. Almost every bridge was destroyed. A half-million Iraqi children had died of starvation and disease. It was also subject to United Nations (read American) inspectors going all over the country to verify that it was conforming to earlier UN demands for destruction of its nuclear and chemical warfare facilities.

All Americans should be reminded again and again that recent wars were based on lies. The First Gulf War was sold to Americans on the basis of the murder of "incubator babies" and an imaginary Iraqi threat to invade Saudi Arabia, including the assertion that satellite photographs showed the Iraqi Army massed on the Saudi border. The "classified" photos never existed. The Kosovo War was based on reports that 100,000 Kosovan Albanians had been murdered by Serbs, so America had to attack so as to stop the mass killing. It was also a lie.

Today, when all the Republican candidates are being pressured by right-wing media and neoconservative money men to sound (and be) hawkish, Americans should recall how most of Washington's establishment lied to promote past wars. Wars mean billions of dollars for key congressional districts' arms producers, millions of rapt viewers for 24-7 cable news, lots of TV time for think-tank chicken hawks,, new jobs for "contractors," more growth for the "surveillance state." There's also the Israel Lobby and Christian Zionists. All In all that is a pretty formidable force for war.

All Americans should be aware and suspicious of again being panicked into supporting more wars.