

Report for Congress

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Iraq: U.N. Inspections for Weapons of Mass Destruction

Updated March 13, 2003

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Summary

U.N. inspections of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction (WMD) programs resumed in November 2002 after a 4-year hiatus. U.N. Security Council Resolution 1441 granted Iraq a final chance to disarm. Given Iraq's history of thwarting WMD inspections, many have low expectations for the success of inspections. This report, which will be updated, analyzes the challenges and opportunities of inspections in light of new U.N. Security Council authorities and Congress's authorization to use U.S. force against Iraq (P.L. 107-243). The success of these inspections will have a direct impact on whether U.S. military force is used to eliminate the threat of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

On the plus side, new inspections have strengthened authorities under the new U.N. resolution, including unimpeded access to all sites and interviewing Iraqi officials privately, and they utilize new technologies. There is also a better relationship between U.N. Monitoring, Verification, and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) than there was between its predecessor and the IAEA. Inspections, rather than military strikes, could encourage defectors to provide critical information and might facilitate uncovering links between WMD and terrorism. Inspections conducted under the threat of military strikes have likely increased the pressure on Iraq to comply. On the negative side, inspectors face new practical, technical, and political challenges. New regulations for sharing intelligence and inspector recruitment may hinder inspections and Iraq has had four years to potentially hide weapons activities in dual-use facilities. The threat of war could increase pressure on inspectors to produce some definitive knowledge and could potentially politicize their investigations. Ultimately, judging Iraq's compliance may rely less on evidence (or lack thereof) of obstruction, than on assumptions about the effectiveness and utility of inspections at this juncture.

UNMOVIC Executive Chairman Blix and IAEA Director General ElBaradei have reported five times to the UN Security Council since inspections began. On December 19, 2002, Blix and ElBaradei reported that Iraq's December 7th declaration of its activities was inadequate. The chief inspectors delivered status reports on the inspection effort on January 9, 2003, January 27, February 14, and March 7. Each time, the reports noted that Iraqi cooperation on process was good, but that substantive evidence of disarmament was lacking. On February 5, Secretary of State Colin Powell briefed the Security Council on Iraq's efforts to evade disarmament using intelligence sources. Security Council members seem to agree that Iraq has failed to cooperate fully, particularly in the substance of disarmament, but they disagree on whether inspections should continue or whether war is necessary to disarm Iraq.

See CRS Report RL31715, *Iraq War? Current Situation and Issues for Congress*, and other listings under "Iraq-U.S. Confrontation" in the Current Legislative Issues section of the CRS products homepage.

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Introduction

On November 8, 2002, the United Nations Security Council gave Iraq “a final opportunity to comply with disarmament obligations under relevant resolutions of the Council” with the adoption of Resolution 1441. Iraq formally accepted the resolution and inspectors began their work on November 27. On December 7, Iraq provided a 12,000-page declaration of its current capabilities, which largely recycled old declarations and maintains that Iraq has no weapons of mass destruction (WMD) capabilities. On December 19th, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the U.N. Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC),¹ the two organizations charged with inspecting Iraq, reported that the declaration was incomplete. UNMOVIC and the IAEA told the U.N. Security Council that Baghdad “missed an opportunity” to come clean about new arms programs.

Since mid-November 2002, UNMOVIC and IAEA inspectors have conducted 750 inspections at 550 sites. They have conducted unannounced inspections, interviewed Iraqi personnel, taken samples, and collected documents. Although Iraq initially objected to reconnaissance flights (by U-2, Mirage 4 and Russian Antonov aircraft) and reportedly actively discouraged scientists from being interviewed in private, by mid-February Iraq acquiesced to these rights of the inspectorate. Both UNMOVIC Executive Chairman Hans Blix and IAEA Director General Mohamed ElBaradei have generally characterized Iraqi cooperation as good on process and lacking on substance.

UN Security Council Resolution 1441 states that “the Council has repeatedly warned Iraq that it will face *serious consequences* as a result of its continued violations of its obligations” (emphasis added). The intense public debate on inspections can be linked to the threat of war that hangs over Iraq if it does not comply with all relevant UN resolutions. From March to September 2002, Iraq repeatedly attempted to attach conditions to the return of inspectors (such as a comprehensive peace settlement in the Middle East and the end of sanctions). Following President Bush’s September 12th speech to the United Nations, and passage of Congress’ resolution authorizing the use of force against Iraq (P.L. 107-243), however, the urgency attached to inspections increased dramatically.² A key

¹ See UNMOVIC’s and IAEA’s web sites: [www.un.org/Depts/UNMOVIC/] and [www.iaea.or.at/worldatom/Programmes/ActionTeam/index.html]

² See [www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/09/20020912-1.html] for text of President Bush’s speech.

question to consider is: what purpose do inspections now serve? Are they a trip-wire for military action to disarm Saddam Hussein, or are they a continuation of an ongoing inspection and disarmament process?

In March 2002, before war against Iraq seemed imminent, National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice remarked in an interview that:

We need to be very clear on the purpose of weapons inspections. These are not inspections for inspections' sake. They are instrumental to make sure that ... Iraq is not trying to acquire weapons of mass destruction. In fact they were supposed to be the ability to give testimony that there are no such programs. And so when we focus on weapons inspections in Iraq, we have to focus on weapons inspections that would be effective enough to be sure that this man is not trying to do what we know he has tried to do over the last 20 years. Ultimately, the United States believes that regime change in Iraq is going to be best for the Iraqi people and for the region. But clearly weapons inspections that are tough, weapons inspections that cannot be challenged, weapons inspections in which Saddam Hussein is not trying to soften the edges of them would be a helpful step forward.³

Few doubt the difficulty of establishing confidence that Iraq is free of weapons of mass destruction. On the one hand, inspections in Iraq have the logically impossible task of proving a negative – that Iraq is not trying to acquire WMD. For those who believe that inspections cannot provide such assurances, obstruction of those inspections hints at (or to some, proves) the concealment of some WMD-related activities.⁴ In this view, even cooperation in the process of inspections provides few assurances of the absence of WMD programs, and the failure of inspections to turn up evidence of WMD-related activities would, in this view, not confer innocence, but illustrate the shortcomings of inspections.

For some observers who are opposed to inspections, a key assumption is that the task of disarming Iraq is insurmountable without genuine Iraqi cooperation, which requires the leadership in Iraq to give up its WMD aspirations. The Bush Administration in January 2003 cited South Africa, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan as models of cooperative disarmament and contrasted Iraq's actions with those of the three models.⁵ The former deputy executive chairman of UNSCOM (U.N. Special

³ Newsmaker Interview with Jim Lehrer, March 11, 2002, [www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/white_house/jan-june02/rice_3-11.html]

⁴ In the same interview, Rice said: "We have a country that continues to flaunt its international obligations undertaken in 1991 in the armistice, that continues to try to acquire weapons of mass destruction. After all, there is a reason that Saddam Hussein does not want weapons inspections in Iraq. It's...obviously he's got something to hide." [www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/white_house/jan-june02/rice_3-11.html]

⁵ "What Does Disarmament Look Like?" The White House, January 23, 2003. See [www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/iraq/disarmament/]. These examples minimize key differences in the situations. For one, Ukraine and Kazakhstan inherited nuclear weapons from the breakup of the Soviet Union and might not ever have had nuclear weapons ambitions, and second, the South African government, according to many, acted to (continued...)

Commission), Charles Duelfer, has compared inspections in Iraq with those conducted in Germany between World War I and World War II, which were ultimately unsuccessful.⁶ Duelfer argues that this kind of coercive disarmament by an international organization is doomed to failure. CIA Director George Tenet remarked in a hearing before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence on February 11, 2003, that “unless he [Saddam Hussein] provides the data to build on, provides the access, provides the unfettered access that he’s supposed to, provides us with surveillance capability, there’s little chance you are going to find weapons of mass destruction under the rubric he’s created inside the country.”⁷

Other observers, in support of inspections, point to the knowledge gained from 1991 to 1998 by inspectors about the extent of Iraq’s WMD programs, to the uncertainties of waging war against an opponent that may have and be inclined to use WMD, and to the value in an approach that has broad international support. Some question the ability of intelligence agencies alone to detect WMD programs, citing reports of the CIA’s lack of knowledge about Iraq’s WMD programs prior to 1991 and the evident surprise about the 1998 Indian and Pakistani nuclear tests.⁸ In the nonproliferation community, most agree that treaties and agreements ultimately cannot stop a country that is determined to acquire WMD, but rather make the process more difficult and costly, thereby buying time for political change. In the case of Iraq, four years without inspections elapsed with relatively little public debate, but the tragedies of September 11, 2001 seem to have convinced many observers that delay in disarming Iraq could increase the threat to international security. A relatively new concern in the debate on Iraq’s disarmament is the alleged support Iraq might provide to terrorists. Public opinion appears to be mixed on whether there is proof that Iraq has links to Al Qaeda, but the fear that Iraq might have incentive to provide WMD materials or weapons to terrorists, is viewed by many as a reason to complete the task of Iraqi disarmament quickly.

The inspectors face multiple tasks. They must resolve outstanding issues that remained in 1998 when inspectors left the country, they must investigate whatever activities may have taken place between 1998 and 2002, and they must provide assurances that no new activities related to WMD are ongoing. Just as inspections may not give 100% confidence in a result, so might not military strikes. Much may depend on follow-up verification.

Some key issues to consider in judging the efficacy of the inspections include:

⁵ (...continued)

dismantle its nuclear weapons when it became clear that regime change was inevitable.

⁶ “How Baghdad Divided the Conquerors,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 11, 2000.

⁷ Director of Central Intelligence, George Tenet, Hearing on “Threats to U.S. Security” before the Senate Select Intelligence committee, February 11, 2003.

⁸ “The Big Difference Between Intelligence and Evidence,” *Washington Post*, February 2, 2003. “US intelligence did not detect Iraq’s nuclear program until it was uncovered after Desert Storm in 1991. It did not find out about the Iraqi biological weapons program until 1995, with some help from the defection of Hussein Kamel.”

- What constitutes evidence of noncompliance? To some, noncompliance is equated with anything less than full cooperation (i.e., unless compliance is proven, Iraq is noncompliant); to others, there must be proof that Iraq is producing weapons of mass destruction.
- What are the risks of continuing inspections? To some, continuing inspections gives Iraq more time to produce weapons of mass destruction; to others, continuing inspections makes it more likely that any covert programs will be uncovered.
- If inspections uncover signs of Iraqi WMD activity, is this a sign of the failure or the success of inspections?
- Can coercive inspections ever be effective? To some, only cooperative inspections provide full assurances, while to others, inspections provide an invaluable source of information that cannot be gained from other means.
- What is the best means of preventing the transfer of WMD technologies or capabilities from Iraq to terrorists? To some, military force is the best way quickly and irrevocably to disarm Iraq of its WMD capabilities to forestall such an action; to others, military action could unintentionally create an environment conducive to terrorist acquisition of WMD-related items.

Background⁹

The inspections conducted in Iraq following the Gulf War verified Iraq's violation of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, the Biological Weapons Convention, and the 1925 Geneva Protocol prohibiting the use of bacteriological or chemical weapons warfare. From May 1991 to December 1998, UNSCOM and the IAEA's Action Team on Iraq conducted almost 300 inspections at over 1,000 facilities. Iraq's programs to develop biological weapons, chemical weapons, and nuclear weapons surprised even those knowledgeable in those areas. IAEA inspections uncovered a Manhattan-Project-like nuclear program, which employed thousands of scientists and explored many avenues of producing weapons-grade material. Nonetheless, Iraq had not produced any real weapons-grade material,

⁹ The two official UN assessments of unresolved disarmament tasks in Iraq are the so-called Amorim report, U.N. Security Council S/1999/356, March 30, 1999, *Final Report of the Panel on Disarmament and Current and Future Ongoing Monitoring and Verification Issues* and UNSCOM's report S/1999/94 (both available at [www.un.org/Depts/unmovic/index.htm]) For a comprehensive, unofficial assessment see "Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction: A Net Assessment," (UK: International Institute for Strategic Studies) September 9, 2002 and "Iraq: A Chronology of U.S. Inspections and an Assessment of Their Accomplishments," in *Arms Control Today*, October 2002, Volume 32 Number 8. For unclassified assessments by the US and UK intelligence communities, see "Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction Programs," [www.cia.gov/cia/publications/iraq_wmd/Iraq_Oct_2002.pdf] and "Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction: The Assessment of the British Government," [www.news.bbc.co.uk/nol/shared/spl/hi/middle_east/02/uk_dossier_on_iraq/pdf/iraqdossier.pdf]

although it did have a crash program to secretly divert highly enriched uranium under IAEA safeguards for a warhead, as well as a crude weapons design. Inspections also uncovered bulk biological weapons agent production capability and a rudimentary delivery capability. Much about Iraq's biological weapons program is still unknown. In contrast, Iraq's capabilities in chemical weapons and missiles were relatively well-known. Inspectors destroyed 38,500 munitions, 480,000 liters of chemical agents, and 1.8 million liters of precursor chemicals (but the fate of about 31,600 chemical munitions, 550 mustard gas bombs, 4,000 tons of chemical precursors and Iraq's capabilities in producing VX agent are still unknown). Prior to the Gulf War, Iraq had a robust missile force and production capability, most of which was destroyed in the war. About 130 Soviet-supplied Scud missiles remained after the war; inspectors accounted for all but two.¹⁰

The history of inspections in Iraq is well-known and well-documented. After the first few years, most of the breakthroughs in knowledge about Iraqi WMD programs either resulted from or benefitted from intelligence tips from governments or from information provided by defectors.¹¹ In particular, the defection of Hussein Kamel, Saddam Hussein's son-in-law, in 1995, provided an intelligence windfall about nuclear and biological weapons programs. (Kamel was subsequently lured back to Iraq and killed shortly thereafter.)

The shortcomings of the inspections between 1991 and 1998 are also well-known. Iraqi officials frequently delayed inspections, spied on inspectors (bugging hotels and offices), harassed inspectors and lied about its capabilities.¹² Major problems included interviewing scientists and engineers with Iraqi "minders" in the room, tip-offs of short-notice inspections, and exclusion from "sensitive sites." The eight presidential palaces became a lightning rod for obstruction, with Iraq complaining of violated sovereignty and accusing inspectors of spying.¹³ Former inspectors have also detailed stories of confrontation and intimidation, including shooting over the heads of inspectors, telephone threats, ransacking of hotel rooms, verbal and physical abuse, as well as Iraq's efforts to infiltrate the inspection regime with spies.¹⁴ In addition, Iraqis systematically destroyed or removed evidence to

¹⁰ See Kenneth Katzman, CRS Issue Brief IB92117, *Iraq: Weapons Threat, Compliance, Sanctions, and U.S. Policy* and Steve Bowman, *Iraqi Chemical and Biological Weapons (CBW) Capabilities*, CRS Report 98-129.

¹¹ See "Understanding the Lessons of Nuclear Inspections and Monitoring in Iraq: A Ten-Year Review," Sponsored by the Institute for Science and Security, "Uncovering the Secret Program – Initial Inspections, talk by Demetrius Perricos, Former Deputy Leader of the IAEA Action Team. [www.isis-online.org/publications/iraq/perricos.html]. See also Gary Milhollin, "The Iraqi Bomb," *New Yorker*, February 1, 1993. [www.wisconsinproject.org/pubs/articles/1993/iraqibomb.html]

¹² See October 8, 2002 briefing by DIA official John Yurechko to Pentagon reporters, at: [www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/iraq/2002/iraq-021008-dod01.htm]

¹³ Although inspectors were allowed to visit one of those sites, Iraq's control of access reportedly made the visit worthless.

¹⁴ Jonathan Tucker, "Monitoring and Verification in a Noncooperative Environment: (continued...)

mislead inspectors about the capabilities of certain facilities. Over the 7 years, however, inspectors developed their own techniques for getting around obstacles that the Iraqis placed in their way. They made better use of intelligence resources, developed tactics to mislead the Iraqis about intended destinations, and improved interviewing techniques.

Two other features of the inspections from 1991 to 1998 were political friction between UNSCOM and the IAEA, and increasing dissent among the permanent five members (P-5) of the UN Security Council. According to some observers, UNSCOM and the IAEA clashed over several issues, including sharing of information, conduct of inspections, and approach to inspections. There were also reports of friction between Rolf Ekeus, Executive Chairman of UNSCOM and Hans Blix, then-Director General of the IAEA.¹⁵ Most apparent was a difference in how aggressively inspections were conducted. Critics of UNSCOM suggest that an overly aggressive approach is ultimately ineffective because inspectors cannot force Iraq to cooperate; supporters suggest that UNSCOM inspectors were appropriately aggressive in their techniques and approach, unburdened by any past relationship with Iraq (unlike the IAEA).

On the U.N. Security Council, “sanctions fatigue,” among other things, helped weaken resolve over Iraq, which Iraq exploited. By the mid-1990s, UNSCOM Chairman Ekeus was unable to get the Security Council to agree that Iraq was in material breach of resolutions and in 1996, he compromised for the first time on the modalities of visits. In October 1997, within days of China, France and Russia abstaining on UNSCOM’s determination that Iraq was violating UNSCR 1115, which required immediate, unconditional and unrestricted access to all sites and records, Iraq demanded U.S. personnel be withdrawn from UNSCOM. Iraq’s obstruction intensified in 1998, and UNSCOM inspectors left Iraq in December 1998 on the eve of U.S. and British air strikes (which became known as Operation Desert Fox). Although their work of uncovering, destroying or rendering harmless Iraq’s WMD capabilities was far from complete, they had reached an impasse.¹⁶

A New Inspection Regime: Resolution 1441

In many respects, inspections have begun where they left off. Inspectors are trying to reestablish a baseline monitoring system to verify that nothing has changed in previously inspected facilities, which may include reinstalling cameras, seals and

¹⁴ (...continued)

Lessons from the UN Experience in Iraq,” *Nonproliferation Review*, Spring-Summer 1996, pp. 1-14.

¹⁵ Gary Milhollin, “The Iraqi Bomb,” *New Yorker*, February 1, 1993.

¹⁶ See CRS Issue Brief IB92117, *Iraq: Weapons Threat, Compliance, Sanctions, and U.S. Policy*, by Kenneth Katzman, for a concise summary of inspections. See also SIPRI’s 2000 *Yearbook on Armaments, Disarmament and International Security*, Appendix 9b, “The future of chemical and biological weapon disarmament in Iraq: from UNSCOM to UNMOVIC,” by Maria Wahlberg, Milton Leitenberg, and Jean Pascal Zanders, pp. 560-576. [www.projects.sipri.se/cbw/research/cbw-yb20009b.pdf]

other kinds of monitoring equipment. They also seek to continue to resolve outstanding issues, search for undeclared activities, and destroy equipment and confiscate documents as appropriate under U.N. Security Council resolutions. Inspectors continue to rely on the intelligence reports shared by members to aid in this process.

When the U.N. Security Council adopted UNSCR 1441, it sought to redress some of the previous problems in inspections. UNSCR 1441 reaffirms the rights and responsibilities of the inspectors and their Iraqi counterparts, but there are a few new details, discussed below. A key issue in drafting the resolution was the question of what would constitute a new material breach of Iraq's obligations, since a low threshold might make war more likely. UNSCR 1441 states that Iraq is currently in material breach of its obligations and that "false statements or omissions in the declarations and failure by Iraq at any time to comply with, and cooperate fully in the implementation of, this resolution shall constitute a further material breach."¹⁷ To some, omissions in Iraq's declaration by themselves constitute a material breach; to others, evidence of a lack of cooperation would additionally be required. In the end, however, neither UNMOVIC nor the IAEA will determine that Iraq is in material breach of its obligations; that responsibility lies with UN Security Council members. However, the inspection teams have exclusive knowledge of the extent to which Iraqis act in a cooperative or non-cooperative way, and thus have significant influence in the assessment.

Protocols for Inspections

UNSCR 1441 attempts to enhance the previous inspection regime with a reiteration of the inspections teams' rights and responsibilities. It incorporates agreements among Blix, IAEA Director General Mohamed ElBaradei, and General Amir H. Al-Saadi, an advisor on technical issues to President Saddam Hussein, established in meetings on September 30 and October 1, 2002 in Vienna, Austria. Those agreements are contained in an October 8 letter appended to the resolution. In short, these include:

- UNMOVIC and the IAEA "will be granted immediate, unconditional and unrestricted access to sites, including what was termed 'sensitive sites' in the past." Notwithstanding the 1998 memorandum of understanding on special procedures for the eight presidential sites, the letter states that these sites may be subject to the same access requirements.
- No restrictions on the size of inspection teams, on people to be interviewed, as well as where and when they are interviewed, and on communications modalities.
- Iraq must ensure that no proscribed material, equipment, records or other relevant items are destroyed except by request of UNMOVIC and/or IAEA inspectors and in their presence (as appropriate).

¹⁷ See website for full text of UNSCR 1441. [www.un.int/usa/sres-iraq.htm]

UNSCR 1441 states that the contents of the annexed letter would be binding upon Iraq and outlined further authorities for UNMOVIC and the IAEA. UNMOVIC and the IAEA have the right to:

- provision of the names of all personnel currently and formerly associated with Iraq's chemical, biological, nuclear and ballistic missile programs and the associated research, development and production facilities;
- be guarded by UN security;
- declare exclusion zones around facilities in order to "freeze" the area so that nothing is changed in or taken out of a site; and
- free import and export of any equipment, materials or documents, without search.

Timeline for Action

Resolution 1441 detailed a time-line of events, similar to earlier UN Security Council resolutions.¹⁸ Within 7 days of UNSCR 1441 adoption on November 8, 2002, Iraq had to accept the resolution (*Iraq accepted on November 13*). Within 30 days, Iraq was required to provide a full declaration of all WMD programs (*Iraq provided on December 7*). Within 45 days, inspections were to start (*inspections began on November 27*), and within 60 days, UNMOVIC and the IAEA were required to provide a progress report to UN Security Council (*provided on January 27, 2003*).

Since November 2002, both UNMOVIC Executive Chairman Blix and IAEA Director General ElBaradei have noted that verification can be a lengthy process and that it could take years to untangle information on what Iraq has done. Hans Blix has noted on several occasions that he is guided by UNSCR 1284, which created UNMOVIC in 1999. Although the Bush Administration objected to this approach and to Blix's plan to brief the Security Council in March, Blix provided the report on key disarmament tasks required by Res. 1284 to the Security Council on March 7. It is apparent that some members of the Security Council believe that inspections should continue, although no Security Council member has attached a preferred duration to those inspections.

Challenges of Inspections

Thus far, inspectors have reported that the Iraq is cooperating, with a few minor delays. In fact, Dr. Blix noted in his March 7 report that cooperation on process is better this time for UNMOVIC than it had been for UNSCOM. It is possible that under the threat of war, Iraq has assessed that cooperation on process is key to avoid initiation of war. For some, this grey area of cooperation presents a particular challenge in the disarmament process, because as long as the Iraqis are cooperative

¹⁸ UNSCR 687 gave IAEA and UNSCOM 45 days to plan inspections and 45 days to implement inspections.

and no WMD-related activities are found, there will be a presumption of compliance.¹⁹

The four-year hiatus in inspections has allowed Iraq to rebuild some facilities and possibly relocate programs without UN inspectors in the country. Many observers believe that Iraq has used the opportunity to develop new methods of concealment and obstruction, and some are concerned that Iraq may use tunneling under existing buildings to avoid excavations being detected by satellites.²⁰ As Blix noted in his March 6 working document on disarmament task:

UNMOVIC now faces the same situation in all three disciplines that UNSCOM and the IAEA faced in 1991 regarding biological and nuclear weapons issues. There are no leads, such as stocks of proscribed items, or WMD production facilities for UNMOVIC to inspect. Instead, UNMOVIC must verify the absence of any new activities or proscribed items, new or retained.²¹

Further, Blix noted in four years without inspections, Iraq potentially could have made considerable progress in biological weapons and chemical weapons. Although the chemical weapons program began in the late 1960s, Iraq was able to build most of its Al Muthanna chemical weapons plant and begin large-scale production of CW agents and munitions in just three years. With a biological weapons program that started in 1974, Iraq took just two years to build the Al Hakam BW production plant and produce more than 27,000 liters of BW agent.²²

Inspectors have continue to confront the logistics challenges of reestablishing inspection support in Baghdad and in Cyprus, and updating information databases, particularly on suppliers of WMD-related items from 1998 to the present. Helicopter support became available in mid-December²³ and U-2 and Mirage 4 reconnaissance flights began in late February. A continuing challenge is procuring the requisite expertise. According to Nikita Smidovich, former UNSCOM staffer now in charge of training for UNMOVIC: “You don’t need to be an expert in chemical or biological weapons. You just need to be able to spot deviations from the norm.”²⁴ Other former inspectors have noted that in addition to a requirement for knowledge of specific weapons, which is probably more limited in the biological weapons and chemical weapons areas than in the missile or nuclear areas (or at least more publicly

¹⁹ In one view, obstruction of inspections is a useful signal that inspectors have come close to uncovering noncompliance.

²⁰ Richard Butler, former UNSCOM executive chairman, suggested to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in its hearings in summer 2002 that Iraq might have attempted to tunnel under buildings to avoid detection from satellite imagery. Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing on Military Involvement in Iraq, July 31, 2002.

²¹ UNMOVIC Working Document, *Unresolved Disarmament Issues*, p. 11. See [www.un.org/Depts/unmovic/documents/cluster.htm]

²² Ibid.

²³ “State-of-Art Gear Displayed,” *Washington Times*, November 27, 2002.

²⁴ “To Catch a Cheat,” *Time*, November 25, 2002.

sensitive), inspectors need a good grasp of weapons production processes (particularly at dual-use sites) and a familiarity with Iraq's WMD programs. In the past, inspection teams were able to draw on weapons expertise from member countries. In the current regime, all inspectors must undergo five weeks of training, and they are required to be U.N. employees under rules adopted by the U.N. in 1999. This approach was implemented to help enhance the objectivity and professionalism of inspectors (perhaps both in reality and in appearance). Critics of these rules suggested the personnel system may not attract the best expertise, since more highly qualified personnel may be unwilling to give up their current job seniority and benefits for a short-term, non-career job at the UN as an inspector. Others have suggested that this new, less flexible arrangement may have a negative effect on intelligence sharing.²⁵ Despite U.N. rules, however, some U.S. personnel reportedly have been able to take a leave of absence from their government jobs to work temporarily for the U.N., without losing benefits.²⁶

Intelligence is as critical to this new set of inspections as it was to previous inspections. On the process of intelligence sharing, media have reported that a new arrangement has been implemented whereby information flows from member governments through a top UN official, rather than to and from individual inspectors.²⁷ Critics of this arrangement argue that it may inhibit the flow of information to UNMOVIC and the IAEA, particularly in the case of defector information, because the U.N. does not have the ability to handle debriefing or resettling defectors. In addition, no information will be allowed to flow back to national intelligence agencies, which could decrease incentives for member states' intelligence services to share information. The impetus for establishing rules for intelligence sharing came from Iraqi complaints in the 1990s that UN inspectors were gathering intelligence, in some cases, for better targeting by air-strikes.²⁸ Some of these claims were substantiated. In practice, the U.N. established an Information Assessment Unit (IAU) several years ago in New York, which, according to one former inspector, became the locus of expertise and information on Iraq's WMD programs.²⁹ The U.S. intelligence community in the 1990s worked on establishing protocols for sharing sensitive information with international organizations, since it was such a vital component of the inspection regime and a relatively new phenomenon.

On the substance of intelligence sharing, UNMOVIC and the IAEA complained early on that the United States had not provided "actionable information" to inspections in Iraq.³⁰ On January 9, 2003, Secretary Powell stated that the United

²⁵ "UN Restricts Inspectors' Use of Intelligence Reports," *USA Today*, November 27, 2002. See also "We're Not Spies, Says Inspection Chief," *Guardian*, November 11, 2002.

²⁶ Interview with State Department official.

²⁷ Gordon Corera, "Playing the Iraqi Inspection Game," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, November 2002, pp. 42-45

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Tucker, "Monitoring and Verification in a Noncooperative Environment," p. 5.

³⁰ In late December 2002, the U.S. provided satellite intelligence about chemical and
(continued...)

States began sharing significant intelligence information on Iraqi weapons programs a few days before. Powell also said that the United States was withholding sensitive information.³¹ Blix, in his February 14 report to the UN Security Council noted that US intelligence had provided some assistance that was valuable, particularly in the discovery of uranium enrichment documents in a private home on January 16, 2003, but led nowhere in other cases. In testimony to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence on February 11, 2003, Central Intelligence Director George Tenet said that “we have given the UN inspectors and UNMOVIC every site that we have that is of high or moderate value, where there is proven intelligence to lead to a potential outcome.”³² In his March 7 briefing to the UN Security Council, Hans Blix noted that he would rather have “twice the amount of high quality information about sites to inspect than twice the number of expert inspectors to send.”³³

A technical challenge for inspectors will be in “proving the negative” – that there are no remaining WMD programs. Although the inspectorates are charged with verifying Iraq’s declarations, their “seal of approval” is often interpreted as affirming the absence of WMD programs. No one expects that inspections can provide 100% confidence, and this is perhaps the reason for the insistence by many that only a regime change can provide assurance that Iraq will give up its WMD programs. Executive Chairman Hans Blix noted earlier this year that inspectors are now more likely to find “smoke, rather than a smoking gun.” Blix suggested, in describing Iraq’s December 7 declaration, that “the absence of evidence means, of course, that one cannot have confidence that there do not remain weapons of mass destruction.”³⁴ Environmental (soil, water, air samples) and material samples that yield evidence of chemical, biological, or nuclear activity may be difficult to date (although this may be less true of radioactivity signatures, which can be dated more easily.)

Another challenge presented by inspections is mainly political – that is, what is the threshold for determining non-compliance? Anthony Cordesman raised a question in hearings before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations about whether the United States would be willing to go to war immediately if it found evidence of a violation on missile testing or the existence of a biological facility.³⁵ By raising the stakes of noncompliance to the conduct of war against Iraq, the perception of some may be that the level of required evidence should be higher. At

³⁰ (...continued)

biological weapons. See “U.S. Is To Release Spy Data on Iraq to Aid Inspections,” *New York Times*, December 21, 2002. See also “U.N. Nuclear Agency Gains a Bigger Profile, and Bigger Problems,” *New York Times*, January 6, 2003.

³¹ “US Is Sharing Iraq Data with Blix,” *Washington Post*, January 9, 2003.

³² George Tenet, Hearing on “Threats to U.S. Security” before the Senate Select Intelligence Committee, February 11, 2003.

³³ “Oral Introduction of the Twelfth Quarterly Report of UNMOVIC,” available at [www.un.org/app/news/printinfocusnews.asp?nid=414]

³⁴ “Powell Says Iraq Raises Risk of War By Lying On Arms,” *New York Times*, December 20, 2002, p 1.

³⁵ Discussion, July 31, 2002, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Hearings on Military Involvement in Iraq.

one end of the spectrum is zero tolerance of noncompliance; at the other end of the spectrum is caution about sufficient evidence to go to war.³⁶

Opportunities of Inspections

A 4-year hiatus is a lengthy period of time if inspectors aim to reestablish continuity. But in the context of what inspectors faced in 1991, the task may be smaller. In 1991, with virtually no baseline data, inspectors were challenged with documenting programs that had been in existence for close to 30 years. Operation Desert Storm destroyed some facilities, but inspectors destroyed a lot more subsequently.³⁷ Operation Desert Fox destroyed even more. In addition, it is possible that the scope of some programs may have been scaled back in the last 4 years; rather than spreading resources among many biological toxins or chemical weapons or uranium enrichment processes, Saddam Hussein might have focused on a select few. Of course, this could make the task of discovery more difficult since there would be a narrower range of signatures.

Inspections, in contrast to military strikes, provide opportunities to interview scientists involved with the weapons programs. However, the interview process thus far has had mixed results. In general, the IAEA has had more success in conducting private interviews than UNMOVIC, but even then, some interviews were conducted with tape recorders in the room. UNMOVIC so far has requested interviews with 38 individuals but interviewed just five privately in February and nine thus far in March. The IAEA conducted more than 9 private interviews in February, mostly with scientists connected to the gas centrifuge uranium enrichment program.

In addition to conducting interviews in private, UNSCR 1441 allows interviews to be conducted outside Iraq. Iraq agreed by the end of December to let weapons scientists leave the country (as a personal decision) and provided a list of 500 experts to UNMOVIC and the IAEA.³⁸ However, no one yet has been asked to leave the country. Blix reported in his March 7 briefing that interviews outside Iraq might provide assurances of the absence of undue pressures and that he planned to request such interviews soon. Some observers believe that only interviews conducted outside of Iraq will be effective because of the threat of retaliation by the Iraqi government.³⁹ Others go further, suggesting that Saddam Hussein's record of inflicting torture and abuse (including the murder of Hussein Kamel after he defected and then returned to Iraq) means that interviews without promises of asylum do not hold hopes of full disclosure.

³⁶ In remarks on November 13, 2002, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan cautioned the United States that military action would have to be based on credible evidence of Iraq's obstruction, and not "flimsy excuses" to go to war. See "Annan Presses Bush to Avoid A Rush to War," *New York Times*, November 13, 2002.

³⁷ See [www.un.org/Depts/unscom/Achievements/achievements.html] .

³⁸ "US Sees Showdown over Iraqi Scientists," *Washington Post*, December 13, 2002; "Iraq Gives UN a List of 500 Weapons Experts," *New York Times*, December 29, 2002.

³⁹ See Stephen F. Hayes, "Negotiations, Pentagon Style," *Weekly Standard*, November 25, 2002, and James Kitfield, "Disclosure, Defectors Key to Inspections," *National Journal*, November 16, 2002.

Hans Blix has suggested that the U.N. is not in the business of enticing defectors. In addition to practical considerations (for example, lack of experience in assisting defectors), it is not clear that the inspection teams have anything to offer scientists that would outweigh the coercive power of the Iraqi government over its citizens. Charles Duelfer, former deputy executive chairman of UNSCOM, has suggested that the UN should offer “sanctuary or safe haven to those who find it a condition for speaking the truth.”⁴⁰ He has further suggested that “if UNSCOM had 100 green cards to distribute during inspections, it could have quickly accounted for the weapons programs.” Over the long run, however, inspections indirectly could provide incentives for defections if it appears that inspection teams are on the verge of big discoveries. For example, some have suggested that Hussein Kamel’s defection, which provided a treasure trove of information, was prompted by the growing perception that U.N. inspectors were getting closer to the truth about Iraq’s biological weapons program.⁴¹

With or without defectors, inspectors have new tools to use. Since the last round of inspections, some equipment has been readied for field implementation (i.e., made portable), such as ground-penetrating radar (to detect hidden or underground equipment or facilities) and ultra-sensitive gamma ray detectors (to detect radioactive materials through shielding).⁴² ElBaradei noted in his February 14th report that inspectors had used ground-penetrating radar. Rapid detection techniques for biological agents, such as the Ruggedized Advanced Pathogen Identification Device, or RAPID, were not available 10 years ago, nor were detectors for specialized metal alloys, like ALEX (alloy expert), or toxic industrial materials detectors (TIMs). Inspectors are also using enhanced chemical agent monitors (ECAMS) and handheld advanced nucleic acid analyzers (HANAA).⁴³ The availability of satellite imagery in digital format as well as digital photography should facilitate real-time analysis, since it can be sent back to offices to be analyzed immediately.⁴⁴

In actual operations, the cooperation between UNMOVIC and the IAEA now appears closer than it was between UNSCOM and the IAEA from 1991 to 1998, primarily because of the appointment of Hans Blix as the executive chairman of UNMOVIC. A former inspector has noted that the “bureaucratic turf battles between

⁴⁰ Charles Duelfer, “The Inevitable Failure of Inspections in Iraq,” *Arms Control Today*, September 2002.

⁴¹ According to Jonathan Tucker, discrepancies in amounts of growth media procured by Iraq provided strong circumstantial evidence for a biological weapons program. “The new revelations also put senior Iraqi officials in the increasingly untenable position of being caught telling outright lies, generating tensions within the regime that may have contributed to the defection in August 1995 of Lt. Gen. Hussein Kamel al-Majid, the mastermind behind Baghdad’s WMD programs.” See “Monitoring and Verification in a Noncooperative Environment: Lessons from the UN Experience in Iraq,” p. 11.

⁴² Romesh Ratnesar and Andrew Purvis, “To Catch a Cheat,” *Time*, November 25, 2002. See also IAEA web site [www.iaea.org/worldatom/press/news/2002/22-11-22170.html].

⁴³ S/2003/232, Twelfth Quarterly Report of UNMOVIC, February 28, 2003, p. 5.

⁴⁴ “Iraq Set to Open Sites Previously Off-Limits,” *Washington Post*, November 27, 2002.

the two agencies ...made their collaboration tense, and, at times, openly hostile.”⁴⁵ The overlap in personnel between the two organizations (for example, Demetrius Perricos, now director of planning and operations for UNMOVIC, performed a similar role for the IAEA in the 1990s) could help minimize conflicting inspection styles and maximize information sharing. To some observers, particularly those who feel that Blix was ineffectual as director-general of the IAEA and who criticized what they saw as a complaisant approach toward Iraq from 1991 to 1998, however, greater synergy between the two teams could be viewed as a negative development.⁴⁶

Finally, inspections may offer an opportunity to gain insight into the connection, if any, between Iraq’s WMD programs and support for terrorism. The process of combing through documents and interviewing scientists and engineers could provide a fuller picture of Iraq’s clandestine procurement system, thereby contributing to the world’s knowledge base of potential connections for terrorists who want to acquire or develop WMD. On the other hand, some have argued that although military strikes might destroy information about capabilities, the capabilities themselves must be destroyed before they fall into the hands of terrorists.

In the final analysis, the success of inspections is likely to rest more on the political determination of the United States and its allies in eliminating Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction, rather than in modalities of inspections and technical equipment. A Carnegie Endowment study on coercive inspections found three factors of success for UNSCOM inspections in the first 5 years: the credible threat of force from U.S. Desert Storm forces in the region, unity among the permanent five members of the U.N. Security Council, and Saddam Hussein’s belief that he could successfully hide what he had. In the current environment, the credible threat of force has been reconstituted, and UNSCR 1441 demonstrates unity for the first time since 1995 that Iraq was in material breach of its disarmament obligations.⁴⁷ However, the Council is currently strongly divided on the latest phase of its oversight of the inspections.

⁴⁵ See Jonathan Tucker, “Monitoring and Verification in a Noncooperative Environment: Lessons from the UN Experience in Iraq,” p.12.

⁴⁶ Criticism of the IAEA, and by extension, of Hans Blix, dates back to the IAEA’s failure to detect the nuclear weapons program in Iraq, particularly when some activities took place at sites where IAEA inspections were conducted. Some observers believe that IAEA and Blix are far too diplomatic to be effective in Iraq. See, for example, Gary Milhollin’s 1993 *New Yorker* article previously cited, which criticizes Blix and ElBaradei, as well as Maurizio Zifferero (now deceased) as head of the Action Team. Current critics have stressed that Blix was clearly not the first choice to head UNMOVIC. See “Hans Blix’s Third Try,” *Wall Street Journal*, November 22, 2002; “Nix Blix,” *Washington Times*, November 27, 2002; “Hans the Timid,” *Wall Street Journal*, November 26, 2002; and Chris Suellentrop, “Hans Blix: Incompetent Bureaucrat or Cowardly Diplomat,” at slate.msn.com, November 26, 2002, for arguments opposing Blix. See also “Can Blix nix Iraq’s tricks?” *Guardian*, November 8, 2002; “Chief Inspector’s Style: Be Thorough, But Fair,” *USA Today*, November 15, 2002; and “Daunting Task Awaits UN Arms Chief,” *Boston Globe*, November 18, 2002, for more balanced assessments.

⁴⁷ For a comprehensive discussion of political divisiveness over Iraq on the Security Council see SIPRI’s 2000 *Yearbook on Armaments, Disarmament and International Security*, Appendix 9b, pp. 560-576. [www.projects.sipri.se/cbw/research/cbw-yb20009b.pdf]

Milestones in the Inspection Process

UNSCR 1441 did not specify the length of the inspection process or create specific phases of inspection, in contrast to the UNSCR 687 and 715, which distinguished between inspections to destroy WMD-related capabilities and the ongoing monitoring inspections.⁴⁸ Some milestones are evident in the 15 weeks of inspections thus far.

Evaluating Iraq's December 7 Declaration

Chairman Blix and Director-General ElBaradei reported preliminarily to the UN Security Council on December 19, 2002 about Iraq's December 7 declaration. There was a strong consensus that Iraq had omitted significant information about its weapons programs. In particular, Iraq failed to clear up the outstanding issues that have existed from 1998 and which were detailed in UNSCOM document S/1999/94 and the so-called Amorim Report S/1999/356.⁴⁹ Those issues, in Blix's words, "do not contend that weapons of mass destruction remain in Iraq, but nor do they exclude that possibility. They point to lack of evidence and inconsistencies, which raise question marks, which must be straightened out, if weapons dossiers are to be closed and confidence to arise."⁵⁰ These include documentation of nuclear weapons design and external assistance, the destruction of growth media for biological agents, information about VX weaponization and stockpiles, accounting for special warheads for missiles and for missile propellant production. As of January 27, 2003, UNMOVIC was still preparing lists of "unresolved disarmament issues" and "key remaining disarmament tasks" in accordance with UNSCR 1284.

The U.S. State Department issued a fact sheet on December 19, 2002 giving illustrative examples of omissions in the declaration. These included:

- no verifiable account of growth media for biological agents
- no reasonable explanation for manufacturing rocket fuels for missiles beyond its current limited capabilities
- no account of efforts to procure uranium from Niger
- no information about VX production
- no account of chemical and biological weapons destruction
- no account of empty munitions that could be filled with chemical agents
- no explanation of a connection between unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) programs and biological agent dispersal.⁵¹

⁴⁸ The IAEA began ongoing monitoring in 1994, while UNSCOM continued with two-track inspections, both destruction-related and ongoing monitoring.

⁴⁹ See [www.un.org/Depts/unmovic/index.htm] for the documents.

⁵⁰ See [www.un.org/Depts/unmovic/recent%20items.html] for text of Blix's January 27 report to the UN Security Council.

⁵¹ See [www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2002/16118pf.htm]

This fact sheet went beyond the unresolved issues of 1998 to include the range of Iraq's missiles (Al-Samoud-2 and the Al Fatah), alleged reports of uranium procurement, and the ability of UAVs to disperse biological agents. These three issues were among those detailed in the CIA October 2002 document, *Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction Programs* and the UK's *Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction: The Assessment of the British Government*, both of which presumably draw on intelligence sources.

January 27 Report to UN Security Council⁵²

On January 27, 2003, Hans Blix and Mohamed ElBaradei reported to the UN Security Council on the progress of their inspections. Although both gave ample examples of Iraqi cooperation and non-cooperation, media generally interpreted the reports as presenting evidence of Iraqi noncompliance. Inspections in the interim had uncovered 12 empty chemical munition shells and over 2000 pages of documents on uranium enrichment using lasers in the home of a scientist. In his report, Blix distinguished between cooperation on process and on substance. On the first, Blix said that Iraq has cooperated "rather well," but then detailed areas in which cooperation on substance was lacking. He suggested specifically that Iraq needed to cooperate in finding items and activities (e.g., 122mm chemical warheads), in finding documents, particularly those in private homes, in providing names of personnel and in ensuring that interviews are credible. Director General ElBaradei reported that inspections since November 2002 have identified no prohibited nuclear activities but urged states to continue to provide intelligence information. ElBaradei specifically suggested that the inspection process "should be allowed to run its natural course" and that credible assurances could be provided within the next few months. The White House spokesman said that the "report...clearly shows Iraq is not complying."

February 5 Powell Briefing to UN Security Council⁵³

Secretary of State Powell addressed the UN Security Council on February 5 with a briefing on Iraq's attempts to evade disarmament. The briefing included audiotapes of Iraqi military officers discussing hiding modified vehicles from inspectors and orders to eliminate talk of "nerve agents" in wireless communications. Secretary Powell shared anecdotes of documents in cars driven by Iraqi intelligence officers, removing hard drives from computers, and sanitizing all of the presidential palaces of traces of WMD, derived from human intelligence sources. Secretary Powell also showed satellite photos of bulldozed chemical weapons sites and the removal of telltale vehicles and equipment from chemical weapons bunkers at the Taji facility before the December 22, 2002 inspections. In addition, Secretary Powell cited 4 human intelligence sources about the existence of about 18 mobile biological weapons laboratories. Powell noted that it would be virtually impossible to find these mobile labs without Iraqi cooperation. In the nuclear area, Secretary Powell

⁵² See [www.iaea.org/worldatom/Press/Focus/IaeaIraq/unscreport_290103.html] for ElBaradei's report and [www.un.org/Depts/unmovic/Bx27.htm] for Blix's report.

⁵³ See [www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/02/20030205-1.html] for text of Powell's presentation.

reported on Iraqi attempts to procure magnets and high speed balancing machines from companies in Romania, India, Russia and Slovenia to support assertions that Iraq is pursuing a centrifuge uranium enrichment program. With respect to missiles, Secretary Powell reported that Iraq had continued to import SA-2 rocket engines as late as December 2002 but did not provide further evidence. Finally, Secretary Powell showed a satellite photograph depicting a racetrack-shaped flight path of an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) that was tested for a distance of 500km without refueling. Iraq's December 7th declaration claimed that its UAVs had ranges of just 80kms.

Secretary Powell's briefing highlighted the significant role intelligence can play in determining Iraqi compliance. While most observers agree that the presentation did not include a "smoking gun," the information points to Iraqi practices to evade detection. Since February 5th, there has been considerable debate on whether the intelligence provided constitutes evidence of noncompliance. Although Blix's report on February 14th noted that "intelligence information has been useful for UNMOVIC," he also stated that we must recognize possible limitations and misinterpretations. Blix took issue with the satellite photos of the chemical sites, suggesting that the fact that the images were taken several weeks apart meant that the movement of munitions could "just as easily have been a routine activity as a movement of proscribed munitions in anticipation of imminent inspection."⁵⁴ Blix also noted that in some cases, intelligence information led to discovery of documents, whereas in other cases, intelligence led to sites with no proscribed items.

February 14 Report to UN Security Council⁵⁵

Leading up to the February 14th report, there was some movement on outstanding inspection issues. In meetings with Blix and ElBaradei in Baghdad on February 8 and 9, 2003, Iraqi officials handed over documents on anthrax, VX, and missile programs, although Blix and ElBaradei subsequently reported that there was no new information in them. On February 6, an Iraqi biologist agreed to be interviewed privately. Of five requests to meet with non-nuclear scientists, however, only three have agreed to private interviews. Blix characterized Iraq as beginning to adopt a "more serious attitude" of cooperation, but would not call these developments a breakthrough. On February 10, Iraq notified the UN that it would permit overflights of American U-2, French Mirage, and Russian Antonov aircraft. President Bush has downplayed the significance of these developments, stating that Iraq is stalling for time and that U-2 flights would not be necessary if Iraq were complying. From the perspective of inspectors, however, imagery from U-2 flights help mission planning and fills in gaps from noncontinuous satellite monitoring. Thus, U-2 and other aircraft overflights could help detect Iraqi evasion efforts. U-2 overflights were conducted routinely under the previous inspection regime from 1991 to 1998.

⁵⁴ See [www.un.org/Depts/unmovic/blix14Febasdel.htm] for Blix report.

⁵⁵ See [www.un.org/Depts/unmovic/blix14Febasdel.htm] for Blix report and [www.iaea.org/worldatom/Press/Statements/2003/ebsp2003n005.shtml] for ElBaradei report

In his February 14 report, Blix reiterated many of his conclusions of January 27 about Iraqi cooperation, both good and bad. Of most importance, Blix stated that the group of missile experts he had convened had concluded that the Al-Samoud-2 missile range exceeded 150km and that the missiles should be destroyed. For the same reason, the 380 SA-2 engines should also be destroyed. The missile test stand that US and UK officials maintained was proscribed was not necessarily connected to proscribed activities and thus could remain. Blix did not touch on issues of chemical or biological weapons except to say that experts were not hopeful that Iraq could technically verify the destruction of anthrax or two VX precursors. Blix reported positively on Iraq's presidential decree outlawing importation and production of biological, chemical and nuclear weapons and on the establishment of a second commission to search for WMD-related documents.

ElBaradei's report to the UN Security Council repeated his January 27 conclusions that IAEA inspectors had found no evidence of ongoing prohibited nuclear or nuclear-related activities in Iraq. He stressed the expanding capabilities of the inspection team and the ability of inspectors "to assess the presence or absence of a nuclear weapons program in a state even without the full cooperation of the inspected state."⁵⁶ ElBaradei covered the specific issues raised by Secretary Powell's briefing, including Iraq's purchases of uranium, aluminum tubes reportedly for centrifuge enrichment of uranium, magnets and magnet production facilities. In all cases, ElBaradei said the IAEA was reviewing additional information and has asked Iraq specifically for more information on the high tolerances of the aluminum. In addition, the IAEA is exploring the disappearance of 32 tons of HMX, an explosive material with technical characteristics well-suited for nuclear weapons, which had been under seal until 1998.

March 7 Report to UN Security Council

In advance of the March 7 briefing, Chairman Blix provided UNMOVIC's twelfth quarterly report (S/2003/232) to the Security Council.⁵⁷ The report highlighted several examples of Iraq's cooperation on process, including: helicopter and surveillance overflights; the two Iraqi commissions created to help UNMOVIC find documents and proscribed items; provision of lists of personnel to interview; and procedures to determine the disposition of anthrax and VX agent. On substance, the document noted that there was little new information in the December 7 declaration, that Iraqis helped find the R-400 bombs, that Al-Samoud-2 missiles were being destroyed, and that WMD-related activities had been prohibited by presidential decree. Nonetheless, Blix noted that "Iraq could have made greater efforts to find any remaining proscribed items or provide credible evidence showing the absence of such items. The results in terms of disarmament have been very limited so far."

In his March 7 briefing to the Security Council, Blix's remarks focused on the process of investigation, noting that where documentary evidence is not available, it

⁵⁶ See [www.iaea.org/worldatom/Press/Statements/2003/ebsp2003n005.shtml] for ElBaradei February 14 report.

⁵⁷ See [www.un.org/Depts/unmovic/documents/2003-232.pdf] for text of the Twelfth Quarterly report of UNMOVIC, S/2003/232.

may be possible to obtain evidence through interviews. He noted that “there has been an acceleration of initiatives from the Iraqi side since the end of January,” adding that it is not yet clear how effective they would be in resolving outstanding issues. Blix concluded that those initiatives did not constitute immediate cooperation, nor did they cover all relevant areas, but that even with a “proactive Iraqi attitude,” verification of disarmament would take months.

IAEA Director General ElBaradei’s March 7 report was notable for his refutations of some of the allegations of clandestine nuclear activities by Iraq. ElBaradei reported that documents on the alleged procurement of uranium from Niger were deemed fraudulent. While continuing its scrutiny of the high-strength aluminum tubes, which the United States and UK believe were intended for use in uranium enrichment, the IAEA concluded that the tubes were not likely to have been related to centrifuge manufacture and that it was highly unlikely that Iraq could have redesigned the tubes for such purposes. Likewise, the IAEA concluded that Iraq’s attempts to procure magnets and magnet production capabilities were not related to a clandestine enrichment program, although Iraq is “likely” to possess the expertise to manufacture such magnets on its own. Therefore, the IAEA will continue to monitor and inspect such equipment. In addition, ElBaradei began his briefing by reporting an overall deterioration in industrial capacity, which he suggested would affect Iraq’s capability to resume a nuclear weapons program, while not explicitly stating it would have a negative impact.

“Clusters Document” & Key Disarmament Tasks

In the same week, Hans Blix provided Security Council members with a draft document dated March 6, 2003, *Unresolved Disarmament Issues: Iraq’s Proscribed Weapons Programs*.⁵⁸ Under UN Security Council Resolution 1284, which established UNMOVIC in 1999, UNMOVIC must identify key remaining disarmament tasks, which Blix has done in this 173-page document. This report builds on the 1999 documents prepared by the UN on key disarmament tasks and adds new data. Media reports subsequently have focused on two items in this document that were not highlighted in Blix’s March 7 briefing: the discovery of undeclared remotely piloted vehicles (RPVs or drones) and cluster bombs that could be used with chemical or biological agents.⁵⁹ Although Blix mentioned on March 7 that UNMOVIC was investigating RPVs, these undeclared drones were first detected in inspections at Samarra Airfield on February 17. The relevant issue is whether these RPVs are associated with chemical or biological weapons, which is not yet clear.⁶⁰ With respect to the cluster bombs, the clusters document reports that in February 2003 (February 2 and 5), inspection teams found a component of a 122mm

⁵⁸ Available at [www.un.org/Depts/unmovic/documents/cluster.htm]

⁵⁹ “Blix Left Out Data from U.N. Testimony,” *Washington Times*, March 11, 2003.

⁶⁰ UNSC Resolution 687 did not prohibit unmanned aerial vehicles; it prohibited ballistic missiles with a range exceeding 150km. Likewise, the plans for ongoing monitoring and verification do not specify unmanned aerial vehicles (S22871/Rev1 of 2 October 1991). However, delivery vehicles associated with WMD would be captured under the provisions of UNSC 707 that call for full, final, and complete disclosure by Iraq of “all aspects of its programs to develop weapons of mass destruction.”

CBW cluster submunition at Al Nouman. When questioned during the visit, Iraqi officials denied any knowledge of a connection between the cluster bombs and the CBW program, although there is earlier evidence of Iraqi interest in developing cluster munitions with CBW agents.

U.S. Assistance to Inspections

UNSCR 1441, paragraph 10, requests all member states to “fully support inspections, including by providing any information related to prohibited programmes or other aspects of their mandates, including on Iraqi attempts since 1998 to acquire prohibited items, and by recommending sites to be inspected, persons to be interviewed, conditions of such interviews, and data to be collected.” In the past, the United States provided significant assistance to inspection in Iraq, from the provision of equipment, personnel, training, analysis, and funds, to providing U-2 overflight imagery. Unlike in the past, however, the U.N. now has more funds from its Oil for Food Program and is contracting out many services that in the past may have been provided by the United States. At present, the United States is providing equipment and training, intelligence, and U-2 overflights. The FY03 authorization for Defense Department spending contains \$15 million for assistance to inspections, but the real cost of assistance is likely to be higher. In addition to logistical support, the United States provides limited assistance in providing U.S. inspectors. According to UNMOVIC, half the U.N. inspectors are recommended by governments and the other half apply independently. UNMOVIC’s staff, at the end of February 2003, totaled 202 personnel from 60 countries, including 84 inspectors.⁶¹ Early on, about 27 U.S. inspectors were on board. By comparison, Britain provides 13 inspectors, France 25 and Russia, 22.⁶² The U.S. State Department has not released details on the extent of U.S. support to inspections.

Congressional Role⁶³

The most significant action of the 107th Congress with respect to Iraq was the authorization for the use of force against Iraq, which President Bush signed into law (P.L. 107-243) on October 16, 2002.⁶⁴ Under this law, the President must determine whether the use of force is necessary and appropriate to: (1) defend the national security of the United States against the continuing threat posed by Iraq; and (2) enforce all relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions. While there are other UN Security Council resolutions with which Iraq has not complied, clearly the

⁶¹ S/2003/232, Twelfth Quarterly Report of UNMOVIC.

⁶² “We’re Not Spies, Says Inspection Chief,” *Guardian*, November 11, 2002; “Team of ‘Detectives’ Begins Hunt for Weapons,” *USA Today*, November 27, 2002.

⁶³ For a full history of legislation related to Iraq, see CRS Report RS21324 by Jeremy Sharp, *Congressional Action on Iraq 1990-2002: A Compilation of Legislation*.

⁶⁴ CRS Report RL31596, *Iraq: Authorization of Use of U.S. Armed Forces Against - Side-By-Side Comparison of Public Law 107-243 and Selected Legislative Proposals*, by Dianne Rennack.

most important of those relate to Iraq's WMD programs.⁶⁵ The law requires that President Bush report to the Speaker of the House and the President pro tempore of the Senate, within 48 hours of the exercise of his authority to use force, that U.S. reliance on further diplomatic and other peaceful means is not adequate to protect the national security of the United States against the continuing threat posed by Iraq, or is not likely to lead to enforcement of U.N. resolutions.

The 108th Congress has already taken up issues related to Iraq as the public debate heats up. In the Senate, there are two resolutions related to inspections and the authorization of war. Senator Byrd introduced S.Res 28, which expresses the sense of the Senate that inspections should be given sufficient time for a thorough assessment of Iraq's compliance and that the United States should seek an additional UN resolution authorizing force against Iraq. S.Res 28 was referred to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations on January 29, 2003. Senator Kennedy introduced S.Res 32, which expresses the sense of the Senate that the United States should fully support the work of UN weapons inspectors and obtain approval by Congress of new legislation authorizing the use of all necessary means, including military force, to disarm Iraq. S.Res 32 was also referred to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations on January 29, 2003.

In the House, Rep. Alcee Hastings introduced H. Res. 55, which has provisions similar to S.Res. 28 for more time for inspections and a second UN resolution. Rep. Sheila Jackson-Lee introduced H.Con.Res. 2 on January 7, 2003, which expresses the sense of Congress that the P.L. 107-243 should be repealed, and Rep. DeFazio introduced H.J.Res 20 which also calls for the repeal of the authorization for the use of force. H.Res 20 has 30 cosponsors; H.Con.Res. 2 has 11 cosponsors. All these resolutions have been referred to the House International Relations Committee.

Of particular interest to the inspections is the introduction by Senator Biden of S. 205, the "Iraqi Scientists Immigration Act of 2003" on January 23, 2003, which is being prepared for the Senate floor. This bill would provide up to 500 visas for workers in WMD programs and their families that are willing to and capable of providing information to the United States or the UN. In the 107th Congress, Senator Biden introduced S. 3079, the "Iraqi Scientists Immigration Act of 2002," on October 8, 2002, which passed the Senate unanimously with an amendment and was referred to the House Committee on the Judiciary on November 22, 2002. The bill would have authorized immigrant visas for Iraqi WMD scientists, thereby providing some assurances for defectors that they would be provided refuge if they left Iraq.

⁶⁵ At least two other draft resolutions (Biden-Lugar and Levin) sought to narrow the language to focus specifically on WMD violations. In a white paper available on the White House web page, entitled "A Decade of Deception and Defiance," the Bush Administration has listed all the resolutions with which Iraq is in non-compliance. Reportedly a background paper for President Bush's September 12th speech to the UN General Assembly, it states that Saddam Hussein has repeatedly violated 16 UN Security Council Resolutions.