

Read The Report

You're probably thinking "they haven't found any actual weapons of mass destruction (yet) in Iraq, but they have found the next best thing, namely evidence of WMD *programmes*".

You must read **David Kay's interim report**. It cannot be adequately summarised, so you will not understand what has been happening unless you read it.

Update: Andrew Sullivan **came to the same conclusion** before us.

Fri, 10/03/2003 - 12:27 | [permalink](#)

Quiz:

Who first advocated the use of chemical weapons against opposition Kurds and Arabs in Iraq?

- A.Saddam
- B.Chemical Ali
- C.Winston Churchill
- D.The C.I.A.

by a reader on Sun, 10/05/2003 - 16:18 | [reply](#)

Quiz on Chemical Weapons

In answer to "a reader"'s question.

The first leader In the Middle East to use chemical weapons may well have been Saladin, who happened to be a Kurd:
<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/1189barbarossa-lets.html>
But Saladin was a humane and honorable man and, if the story is true, he will undoubtedly have targeted only enemy soldiers. This is in stark contrast to his nemesis King Richard of England, who massacred civilians as a matter of policy, though without using chemical weapons:
<http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/Saladin.htm>

The morality of British leaders improved greatly over the centuries,

and by the early twentieth century, it would have been unthinkable for a British army to target civilians at all, let alone with chemicals. However, chemical weapons were still used on combatants in warfare, notably in the First World War, and immediately afterwards, Churchill is said to have advocated using them in that way in Iraq. However, this was never done.

Later, the international community decided to ban such weapons, even against soldiers. America and Britain played a leading role in promoting this ban.

The morality of Middle Eastern leaders, however, did not improve. The first leader in the Middle East to use chemical weapons against civilians was probably Gamal Abdul Nasser:
<http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/egypt/cw/>

Nasser was idolized and emulated in many ways, including this way, by Saddam Hussein and other Ba'athists such as Chemical Ali.

And your point is?

by a reader on Sun, 10/05/2003 - 17:27 | [reply](#)

Re: Quiz on Chemical Weapons

Actually Nasser only used chemical weapons against combatants, as far as we know. If we're wrong, can someone correct us on this?

by [Editor](#) on Sun, 10/05/2003 - 18:09 | [reply](#)

Churchill

Clearly Saladin didn't use chemical weapons that were in any way like the weapons that have been in use from W.W.I to the present. (If you have any evidence to the contrary please cite it.)

"it would have been unthinkable for a British army to target civilians at all" What was the military objective in Dresden?

I believe Churchill's words were: "I do not understand this squeamishness about the use of gas. I am strongly in favour of using poison gas against uncivilised tribes." And apparently poison gas was used in artillery shells though not in bombs. (again if you have any evidence to the contrary please cite it.)

My point is: it seems odd to apparently have in your Pantheon of heroes someone who advocated exactly what Saddam implemented

by a reader on Tue, 10/07/2003 - 03:51 | [reply](#)

Evil resides more in the ends, than in the means

I don't think any weapon, or any military tactic, is necessarily evil under all possible circumstances. It is therefore a mistake to focus our criticism of evil individuals and movements, on their chosen tactics. We should criticise them first and foremost for their intended ends, and only secondarily for the compounding offence of employing means that are not justifiable by the objective merit of

those ends.

by **Kolya** on Wed, 10/08/2003 - 23:12 | [reply](#)

Not ends, choices

Evil isn't in the results of an action. Nor the 'means' (I don't think 'means' is very precise/coherent). It's in the choices made.

Sometimes doctors try their very best to save lives, but do things that are physically guaranteed to kill the patient due to imperfect medical knowledge. But this isn't evil murder. The choice the doctor made was to help the patient as best he could.

And it's possible for an assassin to try to wrongly murder a good man, but miss and hit another assassin instead. This act, attempted assassination, was the wrong choice, and evil, but had good results.

-- Elliot Temple

by a reader on Thu, 10/09/2003 - 03:21 | [reply](#)

Re: What was the military objective at Dresden?

The irony in that rhetorical question is not justified. Dresden was bombed because it was in the path of the advancing Red Army, which was fighting its way into Nazi Germany. German resistance was still intense and Soviet losses were still heavy. There was no justification for the Western Allies to let up. For a brief description of the situation see

http://www.greenhillbooks.com/extracts/Bomber_harris.html

"Martin Gilbert goes so far as to call the raid a direct result of the Yalta agreement – to make emergency use of Anglo-American air power in order to disrupt German reinforcements moving eastward to the Russian front.

...

Those who contend that it was unnecessary, indeed wrong, to attack the city centre ignore the practicalities of trying to bomb with high precision at great distance and in conditions that were not only hard to predict but might conceivably lead to another Nuremberg. If the job was to be done at all it was essential to go for the city as a whole"

by a reader on Thu, 10/09/2003 - 04:51 | [reply](#)

Re: Evil resides more in the ends

So what was the end goal for Churchill? Were the Kurds and Arabs an eminent danger to British citizens? No. The goal was to control a

newly acquired piece of the British empire. (Acquired from the

Ottoman empire after W.W.I.)

by a reader on Sat, 10/11/2003 - 21:39 | [reply](#)

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