

From: *The 2001 Anthrax Deception: The Case for a Domestic Conspiracy*

Graeme MacQueen, Clarity Press, 2014, pp. 166-168, 175-176

<https://www.claritypress.com/product/the-2001-anthrax-deception-the-case-for-a-domestic-conspiracy/>

## The Powell Performance

The crop-duster tales were not a complete failure as a disinformation product. True, the reference to crop-dusters in the initial indictment of Moussaoui was later dropped,<sup>121</sup> but when Colin Powell made his infamous bogus presentation at the UN Security Council in the lead-up to the invasion of Iraq he did not hesitate to make reference to Iraq's dreaded aerial dispersion techniques.<sup>122</sup> Moreover, having assured those present that "every statement I make today is backed up by sources, solid sources," Powell held up a vial of simulated anthrax and said:

My colleagues, when Iraq finally admitted having these weapons in 1995, the quantities were vast. Less than a teaspoon of dry anthrax, a little bit about this amount—this is just about the amount of a teaspoon—less than a teaspoon full of dry anthrax in an envelope shut down the United States Senate in the fall of 2001. This forced several hundred people to undergo emergency medical treatment and killed two postal workers just from an amount just about this quantity that was inside of an envelope.

This was classic propaganda. Powell did not claim Iraq was responsible for the attack on the Senate but he made sure Iraq, anthrax and the Senate were all mentioned together. He held the vial aloft for all to see. The fears of the fall of 2001 would have been instantly conjured up for Americans watching the performance.

Powell's presentation included more than misdirection, of course. It also included statements such as the following four that were simply false:

- In 2003 Iraq still possessed bioweapons and the capacity to produce more.
- Iraq had a long-range missile program that could be used to deliver its WMD.
- Iraq also possessed the means to disperse anthrax from planes. (Powell showed a slide illustrating an Iraqi plane dispersing an anthrax simulant.)
- Iraq tolerated al Qaeda on its soil and was prepared to adopt a sponsor relationship to al Qaeda.

Actually, Iraq, a devastated and impoverished country when Powell gave his address in 2003, possessed no significant quantity of anthrax, nor had it possessed such since 1991 when it destroyed its stocks. By 1995-96 Iraq had destroyed even the technical infrastructure needed to reconstitute its bioweapons. In view of this, discussion of the technology required to deliver the non-existent anthrax was more or less irrelevant. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that Iraq's two main aerial dispersion devices for its anthrax—tanks with spray devices mounted on jets and aerosolizers for helicopters—were, as far as we can tell, minimally effective and did not, in any case, survive the 1991 Gulf War and Iraq's immediately subsequent destruction of its bioweapons material. The long-range missile program had also been terminated under pressure from UN inspectors and assorted intelligence officers—the UN inspection process was heavily infiltrated by intelligence agencies of countries hostile to Iraq—long before 2001-2003.<sup>123</sup>

Reference was made earlier in this book to the 935 false statements by the Bush

administration with respect to Iraq. Powell's performance at the UN represents a peak in the graph of those statements. The U.S. Secretary of State displaying his vial of anthrax simulant before the international community just prior to a war of aggression against Iraq is one of the most telling gestures of the 21st century.

## Endnotes

- 121 The crop duster gets a mention in Moussaoui's first indictment: UNITED STATES OF AMERICA -v- ZACARIAS MOUSSAOUI (United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, Alexandria Division, December 2001), <http://cryptome.org/usa-v-zm-ind.htm>. But in the July 25, 2002 indictment the relevant section is dropped: "The old paragraph 17 in the Overt Acts has also been entirely deleted. That paragraph provided discussion of Mr. Atta making inquiries about crop dusting. That is no longer in the superseding indictment." Ibid.
- 122 "The Iraqi regime has also developed ways to disperse lethal biological agents, widely and indiscriminately into the water supply, into the air. For example, Iraq had a programme to modify aerial fuel tanks for Mirage jets. This video of an Iraqi test flight obtained by Unscm some years ago shows an Iraqi F-1 Mirage jet aircraft. Note the spray coming from beneath the Mirage; that is 2,000 liters of simulated anthrax that a jet is spraying." "Full Text of Colin Powell's Speech," The Guardian, February 5, 2003, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2003/feb/05/iraq.usa>
- 123 Charles Duelfer, Comprehensive Report of the Special Advisor to the DCI on Iraq's WMD, September 2004; Scott Ritter, *Iraq Confidential: The Untold Story of the Intelligence Conspiracy to Undermine the UN and Overthrow Saddam Hussein* (New York: Nation Books, 2005). The section of the 1999 report to the UNSC by the UN weapons inspectors dealing with biological weapons is also of interest, although we can see in retrospect that it was extremely unfair to Iraq: UNSCOM - Report to the Security Council - 25 January 1999, 1999, <http://www.fas.org/news/un/iraq/s/990125/dis-bio.htm>.