

\$300m search for WMD draws a blank

Level 3 | Advanced

200,000 troops 10,000 killed 1 (old) vial of botulinum

1 Key vocabulary

Match the words from the text with their meanings.

1. arsenal
 2. toxin
 3. vial
 4. potency
 5. regime
 6. dossier
 7. incontrovertible
 8. flawed
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- a. a government that controls a country strictly or unfairly
 - b. a small bottle used for storing medicine
 - c. the strength of a medicine, drug or chemical
 - d. true and impossible to doubt
 - e. a large collection of weapons and military equipment
 - f. full of errors
 - g. a set of documents about a person or situation
 - h. a poisonous substance that causes disease

2 Find the information

1. What are WMD?
2. What does ISG stand for?
3. What is botulinum?
4. What is botox used for?
5. Who is Jack Straw?

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\$300m search for WMD draws a blank

The man in charge of a \$300m hunt for Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction recently admitted that no hidden arsenal had been found, and the only potential weapon uncovered was a single vial containing a biological toxin widely used in cosmetic surgery. According to a progress report by the Iraq Survey Group (ISG), delivered to the US Congress by the group's leader, David Kay, Saddam had taken no steps to revive his nuclear weapons plan since 1998, and had abandoned any large-scale chemical weapons programme more than a decade ago. Mr Kay said he thought a comprehensive search might take another six to nine months.

The sole exception in the ISG report was a vial containing a botulinum toxin found hidden in the home of an Iraqi scientist, among a batch of other biological samples. The Iraqi regime was known to have experimented with botulinum as a weapon. However, the type found appears to be of limited potency, and

could have been used to vaccinate livestock or even in the form of Botox, used in cosmetic surgery to get rid of wrinkles.

"We don't know from this if this scientist was going to get rid of Saddam's wrinkles or kill people," said Joseph Cirincione, a weapons expert. On Monday it appeared that even this slender evidence of potential WMD material had been undercut, as it emerged that the vial had been sitting in the Iraqi scientist's refrigerator at home for 10 years. Many passages in the report contrast with the UK government's dossier on Iraq's banned weapons programme published last September. It claimed that Iraq had chemical and biological weapons "available". The ISG found no evidence of that.

But the British Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, maintained that the report justified the war, arguing that it contained "incontrovertible evidence" that Saddam was in breach of UN resolutions. His remarks echoed those of Tony Blair, who stressed before the report was released that the ISG had only been actively searching for weapons for three months. The clear

absence of anything resembling a smoking gun in the report dismayed Democrats and Republicans alike. However, the US Congress appeared split on party lines on whether to approve the \$600m the administration is asking for to continue the ISG's search.

The leading Democrat on the Senate intelligence committee, Jay Rockefeller, said: "To be where we are today, asking for another six to nine months and a good deal of money, leads me to believe we need to do some serious thinking about the doctrine of pre-emption, that we need to do some serious thinking about [how] did our intelligence allow us to get so that we could decide to go to war." Donald Rumsfeld, the defence secretary, said: "It will be unfortunate if it turns out that intelligence used to justify the war in Iraq turns out to have been seriously flawed."

Julian Borger, Ewen MacAskill and Richard Norton-Taylor

The Guardian Weekly

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3 Comprehension check

Match the beginnings and the endings of the sentences.

1. The ISG believes that ...
 2. According to the ISG's progress report, the nuclear weapons plan ...
 3. The only thing the ISG found was ...
 4. The vial of botulinum ...
 5. The ISG found no evidence that ...
 6. The British Foreign Secretary claimed the ISG's report ...
 7. Both Democrats and Republicans ...
 8. The US Congress is still split over whether ...
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- a. ... Iraq has chemical and biological weapons available.
 - b. ... a vial of botulinum.
 - c. ... were disappointed by the findings of the report.
 - d. ... Saddam Hussein abandoned his weapons programme more than 10 years ago.
 - e. ... justified the war against Iraq.
 - f. ... was abandoned in 1998.
 - g. ... to approve an additional \$600m to continue the ISG's search.
 - h. ... was found in the refrigerator of an Iraqi scientist.

4 Find the word

Find a word or expression that means the following:

1. a verb which means to bring something back to life
2. a noun which means lines on the skin which appear as people get older
3. an adjective which means very small in degree and only just enough
4. a past participle which means made less effective
5. an idiomatic expression which means clear proof that someone has done something wrong
6. an adjective which means extremely disappointed or upset
7. a noun which means information collected about the secret plans of a foreign government
8. an expression which means a policy designed to make it impossible or difficult for the enemy to attack

5 Prepositions

Fill the gaps using an appropriate preposition. Check your answers in the text.

1. David Kay is _____ charge of the ISG's search for weapons of mass destruction.
2. A vial of botulinum was found _____ a batch of biological samples.
3. The botulinum might have been used to get rid _____ wrinkles.

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4. The report contrasts _____ the UK government's dossier.
5. According to Jack Straw, Saddam was _____ breach of UN resolutions.
6. The ISG found no evidence _____ available weapons.

6 Discussion

Do you think it is right that the ISG should continue to look for weapons in Iraq?

Was the war justified? Make a list of points for and against military action in Iraq.