

ANTHRAX ATTACK USED TO JUSTIFY THE IRAQ WAR

Glenn Greenwald notes this detail from the British Iraq inquiry.

Yesterday, the British Ambassador to the U.S. in 2002 and 2003, Sir Christopher Meyer (who favored the war), testified before the investigative tribunal and said this:

Meyer said **attitudes towards Iraq were influenced to an extent not appreciated by him at the time by the anthrax scare in the US soon after 9/11. US senators and others were sent anthrax spores in the post, a crime that led to the death of five people, prompting policymakers to claim links to Saddam Hussein. . . .**

On 9/11 Condoleezza Rice, then the US national security adviser, told Meyer she was in “no doubt: it was an al-Qaida operation” . . . It seemed that Paul Wolfowitz, Rumsfeld’s deputy, argued for retaliation to include Iraq, Meyer said. . . .

But the **anthrax scare had “steamed up” policy makers in Bush’s administration and helped swing attitudes against Saddam,** who the administration believed had been the last person to use anthrax.

I’ve written many times before about how the anthrax attack played at least as

large of a role as the 9/11 attack itself, if not larger, in creating the general climate of fear that prevailed for years in the U.S. and specifically how the anthrax episode was exploited by leading media and political figures to gin up intense hostility towards Iraq (a few others have argued the same). That's why it's so striking how we've collectively flushed this terrorist attack down the memory hole as though it doesn't exist.

As I pointed out earlier this month, the attack and the FBI's investigation of it is not entirely forgotten. Chuck Grassley asked Robert Mueller about the investigation this spring. But Mueller invented a totally bullshit answer to dismiss the possibility of investigating the FBI's investigation.

Grassley then goes on to ask about the National Academy of Sciences review of the FBI's scientific analysis of the FBI's anthrax case. After Mueller reviews that, Grassley asks whether the FBI would be willing to have an independent review of its "detective work" in the case. Mueller basically says, "no."

Grassley: Are you opposed to an independent review of the FBI's detective work, in addition to a review of the scientific evidence?

Mueller: Because of the importance of science to this particular case, investigative steps were often taken to address leads developed by newly evolved science. In addition, the significance of information or evidence we acquired often took on new or enhanced meaning as scientific advances were


made. Consequently, a review of the scientific aspect of this case would be the logical first step. There is also ongoing criminal and civil litigation concerning the Amerithrax investigation and information derived therefrom, and an independent review of the FBI's "detective work" at this time could adversely affect those proceedings.

What an astoundingly bullshit answer!

First, obviously the "detective work" needs to be investigated, if only to explain why the FBI ignored evidence pointing to Bruce Ivins and invented a case against Hatfill. Second, if ongoing litigation (including criminal?!?!?) wouldn't be hindered by the scientific review, why would it be hindered by a review of the "detective work"? What Muller is more likely saying is just what he admitted with regards to Hatfill: until any civil suits are settled, the FBI doesn't want to admit to the full extent of its incompetence.

As we have **discussed at length**, there are reasons to doubt the FBI's conclusions that Bruce Ivins acted alone (more [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)). Indeed, all the FBI has claimed it proved with its nifty new scientific analysis (and Mueller states this) is that Ivins made the strain used in the attack (I'll leave it to the scientists to address Mueller's certainty on that front). They certainly have not proven that Ivins mailed the anthrax. Which means, quite simply, they haven't solved the case.

But Robert Mueller doesn't want to show the FBI's work.



Now maybe the FBI realizes they haven't solved this case, and that's why they can't start investigating their own detective work. But if that's the case, don't you think they ought to tell the American people that there's an American bioterrorist running around on the loose?

The FBI investigation ought to be reviewed because the bioterrorist may well be wandering free, and because the FBI showed real incompetence several times during its investigation.

But Glenn points out another reason this investigation ought to be reviewed: because the attack played a key role in drumming up the attack on Iraq.