

# Powell's former chief of staff on Iraq intel: 'I participated in a hoax'

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[http://rawstory.com/news/2005/Powells\\_former\\_chief\\_of\\_staff\\_on\\_0205.html](http://rawstory.com/news/2005/Powells_former_chief_of_staff_on_0205.html)

In an interview that aired on PBS on Friday, Feb. 3, Colin Powell's former chief of staff claimed that the speech Powell made before the United Nations on Feb. 5, 2003, laying out a case for war with Iraq, included falsehoods of which Powell had never been made aware. He said, "My participation in that presentation at the UN constitutes the lowest point in my professional life. I participated in a hoax on the American people, the international community and the United Nations Security Council."

Colonel (ret.) Lawrence Wilkerson, a veteran of the Vietnam War, served for many years as Powell's consultant and advisor. He stated in the interview that he was "intimately involved in the preparation of Secretary Powell for his five February 2003 presentation at the UN Security Council" and that neither CIA Director George Tenet nor the CIA analysts involved in furnishing Powell with the information on mobile biological laboratories that he would use in his speech gave any indication that there were disputes about the reliability of the informants who had supplied this information.

Wilkerson still sees this lapse as the result of a profound intelligence failure, saying, "I have to believe that. Otherwise I have to believe some rather nefarious things about some fairly highly placed people in the intelligence community and perhaps elsewhere."

Wilkerson also agreed with the interviewer that Vice President Cheney's frequent trips to the CIA would inevitably have brought "undue influence" on the agency. When asked if Cheney was "the kind of guy who could lean on somebody" he responded, "Absolutely. And be just as quiet and taciturn about it as— he— as he leaned on 'em. As he leaned on the Congress recently— in the— torture issue."

Wilkerson stood strongly by his earlier description of Cheney and Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld as having formed a cabal to hijack the decision-making process, emphasizing both their determination to ignore the Geneva Conventions and the "inept and incompetent" planning for post-invasion Iraq. And he concluded, "I'm worried and I would rather have the discussion and debate in the process we've designed than I would a dictate f