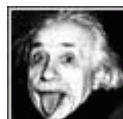




Iraq Special Report

News24 brings you the latest news from the War in Iraq

• [Set News24 as home](#)



Test your brainpower!

Are you an under-appreciated intellectual? Here's your chance for glory - play Triviazone, from QQ and News24.

[Home](#) | [South Africa](#) | [Africa](#) | [World](#) | [Sport](#) | [Business](#) | [Entertainment](#) | [Sci-Tech](#) | [Health](#) | [Backpage](#)

News sections

World : Iraq

Updated: 11/04/2003 16:19 - (SA)

World

[Iraqi Dossier News](#)

[South Africa](#)

[Business](#)

[Sport](#)

[Africa](#)

[Sci-Tech](#)

[Entertainment](#)

[Health](#)

[Backpage](#)

Special Focus

[Food24](#)

[Health24](#)

[Property24](#)

[Smalls24](#)

[Subscribe24](#)

[Women24](#)

[Wheels24](#)

[Lottery](#)

[Letters](#)

[Weather](#)

[Horoscopes](#)

Special Reports

[Iraqi Dossier](#)

[Health24: Sars](#)

[Zimbabwe](#)

[Aids Focus](#)

[More](#)

Partners

[Die Burger](#)

[Beeld](#)

[Rapport](#)

[Volksblad](#)

[Finansies & Tegniek](#)

[Landbou](#)

[Sake](#)

[LitNet](#)

[Natal Witness](#)

[City Press](#)

[Finance Week](#)

[Carte Blanche](#)

[SASI](#)

[M&G Online](#)

[KRIT](#)

Other Papers

[Community](#)



War planned 'long in advance'

09/04/2003 21:25 - (SA)

Madrid - The invasion of Iraq was planned a long time in advance, and the United States and Britain are not primarily concerned with finding any banned weapons of mass destruction, the chief UN weapons inspector, Hans Blix, said in an interview on Wednesday.

[Print article](#) [email story](#)

"There is evidence that this war was planned well in advance. Sometimes this raises doubts about their attitude to the (weapons) inspections," Blix told Spanish daily El Pais.

"I now believe that finding weapons of mass destruction has been relegated, I would say, to fourth place, which is why the United States and Britain are now waging war on Iraq.

Today the main aim is to change the dictatorial regime of Saddam Hussein," he said, according to the Spanish text of the interview.

Blix said US President George W Bush had told him in October 2002 that he backed the UN's work to verify US and British claims that Baghdad was developing biological, chemical and nuclear weapons.

Washington 'less convinced now'

But he said he knew at the time "there were people within the Bush administration who were sceptical and who were working on engineering regime change". By the start of March the hawks in both Washington and London were getting impatient, he added.

Blix said that he thought the US might initially have believed Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction - although its "fabrication" of evidence raised doubts about even that - but that Washington was now less convinced by its own claims.

"I think the Americans started the war thinking there were some. I think they now believe less in that possibility.

But I don't know - you ask yourself a lot of questions when you see the things they did to try and demonstrate that the Iraqis had nuclear weapons, like the fake contract with Niger," he explained.

That was a reference to US allegations - later denied - that Iraq had sought to purchase uranium from the west African state of Niger.

"I'm very curious to see if they do find any (weapons)," he said.

Blix said the war, which on Wednesday entered its 21st day, was "a very high price

SEARCH NEWS24

Iraq: Links

Timelines

- [26/04/03 - Present](#)
- [08/11/02 - 26/04/03](#)

Resources

- [Iraq Galleries](#)
- [Iraq Map](#)
- [Iraq Factfile](#)
- [Profile: Saddam Hussein](#)

- [Health24: Biological & Chemical Warfare](#)
- [VX Gas: Image](#)
- [Mustard Gas: Image](#)

Logistics

- [Orders of Battle](#)
- [Battle Sites](#)

Features

- [Psychological Warfare](#)
- [Rules of Engagement](#)
- [The propaganda war](#)
- [The media debate](#)

The US war machine

- [Joint direct attack munition](#)
- [Tomahawk cruise missile](#)
- [Stealth missile](#)
- [Patriot anti-missile system](#)
- [Daisy Cutter](#)
- [Bunker busters](#)
- [Carpet-bomber](#)
- [Tankbuster](#)
- [B-1](#)
- [B-2](#)
- [F-14](#)
- [F-15](#)
- [F-16](#)
- [AC-130 gunship](#)

Iraq history

- [Country profile](#)
- [A complete history](#)
- [A chronology of key events](#)

The Iraqi view

- [Saddam Hussein](#)

to pay in terms of human lives and the destruction of a country" when the threat of weapons proliferation could have been contained by UN inspections.

By attacking Iraq, Washington had sent the wrong message - that if a country did not possess biological, chemical or nuclear weapons, it risked being attacked.

US sending out the wrong signal

"The United States maintains that the war on Iraq is designed to send a signal to other countries to keep away from weapons of mass destruction.

But people are getting a different message.

Take the announcement North Korea has just made. It's tantamount to saying 'if you let in the inspectors, like Iraq did, you get attacked'.

North Korea accused the United States on Sunday of using a UN Security Council discussion of its nuclear programme as a "prelude to war" and warned that it would fully mobilise and strengthen its forces.

"It's an important problem," Blix continued.

"If a country perceives that its security is guaranteed, it won't need to consider weapons of mass destruction. This security guarantee is the first line of defence against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction."

The 74-year-old Swede announced in March that he would step down from his post when his contract runs out in June.

Blix's reputation for independence and resisting political pressure was sorely tested as the Iraq crisis unfolded and US officials became exasperated with his measured reports on Iraqi cooperation with his inspection teams.

[Discussion Forums - Have your say about this article](#)



interview

- [The Iraqi Presidency](#)
- [The Iraqi Daily](#)

The American view

- [Iraq's WOD programmes](#)
- [Decade of defiance, deception](#)
- [The White House](#)

United Nations

- [Office of the Iraq programme](#)
- [UN sanctions against Iraq](#)

War

- [Military analysis network](#)
- [Target Iraq](#)

Anti-War

- [End the war](#)
- [No war with Iraq](#)
- [Listen for peace](#)
- [Anti-war.com](#)

Iraq Library

- [Against War with Iraq: An Anti-War Primer](#)
- [Arming Iraq: How the US and Britain Secretly Build Saddam's War Machine](#)
- [Targeting Iraq: Sanctions and Bombing in US Policy](#)
- [Saddam's Bombmaker: The Inside Story of Iraqi Nuclear and Biological Weapons Agenda](#)
- [Iraq: Old Land New Nation in Conflict](#)
- [Iraq and the War of Sanctions: Conventional Threats and Weapons of Mass Destruction](#)
- [Saddam's Word: Political Discourse in Iraq](#)
- [Saddam's Secrets: The Hunt for Iraq's Hidden Weapons](#)

Breaking News

- Sars biological weapon?
- Kids used as decoy
- UN fears refugee exodus
- Mehrtens to miss Cats clash
- SA wants Harksen back
- Warnings could bankrupt booze