

IRAQ'S WMD CAPABILITIES

Prior to 2002, most national and international officials and experts believed that Iraq likely had research programs and some stores of hidden chemical or biological weapons and maintained interest in a program to develop nuclear weapons. The debate that began in 2002 was not over weapons, but over war. The issue was whether Iraq's capabilities and its failure to cooperate fully with UN inspections by adequately accounting for its activities posed such a severe threat as to require military invasion and occupation in early 2003.

FOUNDATIONS OF THE ASSESSMENTS

For many years, UN inspectors had detailed questions that needed to be answered before they could declare that all of Iraq's chemical and biological programs and long-range missile programs had ended and that all remaining weapons had been destroyed. There were

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also concerns, but fewer questions, on the nuclear program. The International Atomic Energy Agency

had destroyed all known equipment related to the development or production of nuclear weapons and concluded in 1999 that its "verification activities have revealed no indication that Iraq possesses nuclear weapons or any meaningful amounts of weapon-usable nuclear material or that Iraq has retained any practical capability (facilities or hardware) for the production of such material." It should be noted, however, that some claimed unilateral destruction of equipment and components could not be verified.

No one knew for certain how many, if any, chemical or biological weapons Iraq still had. All estimates were based on the weapons and materials unaccounted for when UNSCOM ended its inspections in 1998. There remained justifiable suspicions that Iraq could have tons of chemical weapons hidden or enough growth media to produce tons of new biological weapon agents.

For example, the U.S. intelligence consensus in 1999, as reported to Congress was:

We do not have any direct evidence that Iraq has used the period since Desert Fox [1998] to reconstitute its WMD programs, although given its past behavior, this type of activity must be regarded as likely. The United Nations assesses that Baghdad has the capability to reinstate both its CW and BW programs within a few weeks to months, but without an inspection monitoring program, it is difficult to determine if Iraq has done so.³

The report further noted that:

Since the Gulf War, Iraq has rebuilt key portions of its chemical production infrastructure for industrial and commercial use, as well as its missile production facilities. It has attempted to purchase numerous dual-use items for, or under the guise of, legitimate civilian use. This equipment—in principle subject to UN scrutiny—could also be diverted for WMD purposes.

These findings were repeated almost verbatim in subsequent biannual intelligence reports to Congress. A Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) estimate from September 2002 stated:

A substantial amount of Iraq's chemical warfare agents, precursors, munitions, and production equipment were destroyed between 1991 and 1998 as a result of Operation Desert Storm and UNSCOM (United Nations Special Commission) actions. Nevertheless, we believe Iraq retained production equipment, expertise, and chemical precursors and can reconstitute a chemical warfare program in the absence of an international inspection regime. . . . There is no reliable information on whether Iraq is producing and stockpiling chemical weapons, or where Iraq has—or will—establish its chemical warfare agent production facilities. . . . Iraq is steadily establishing a dual use industrial chemical infrastructure that provides some of the building blocks necessary for production of chemical agents.⁴

In brief, the consensus of the intelligence agencies in early 2002 was that:

- ▶ The 1991 Gulf War, UN inspections, and subsequent military actions had destroyed most of Iraq's chemical, biological, nuclear, and long-range missile capability.
- ▶ There was no direct evidence that any chemical or biological weapons remained in Iraq, but agencies judged that some stocks could still remain and that production could be renewed.
- ▶ As Iraq rebuilt its facilities, some of the equipment purchased for civilian use could also be used to manufacture chemical or biological weapons.
- ▶ Without an inspection regime, it was very difficult to determine the status of these programs.

RISING ALARM

Beginning in mid-2002, however, the official statements of the threat shifted dramatically toward greater alarm regarding certainty of the threat and greater certainty as to the evidence. This shift does not appear to have been supported by new, concrete evidence from intelligence community reports—at least those now publicly available. These statements were picked up and amplified by congressional leaders, major media, and some experts.

Most of the official statements on Iraq's weapon programs were supported by a National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) on Iraq that was produced, partially in response to congressional requests, over a three-week period in September 2002.⁵ It was delivered to Congress ten days before the vote authorizing the use of force to compel Iraqi compliance with UN resolutions. The Director of Central Intelligence released an unclassified version of the estimate, *Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction Programs*, in October 2002.

Three aspects of this NIE merit particular attention: It was produced far more quickly than is normal for such documents; it went far beyond the consensus intelligence assessments of the preceding five years; and, it had more serious dissents to its key findings than any other declassified NIE.

Importantly, the unclassified October version, presented to the public before the war, notes only that some “specialists” disagreed with the claim that Iraq was importing aluminum tubes for nuclear weapon production. The more accurate declassified excerpts released in July 2003, after the war, had additional detail, including dissenting opinions. This version made clear that entire agencies, not just some individuals, dissented on the aluminum tubes and on a number of other key issues. Nor does the October public summary include the important finding included in the declassified version that Saddam would be unlikely to give WMD to terrorists, “fearing that exposure of Iraqi involvement would provide Washington a stronger cause for making war,” and that he might do so only “if sufficiently desperate.” This finding was, however, included in a letter from

CIA Director George Tenet to Senate Intelligence Committee Chairman Bob Graham, who read the letter aloud at an open hearing on October 8.⁶ Set side by side, the letter, the NIE, and the summaries suggest that the CIA was, with a degree of muddle, attempting to straddle two contradictory positions: The White House view that the likelihood of transfer was very high, and its own analysts' view that the likelihood was quite low.

The July 2003 declassified excerpts contained forty distinct caveats or conditions on the intelligence judgments—including fifteen uses of the adverb “probably”—that other publications and statements usually dropped. For example, the declassified NIE excerpts say, “We assess that Baghdad has begun renewed production of mustard, sarin, GF (cyclosarin) and VX.” The unclassified October 2002 version released to the public before the war says, “Baghdad has begun renewed production of chemical warfare agents. . .” Cutting the phrase “we assess” changes the statement from an opinion to a fact.

During 2002 and 2003, public government statements (including fact sheets from the State Department and the White House) increased steadily in the alarm they expressed over the extent of these programs and began to assert that the Hussein regime had operational ties to Al Qaeda terrorists. Some public statements went far beyond the NIE. For example, the NIE says “*Most* agencies assess that Baghdad started reconstituting its nuclear weapons program” (emphasis added), whereas Vice President Cheney said in August 2002, “We now know that Saddam has resumed his efforts to acquire nuclear weapons...Many of us are convinced that Saddam will acquire nuclear weapons fairly soon.”⁷

It has been reported that some official statements relied on unverified claims from Iraqi defectors, rather than information gathered by UN inspections or intelligence professionals. Several of the defectors provided by the Iraqi National Congress headed by Ahmad Chalabi were judged to be not credible after the war began. An assessment by the DIA concluded that most of the information given by Iraqi defectors

was of little or no value, with much of it invented or exaggerated.⁸

Lacking hard evidence on Iraqi programs, government officials say they had to develop an outline of a threat picture, then accumulate “bits and pieces” of information that filled in that picture. National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice explained on June 8 that the White House did not have one, single assessment, but rather formed a “judgment.” The judgment was “not about a data point here or a data point there, but about what Saddam Hussein was doing. That he had weapons of mass destruction. That was the judgment.” This, she said, was a picture they developed when they “connected a lot of dots from multiple sources.”⁹

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Former British foreign secretary Robin Cook says of similar methodology in the United Kingdom, “I think it would be fair to say there was a selection of evidence to support a conclusion. I fear we got into a position in which the intelligence was not being used to inform and shape policy, but to shape policy that was already settled.”¹⁰

A November 2003 report by retired Israeli General Shlomo Brom critiques the failure of Israeli intelligence to accurately assess Iraq's arsenals. He attributes the Israeli intelligence community's adoption of worst-case scenarios to a desire to evade culpability for underestimating threats. The intelligence lapse prior to the Yom Kippur War, he notes, created a culture of “assigning culpability and punishing those responsible.” As a result, intelligence estimates tend to be dire. “Intelligence analysts feel that by giving bleak assessments they decrease the threat to themselves,” he says, “if the assessment ends up being correct they will be heroes, and if it ends up being untrue, no one will give them any trouble because everyone will be pleased that their bleak prophecies did not materialize.”¹¹

Some official statements misrepresented the findings of UN inspections. For example, President Bush said,

The regime was forced to admit that it had produced more than 30,000 liters of anthrax and other deadly biological agents. The inspectors, however, concluded that Iraq *had likely produced* two to four times that amount. This is a massive stockpile of biological weapons that has never been accounted for, and is capable of killing millions.¹² (emphasis added)

The inspectors, however, did not say that Iraq *had likely produced* these additional amounts of deadly agents, only that Iraq *might have imported enough growth media to produce* these amounts. They did not know for sure either the amount of media or whether it had been used for this purpose. As then-Executive Chairman of UNMOVIC Hans Blix explained to the UN Security Council in December:

About anthrax—well, Iraq declared earlier that they had produced 8,500 litres of anthrax and there was not sufficient evidence to demonstrate that it was limited to 8,500. If it was so, we must ask ourselves was there more?...UNSCOM actually calculated that, with the capacity that [Iraq] had, they could have produced about three times as much, something like 24,000 litres. Then Iraq declared that they had destroyed it all and there was some evidence given that they had destroyed some of it. There was not sufficient evidence to show that all was destroyed. Hence, there is a question: is there still some anthrax in Iraq?...This is the kind of questions that we have on many items.¹³

Blix said in his reports to the Security Council that though there were weapons and agents unaccounted for, “One must not jump to the conclusion that they exist. However, that possibility is also not excluded.”¹⁴ The inspectors carefully kept both possibilities open.

The U.S. assessments in the months before the war, however, appear to have drawn just such conclusions. Official estimates peaked with the statement by the President to the nation on the eve of war:

Intelligence gathered by this and other governments leaves no doubt that the Iraq regime continues to possess and conceal some of the most lethal weapons ever devised...The danger is clear: using

chemical, biological or, one day, nuclear weapons, obtained with the help of Iraq, the terrorists could fulfill their stated ambitions and kill thousands or hundreds of thousands of innocent people in our country or any other.¹⁵

On March 19, 2003, the main body of U.S. and British forces began the invasion of Iraq. But the search for the expected stockpiles of weapons had already begun.

THE WEAPONS HUNT

The initial search team, known as Task Force 20, entered Iraq covertly before fighting began, according to reports. The special forces were tasked with uncovering Iraq’s WMD and “high-value targets” such as Saddam Hussein. As major operations began, the 75th Exploitation Task Force (XTF) became the primary search team in the WMD hunt. Site Survey Teams also joined the search as forward teams with preliminary detection equipment.

In June 2003, the Iraq Survey Group (ISG) replaced the 75th XTF. The ISG, a group of about 1,300 to 1,400 military and civilian personnel, assumed responsibility to unearth and record Iraq’s WMD and uncover Saddam’s human rights abuses and links to terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda. Today, the number of personnel searching for WMD far exceeds the number of original UN inspectors; current teams also use more sophisticated detection equipment. (For a summary of WMD search teams in Iraq, see table 1.)

These teams had high expectations. Before the war, administration officials stated repeatedly that Iraq had a reconstituted nuclear weapon program, hundreds of tons of chemical and biological weapons, industrial facilities for large-scale, ongoing production of even more chemical and biological weapons, dozens of Scud missiles, and a fleet of unmanned aerial vehicles capable of delivering these weapon agents. U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell asserted in January 2003 that “Iraq continues to conceal quantities, vast quantities, of highly lethal

TABLE 1. SUMMARY OF WMD SEARCH TEAMS^a

TEAM	DATES	ESTIMATED PERSONNEL ^b	DESCRIPTION
UNSCOM Inspectors (UN)	1991–1998	70–80 inspectors	UN inspectors charged to monitor and verify the destruction of Iraq’s non-nuclear WMD after the 1991 Gulf War and operate an ongoing monitoring and verification of Iraqi compliance
IAEA Iraq Action Team (UN)	1991–1998	Varied	IAEA team tasked to monitor and verify the dismantlement of Iraq’s nuclear program after the Gulf War and operate an ongoing monitoring and verification of Iraqi compliance
UNMOVIC Inspectors (UN)	November 2002–March 2003	100 inspectors	UN inspectors tasked to disarm Iraq of chemical or biological weapons or prohibited missiles and operate an ongoing monitoring and verification system
Iraq Nuclear Verification Office (UN)	November 2002–March 2003	17 inspectors	IAEA team tasked to uncover and dismantle any Iraqi nuclear program and operate an ongoing monitoring and verification system
Task Force 20 (U.S.)	March 2003–Summer 2003	classified	Covert special forces team tasked to find and destroy WMD, high-profile targets, and conduct rescue operations
Site Survey Teams (U.S.)	March 2003–June 2003	100 (8–24 WMD experts)	Four teams tasked to initially examine and evaluate suspect WMD sites; according to reports, in May 2003 these teams reduced the number of WMD experts per team from six to two and were charged with investigating additional sites related to human rights abuses and terrorist links
75th Exploitation Task Force (XTF) (U.S.)	March–June 2003	600 (25–120 actively searching)	Formerly a field artillery brigade, the 75th XTF was charged with uncovering and documenting WMD; the XTF had four Mobile Exploitation Teams (METs) composed of approximately 25–30 special forces, intelligence officers, computer specialists, and WMD experts; initially all four teams searched for WMD but according to reports by mid-May three METs were tasked with “non-WMD” missions including terrorist activity and theft of antiquities
Iraq Survey Group (U.S., Britain, Australia)	June 2003–Present	1,300–1,400 (200–300 actively searching)	Team composed of military and civilian specialists to uncover WMD, terrorist ties, and human rights abuses; and to interview Iraqi scientists and review recovered documents. Former UN inspector David Kay coordinates the group’s activities

^a Table compiled by authors from official sources and news reports. Sources on file with authors.

^b This column provides an estimate of the number of personnel at any one particular time. However, many more experts were potentially involved in the activities of each team. For example, approximately 3,000 experts participated in UNSCOM inspections in the period from 1991 to 1998.

material and weapons to deliver it.”¹⁶ U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld said in March 2003 that U.S. officials knew the location of Iraq’s WMD: “We know where they are.”¹⁷

Although it cannot be said that hidden weapons will not be found, none have been located by UN inspectors or U.S. forces. As David Kay, Director of the ISG, concluded in his report to Congress

on October 2, “We have not yet found stocks of weapons...”¹⁸

The following sections detail the Iraqi programs for nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons, missile systems, and ties to terrorist groups. We compare the pre-2002 intelligence estimates with the October 2002 NIE, administration claims, UN findings, and evidence discovered in Iraq to date.

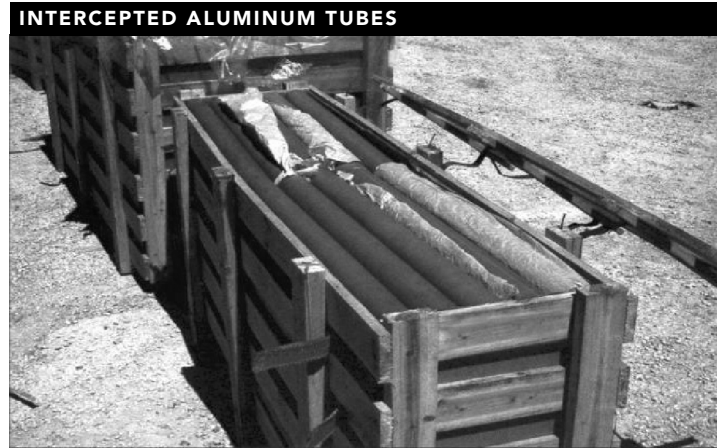
■ NUCLEAR WEAPON PROGRAM

Administration Statements

Senior officials said that Saddam Hussein was very close to having a nuclear weapon or might already have one.

The administration said that Saddam Hussein continued to actively pursue nuclear weapons and that Iraq's biggest challenge was to obtain sufficient fissile material for a device. Evidence cited for this included Iraqi attempts to purchase uranium from Africa and import aluminum tubes and high-strength magnets for enrichment.

- ▶ “[W]e now know that Saddam has resumed his efforts to acquire nuclear weapons. . . Many of us are convinced that Saddam will acquire nuclear weapons fairly soon.” (Vice President Cheney, Remarks to the Veterans of Foreign Wars 103rd National Convention, August 26, 2002)
- ▶ “[W]e do know, with absolute certainty, that he is using his procurement system to acquire the equipment he needs in order to enrich uranium to build a nuclear weapon.” (Vice President Cheney, NBC “Meet the Press,” September 8, 2002)
- ▶ “The regime has the scientists and facilities to build nuclear weapons, and is seeking the materials needed to do so.” (President Bush, Rose Garden Ceremony, October 2, 2002)
- ▶ “The evidence indicates that Iraq is reconstituting its nuclear weapons program. . . Satellite photographs reveal that Iraq is rebuilding facilities at sites that have been part of its nuclear program in the past. Iraq has attempted to purchase high-strength aluminum tubes and other equipment needed for gas centrifuges, which are used to enrich uranium for nuclear weapons. If the Iraqi regime is able to produce, buy, or steal an amount of highly-enriched uranium a little larger than a single softball, it could have a nuclear weapon in



Briefing slide from Secretary Powell's February UN presentation.

- less than a year.” (President Bush, Address on Iraq, October 7, 2002)
- ▶ “We don't know whether or not he has a nuclear weapon.” (President Bush, Crawford, Texas, December 31, 2002)
- ▶ “The British government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa. Our intelligence sources tell us that he has attempted to purchase high-strength aluminum tubes suitable for nuclear weapons production.” (President Bush, State of the Union Address, January 28, 2003)
- ▶ “We have no indication that Saddam Hussein has ever abandoned his nuclear weapons program. On the contrary, we have more than a decade of proof that he remains determined to acquire nuclear weapons. . . Saddam Hussein is determined to get his hands on a nuclear bomb. He is so determined that he has made repeated covert attempts to acquire high-specification aluminum tubes from 11 different countries, even after inspections resumed. . . We also have intelligence from multiple sources that Iraq is attempting to acquire magnets and high-speed balancing machines. . . to enrich uranium.” (Secretary Powell, Address to United Nations Security Council, February 5, 2003)
- ▶ “Intelligence gathered by this and other governments leaves no doubt that the Iraq regime con-

tinues to possess and conceal some of the most lethal weapons ever devised.” (President Bush, Address to the Nation on War with Iraq, March 17, 2003)

Intelligence Assessment

In October 2002, the CIA concluded that Iraq had restarted its nuclear weapon program, but key agencies disagreed. Before 2002, the consensus intelligence assessments expressed concern that Iraq might be “attempting to acquire materials that could aid in reconstituting its nuclear weapons program.”

The CIA’s National Intelligence Estimate concluded with “high confidence” that “Iraq is continuing, and in some areas expanding, its chemical, biological, nuclear and missile programs. . .” The estimate also judged that Iraq “probably will have a nuclear weapon during this decade.” However, it dissents unusual for an NIE that is drafted as a document representing the consensus view of the entire intelligence community, two key intelligence offices—the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Intelligence and Research (State/INR) and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)—disputed the report’s nuclear assessments.¹⁹ (For a summary of key NIE dissents, see table 2. For the declassified excerpts of the NIE, see appendix 1.)

Intelligence assessments of Iraq’s nuclear program had evolved after 2001. In 1997 and 1999, unclassified CIA reports on Iraq’s WMD did not mention

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—President Bush

a nuclear program. In the first half of 2001, the reports concluded that Iraq “has probably continued at least low-level theoretical R&D associated with its nuclear program. . . The Intelligence Community remains concerned that Baghdad may be attempting to acquire materials that could aid in reconstituting its nuclear weapons program.” In 2002, however, the language shifted. The January–June 2002 report said that “most analysts assess that Iraq is working to reconstitute its nuclear program,” and the July–December 2002 report concluded, “all intelligence experts agreed that Iraq remained intent on acquiring nuclear weapons. . .”

UN Findings and Actions

The IAEA found no evidence that Iraq had restarted its nuclear program.

The IAEA established the IAEA Iraq Action Team in April 1991 to conduct inspection activities in Iraq with the assistance and cooperation of UNSCOM. The IAEA conducted inspections in Iraq from 1991 to 1998, and later from November 2002 to March 2003.²⁰ (In December 2002, the office changed its name to the Iraq Nuclear Verification Office, or INVO.)

IAEA inspections between 1991 and 1998 uncovered and dismantled an extensive nuclear program. They revealed that before 1991 Iraq had secretly constructed industrial-scale facilities for the production of uranium compounds suitable for isotopic enrichment or fuel fabrication, pursued research and development of indigenous uranium enrichment technologies, as well as explored weaponization capabilities for implosion-based nuclear weapons.²¹ Inspectors also discovered that Iraq had conducted design and feasibility studies for an indigenous plutonium production reactor and devised a “crash program” for diverting safeguarded research reactor fuel and recovering the highly enriched uranium for use in a nuclear weapon.²²

During this time period, the IAEA removed or secured all known imported and indigenously produced uranium compounds and destroyed or removed all known single-use equipment used in

TABLE 2. KEY NIE DISSENTS

NIE STATEMENTS ABOUT IRAQ'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM	DISSENTING STATEMENTS ABOUT IRAQ'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM
<p>The NIE stated that although Saddam Hussein did “not yet have nuclear weapons or sufficient material to make any, he remains intent on acquiring them.” “Most agencies” believed that Iraq restarted its nuclear program in 1998 after inspectors left the country. The report said that “if Baghdad acquires sufficient fissile material from abroad it could make a nuclear weapon within several months to a year.” (emphasis in original)</p>	<p>“The activities [State/INR] have detected do not, however, add up to a compelling case that Iraq is currently pursuing what INR would consider to be an integrated and comprehensive approach to acquire nuclear weapons. Iraq may be doing so, but INR considers the available evidence inadequate to support such a judgment.”</p>
<p>“Most agencies believe that Saddam’s personal interest in and Iraq’s aggressive attempts to obtain high-strength aluminum tubes for centrifuge rotors—as well as Iraq’s attempts to acquire magnets, high-speed balancing machines, and machine tools—provide compelling evidence that Saddam is reconstituting a uranium enrichment effort for Baghdad’s nuclear weapons program.”</p>	<p>“DOE agrees that reconstitution of the nuclear program is underway but assesses that the [aluminum] tubes probably are not part of the program.” <i>“Iraq’s efforts to acquire aluminum tubes is central to the argument that Baghdad is reconstituting its nuclear weapons program, but INR is not persuaded that the tubes in question are intended for use as centrifuge rotors . . . The very large quantities being sought, the way the tubes were tested by the Iraqis, and the atypical lack of attention to operational security in the procurement efforts are among the factors, in addition to the DOE assessment, that lead INR to conclude that the tubes are not intended for use in Iraq’s nuclear weapon program.”</i></p>
<p>The document sources outside reports and foreign intelligence to support the statement that Iraq attempted to purchase uranium from Niger, Somalia, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.</p>	<p>“[T]he claims of Iraqi pursuit of natural uranium in Africa are, in INR’s assessment, highly dubious.”</p>

enrichment research and development. Inspectors dismantled all known facilities for the enrichment of fuel, destroyed the principal building of the Al Atheer nuclear weapon development and production plant and related equipment. It verified and accounted for the entire inventory of research reactor fuel targeted by the “crash program.”²³

In October 1997, the IAEA’s assessment of Iraq’s nuclear program was that “There are no indications that there remains in Iraq any physical capability for the production of amounts of weapon-usable nuclear material of any practical significance.”²⁴ No evidence was found that Iraq had been successful in its attempt to produce nuclear weapons, and no proof was discovered that Iraq had produced more than a

few grams of weapon-grade nuclear material through indigenous processes or secretly acquired weapon-usable material from abroad.²⁵

IAEA inspections resumed on November 27, 2002, after a four-year hiatus. There were 237 inspections at 148 sites including all those identified in overhead satellite imagery as having suspicious activity. IAEA Director General Mohamed ElBaradei reported to the UN Security Council on March 7, 2003, that:

- ▶ There is “no indication of resumed nuclear activities...nor any indication of nuclear-related prohibited activities at any inspected sites.”
- ▶ “There is no indication that Iraq has attempted to import uranium since 1990.” The documents that

THE NIGER URANIUM CONTROVERSY

Administration Statements

Iraq has “Embarked on worldwide hunt for materials to make an atomic bomb.” (White House Fact Sheet, “A Decade of Defiance and Deception,” September 12, 2002)

“[W]e judge that Iraq has. . . sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa, despite having no active civil nuclear power programme that could require it.” (Government of Great Britain, “Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction,” September 24, 2002)

“We now know that Saddam has resumed his efforts to acquire nuclear weapons. . . Many of us are convinced that Saddam will acquire nuclear weapons fairly soon.” (Vice President Cheney, Remarks to Veterans of Foreign Wars Association, August 26, 2002)

Department of State December 19 fact sheet lists Iraqi failure to declare “efforts to procure uranium from Niger” as one of the omissions in its report to the United Nations, and asks “Why is the Iraqi regime hiding their [sic] uranium procurement?” (Department of State Fact Sheet, “Illustrative Examples of Omissions from the Iraqi Declaration to the United Nations Security Council,” December 19, 2002)

“[T]he [Iraqi] declaration fails to account for or explain Iraq’s efforts to get uranium from abroad. . .” (National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, “Why We Know Iraq Is Lying,” *New York Times*, January 23, 2003)

“The British government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa.” (President Bush, State of the Union Address, January 28, 2003)

“I did not use the yellowcake in my [February 5] presentation. The reason that I did not use the yellowcake in my presentation is that I didn’t sense in going through it all that I saw enough substantiation of it that would meet the tests that we were applying.” (Secretary of State Powell, Department of State Press Briefing, June 2, 2003)

“We did not know at the time—no one knew at the time in our circles—maybe someone knew down in the bowels of the agency, but no one in our circles knew that there were doubts and suspicions that this might be a forgery. Of course it was information that was mistaken.” (National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, NBC “Meet the Press,” June 8, 2003)

Intelligence Assessment

None of the pre-2002 unclassified CIA assessments discussed attempts to acquire uranium from Africa, although most assessments noted that “A sufficient source of fissile material remains Iraq’s most significant obstacle to being able to produce a nuclear weapon.”²⁶

According to the NIE, Iraq “began vigorously trying to procure uranium ore and yellowcake,” reportedly in Niger, Somalia, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, although the report said “We cannot confirm whether Iraq succeeded in acquiring uranium ore and/or yellowcake from these sources.” INR noted, in a separate dissent: “the claims of Iraqi pursuit of natural uranium in Africa are, in INR’s assessment, highly dubious.”²⁷

UN Assessment

On March 7, 2003, IAEA Director General Mohamed ElBaradei concluded that the documents purporting to show a uranium purchase in Niger provided to the IAEA by the United States were unsubstantiated and likely forged. He told the UN Security Council that “Based on thorough analysis, the IAEA has concluded, with the concurrence of outside experts, that these documents, which formed the basis for the reports of recent uranium transaction between Iraq and Niger, are in fact not authentic. We have therefore concluded that these specific allegations are unfounded.”²⁸

Other Statements

In July 2003, former U.S. ambassador Joseph Wilson revealed that he had visited Niger at the CIA’s request in February 2002 to investigate the alleged uranium sale. Wilson said that he not only found the allegation “bogus and unrealistic” but said that his conclusions were likely forwarded to the vice president, who made the initial inquiry in a CIA briefing.²⁹ Wilson said, “The office of the vice president, I am absolutely convinced, received a very specific response to the question it asked and that response was based upon my trip out there.”³⁰ Wilson said that despite similar reports from other sources, including the U.S. ambassador to Niger and a Marine Corps general, a single apparently forged document “formed the basis” of the

president's State of the Union claim.³¹ Wilson concluded, "Based on my experience with the administration in the months leading up to the war, I have little choice but to conclude that some of the intelligence related to Iraq's nuclear weapons program was twisted to exaggerate the Iraqi threat."³²

On July 22, Deputy National Security Advisor Steven Hadley said that he deleted a reference to Iraq's attempts to purchase uranium in Africa from President Bush's October 7 Cincinnati speech based on a telephone call from Director of Central Intelligence George Tenet and two CIA memos sent to himself—one of which was also sent to National Security Advisor

Condoleezza Rice. Hadley said that this second memo detailed

some weakness in the evidence, the fact that the effort was not particularly significant to Iraq's nuclear ambitions because the Iraqis already had a large stock of uranium oxide in their inventory. The memorandum also stated that the CIA had been telling Congress that the Africa story was one of two issues where we differed with the British intelligence . . . based on what we now know, we had opportunities here to avoid this problem. We didn't take them . . . having been taken out of Cincinnati, it should have been taken out of the State of the Union.³³

indicated Iraq attempted to purchase uranium from Niger were declared "in fact not authentic."

- ▶ "There is no indication that Iraq has attempted to import aluminium tubes for use in centrifuge enrichment." Even if it had, "it was highly unlikely that Iraq could have achieved the considerable redesign needed to use them in a revived centrifuge program."
- ▶ Although the question was still under review, there was "no indication to date that Iraq imported magnets for use in a centrifuge program."
- ▶ "[D]uring the past four years, at the majority of Iraqi sites, industrial capacity has deteriorated substantially due to the departure of the foreign support that was often present in the late '80s, the departure of large numbers of skilled Iraqi personnel in the past decade, and the lack of consistent maintenance by Iraq of sophisticated equipment. At only a few inspected sites involved in industrial research, development and manufacturing have the facilities been improved and new personnel been taken on."³⁴

Evidence Since March 2003

There is no evidence of any active Iraqi nuclear program.

In July 2003, former ambassador Joseph Wilson revealed that, in response to an administration request, in February 2002 he investigated the allegation that Iraq attempted to purchase uranium from Niger. Wilson had reported to the U.S. Department of State and the CIA that "it was highly doubtful

"[W]e have not uncovered evidence that Iraq undertook significant post-1998 steps to actually build nuclear weapons or produce fissile material."

—David Kay

that any such transaction had ever taken place."³⁵ Administration officials acknowledged that they could not support the allegation and that the

statement should not have appeared in the president's State of the Union speech. (See box on Niger uranium controversy.)

David Kay said on October 2, "to date we have not uncovered evidence that Iraq undertook significant post-1998 steps to actually build nuclear weapons or produce fissile material. However, Iraq did take steps to preserve some technological capability from the pre-1991 nuclear weapons program."³⁶

Although Kay asserted his belief that Saddam was determined to develop nuclear weapons, he noted in interviews that there was "no doubt" that Iraq had less ability to produce fissile material than in 1991. The program, he said, "had been seriously degraded. The activities of the inspectors in the early 1990s did a tremendous amount."³⁷ He reported further that there were "indications that there was interest, beginning in 2002, in reconstituting a centrifuge enrichment program," but "the evidence does not tie any activity directly to centrifuge research or development."³⁸

Kay says that his interviews with Iraqi scientists "should clear up any doubts about whether Saddam still wanted to obtain nuclear weapons." He cited research under way on "nuclear-relevant dual-use technologies" that could have been used in a renewed program and noted "at least one senior Iraqi official believed that by 2000 Saddam had run out of patience with waiting for sanctions to end and wanted to restart the nuclear program."³⁹ However, published statements from several scientists and officials indicate otherwise, though it is difficult to judge each statement's veracity. According to reports, all of the remaining scientists in U.S. custody deny that WMD exist in Iraq.⁴⁰ Kay did not cite these contradictory statements in his testimony.

► In April 2003, Mahdi Obeidi, an Iraqi scientist, came to U.S. forces with sample parts and blueprints for a nuclear centrifuge that he said he had been ordered to bury in his backyard in 1991. He said that back then, officials had planned to restart the nuclear program once and if the inspection regime collapsed. Obeidi, however, also told U.S. officials that he had never been asked to dig up the parts and plans. He said that the intercepted

aluminum tubes were purchased for Iraq's rocket program, not to enrich uranium.⁴¹

- Another Iraqi nuclear scientist, Jaffar Dhaj Jaffar, also told U.S. officials in July 2003 that Iraq had not reconstituted its nuclear program in the 1990s.⁴²
- Tariq Aziz, the former Iraqi deputy prime minister who surrendered to U.S. troops on April 24, denied that Iraq had any WMD, although he said that Saddam violated the UN-imposed range limit on missiles.⁴³
- General Amir al-Saadi, one of Iraq's top scientists and liaison to UNSCOM and UNMOVIC, in an interview just prior to his surrender to U.S. au-

*"There is no doubt that he has
chemical weapons stocks."*

—Secretary Powell

thorities on April 12, said that Iraq did not have illicit WMD programs: "Nothing, nothing. . . I'm saying this for posterity, for history, not for defending the regime. . . Time will bear me out. . . There will be no difference after the war is over. . . I was knowledgeable about those programs, those past programs, and I was telling the truth."⁴⁴ Since entering into U.S. custody, he has not spoken in public.

- Former Iraqi nuclear physicist Imad Khadduri wrote in a new book, *Iraq's Nuclear Mirage*, that Iraqi scientists lied to Saddam about their progress toward building a weapon before 1991 and that the program was never restarted after the Gulf War.⁴⁵
- "There was no point in trying to revive this program," former bomb designer Sabah Abdul Noor, of Baghdad's Technology University, said in November. "There was no material, no equipment, no scientists. Scientists were scattered and under the eyes of inspectors. To do a project, you have to be together."⁴⁶ However, some Iraqi news

TABLE 3. SUMMARY OF IRAQ'S NUCLEAR WEAPON PROGRAM

PREWAR CONCERNS	PRE-2002 INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS	OCTOBER 2002 NIE ASSESSMENT	UN FINDINGS 2002–2003	ADMINISTRATION STATEMENTS	EVIDENCE SINCE MARCH 2003
Iraq reconstituted its nuclear program after 1998.	PROBABLY NOT. Consensus was that Iraq "probably continued low-level theoretical R&D."	YES. Iraq restarted its nuclear program after UNSCOM left in 1998: "probably will have a nuclear weapon during this decade." Department of State disagreed.	PROBABLY NOT. No evidence that Iraq had restarted a nuclear program. The IAEA dismantled all known aspects of the program in the 1990s. ElBaradei: majority of Iraqi nuclear sites "deteriorated substantially" over decade.	YES. Saddam restarted Iraq's nuclear program and would acquire nuclear weapons fairly soon. Bush: "We don't know whether or not he has a nuclear weapon."	NO. No signs of any active program. Kay: "to date we have not uncovered evidence that Iraq undertook significant post-1998 steps to actually build nuclear weapons or produce fissile material."
Iraq attempted to enrich uranium for use in nuclear weapons.	MAYBE. Concern that "Baghdad may be attempting to acquire materials that could aid in reconstituting its nuclear weapons program."	YES. Iraq imported aluminum tubes and high-strength magnets for uranium enrichment—but the Department of Energy and Department of State disagreed.	NO. IAEA: Unlikely the tubes or magnets could be used for a centrifuge program.	YES. Vice President Cheney: Iraq was procuring equipment to enrich uranium. Iraq purchased high-strength tubes and magnets for uranium enrichment.	NO. No evidence that the tubes or magnets were meant for uranium enrichment. Iraqi scientists maintain the tubes were for rockets. Kay: "the evidence does not tie any activity directly to centrifuge research or development."
Iraq attempted to purchase uranium from abroad.	NO. None of the pre-2002 reports mention any attempts to purchase uranium, although most noted that "a sufficient source of fissile material remains Iraq's most significant obstacle to being able to produce a nuclear weapon."	YES. "Iraq also began vigorously trying to procure uranium ore and yellowcake." Department of State rejected reports that Iraq sought to buy uranium in Africa.	NO. IAEA: The documents supporting the African uranium claim were forgeries.	YES. President Bush: "The British government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa."	NO. In July 2003, various reports revealed that U.S. officials were aware that the evidence for the African uranium claim was unfounded. The administration acknowledged that the remark should not have appeared in the president's State of the Union address.

reports mentioning Saddam's praise of nuclear science teams over the past few years may indicate the opposite.

Looted Materials

Another concern is the status of Iraq's known stores of nuclear material and equipment. At Tuwaitha, Iraq's largest nuclear facility, Iraq stored over 500 tons of natural uranium and almost two tons of low enriched uranium. IAEA inspectors continued to verify, even after 1998, that Iraq's uranium remained sealed.⁴⁷ U.S. forces secured the Tuwaitha site on April 7, 2003, but not before Iraqis looted the facility. In July, a small team of IAEA inspectors—who returned to Iraq in June—reported that at least 10 kilograms of ura-

nium compounds remain missing from Tuwaitha.⁴⁸ Although the material is not suitable for a nuclear weapon, these compounds could be used in a radiological dispersal device or a “dirty bomb.”

Looters damaged at least six other nuclear facilities in Iraq, including the nearby Baghdad Nuclear Research Center, which stored other radioactive isotopes including cesium, strontium, and cobalt. It is unknown if significant quantities of these materials are missing. IAEA inspectors have not been allowed to investigate whether material is missing from this or any additional nuclear facilities and have been limited in their activities by U.S. officials. (For a summary of Iraq's nuclear program, see table 3.)

■ CHEMICAL WEAPON PROGRAM

Administration Statements

The administration said there was no doubt that Saddam possessed a vast stockpile of chemical weapons (CW) and had ongoing production of new weapons. Officials emphasized that Iraq had used chemical weapons against both Iranians and Iraqis in the past.

- ▶ “There is no doubt that he has chemical weapons stocks.” (Secretary of State Powell, Fox “News Sunday,” September 8, 2002)
- ▶ “We know that the regime has produced thousands of tons of chemical agents, including mustard gas, sarin nerve gas, and VX nerve gas.” (President Bush, Address on Iraq, October 7, 2002)
- ▶ “We know that Iraq has embedded key portions of its illicit chemical weapons infrastructure within its legitimate civilian industry. To all outward appearances, even to experts, the infrastructure looks like an ordinary civilian operation. Illicit and legitimate production can go on simultaneously; or, on a dime, this dual-use infrastructure can turn from clandestine to commercial and then back again.” (Secretary Powell, Address to the United Nations Security Council, February 5, 2003)
- ▶ “Our conservative estimate is that Iraq today has a stockpile of between 100 and 500 tons of chemical weapons agent. That is enough agent to fill 16,000 battlefield rockets. Even the low end of 100 tons of agent would enable Saddam Hussein to cause mass casualties across more than 100 square miles of territory, an area nearly 5 times the size of Manhattan. . . when will we see the rest of the submerged iceberg? Saddam Hussein has chemical weapons. Saddam Hussein has used such weapons. And Saddam Hussein has no compunction about using them again, against his neighbors

and against his own people”. (Secretary Powell, Address to the United Nations Security Council, February 5, 2003)

- ▶ “Iraqi operatives continue to hide biological and chemical agents to avoid detection by inspectors. In some cases, these materials have been moved to different locations every 12 to 24 hours, or placed in vehicles that are in residential neighborhoods.” (President Bush, National Press Conference, March 6, 2003)

Intelligence Assessment

The NIE judged that Iraq was producing and stockpiling chemical weapons; previous estimates noted potential capability but were less definitive about whether production was under way.

The NIE stated that although Iraq had less chemical weapon capability than in the early 1990s, the agencies judged that the regime “has begun renewed production of mustard, sarin, GF (cyclosarin), and VX.” The report said “Iraq probably has stocked at least 100 metric tons (MT) and possibly as much as 500 MT of CW agents—*much of it added in the last year*” (emphasis added). The report further assessed that Iraq had chemical weapon “bulk fills” for missile warheads “including for a limited number of covertly stored Scuds.”⁴⁹

No unclassified intelligence assessment before the NIE had reached such conclusions. The biannual reports to Congress had noted that Iraq had not accounted for several thousand chemical-capable munitions and that rebuilt commercial infrastructure could be turned to weapon production. The assessments were uncertain. A September 2002 DIA report concluded, for example, “there is no reliable information on whether Iraq is producing and stockpiling chemical weapons, or where Iraq has—or will—establish its chemical warfare agent production facilities.”⁵⁰



Briefing slides from Secretary Powell's February presentation to the UN.

UN Findings and Actions

UNMOVIC did not uncover evidence of a renewed chemical weapon program.

Iraq's chemical weapon program began in the 1970s and accelerated during the Iran–Iraq war. Iraq developed mustard gas as well as the more sophisticated nerve agents tabun, cyclosarin, and sarin.⁵¹ Between 1991 and 1994, UNSCOM found and supervised the destruction of 38,537 filled and unfilled munitions, 690 tons of agents, 3,000

“Iraq’s large-scale capability to develop, produce, and fill new CW munitions was reduced—if not entirely destroyed—during Operations Desert Storm and Desert Fox, 13 years of UN sanctions and UN inspections”
—David Kay

tons of precursor chemicals, and over 100 pieces of chemical weapon production equipment. In 1996, UNSCOM concluded that equipment previously exempted from destruction based on false Iraqi declarations was, in fact, used or intended for use in

chemical weapon production. In 1997, UNSCOM destroyed 325 pieces of additional production equipment, 125 pieces of analytical instruments, and 275 tons of precursor chemicals.⁵²

Iraq did not account for 15,000 artillery rockets capable of delivering nerve agents and 550 artillery shells filled with mustard agents.⁵³

Another major area of concern related to VX nerve agent. By 1995, UNSCOM accumulated enough circumstantial evidence to force Iraq to admit to the production of 4 tons of VX. In November 1997, UNSCOM found evidence that Iraq had developed a production capability of VX and obtained at least 750 tons of VX precursor chemicals.⁵⁴ As of October 1998, UNSCOM had no evidence that Iraq had weaponized its VX. A U.S. laboratory reported that it detected the presence of VX on samples of missile warhead remnants found by UNSCOM inspectors. Testing at French and Swiss laboratories did not confirm this report. Iraq continued to insist that it had destroyed all VX agents and precursors.⁵⁵

Iraqi defector Hussein Kamal told UNSCOM inspectors in the summer of 1996 that Iraq had destroyed all its chemical and biological weapons stocks and the missiles to deliver them, according to published reports. Kamal, Saddam's son-in-law, had run these programs for ten years before defecting. He said that Iraq had not abandoned all its plans for these programs, however. He said officials had retained designs and engineering details of the weapons—in

some cases, by bringing them to their homes—but destroyed the actual weapons. He gave the same information to U.S. and British intelligence agencies.⁵⁶

UNMOVIC inspections between November 2002 and March 2003 did not reveal evidence of a renewed chemical weapon program. UNMOVIC found sixteen chemical artillery munitions,⁵⁷ information and hardware relating to cluster bombs and cluster warheads, and sixteen 122-millimeter chemical warheads and rockets.⁵⁸ Analyses of the contents of the 122-millimeter warheads showed that the clear liquid they contained was primarily water. UNMOVIC found and destroyed 155-millimeter shells containing mustard gas produced over fifteen years ago.⁵⁹ In March 2003, Iraq proposed a technical method to substantiate its claims of having destroyed its VX in 1991 and provided significant scientific data and documentation to resolve outstanding concerns regarding VX.⁶⁰

No evidence was found to substantiate claims of underground chemical facilities.⁶¹

Evidence Since March 2003

No chemical weapons or programs found.

U.S. search teams have not found chemical agents or chemical weapons in Iraq. David Kay said on October 2,

Multiple sources with varied access and reliability have told ISG that Iraq did not have a large, ongoing, centrally controlled CW program after 1991. Information found to date suggests that Iraq's large-scale capability to develop, produce, and fill new CW munitions was reduced—if not entirely destroyed—during Operations Desert Storm and Desert Fox, 13 years of UN sanctions and UN inspections. . . Our efforts to collect and exploit intelligence on Iraq's chemical weapons program have thus far yielded little reliable information on post-1991 CW stocks and CW agent production. . .

Kay also said that he had “multiple sources that indicate that Iraq explored the possibility of CW production in recent years, possibly as late as 2003.”

“During its war against Iran, Iraq found that chemical warfare agents, especially nerve agents such as sarin, soman, tabun, and later VX, deteriorated after just a couple weeks' storage in drums or in filled chemical warfare munitions. The reason was that the Iraqi chemists, lacking access to high-quality laboratory and production equipment, were unable to make the agents pure enough. (UNSCOM found in 1991 that the large quantities of nerve agents discovered in storage in Iraq had lost most of their lethal property and were not suitable for warfare.) . . . The rather bizarre political focus on the search for rusting drums and pieces of munitions containing low-quality chemicals has tended to distort the important question of WMD in Iraq and exposed the American and British administrations to unjustified criticism.”

—former executive chairman of UNSCOM
Rolf Ekeus, “Iraq's Real Weapons Threat,”
Washington Post, June 29, 2003

He said the ISG would continue to investigate “key areas in which Iraq may have engaged in proscribed or undeclared activity since 1991, including research on a possible VX stabilizer, research and development for CW-capable munitions, and procurement/concealment of dual-use materials and equipment.”⁶² He emphasized that “in searching for retained stocks of chemical munitions, ISG has had to contend with the almost unbelievable scale of Iraq's conventional weapons armory. . . there are approximately 130 known Iraqi Ammunition Storage Points. . . of these. . . 120 still remain unexamined.”⁶³

Other officials say that many of these sites have been searched. Lt. Gen. James Conway, Commander of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, told reporters in May, “It was a surprise to me then, it remains a surprise to me now, that we have not uncovered unconventional weapons. It's not for lack of trying. We've been to virtually every ammunition supply point between the Kuwaiti border and Baghdad, but they're simply not there.”⁶⁴ (For a summary of Iraq's chemical program, see table 4.)

TABLE 4. SUMMARY OF IRAQ'S CHEMICAL WEAPON PROGRAM

PREWAR CONCERNS	PRE-2002 INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS	OCTOBER 2002 NIE ASSESSMENT	UN FINDINGS 2002-2003	ADMINISTRATION STATEMENTS	EVIDENCE SINCE MARCH 2003
Iraq had large stockpiles of chemical weapons.	MAYBE. Pre-2002 reports did not report the existence of chemical weapon stockpiles. Discrepancies in Iraqi accounting suggested that "Iraq may have hidden an additional 6,000 CW munitions."	YES. "High confidence" that Iraq had chemical weapons, probably between 100 and 500 metric tons.	NOT SURE. UNMOVIC uncovered several chemical warheads, but no significant stockpile. Iraq failed to provide evidence that it destroyed significant quantities of chemical munitions and precursor materials.	YES. Certain that Iraq had vast chemical weapon stockpiles including mustard gas, sarin nerve gas, and VX, and was hiding them from inspectors.	NO. No chemical weapons found. Appears none were produced after 1991. Kay: "Iraq did not have a large, ongoing, centrally controlled CW program after 1991."
Iraq had covert chemical weapon production facilities.	NOT SURE. Iraq "rebuilt key portions of its chemical production infrastructure for industrial and commercial use" in addition to purchasing dual-use equipment.	YES. Iraq "has begun renewed production" of chemical agents, including mustard, sarin, cyclosarin, and VX.	PROBABLY NOT. UNMOVIC inspections did not find any active production facilities or evidence of hidden chemical weapon production capability.	YES. Iraq hid its chemical program. Secretary Powell: "We know that Iraq has embedded key portions of its illicit chemical weapons infrastructure within its legitimate civilian industry."	NO. No open or covert chemical munitions or production facilities found. Some low-level research activity and dual-use programs possible.

■ BIOLOGICAL WEAPON PROGRAM

Administration Statements

The administration was certain that Iraq was hiding a large, sophisticated biological weapon production program, probably with hundreds of tons of agent and weapons including several mobile weapon laboratories built to deceive inspectors. These weapons were said to be capable of “killing millions.”

- ▶ “With respect to biological weapons, we are confident that he has some stocks of those weapons, and he is probably continuing to try to develop more.” (Secretary Powell, Fox “News Sunday,” September 8, 2002)
- ▶ “Right now, Iraq is expanding and improving facilities that were used for the production of biological weapons.” (President Bush, Remarks at the United Nations General Assembly, September 12, 2002)
- ▶ “[T]he regime was forced to admit that it had produced more than 30,000 liters of anthrax and other deadly biological agents. The inspectors, however, concluded that Iraq *had likely produced* two to four times that amount. This is a massive stockpile of biological weapons that has never been accounted for, and capable of killing millions” (emphasis added). (President Bush, Address on Iraq, October 7, 2002)
- ▶ “Iraq’s BW program includes mobile research and production facilities that will be difficult, if not impossible, for the inspectors to find. Baghdad began this program in the mid-1990s, during a time when UN inspectors were in the country.” (Director of Central Intelligence George Tenet, Testimony to the Senate Select Intelligence Committee, February 11, 2003)
- ▶ “One of the most worrisome things that emerges from the thick intelligence file we have on Iraq’s biological weapons is the existence of mobile production facilities used to make biological agents. . . We

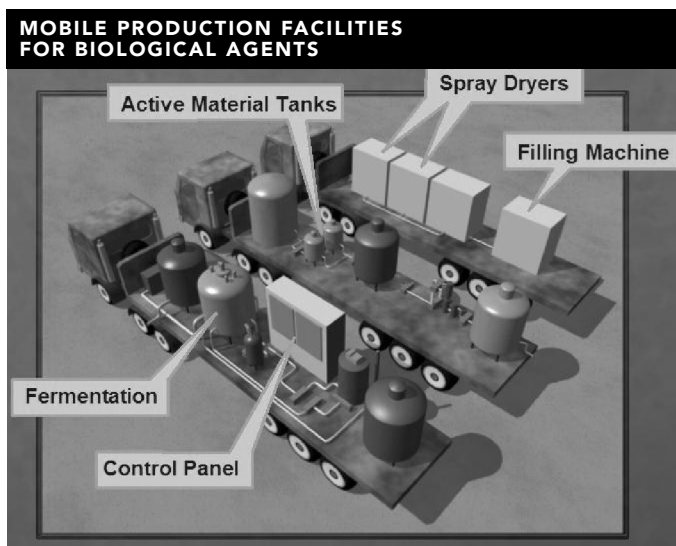
have first-hand descriptions of biological weapons factories on wheels and on rails. . . We know that Iraq has at least seven of these mobile biological agents factories. . . Saddam Hussein has investigated dozens of biological agents causing diseases such as gas-gangrene, plague, typhus, tetanus, cholera, camelpox, and hemorrhagic fever. And he also has the wherewithal to develop smallpox. . . there can be no doubt that Saddam Hussein has biological weapons and the capability to rapidly produce more, many more.” (Secretary of State Powell, Address to the United Nations Security Council, February 5, 2003)

- ▶ “Iraq declared 8,500 liters of anthrax, but UNSCOM estimates that Saddam Hussein could have produced 25,000 liters. . . And Saddam Hussein has not verifiably accounted for even one teaspoon-full of this deadly material. . . The Iraqis have never accounted for all of the biological weapons they admitted they had and we know they had. They have never accounted for all the organic material used to make them. And they have not accounted for many of the weapons filled with these agents such as their R-400 bombs. This is evidence, not conjecture. This is true. This is all well-documented.” (Secretary of State Powell, Address to the United Nations Security Council, February 5, 2003)

Intelligence Assessment

The NIE concluded that Iraq’s biological weapon (BW) program was active and larger than its program in 1991. Before 2001, the assessments were less definitive, expressing concern that Iraq might still be pursuing a BW program.

The NIE said, “We judge that all key aspects—R&D, production, and weaponization—of Iraq’s offensive BW program are active and that most elements are larger and more advanced than they were before the Gulf War.” The report concluded with



Secretary Powell's presentation slide on mobile biological vehicles.

“high confidence” that Iraq had biological weapons.

The report also said, “We judge Iraq has some lethal and incapacitating BW agents and is capable of quickly producing and weaponizing a variety of such agents, including anthrax, for delivery by bombs, missiles, aerial sprayers, and covert operatives.” The NIE also said, “Chances are even that smallpox is part of Iraq’s offensive BW program” and “Baghdad probably has developed genetically engineered BW agents.”

The NIE stated that Iraq possessed mobile biological weapon laboratories capable of producing “an amount of agent equal to the total that Iraq produced in the years prior to the Gulf War.”⁶⁵

Assessments prior to December 2001 had voiced concerns and warned of intentions to restart weapon programs but did not assert that any programs or weapons existed. Most were consistent with the 1998 intelligence report to Congress—while UNSCOM inspectors were still in Iraq:

After four years of denials, Iraq admitted to an offensive program resulting in the destruction of Al Hakam—a large BW production facility Iraq was trying to hide as a legitimate biological plant. Iraq still has not accounted for over a hundred BW bombs and over 80 percent of imported growth media—directly related to past and future Iraqi

production of thousands of gallons of biological agent. This lack of cooperation is an indication that Baghdad intends to reconstitute its BW capability when possible.⁶⁶

UN Findings and Actions

UNMOVIC inspectors had not found any evidence of programs, production, or stockpiles of biological weapons.

From 1991 to 1994, Iraq consistently denied having a biological warfare program. In July 1995, it finally admitted to possessing an offensive biological warfare program. A month later, Iraq conceded that it also had a program to weaponize biological agents.⁶⁷ UNSCOM found that Iraq might have produced up to 10 billion doses of anthrax, botulinum toxin and aflatoxin.⁶⁸ The Iraqi research program also focused on other agents such as camel pox, gas gangrene, and bubonic plague. Although research and development facilities at Salman Pak and Al Muthanna were known to intelligence forces, the largest research and

“We judge that all key aspects—R&D, production, and weaponization—of Iraq’s offensive BW program are active and that most elements are larger and more advanced than they were before the Gulf War.”

—NIE

development and production site at Al Hakam remained secret until it was detected and identified by UNSCOM in April 1995, as reported to the Security Council. Further information was provided by the defection of General Hussein Kamal, Saddam’s son-in-law, in 1995.⁶⁹ In 1996, UNSCOM demolished

all Al Hakam facilities, equipment, and materials. In addition, equipment from the Al Manal and Al Safah sites was transported to Al Hakam and dismantled, the air handling system for high containment at Al Manal was inactivated, and some of the growth media acquired by Iraq for proscribed activities was destroyed.⁷⁰

The 731 inspections conducted by UNMOVIC between November 27, 2002, and March 18, 2003, did not reveal any “evidence of the continuation or resumption of programs of weapons of mass destruction or significant quantities of proscribed items.”⁷¹ Twenty-eight percent of the inspections were to biological sites, including laboratories and military sites. The main problem inspectors reported was the absence of documentation to confirm the quantities of proscribed agents listed in 1998 that Iraq claimed to have destroyed. Under UNMOVIC supervision, Iraq excavated the remnants of 128 (out of the 157 declared) R-400 bombs that the Iraqis said they had destroyed but had not previously adequately documented.⁷² The biological team supervised and verified the destruction of 244.6 kg of declared but expired growth media and 40 vials of expired toxin standards. In both cases, Iraq initiated the destruction request.⁷³ Inspectors did not find evidence to support intelligence reports regarding the existence of mobile production units for biological weapons. They noted that shortly before the suspension of inspections, Iraqi officials provided more information on vehicles that could have been mistaken for mobile labs, but the inspectors did not have time to investigate fully.⁷⁴

Evidence Since March 2003

U.S. search teams have not uncovered any biological weapons or weaponized agents.

Kay concluded that U.S. evidence “suggests Iraq after 1996 further compartmentalized its program and focused on maintaining smaller, covert capabilities that could be activated quickly to surge the production of BW agents.”⁷⁵ The U.S. search teams did not find any evidence of an active weapon program,

or production of facilities, although Kay reported on October 2 that Iraq had a “clandestine network of laboratories” and “concealed equipment and materials from UN inspectors,” such as a “vial of live *C. botulinum* Okra B. from which a biological agent can be produced.”

Kay’s testimony and subsequent administration statements highlighted the discovery of the vial, stored in an Iraqi scientist’s kitchen refrigerator since 1993. This was the only suspicious biological material Kay had reported as of the end of December 2003. President Bush said the “live strain of deadly agent botulinum” was proof that Saddam Hussein was “a danger to the world.”⁷⁶ Several former U.S. bioweapons officials, UN inspectors, and biological experts told the *Los Angeles Times* that the sample was purchased from the United States in the 1980s and that no country, including Iraq, has been able to use

DIA engineers concluded the trailers were likely used to make hydrogen for weather balloons.

botulinum B in a weapon. Iraq had used the more deadly botulinum A in its pre-1991 weapon program, mimicking other countries’ programs, including those of the Soviet Union and the United States.⁷⁷

Kay also said he had uncovered new research on Congo Crimean Hemorrhagic Fever (CCHF) and Brucella that pointed to a new weapon program. The *Los Angeles Times* reported that both diseases are common in Iraq, and that there is no evidence that the research is connected to weapons.⁷⁸ Experts note that no one has ever weaponized CCHF, and the UN inspectors never found evidence that Iraq had weaponized Brucella. The United States at one time had tried Brucella in weapons but rejected it as too slow-acting and too easily treated with antibiotics.⁷⁹

In April and May 2003, U.S. troops uncovered two vehicles that a joint CIA-DIA report called “the strongest evidence to date” of Iraq’s biological weapon capabilities, although the vehicles did not test

positive for BW agents.⁸⁰ Undersecretary of Defense Stephen Cambone said on May 7, “The experts have been through it. And they have not found another plausible use for it.”⁸¹ The announcement generated headlines in the *Washington Post* and newspapers around the world. President Bush said, “We found the weapons of mass destruction. We found biological laboratories.”⁸²

However, in August 2003, the *New York Times* reported that engineers from the DIA who had examined the trailers had concluded in June that the vehicles were likely used to chemically produce

hydrogen for artillery weather balloons, as the Iraqis had claimed.⁸³ Similarly, an official British investigation into the two trailers concluded that they were not mobile germ warfare labs, but were for the production of hydrogen gas. One British scientist said, “They are not mobile germ warfare laboratories. You could not use them for making biological weapons. They do not even look like them.”⁸⁴ Kay concluded in his testimony to Congress that the ISG had “not yet been able to corroborate the existence of a mobile BW production effort.”⁸⁵ (For a summary of Iraq’s biological program, see table 5.)

TABLE 5. SUMMARY OF IRAQ'S BIOLOGICAL WEAPON PROGRAM

PREWAR CONCERNS	PRE-2002 INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS	OCTOBER 2002 NIE ASSESSMENT	UN FINDINGS 2002-2003	ADMINISTRATION STATEMENTS	EVIDENCE SINCE MARCH 2003
Iraq had current biological weapon stockpiles.	NOT SURE. "We are concerned that Iraq may again be producing BW agents."	YES. "High confidence" that Iraq had biological weapons.	NOT SURE. UNMOVIC inspectors could not find evidence of any BW agents or biological weapons.	YES. Iraq had a stockpile of biological weapons. President Bush: Iraq had "a massive stockpile of biological weapons that has never been accounted for, and capable of killing millions."	NO. No weaponized biological agents found.
Iraq had reconstituted its biological weapon program.	YES. December 2001 report: "Baghdad continued to pursue a BW program," and Iraq had a "knowledge base and industrial infrastructure that could be used to produce quickly a large amount of BW agents at any time."	YES. Iraq had an active bioweapon program that was larger than before 1991.	NOT SURE. UNMOVIC inspections did not reveal evidence of a continued biological weapon program. However, Iraq did not provide evidence that it had destroyed BW agents.	YES. Iraq was producing and developing several different types of biological agents and the means to disperse them. President Bush: "Right now, Iraq is expanding and improving facilities that were used for the production of biological weapons."	NO. No evidence of an active biological weapon program. ISG found some evidence of intent to restart program at future date, and some possible dual-use research.
Iraq possessed at least seven mobile biological weapon laboratories.	NO COMMENT. No pre-2002 report mentions mobile biological laboratories.	YES. Iraq had an unspecified number of mobile biological agent laboratories.	NOT SURE. UNMOVIC did not uncover evidence of mobile biological weapon facilities.	YES. Secretary Powell: "We know that Iraq has at least seven of these mobile biological agents factories."	PROBABLY NOT. Two vans found, but neither tested positive for biological agents. DIA: the labs are most likely for producing hydrogen artillery weather balloons.

■ MISSILE AND DELIVERY SYSTEM PROGRAMS

Administration Statements

Administration officials said that Iraq had delivery systems, such as missiles and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), capable of striking Israel or potentially the United States with chemical or biological payloads.

“Iraq also possesses a force of Scud-type missiles . . . [and is] building more long-range missiles [so] that it can inflict mass death throughout the region.”

—President Bush

Missiles

- ▶ “Iraq also possesses a force of Scud-type missiles with ranges beyond the 150 kilometers permitted by the United Nations. Work at testing and production facilities shows that Iraq is building more long-range missiles [so] that it can inflict mass death throughout the region.” (President Bush, Remarks at the United Nations General Assembly, September 12, 2002)
- ▶ “[N]umerous intelligence reports over the past decade from sources inside Iraq indicate that Saddam Hussein retains a covert force of up to a few dozen Scud-variant ballistic missiles. These are missiles with a range of 650 to 900 kilometers. . . “[Saddam] has the ability to dispense these lethal poisons and diseases in ways that cause massive death and destruction. . . Iraq has programs that are intended to produce ballistic missiles that fly over 1,000 kilometers. One program is pursuing a liquid fuel missile that would be able to fly

more than 1,200 kilometers.” (Secretary of State Powell, Address to the United Nations Security Council, February 5, 2003)

- ▶ “While we were here in this council chamber debating Resolution 1441 last fall, we know, we know from sources that a missile brigade outside Baghdad was disbursing rocket launchers and warheads containing biological warfare agents to various locations, distributing them to various locations in western Iraq. Most of the launchers and warheads have been hidden in large groves of palm trees and were to be moved every one to four weeks to escape detection.” (Secretary of State Powell, Address to the United Nations Security Council, February 5, 2003)
- ▶ “[F]rom recent intelligence, we know that the Iraqi regime intends to declare and destroy only a portion of its banned Al Samoud inventory and that it has, in fact, ordered the continued production of the missiles that you see being destroyed. Iraq has brought its machinery that produces such missiles out into the daylight for all to see. But we have intelligence that says, at the very same time, it has also begun to hide machinery it can use to convert other kinds of engines to power Al Samouds 2.” (Secretary of State Powell, Speech at Center for Strategic and International Studies, March 5, 2003)

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles

- ▶ “We’ve also discovered through intelligence that Iraq has a growing fleet of manned and unmanned aerial vehicles that could be used to disperse chemical and biological weapons across broad areas. We are concerned that Iraq is exploring ways of using these UAVs for missions targeting the United States.” (President Bush, Address on Iraq, October 7, 2002)
- ▶ “Iraq has been working on a variety of UAVs for more than a decade. . . Iraq is now concentrating not on these airplanes but on developing and testing smaller UAVs such as this. . . There is ample

evidence that Iraq has dedicated much effort to developing and testing spray devices that could be adapted for UAVs . . . The linkages over the past ten years between Iraq's UAV program and biological and chemical warfare agents are of deep concern to us. Iraq could use these small UAVs which have a wingspan of only a few meters to deliver biological agents to its neighbors, or if transported, to other countries, including the United States." (Secretary of State Powell, Address to the United Nations Security Council, February 5, 2003)

Intelligence Assessment

The NIE said Iraq probably had some Scuds and pursued programs for longer-range missiles and UAV delivery vehicles. Assessments from 2000 on had similar findings.

The NIE said the evidence suggested that Iraq "retains a covert force of up to a few dozen Scud-variant SRBMs with ranges of 650 to 900 km." The report asserted that Iraq, with foreign assistance, was in the process of "developing medium-range ballistic missile

"We have not discovered evidence to corroborate these claims [of Scuds]." —David Kay

capabilities," including a "test stand for engines more powerful than those in its current missile force."

The report stated that Iraq had a "development program" for UAVs that was "probably intended to deliver biological warfare agent" and could pose a threat to states and U.S. troops in the Middle East "and if brought close to, or into, the United States, the US Homeland" (emphasis in text).⁸⁶ The Air Force dissented from this finding.

Previous assessments had noted that Iraq might use the technologies and equipment from their permitted short-range missiles to build longer-range systems especially if sanctions and UN inspections

ended. Reports to Congress beginning in 2000 said that "Iraq probably retains a small, covert force of Scud-type missiles," and that it was believed to be working on a UAV program.

UN Findings and Actions

Missiles

UNMOVIC inspectors found more activity in the missile programs than in any other area. They found and began destroying missiles that exceeded the UN-imposed 150-kilometer range limits and the test stands and equipment to build longer-range systems.

Between 1991 and 1993, UNSCOM found and supervised the destruction of 48 operational Al Hussein missiles (a 600 kilometer variety of the Scud B 300 kilometer missile), 14 conventional missile warheads, 6 operational mobile launchers, 28 operational fixed launch pads, 32 fixed launch pads under construction, 30 missile chemical warheads, other missile support equipment and materials, and a range of assembled and nonassembled "super-gun" components.⁸⁷ UNSCOM could also later verify first partly in 1992, and later more completely in 1995 that Iraq had, in violation of its obligation to submit to UNSCOM for destruction all its missiles of prohibited range, secretly and unilaterally destroyed 83 Al Hussein missiles.⁸⁸ Subsequently in 1997 UNSCOM could report to the Security Council that it had accounted for all but two of the 819 proscribed missiles, including the missiles modified into Al Hussein missiles.⁸⁹ By early 1995, UNSCOM accumulated evidence that Iraq had failed to declare all proscribed items and forced Iraq to destroy a variety of proscribed dual-use equipment, including production equipment, flow-forming machines, vacuum furnaces, a turbo pump test stand, and a balancing machine.⁹⁰ In early 1996 UNSCOM could disclose and halt an advanced procurement activity by Iraq in Russia of large quantities of ballistic missile guidance systems, part of which Iraq tried to hide in the Tigris River. UNSCOM's October 1998 report stated

that it had accounted for all but 50 conventional Scud warheads and for 43 out of 45 chemical and biological warheads unilaterally destroyed by Iraq in 1991.⁹¹

UNMOVIC/IAEA inspections carried out between November 2002 and March 2003 did not find any evidence of Scuds but did reveal that “There has been a surge of activity in the missile technology field in Iraq in the past four years.”⁹² Iraq continued to develop two ballistic missiles after inspectors left in 1998: the Al Samoud 2 (liquid propellant) and the Al Fatah (solid propellant). UNMOVIC informed Iraq that the Al Samoud 2 was proscribed and would be destroyed because it exceeded the permitted range of 150 kilometers by 30 kilometers.⁹³ Iraq started the destruction process on March 1, 2003, and within a week, 34 Al Samoud 2 missiles, including four training missiles and two combat warheads, one launcher, and five engines had been destroyed under UNMOVIC supervision.⁹⁴ By the time the war started, Iraq had destroyed two-thirds of its Al Samoud 2 missiles and one-third of the associated support equipment and logistics.⁹⁵ A decision on the Al Fatah missiles was still pending further information, when UNMOVIC withdrew from Iraq in March 2003.⁹⁶ UNMOVIC also discovered large propellant chambers that could be used to produce rocket motors for missiles with ranges greater than 150 kilometers.⁹⁷ Iraq destroyed these in the first week of March under UNMOVIC supervision. In his report to the UN Security Council on March 7, 2003, Executive Chairman of UNMOVIC Hans Blix, stated: “The destruction undertaken constitutes a substantial measure of disarmament—indeed, the first since the middle of the 1990s. We are not watching the breaking of toothpicks. Lethal weapons are being destroyed.”⁹⁸

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles

In its December 8, 2002 declaration to the United Nations, Iraq claimed it possessed a number of UAVs and other smaller remotely piloted vehicles with wingspans up to 5.52 meters. UNMOVIC inspectors inspected a remotely piloted vehicle in February.

By mid-February, Iraq amended the declared wingspan of its remotely piloted vehicles to 7.4 meters. UNMOVIC had insufficient time to determine whether the vehicles were capable of chemical and biological weapons dissemination and whether their range exceeded 150 kilometers.⁹⁹

Evidence Since March 2003

U.S. troops have not found any Scud-type missiles, evidence of continued production of Scud-type missiles, or any UAVs capable of delivering chemical or biological agents.

Kay said, “To date we have not discovered documentary or material evidence to corroborate these claims [about Scud-type missiles]. . .” Kay reported that detained scientists and officials said Saddam had begun programs to develop missiles with 400- to 1000-kilometer ranges. Kay said, “One cooperative source has said that he suspected that the new large-diameter solid-propellant missile was intended to have a CW-

*“Secretly, and without fingerprints,
he could provide one of his
hidden weapons to terrorists...”*

—President Bush

filled warhead, but no detainee has admitted any actual knowledge of plans for unconventional warheads for any current or planned ballistic missile.”

Kay reported evidence of two cruise missile programs, one of which he said was intended to develop cruise missiles with a 1,000-kilometer range. However, Kay noted that Iraq halted development once UN inspections began in 2002. Kay said that several Iraqi officials stated that one UAV system flew over 500 kilometers on auto-pilot in 2002 and the UAV issue “remains an open question.” Kay concluded that Iraq also had a “substantial illegal procurement for all aspects of the missile programs.”¹⁰⁰

TABLE 6. SUMMARY OF IRAQ'S MISSILE AND DELIVERY SYSTEM PROGRAMS

PREWAR CONCERNS	PRE-2002 INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS	OCTOBER 2002 NIE ASSESSMENT	UN FINDINGS 2002–2003	ADMINISTRATION STATEMENTS	EVIDENCE SINCE MARCH 2003
Iraq possessed a covert fleet of Scuds.	PROBABLY. "Iraq probably retains a small, covert force of Scud-type missiles."	PROBABLY. "Gaps in Iraqi accounting" to the United Nations indicated that Iraq had "up to a few dozen" Scud-type missiles with ranges of 650–900 km.	PROBABLY NOT. By 1998, UNSCOM destroyed or verified destruction of all known Scud missiles and most warheads. UNMOVIC did not find any evidence of Scuds.	YES. President Bush: Iraq had a "force of Scud-type missiles."	NO. No Scud-type missiles found. Kay: "We have not discovered documentary or material evidence to corroborate these claims."
Iraq was developing UAVs as delivery vehicles for chemical and biological agents.	MAYBE. Iraq attempted to convert a L-29 jet trainer into a UAV, and "we suspect that these refurbished trainer aircraft have been modified for delivery of chemical or, more likely, biological warfare agents."	PROBABLY. Iraq had a "development program" for UAVs "probably intended" to disperse biological agents—the Air Force disagreed.	NOT SURE. UNMOVIC did not have time to evaluate whether Iraq's UAVs could disperse biological agents.	YES. President Bush: "Iraq has a growing fleet of manned and unmanned aerial vehicles that could be used to disperse chemical and biological weapons across broad areas."	NO. Air Force experts: The drones recovered so far are too small to disperse significant quantities of biological agents.
Iraq was building missiles with 1,000 km range.	MAYBE. Iraq had a program to develop "longer range, prohibited missiles" of unspecified range.	NOT EXACTLY. Iraq was developing longer range ballistic missile "capabilities" including a "test stand" for more powerful missile engines.	MAYBE, BUT . . . The Al Samoud 2 exceeded the 150-km missile limit by 30 km, but UNMOVIC supervised the destruction of rockets and propellant chambers that could help build longer-range missiles.	YES. President Bush: "Iraq is building more long-range missiles [so] that it can inflict mass death throughout the region."	NO. No evidence of production of such missiles. Kay: Saddam intended to develop a program for long-range missiles.

On July 18, 2003, the White House released declassified sections of the NIE that for the first time included dissenting opinions of several agencies. The director of Air Force intelligence had disagreed with most of the administration's prewar UAV statements. The Air Force—the government agency with the most experience in UAV programs and development—concluded that Iraq's efforts to convert aircraft were unfeasible, that Iraq's latest drones were too small to carry WMD agents, and that the

primary function of Iraq's UAVs was reconnaissance missions.

To date, recovered UAVs in Iraq confirm the Air Force's predictions that the drones were intended for reconnaissance missions. The small size of the reported 25 to 30 recovered UAVs in Iraq in July 2003 would most likely not allow them to disperse significant amounts of chemical or biological agents.¹⁰¹ (For a summary of Iraq's missile and delivery system programs, see table 6.)

■ IRAQ AND TERRORISM

Administration Statements

Administration officials said that Iraq had operational ties to Al Qaeda and would give terrorists weapons of mass destruction to use against the United States, and the administration implied that Saddam Hussein was linked to the September 11 attacks.

- ▶ “[T]here clearly are contacts between Al Qaeda and Iraq . . . there clearly is testimony that some of the contacts have been important contacts and that there’s a relationship here.” (National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, PBS “NewsHour with Jim Lehrer,” September 25, 2002)
- ▶ “Evidence from intelligence sources, secret communications, and statements by people now in custody reveal that Saddam Hussein aids and protects terrorists, including members of Al Qaeda. Secretly, and without fingerprints, he could provide one of his hidden weapons to terrorists, or help them develop their own. Before September the 11th, many in the world believed that Saddam Hussein could be contained. But chemical agents, lethal viruses and shadowy terrorist networks are not easily contained. Imagine those 19 hijackers with other weapons and other plans—this time armed by Saddam Hussein. It would take one vial, one canister, one crate slipped into this country to bring a day of horror like none we have ever known.” (President Bush, State of the Union, January 28, 2003)
- ▶ “Saddam Hussein has longstanding, direct and continuing ties to terrorist networks. Senior members of Iraqi intelligence and Al Qaeda have met at least eight times since the early 1990s. Iraq has sent bomb-making and document forgery experts to work with Al Qaeda. Iraq has also provided Al Qaeda with chemical and biological weapons training. And an Al Qaeda operative was sent to Iraq several times in the late 1990s for help in acquiring poisons and gases. We also know that Iraq is harboring a terrorist network

headed by a senior Al Qaeda terrorist planner. This network runs a poison and explosive training camp in northeast Iraq, and many of its leaders are known to be in Baghdad.” (President Bush, Radio Address, February 8, 2003)

- ▶ “Iraq is harboring senior members of a terrorist network led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a close associate of Osama bin Laden. We know Zarqawi’s network was behind the poison plots in Europe as well as the assassination of a U.S. State Department employee in Jordan. Iraq has in the past provided training in document forgery and bomb-making to Al Qaeda. It also provided training in poisons and gases to two Al Qaeda associates; one of these associates characterized the relationship he forged with Iraqi officials as successful.” (Director of Central Intelligence George Tenet, Senate Testimony, February 11, 2003)

Intelligence Assessment

The NIE concluded that it was unlikely that Saddam would cooperate with, or give WMD to, terrorists. Previous assessments did not mention this possibility.

The NIE said “Baghdad for now appears to be drawing a line short of conducting terrorist attacks with conventional or CBW against the United States,” because Saddam feared U.S. retaliation. However, “Iraq probably would attempt clandestine attacks against the US Homeland if Baghdad feared an attack that threatened the survival of the regime were imminent or unavoidable, or possibly for revenge.” Even then, he was more likely to carry out the attacks with his own “special forces or intelligence operatives” rather than contracting with or engaging independent terrorist groups. The NIE judged that an Iraqi–Al Qaeda alliance was most likely if Saddam was “sufficiently desperate.” Then, he might decide that the “extreme step of assisting the Islamist terrorists in conducting a CBW attack against the United States would be his last chance to exact vengeance by taking a large number of victims with him.”¹⁰²

Evidence Since March 2003

There is no new evidence that Iraq actively aided Al Qaeda. There is some evidence that there were no operational links.

U.S. troops have captured dozens of alleged Al Qaeda members, but these arrests have so far failed to bring new evidence of Iraqi–Al Qaeda cooperation.

The *New York Times* reported in June that two of the highest-ranking leaders of Al Qaeda in custody, Abu Zubaydah and Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, both told interrogators that Iraq and Al Qaeda did not carry out operations together.¹⁰³ In July, it was reported that U.S. authorities captured Ahmed Khalil Ibrahim Samir al-Ani, the Iraqi intelligence officer alleged to have met with Al Qaeda mastermind Mohamed Atta in April 2001 in Prague, but the results of his interrogation were not reported.¹⁰⁴

The UN Monitoring Group on Al Qaeda released a draft report in June that found no link between Iraq and the terrorist group. The committee's chief investigator said, "Nothing has come to our notice that would indicate links. . . hat doesn't mean to say it doesn't exist. But from what we've seen the answer is no."¹⁰⁵

Since September, some administration officials reiterated that they never directly linked Iraq with the 9/11 attacks. President Bush said on September 17, "No, we've had no evidence that Saddam Hussein was involved with September the 11th. Now, what the vice president said was that he has been involved with Al Qaeda. And al-Zarqawi, an Al Qaeda operative, was in Baghdad. He's the guy that ordered the killing of a U.S. diplomat. . . There's no question that Saddam Hussein had Al Qaeda ties."¹⁰⁶ The administration continued to insist that the potential combination of Iraq, WMD, and terrorism posed an unacceptable threat. National Security Advisor

Condoleezza Rice said on October 8, "We have no evidence that Saddam Hussein was involved in the September 11th attacks. Yet the possibility remained that he might use his weapons of mass destruction or that terrorists might acquire such weapons from his regime, to mount a future attack far beyond the scale of 9/11. This terrible prospect could not be ignored or wished away."¹⁰⁷

The president and the vice president, however, continue to assert the links by implication. Vice President Dick Cheney said in October: "Saddam Hussein had a lengthy history of reckless and sudden aggression. He cultivated ties to terror—hosting the Abu Nidal organization, supporting terrorists, and making payments to the families of suicide bombers in Israel. He also had an established relationship with Al Qaeda, providing training to Al Qaeda members in the areas of poisons, gases, making conventional bombs."¹⁰⁸

In November, the *Weekly Standard* published excerpts from a classified annex to a memo dated October 27, 2003 by Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Douglas J. Feith to Senators Pat Roberts and Jay Rockefeller, the chairman and vice chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee.¹⁰⁹ The article claimed that Feith's list of fifty incidents of alleged Iraqi–Al Qaeda contacts proved "an operational relationship from the early 1990s," and that "there can no longer be any serious argument about whether Saddam Hussein's Iraq worked with Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda to plot against Americans."¹¹⁰

The Department of Defense issued a statement saying the memo had been misinterpreted, saying that the items were raw intelligence previously considered and did not represent new information. "The classified annex was not an analysis of the substantive issue of the relationship between Iraq and Al Qaeda, and it drew no conclusions."¹¹¹

CHARACTERIZATION OF UN INSPECTIONS

In September 2002, in a speech before the UN General Assembly, President Bush gave a relatively positive view of UN inspections. His speech concentrated on UN inspection accomplishments, for example, citing their success in uncovering Iraq's extensive chemical weapon program in the face of Iraqi subterfuge.¹¹²

Soon, however, the administration began to voice doubt that inspections were at all useful, charging that UN inspectors were easily deceived by Iraq's

Administration officials believed UN inspectors were easily deceived.

trickery and therefore unlikely to uncover Saddam's WMD. Executive Chairman of UNMOVIC Hans Blix later said that he felt the administration "gave up on inspections" in early 2003.¹¹³ However, some in the administration, such as Vice President Cheney and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, never appeared to believe UN inspections were effective.

- ▶ "[T]here were inspectors in that country for a long time, and they did a lot of looking around and they found some things. But for the most part, anything they found was a result of having been cued to something as a result of a defector giving them a heads up that they ought to do this, that or the other thing." (Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, DOD News Briefing, April 15, 2002)
- ▶ "So many of us I think are skeptical that simply returning the inspectors will solve the problem. A great deal depends upon what conditions they would operate under; would they be able to go anywhere, any time, without notice on extensive searches? You've got to remember he's had about four years now to hide everything that he's been doing and he's gotten to be very good at that, worked at it very aggressively. So even if you had the return of inspectors, I'm not sure they would be able to do enough to be able to guarantee us and our friends in the region that he had, in fact, complied. He's gotten very good at denial and deception." (Vice

President Cheney, Remarks on the President's Economic Security Agenda, August 7, 2002)

- ▶ "Saddam has perfected the game of cheat and retreat, and is very skilled in the art of denial and deception. A return of inspectors would provide no assurance whatsoever of his compliance with UN resolutions. On the contrary, there is a great danger that it would provide false comfort that Saddam was somehow 'back in his box.'" (Vice President Cheney, Remarks to the Veterans of Foreign Wars 103rd National Convention, August 26, 2002)
- ▶ "When it comes to the UN weapons inspection in Iraq, looking for a smoking gun is a fool's mission. . . Even the best inspectors have almost no chance of discovering hidden weapons sites such as these in a country the size of Iraq." (David Kay, "It Was Never about a Smoking Gun," *Washington Post*, January 19, 2003—Kay was not then a U.S. official.)
- ▶ "We have sources who tell us that the Iraqis, through their intelligence efforts, are working very hard to frustrate the inspectors." (National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, NBC "Meet the Press," February 16, 2003)
- ▶ "The inspections have turned out to be a trap. They have become a false measure of disarmament in the eyes of people. We're not counting on Blix to do much of anything for us." (Senior administration official, *New York Times*, March 2, 2003)
- ▶ The 12,000-page declaration issued by Iraq in December 2002 in response to UN demands, "repeated the biggest lie of all, the claim that Iraq has no weapons of mass destruction, thereby setting the stage for further deception of the inspectors as they went about their business. . . the inspection effort isn't working. Why? Because it was never intended to work under these kinds of hostile circumstances. It was intended to help the Iraqis comply. They were not intended to be detectives that went around seeking out things in the absence of genuine Iraqi cooperation. Inspections cannot work effectively as long as the Iraqi regime remains

bound and determined to hold on to its weapons of mass destruction instead of divesting itself of these terrible items. . . Inspections will amount to little more than casting at shadows unless Iraq lifts the fog of denial and deception that prevents inspectors from seeing the true magnitude of what they're up against." (Secretary of State Powell, Speech to Center for Strategic and International Studies, March 5, 2003)

Much of Secretary of State Powell's address to the UN Security Council on February 5, 2003, in particular illustrated how the administration believed the Iraqis were fooling the inspectors:

- ▶ "The truck you also see is a signature item. It's a decontamination vehicle in case something goes wrong. This is characteristic of those four bunkers. . . You are now looking at two of those sanitized bunkers. The signature vehicles are gone, the tents are gone, it's been cleaned up, and it was done on the 22nd of December, as the UN inspection team is arriving, and you can see the inspection vehicles arriving in the lower portion of the picture on the right. The bunkers are clean when the inspectors get there. They found nothing."
 - ▶ "The issue before us is not how much time we are willing to give the inspectors to be frustrated by Iraqi obstruction. But how much longer are we willing to put up with Iraq's noncompliance before we, as a council, we, as the United Nations, say 'Enough. Enough.'"
 - ▶ "It took the inspectors four years to find out that Iraq was making biological agents. How long do you think it will take the inspectors to find even one of these 18 [modified] trucks without Iraq coming forward, as they are supposed to, with the information about these kinds of capabilities?"
- ▶ "To fully appreciate the challenge that we face today, remember that in 1991 the inspectors searched Iraq's primary nuclear weapons facilities for the first time, and they found nothing to conclude that Iraq had a nuclear weapons program."

The administration also conveyed a deep-seated distrust of the inspectors' findings and conclusions. For example, the administration dismissed the IAEA's conclusion that Iraq's aluminum tubes were not destined for Iraq's nuclear enrichment program. Vice President Cheney said on March 16, "if you look at the track record of the International Atomic Energy Agency and this kind of issue, especially where Iraq is concerned, they have consistently underestimated or missed what it was Saddam Hussein was doing. I don't have any reason to believe they're any more valid this time than they've been in the past."

Administration officials are confident that U.S. inspection teams, with sufficient time, will turn up evidence that the UN teams could not. Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Douglas Feith said on May 15, 2003, "I am confident that we will eventually be able to piece together a fairly complete account of Iraq's WMD programs—but the process will take months and perhaps years . . . It bears stressing: The task of accounting for and eliminating all nuclear, chemical and biological stockpiles, facilities and infrastructure will take time."¹¹⁴

Iraq Survey Group chief David Kay remarked in late July 2003, "I think we are making solid progress. It is preliminary. We're not at the final stage of understanding fully Iraq's WMD program, nor have we found WMD weapons. It's going to take time. The Iraqis had over two decades to develop these weapons, and hiding them was an essential part of their program."¹¹⁵ In October 2003, Kay again asked for patience, saying, "It is far too early to reach any definitive conclusions, and, in some areas, we may never reach that goal."¹¹⁶