

\$300m search for WMD draws a blank

Level 2 | Intermediate

200,000 troops

10,000 killed

1 (old) vial of botulinum

1 Key vocabulary

Fill the gaps using these words from the text:

revive
vial

abandon
dossier

toxin
wrinkles

incontrovertible
regime

1. A _____ is a set of documents about a person or a situation
2. Lines that appear on a person's skin as they grow older are called _____.
3. If evidence is _____ it is true and impossible to doubt.
4. If you _____ something, you bring it back to life.
5. If, on the other hand, you _____ something, you stop doing it.
6. A _____ is a government that controls a country strictly or unfairly.
7. A _____ is a poisonous substance that causes disease.
8. A _____ is a small, glass container for storing chemicals.

2 True or false

Are these statements true or false?

1. So far the search for Iraq's weapons of mass destruction has cost \$600m.
2. ISG stands for Iraq Search Group.
3. The ISG inspectors found just one vial of poison.
4. Botox is used in cosmetic surgery.
5. All members of the US Congress want the ISG search to continue.
6. The ISG has been looking for weapons for 3 months.

Now look in the text and check your answers.

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The man in charge of a \$300m search for Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction said last week that no hidden weapons had been found. The only potential weapon found was a single vial containing a biological poison that is often used in cosmetic surgery. According to a progress report by the Iraq Survey Group (ISG) Saddam had not tried to revive his nuclear weapons plan since 1998. David Kay, the leader of the ISG said Saddam had also abandoned any large-scale chemical weapons programme more than 10 years ago.

The only exception in the ISG report was a vial containing a botulinum toxin. The bottle was found hidden in the home of an Iraqi scientist, among a batch of other biological samples. It was known that the Iraqi regime experimented with botulinum as a weapon. However, the botulinum found in the vial was not very strong, and could have been used to vaccinate farm animals. In the form of Botox, it could also have been used in cosmetic surgery to get rid of wrinkles.

"We don't know if this scientist

was going to get rid of Saddam's wrinkles or kill people," said Joseph Cirincione, a weapons expert. Later even this doubtful evidence of potential WMD material was undermined, when it was learnt that the vial had been sitting in the Iraqi scientist's refrigerator at home for 10 years. Many parts of the report contrast with the UK government's dossier on Iraq's banned weapons programme published last September. The dossier claimed that Iraq had chemical and biological weapons "ready to use". The ISG found no evidence of that.

But the British Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, said that the report justified the war, arguing that it contained "incontrovertible evidence" that Saddam was breaking UN resolutions. His remarks echoed those of Tony Blair, who stressed before the report was published that the ISG had only been actively searching for weapons for three months. In the USA, the clear absence of evidence of WMDs in the report disappointed Democrats and Republicans alike. However, the US Congress was divided on whether to approve \$600m to continue the ISG's search.

Jay Rockefeller, the leading Democrat on the Senate

intelligence committee, said: "We are now asking for another six to nine months. This makes me believe that we need to think seriously about our policies on Iraq. We also need to think seriously about how it was that the intelligence that was available to us allowed us to decide to go to war". Donald Rumsfeld, the US Defence Secretary, said "It will be unfortunate if the intelligence used to justify the war in Iraq turns out to be wrong."

Julian Borger, Ewen MacAskill and
Richard Norton-Taylor

The Guardian Weekly

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3 Comprehension checks

Choose the best answer.

1. How many weapons of mass destruction did the ISG find?
 - a. none
 - b. a lot
 - c. just one vial of botulinum
2. When did Saddam Hussein abandon his chemical weapons programme?
 - a. in 1998
 - b. 10 years ago
 - c. last year
3. What can botox be used for?
 - a. vaccinating animals
 - b. cosmetic surgery
 - c. treating illness
4. Why did Jack Straw say that the report justified the war?
 - a. because it provided evidence that Saddam was breaking UN resolutions
 - b. because the ISG found a vial of botulinum
 - c. because it was similar to the UK government's dossier
5. Why are US congressmen divided?
 - a. because the report was unclear
 - b. because some want to continue the search and others do not
 - c. because the search will cost another \$600m

4 Word building

Complete the table

	Verb	Noun
1.	publish	_____
2.	search	_____
3.	destroy	_____
4.	vaccinate	_____
5.	resolve	_____
6.	justify	_____
7.	argue	_____
8.	disappoint	_____

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5 Prepositions

Fill the gaps using prepositions:

1. David Kay is _____ charge _____ the search for WMDs.
2. Botox is used to get rid _____ wrinkles.
3. The report contrasts _____ the UK government's dossier.
4. The ISG had been searching _____ weapons for 3 months.
5. Botox is used _____ cosmetic surgery.
6. According _____ the report, Saddam Hussein has not tried to revive his weapons programme.

6 Discussion

Do you believe Iraq has hidden weapons of mass destruction?

Was the war against Iraq justified? Why? Why not?

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Key

1 Key Vocabulary

1. dossier
2. wrinkles
3. incontrovertible
4. revive
5. abandon
6. regime
7. toxin
8. vial

2 True or false

1. F
2. F
3. T
4. T
5. F
6. T

3 Comprehension checks

1. c
2. b
3. b
4. a
5. b

4 Word building

1. publication
2. search
3. destruction
4. vaccination
5. resolution
6. justification
7. argument
8. disappointment

5 Prepositions

1. in; of
2. of
3. with
4. for
5. in
6. to