

CURVEBALL: I LIED TO GET RID OF SADDAM

Almost eight years after he helped start a war, the Iraqi behind the US claim that Iraq had mobile weapons labs admitted in an interview with the Guardian that he lied. (h/t Hissypit)

Rafid Ahmed Alwan al-Janabi, codenamed Curveball by German and American intelligence officials who dealt with his claims, has told the Guardian that he fabricated tales of mobile bioweapons trucks and clandestine factories in an attempt to bring down the Saddam Hussein regime, from which he had fled in 1995.

The article as a whole provides fascinating details of how the German intelligence, BND, service basically fed Curveball the details he'd need to fabricate his lies.

But I'm particularly interested in two new details he reveals. First, BND and British intelligence met with Curveball's boss in mid-2000; the boss debunked Curveball's claims.

Janabi claimed he was first exposed as a liar as early as mid-2000, when the BND travelled to a Gulf city, believed to be Dubai, to speak with his former boss at the Military Industries Commission in Iraq, Dr Bassil Latif.

The Guardian has learned separately that British intelligence officials were at that meeting, investigating a claim made by Janabi that Latif's son, who was studying in Britain, was procuring weapons for Saddam.

That claim was proven false, and Latif strongly denied Janabi's claim of mobile bioweapons trucks and another allegation that 12 people had died during an accident at a secret bioweapons facility

in south-east Baghdad.

The German officials returned to confront him with Latif's version. "He says, 'There are no trucks,' and I say, 'OK, when [Latif says] there no trucks then [there are none],'" Janabi recalled.

So this is yet another well-placed Iraqi who warned western intelligence that the WMD evidence that would eventually lead to war was baseless (one George Tenet and others haven't admitted in the past).

And Curveball describes how BND returned to his claims in 2002, then dropped it, then returned to it just before Colin Powell's February 5, 2003 speech at the UN.

We've known the outlines of these details before. But it sure adds to the picture of the US dialing up the intelligence it needed – however flimsy – to start a war.