

Iraq

What Next?

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“The deadline we have before us right now is on the 27th of January...and we will see what the inspectors have found or not found and what Dr. Blix and Dr. ElBaradei think with respect to the presence or absence, or ‘we don’t know yet,’ of weapons of mass destruction. At that point, we will have to make some judgments as to what to do next. What’s the next step? But it is not necessarily a D-day for decision-making.”

**Secretary of State Colin Powell
Washington Post, January 9, 2003**

American televisions are filled with war rooms, countdowns, deadlines, and showdowns with Iraq. The almost minute by minute coverage distorts public understanding of how inspections work and creates a false sense of the inevitability of war. No decision has in fact been made. Within the administration some indeed intend the buildup as the prelude to war while for others it presents the credible threat of war that is necessary to compel Iraq’s disarmament through inspections.

Where does President Bush stand? Some believe that he long ago made up his mind; like some of his advisors, he has decided war is inevitable. Even if he has not decided, others say, he has gone too far to “back down” now. The military mobilization, like that which led to World War I, has acquired an irreversible momentum that compels the president to follow the movement of men and metal into conflict. Still others point out that disarmament achieved without a war would be an enormous—and enormously popular—achievement. Brent Scowcroft in November 2002 called the president’s strategy a “triumph” and a “remarkable exercise in diplomacy” that had “opened up a possibility for peaceful resolution of the crisis over Iraq that few would have thought conceivable only three months ago.”¹

Early in October 2002, the administration explicitly shifted its preferred outcome from regime change through war to disarmament through inspections. The policy shift was signaled at several levels, including by then Senate minority leader Trent Lott² and by Secretary of State Colin Powell.³ In Cincinnati, Ohio, on October 7, President Bush said that war was neither imminent nor unavoidable as long as Saddam agreed to disarm. The president has repeatedly called war a “last resort” to be used if all else fails. On December 31 in Crawford, Texas, he snapped at a

reporter who said the country was headed to war with Iraq. “I don’t know why you say that...I hope we’re not headed to war in Iraq. I’m the person who gets to decide, not you.”⁴

One senior U.S. official told the *Washington Post* recently, “The odds have gone down for war. We don’t have a good war plan; the inspectors have unprecedented access to Iraq; we have just started giving them intelligence; we have to give them more time to see how this works. There is no reason to stop the process until it can’t proceed any further.”⁵ Late in January 2003, while official rhetoric heated up, the stated U.S. policy remained unchanged.

There are powerful reasons why the president would ensure that he has exhausted all peaceful means of resolving the issue before committing hundreds of thousands of young Americans to a war that may entail high civilian casualties and great risks to U.S. political, economic, and security interests. The most dangerous, though least mentioned of these is the high likelihood that a war would be a potent recruiting tool for terrorist groups. Former CIA chief of counterterrorism operations, Vincent Cannistraro, says, “A war in Iraq would serve as a recruiting ground for Al Qaeda. In fact, some Al Qaeda people believe that a U.S. war—unilaterally, particularly, but even if it were multilateral under the political cover of the UN—would be desirable for Al Qaeda.”⁶ The U.S. homeland is not prepared to meet this threat.

It is still too early to assess whether the inspections are working well enough to disarm Saddam, or, for that matter, how much there is to disarm. On January 27, 2003, the Iraq Nuclear Verification Office of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) will report on their first 60 days of inspections. Prime Minister Tony Blair, the foreign leader most supportive of the U.S. effort, told his cabinet ministers in early January that UN inspectors must be given “time to do their job.”⁷ The prime minister’s official spokesman said it was important that the 27th of January be seen as “a staging post” and not a deadline.⁸ Other key allies seem to agree. France said on January 20 that it would not support any Security Council resolution for military action against Iraq in the coming weeks.

So what can factually be said about the inspection process to date? What more needs to be known before its success or failure can be judged, and against what measure should that judgment be made? What are realistic timeframes for those decisions? How should we understand and evaluate the claims, counterclaims and interpretations that will follow the reports on January 27?

WHAT ARE THE INSPECTORS LOOKING FOR?

There have been thousands of references to Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, but what exactly are the inspectors searching for? What does the United States think Iraq may be hiding? Many expected the United States, the United Kingdom, or other nations to come forth with specific and detailed information after Iraq released its 12,000-page declaration on December 7, 2002. They did not. Several officials told the media that actually there was no hard evidence of specific weapons. "It would be better if the inspectors go out and come back with a coon skin or two to tack on the wall," said one.⁹ "There's no single smoking gun, but a lot of pieces that add up to a smoking gun," offered another senior official.¹⁰

So what, specifically, is being looked for?

Most, if not all, of the allegations cited by U.S. official statements are based on the reports from UN weapons inspections conducted from 1991 to 1998 by the United Nations Special Commission on Iraq (UNSCOM) and the IAEA Iraq Action Team. The most comprehensive, unclassified analyses of U.S. concerns are found in the October 2002 report from the Central Intelligence Agency and the U.S. Department of State Fact Sheet of December 19, 2002. The British concerns, which U.S. officials often reference, are outlined in "Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction: The Assessment of the British Government," issued in September 2002. The following summary is drawn from all three of these sources and others. In brief, there are unanswered questions in six major areas.

Iraq's missile capabilities

The following are areas of concern:

- ◆ Discrepancies in Baghdad's declarations suggest that Iraq retains several Scud-variant short-range ballistic missiles.¹¹
- ◆ Iraqi facilities may have expanded since 1998 for the purpose of developing longer-range missiles than are permitted by the United Nations. Specifically, the United States is concerned about a production plant for ammonium perchlorate (an ingredient in rocket fuel); research, development, testing, and evaluation facilities in Iraq that now maintain larger test stands; propellant mixing buildings; and other renovation and expansion conducive to the production of long-range missiles.¹²
- ◆ The United States is also concerned about Iraq's attempt to acquire sensitive ballistic missile guidance components.¹³
- ◆ Iraq "disclosed manufacturing new energetic fuels suited only to a class of missile to which it does not admit."¹⁴

In his recent presentations to the Security Council, UNMOVIC Executive Chairman Hans Blix reported that Iraq, in fact, declared to UNSCOM that its missiles exceeded the mandated 150-kilometer range by a maximum of 33 kilometers in 13 flight tests. He indicated that Iraq's decision to go forward with this project "will now need to be considered" by UNMOVIC.¹⁵ He also reported that Iraq had declared the import of missile engines and raw materials for the production of solid missile fuel, even though this import violates the relevant resolutions. UN inspections have also confirmed the presence of relatively large numbers of missile engines some imported as late as 2002. "We have yet to determine the significance of these illegal imports," Blix said.¹⁶

Iraq's nuclear weapons capabilities

The United States judges that Iraq is several years away from developing a nuclear weapon unless it is able to acquire the weapons-grade material it currently lacks, in which case it could produce such a weapon within a year.¹⁷

The following are areas of concern:

- ◆ Iraq "may have acquired uranium enrichment capabilities that could shorten substantially the amount of time necessary to make a nuclear weapon," but the October 2002 report offered no evidence to support this possibility.¹⁸
- ◆ Iraq may have undertaken efforts to procure uranium from Niger.¹⁹
- ◆ A number of Iraqi purchases (including vacuum pumps, a magnet production line, anhydrous hydrogen fluoride and fluorine gas, a filament winding machine, and a balancing machine) point to the development of a centrifuge enrichment program.²⁰
- ◆ The United States has underscored Iraq's "efforts to procure tens of thousands of proscribed high-strength aluminum tubes" possibly for use in a centrifuge enrichment program.²¹

In a press conference on January 9, 2003, IAEA Director General ElBaradei reported on his investigations so far into this last and highly publicized concern: "We told the Council that we have been investigating Iraqi reports that they have imported aluminum tubes for rockets and not for centrifuges, not for uranium enrichment. We are investigating their efforts to procure aluminum tubes. We are in touch with some of their intended suppliers, and the question is still open, but we believe, at this stage, that these aluminum tubes were intended for the manufacturing of rockets."²²

Iraq's biological weapons capabilities

The following are areas of concern:

- ◆ “All key aspects of Iraq’s offensive biological weapons program are active.”²³
- ◆ The United States is also concerned about the possible existence of biological weapons agents, particularly *Bacillus anthracis* (anthrax).²⁴
- ◆ Civilian facilities may be employed for the production of biological agents. According to British intelligence, “facilities of concern” include a castor oil production plant, the al-Dawrah Foot and Mouth Disease Vaccine Institute, and other vaccination plants.²⁵
- ◆ Iraq may have established large-scale mobile production units and laboratories for the production of biological weapons agents.²⁶
- ◆ The Iraqi military has “command, control, and logistical arrangements in place” to deploy both biological and chemical weapons “within 45 minutes of a decision to do so.”²⁷

In his recent reports to the Security Council, Hans Blix outlines identical concerns to those of the United States, with regard to Iraq’s claimed unilateral destruction of biological agents and its declarations concerning the material balance of bacterial growth media.²⁸ According to the December 2002 State Department Fact Sheet, UNSCOM “concluded that Iraq did not verifiably account for 400 biological weapon-capable aerial bombs and, at a minimum, 2,160 kg of growth media...enough to produce 26,000 liters of anthrax – three times the amount Iraq declared; 1,200 liters of botulinum toxin, and 5,500 liters of clostridium perfringens – 16 times the amount Iraq declared.”²⁹ In particular, UNMOVIC intends to press Iraq further on its production and destruction of anthrax.³⁰

Iraq's chemical weapons capabilities

The following are areas of concern:

- ◆ Iraq probably has stocked several hundred tons of chemical warfare agents and several thousand tons of precursor chemicals.³¹ According to the British Joint Intelligence Committee, “These stocks would enable Iraq to produce significant quantities of mustard gas within weeks and of nerve agent within months.”³²
- ◆ Iraq has renewed production of chemical warfare agents, “probably including mustard, sarin, cyclosarin, and VX.”³³
- ◆ Civilian chemical facilities could be employed for the production of chemical agents.³⁴
- ◆ Baghdad has renovated and expanded dual-use facilities, particularly plants that produce chlorine and phenol (both have legitimate civilian uses but are also precursor chemicals for blister and nerve agents).³⁵

- ◆ According to British intelligence, Baghdad has also renovated a plant that produces phosgene (possible precursor for nerve agent).³⁶
- ◆ The United States is also concerned about agents and munitions that Iraq claimed to destroy under UNSCOM's watch, but whose destruction could not be verified. In particular, 15,000 artillery rockets capable of delivering nerve agents and 550 artillery shells filled with mustard agents have not been accounted for.³⁷ In December 2002, the State Department, based on UNSCOM reports, noted that a total of 30,000 empty munitions that could be filled with chemical agents remain unaccounted for.³⁸

According to Blix's reports to the Security Council, "In the chemical weapons field, Iraq has further explained its account of the material balance of precursors for chemical warfare agents. Although it [the declaration] does not resolve outstanding issues on this subject, it may help to achieve a better understanding of the fate of the precursors."³⁹

The UN inspectors are also concerned with the production and weaponization of VX nerve agent. Blix reported that Iraq has declared the installation of equipment for the aforementioned chlorine production facilities. UNMOVIC recently inspected the plant and its equipment and is considering "the fate of this equipment, as well as other equipment, which was presumed destroyed."⁴⁰ Finally, UNMOVIC is also addressing the 15,000 artillery rockets and 550 artillery shells, two concerns highlighted in UNSCOM's report S/1999/94 to the Security Council in 1999.⁴¹

The discovery in January 2003 of 15 such rockets, unfilled, holds some small promise of resolving this key issue. After meeting with UN officials in Baghdad on January 19 and 20, Iraq pledged to conduct a "comprehensive search" for all 122mm rocket warheads (with a range of 15-20 km) designed to hold chemical agents.⁴² The results of this search will be a significant indicator of Iraqi cooperation. Hans Blix noted that a complete accounting of the old weapons "may require some time."⁴³

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles

The following is an area of concern:

- ◆ Iraq has undertaken efforts to convert various aircraft into UAVs capable of delivering chemical and biological warfare agents via spraying or drop-tanks. According to the October 2002 report, UAVs could "threaten Iraq's neighbors, U.S. forces in the Persian Gulf, and the United States if brought close to, or into, the U.S. Homeland."⁴⁴

Procurement

The following are areas of concern:

- ◆ Iraq utilizes earnings from illicit oil sales to improve its weapons of mass destruction capabilities. Iraq imports a substantial quantity of goods without the inspection of UN monitors.
- ◆ Within the Oil-for-Food Program, Iraq both acquires dual-use items and improves existing industrial machinery that could be used to develop weapons of mass destruction.⁴⁵

Since its creation in 1999, UNMOVIC has screened some Iraqi commercial contracts. This process has identified over a hundred contracts involving dual-use items of concern it will investigate. UNMOVIC also “requested that suppliers provide technical information on hundreds of other goods because of concerns about potential misuses of dual-use equipment.”⁴⁶

Procurement remains one of the most critical issues. Despite Iraq’s best efforts to produce all key components and ingredients indigenously, “today Iraqi engineers and scientists certainly still depend on foreign expertise, imported critical components, spare parts and materials, especially in the nuclear, missile, and chemical fields, and to a lesser extent in the biological field,” says former senior UNSCOM inspector Fouad El-Khatib.⁴⁷ He notes that UNSCOM discovered that between 1993 and 1998, Iraq covertly negotiated transactions with more than 500 companies from more than 40 countries around the globe.⁴⁸ It will take time and persistence to unravel this complex web.

WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED TO DATE?

1. Is the United States sharing intelligence with UNMOVIC as called for by the Security Council resolution?

Sharing did not begin until January and has been only partial. The pace may now be accelerating.

The United States did not begin to share intelligence with UNMOVIC until less than four weeks before the January 27, 2003 report deadline. It wasn’t until the first week of January that Blix’s team received a package of information about “a number of sites in a variety of areas.”⁴⁹

However, Secretary of State Powell also noted that Washington was holding back on some of its most sensitive intelligence, waiting to see if inspectors “are able to handle it and exploit it ...” He added, “It is not a

matter of opening up every door that we have.”⁵⁰ The secretary explained that “the means by which we get this information is so sensitive, and if it is not handled properly or exploited in the right way, we will lose that channel.”⁵¹

At first, when questioned about Secretary Powell’s statement that the United States had started sharing “significant” information, the IAEA Director General, ElBaradei, responded, “Not yet. We hope soon to get actionable information.”⁵² Despite American promises, the kind of intelligence that the UN inspectors are looking for has been slow in coming, even prompting one UN official to say, “There are people who wonder whether there is targeted or concrete information available.”⁵³

On January 10, 2003, the IAEA’s ElBaradei called again for more “actionable” intelligence. He explained that the inspectors “need specific information on where to go and where to inspect.” He told the *Washington Post* that the IAEA has established a good process with the intelligence agencies in the United States and other countries and he hoped that the coming weeks would bring “additional information that can accelerate our job in the field.”⁵⁴ The State Department responded to ElBaradei’s comments: “They’re getting the best we’ve got, and we are sharing information with the inspectors that they can use and based on their ability to use it.”⁵⁵

According to the *Washington Post*, the National Security Council is continuing to debate the issue of disclosing the most sensitive intelligence the United States has on Iraq’s biological and chemical weapons. The *Post* reported that the United States is currently reviewing this data and weighing the possibility of presenting it in the Security Council if inspections fail to discover a “smoking gun.” One reason the Pentagon wants to withhold some of this intelligence is because these sites would be among the first targets in any U.S. military attack.⁵⁶ Another reason for U.S. reluctance is that the UN teams don’t yet have overhead surveillance. According to one source, the CIA wants overhead monitoring of the sites before, during, and after surprise UN visits of suspect sites in Iraq “to see nothing goes in or out.” “They [the CIA] don’t have that many shots in their locker,” said the source, referring to the suspect-sites list. “They want to ensure the UN makes effective use of what they do know.”⁵⁷ (See also question 5.)

After a meeting in Moscow, ElBaradei said, “We have started to receive the specific actionable material.” He further indicated that inspectors will be working with this material. The IAEA chief said this did not mean that he had specific proof of weapons of mass destruction. He did suggest that the material dealt with sites the inspectors should be visiting.⁵⁸

2. What about intelligence from other countries?

Little information is available.

France, Britain, and Germany have all provided intelligence. Israeli intelligence was crucial to UNSCOM, but little is known about their current information sharing with UNMOVIC.

3. Has the information provided been acted upon?

Yes, but with a delay.

Aerial and satellite imagery analysis provided by the United States, France and Britain seems to be helping inspectors. Some images have shown new infrastructure in sites that were already known. For example, the British dossier features new buildings in the previously known Al Rafah test facility. Inspectors acted on this new information on the first day of the UNMOVIC inspections. There have also been a few cases of new sites identified by the photo interpreters, and inspectors have acted on this information as well. One such site, Al Fatah, was listed by Iraq in its new declaration and was visited in the first few days of the resumed inspections.

The imagery provided is reviewed only by UNMOVIC executive director, Hans Blix, and his top intelligence assistant, James Corcoran. Field inspectors in Iraq then receive orders without knowing the imagery's origins.⁵⁹

Other intelligence provided includes communications intelligence (or COMINT) of voice and data communications that have been intercepted and analyzed. This kind of data is more problematic to act on because it is often not determinative. For example, data related to procurement may not provide precise or definite information on imports, and may not point to specific hidden or unknown sites. Thus it could take an inspector months of intrusive inspections, gathering additional data in Iraq, before being able to act decisively on such intelligence. There are facilities that UNSCOM did not visit, such as breweries, which UNMOVIC has visited in the last few weeks. These visits may have been in response to COMINT received.

4. What percentage of the 700 sites of concern identified by UNSCOM has UNMOVIC visited?

Fewer than half.

Prior to January 8, 2003, UNMOVIC had conducted 150 inspections of 127 sites.⁶⁰ In addition, the IAEA had conducted 109 inspections at 88 sites.⁶¹ Since then, the pace of inspections has accelerated. It is likely that in this short period many of these initial visits have been superficial. Full inspections of all these sites are needed to establish the foundation on which UNMOVIC is to build.

It should be noted, however, that while a solid baseline is the starting point, Iraq has likely moved most prohibited activity to new sites since UNSCOM departed in 1998. In December 2002, Hans Blix said, “The sites to be inspected in the future are not only those which have been declared by Iraq or inspected in the past, but also any new sites which may become known through procurement information, interviews, defectors, open sources, intelligence or overhead imagery. New techniques and increasing resources are available for this effort.”⁶²

5. Have inspectors started using advanced or high-tech equipment to aid their efforts?

They have only just begun.

It appears that the inspectors are just beginning to use advanced equipment to aid their efforts. Hans Blix noted in December 2002, “Advanced technology will play its role *once procurement is finalized*. Not only monitoring equipment such as cameras and sensors will be used, but also surveillance over-flights from various platforms, including fixed-wing aircraft, drones, and helicopters [emphasis added].”⁶³

Helicopters are essential to no-notice inspections, and will be used routinely in both the fly and the “no-fly” zones. However, the first helicopter flight in support of inspections did not take place until January 5, 2003. Eight helicopters are now in Baghdad. UNMOVIC is also planning to commence high-altitude surveillance over Iraq in the near future, according to Blix.⁶⁴

Former UNSCOM chairman Rolf Ekeus has emphasized the critical importance of U-2 imagery in his efforts. Because of their high-resolution cameras, “sweep cameras” and large quantity of imagery, “U-2 operations became a uniquely effective tool of inspection,” he writes.⁶⁵ The U.S. Department of Defense approved the use of U-2 planes in early December

2002, but these flights have yet to begin. Some of the delay appears to be from Iraqi demands that its planes be allowed to tail the U-2s, even into the no-fly zones. Similar demands to follow helicopter flights were resolved by an agreement between UNMOVIC and Iraq on January 20, 2003. The delay in the immediate commencement of high-altitude surveillance is a major weakness in UNMOVIC's performance to-date.

According to press reports, the U.S. has also offered Blix the use of Predator surveillance drones—a type of unmanned aerial vehicle, or UAV. Blix, however, wishes for the Europeans to provide the UAVs to avoid the appearance of bias. These, however, are not considered as effective as the Predator at collecting overhead surveillance.⁶⁶ Use of unmanned aerial surveillance has yet to begin.

6. Have the inspectors had enough time to draw useful conclusions in their January 27 report to the Security Council?

No.

The inspectors began arriving in Iraq on November 18, 2002. They did not use their first helicopter until January 5, 2003. As of this writing, these teams are not yet up to full strength. They are less than halfway through reinspecting the more than 700 sites that UNSCOM identified and they have barely begun to examine new sites. Work on foreign procurement is in its earliest stages.

IAEA head Mohamed ElBaradei emphasized at his January 9, 2003 briefing for the Security Council that this was just the beginning of the inspection process. He said that the January 27 report “is an update report, it is not a final report. It's a work in progress ... we'll continue our work afterward and we still have a lot of work to do.”⁶⁷

7. How long would it take to complete the inspections?

Roughly another year.

No one can say precisely how long the full process of discovery will take. For a very long time, those with the most detailed knowledge of the inspection process have estimated that the process would require between one and two years. Ambassador Ekeus, former head of UNSCOM, indicated in November 2002 that “it took us four years to discover a major biological program. Now we've had four years of [Iraqi] activity. Maybe it will take two years” to uncover the Iraqi program's development since 1998.⁶⁸

In September 2002, IAEA spokeswoman Melissa Fleming said, “We say a year ... to allow for adequate time” to determine whether the nuclear program certified by the IAEA as having been completely destroyed has been restarted by the Iraqis since the departure of the inspectors in 1998.⁶⁹ UNMOVIC officials agreed, “We could report within a year, though some think that is far too long ... But if you want an effective system, you can’t be too hasty.”⁷⁰

On January 13, 2003, IAEA spokesman Mark Gwozdecky told *CNN*, “Dr. Blix and Dr. ElBaradei made it very clear as late as last spring that this is an operation that could take in the vicinity of a year.”⁷¹

In September 2002, Secretary Powell discussed a “six-month deadline for finding and dismantling any Iraqi weaponry” but, according to the *Los Angeles Times*, the administration would have entertained a one-year timeline for inspections.⁷²

These time estimates are for the discovery process only. Dismantlement of what is found would begin during this time but could extend beyond it, destroying chemical and biological weapons safely can be a very slow process. Successful inspections also presume an intrusive, open-ended monitoring and verification process that would continue for at least as long as Saddam Hussein remains in power and, given Iraq’s political instability, probably well beyond.

8. Does Iraq pose a threat while inspections are under way?

Not under current conditions.

Saddam is in an iron box. With tens of thousands of troops around Iraq, an international coalition united in support of the inspection process, and now hundreds of inspectors in the country able to go anywhere at any time, Saddam is unable to engage in any large-scale development or production of chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons. It would be exceedingly difficult to import significant quantities of proscribed materials or to manufacture longer-range missiles or missile components. Thus, while there may be legitimate concerns about the ability of the inspection regime to discover hidden caches of weapons, there should be no doubt about its ability to prevent militarily significant industrial production.

Even if inspections fail to provide evidence supporting Iraqi claims that no weapons of mass destruction remain in the country, the inspections will serve a vital monitoring and verification purpose. Hans Blix notes,

“Inspections of sites have, as one important objective, the verification of industrial, military, research, and other current activities with a view to assuring that no proscribed programs or activities are regenerated at any site in Iraq. This side of the inspection system can be characterized as a form of containment. Through the other side of the system of reinforced monitoring, there is a continuation of investigations to complete the requirement of disarmament.”⁷³

9. What then is forcing the pace? How long can the process be allowed to last?

The demands of a war force the pace. Otherwise, inspections could continue for as long as necessary.

The short deadlines in Security Council Resolution 1441 have been the source of much confusion. Technically, the deadlines can only have been intended to preclude an Iraqi delay strategy and get inspections off to a quick start, not to define their end. However, the United States likely also wanted, at the very least, to preserve its ability to launch a war this winter. Hot weather in Iraq begins in March, making activity in chemical and biological weapon protective gear progressively more difficult and, at some point, precluding war except under the most exigent conditions. Thus it is the war’s timeline that would drive a conclusion to inspections this early in the process.

For inspections to continue unimpeded for another year or more, two conditions are necessary: a continuing threat of the imminent use of force and preserving the unity of the major powers. If the latter is lost, Saddam Hussein will return to his proven strategies of divide and conquer in the Security Council. Maintaining the solid front against him will depend in part on U.S. policies and in part on intervening events, and is by no means assured.

The large U.S. troop deployment can continue for as long as necessary, but at a human, military, and financial cost. Lengthy deployments, especially of reserve units, impose a severe strain on the men and women involved, and on their families, children, and marriages. While units can be rotated, those in the field suffer an inevitable decline in readiness due to lack of opportunity for training. Finally, the deployment is expensive, with some estimates at \$1 billion per week to keep 150,000 troops in the Gulf.⁷⁴ However, the human and financial costs are vastly higher for a war. Many servicemen and women might go home more quickly after a short war this spring, but others will lose their lives. And perhaps 50,000 or more would have to remain in Iraq after a war for anywhere from 18 months to more than a decade. The Congressional Research Service reports that direct war

costs would range from \$40 billion to \$200 billion,⁷⁵ with tens of billions of dollars per year needed for the occupying force.

10. Has there been any Iraqi obstruction of inspections?

No.

To date, there has been no obstruction. Blix has clearly stated, “The prompt access/open doors policy that has been pursued so far by Iraq vis-a-vis the inspectors is an indispensable element of transparency in a process that aims at securing disarmament by peaceful means.”⁷⁶

Given that Iraq pursued all kinds of obstruction during UNSCOM inspections, insisted on negotiating every element of access (who should be allowed on inspection teams, delays in visas, when teams might arrive), routinely obstructed inspectors in the field (blocking them from facilities, keeping them penned up in their vehicles, removing material by one door while inspectors waited at another), and insisted that numerous sites be declared off limits (including huge so-called presidential palaces, military bases, etc.), the record to date in this respect should not be underestimated. With the possible exception of U-2 flights (see question 5), UNMOVIC, backed by U.S. force and international political unity, has imposed conditions, not negotiated them. Nothing in Iraq is off-limits and inspectors have met no hindrance to their activities.

11. Has Iraq cooperated with inspections?

No.

Blix noted, “Prompt access is by no means sufficient to give confidence that nothing is hidden in a large country with an earlier record of avoiding disclosures. Iraq is very familiar with the fact that only declarations supported by evidence will give confidence about the elimination of weapons. In this respect we have not so far made progress.”⁷⁷

Iraq must convince the United Nations that it has indeed destroyed all the weapons that it claimed to destroy. A complete accounting of its past activities and actions is well within the ability of the Iraqi bureaucracy, and there is no excuse for not providing such an explanation.

This accounting is a minimal standard of active cooperation, which inspectors have called for and Iraq has not provided.⁷⁸ Iraq’s failure in its formal declaration and elsewhere to “bring forward evidence, documents, and interviews” that would answer lingering questions, as both

UNMOVIC and the IAEA have requested, should bar a determination that Iraq has earned relief from Security Council sanctions or coercive enforcement measures. The January 20 promise by Iraqi officials that they will now permit Iraqi scientists to be interviewed in private by UN inspectors is a small sign of progress in this regard.⁷⁹

12. What is the significance of a ‘smoking gun’?

None—it depends on what you are trying to achieve.

Because UN Resolution 1441 requires Iraq to cooperate, one can argue that finding banned weapons or activities that Iraq failed to declare constitutes a material breach and therefore a reason to halt inspections and turn to war. Yet, of course, *the very purpose* of inspections is to find Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction, so one could equally see such discoveries as solid evidence that inspections are succeeding and should continue. The so-called ‘smoking gun’ is therefore a red herring. If inspections are for the purpose of disarmament, a smoking gun is evidence of progress. If the intent is to remove the current government of Iraq, a smoking gun is a hoped-for reason to gather international support for stopping inspections and turning to war.

13. What constitutes success or failure?

This is the nub.

Failure would be an Iraq with weapons of mass destruction in the possession of a hostile regime, and the United States and/or the Security Council discredited and powerless to reverse this situation. Success as defined by the Security Council and accepted by the broader international community would be an Iraq verifiably free of weapons of mass destruction. Notwithstanding the heinous nature of the Iraqi regime, Security Council Resolution 1441 clearly states its aim in paragraph 2 as “bringing to full and verified completion the disarmament process.” The resolution does not address the regime’s removal.

Success could come about as the result of voluntary Iraqi action that is verified to UNMOVIC’s satisfaction, or as the result of hidden Iraqi weapons being discovered and thereafter destroyed by UNMOVIC. Both of these outcomes are envisioned under Security Council Resolution 1441. There would be no need for the elaborate rights and resources accorded to UNMOVIC if complete Iraqi cooperation—in effect, voluntary surrender of its WMD and related programs—could be realistically expected.

A third possibility would be an Iraq disarmed as the result of a U.S.-led invasion and post-war process of occupation, inspections, and disarmament. Though this variant has not yet been endorsed by the international community, depending on the degree to which others judge the reasons for launching a war to be compelling, it might be obtained. If the United States were to begin a war without such an endorsement, the costs and risks of both the war and its aftermath would escalate steeply. Even if carried out through a coalition, a war would be seen in the region as an American war and would almost certainly bring many new recruits to the ranks of anti-American terrorists. Though the military outcome would be a victory, it could come at an enormous near- and long-term cost.

Realistic variants of failure include an inspection process that yields no clear outcome—either that Iraq has been verifiably disarmed, or that it possesses weapons of mass destruction. Some permanent members of the UN Security Council would likely conclude from this nebulous denouement that military pressure on Iraq should be scaled back and sanctions should be relieved. The United States would strongly disagree on both counts.

Another variant of failure would be regime change in Iraq (by coup or outside hands), withdrawal of international disarmament inspectors, and a subsequent decision by the new Iraqi government to retain or acquire some WMD capability as a deterrent against another such attack or against other threats in a dangerous neighborhood.

One could argue further that it would be a failure if a military action prompted an otherwise contained Saddam Hussein to unleash chemical or biological weapons against Israel and/or U.S. forces, prompting Israel and/or the United States to use nuclear weapons in response. Beyond the humanitarian consequences, and even assuming the defeat of Saddam and disarmament of Iraq, this use of nuclear weapons against a Muslim people would cause lasting political and moral upset in the international system. The United States (and Israel) would find it exceedingly difficult to manage the ensuing backlash.

IN CONCLUSION

Initially, the aim of U.S. policy was to prevent an imminent threat of attack by Iraq against the U.S. and allied forces, territory, and friends. That goal has, for now, been achieved. Saddam Hussein is effectively incarcerated and under watch by a force that could respond immediately and devastatingly to any aggression. Inside Iraq, the inspection teams

preclude any significant advance in WMD capabilities. The status quo is safe for the American people.

If, as President Bush has stated and the UN Security Council has determined, the current aim is to achieve and verify Iraq's compliance with its obligations to disarm itself of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons and long-range missiles, then the intended process has not yet been completed. Indeed, it has barely begun. Inspections have neither failed nor succeeded, and much more time is required to reach either outcome. This is not due to delay by Iraq or to a less than all-out effort by the inspection teams. The tight deadlines in Resolution 1441 were meant to jumpstart a process, not to define its extent.

The crucial issue before the United States at this moment then is on what grounds it would terminate inspections in midcourse in favor of an immediate invasion. Iraq's failure to produce a complete declaration does constitute a material breach of Resolution 1441. The question, however, is whether it constitutes a wise, compelling, and necessary *casus belli*. We believe that it does not. Only if the administration's true aim is to remove the current government of Iraq as a matter of principle would a turn to war *at this moment* make sense. If that is the case, of course the inspection and disarmament process now underway is irrelevant.

Given the immense costs and risks of war, all of which rise sharply without broad international support, inspections should continue until they are obstructed (which should trigger their immediate end, followed by invasion) or succeed. This requires the United States, and the international community as a whole, to keep intense pressure on Iraq. U.S. forces will have to—and can—continue their deployment until Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction and missile capabilities have been verifiably disarmed. There is an economic and human cost to this deployment that is a tiny fraction of the costs in both dimensions that would be incurred by a war.

The burden must not rest solely on the United States. The onus is on each of the permanent members of the Security Council, in particular, to extend its full commitment behind the intent of Resolution 1441 to disarm Iraq either through inspections or by force.

A final word concerns politics—and patience. If Iraq is disarmed without a war, it will be, and be rightly seen as, a tremendous victory for President Bush. There can be no doubt that the current highly intrusive inspection regime could not have been achieved without his clear willingness to use the full extent of American power. He will deserve full credit.

NOTES

¹ Brent Scowcroft, *Washington Post*, November 21, 2002.

² After meeting with Republican leaders on October 1, 2002, noted, “If inspectors go in and get these weapons and they’re destroyed and we get cooperation, that would be ... ideal.” Trent Lott, October 1, 2002.

³ Secretary of State Colin Powell told *USA Today*’s editorial board, “The issue is disarmament. If you can get the inspectors back in, that can make sure under a tightened, tough regime, with consequences for failure to perform, you can disarm this society...Then in effect you have a different kind of regime no matter who’s in Baghdad.” (Barbara Slavin, *USA Today*, October 3, 2002.) President Bush repeated this formulation in his October 7 speech in Cincinnati, Ohio: “By taking these steps, and only by taking these steps, the Iraqi regime has an opportunity to avoid conflict. These steps would also change the nature of the Iraqi regime itself. America hopes the regime will make that choice.”

⁴ Mike Allen, *Washington Post*, January 1, 2003.

⁵ Michael Dobbs, *Washington Post*, January 11, 2003.

⁶ Vincent Cannistraro, “Iraq and the War on Terrorism,” *Diane Rehm Show*, National Public Radio, October 9, 2002. Cannistraro added, “After the USS Cole, for example, two years ago was bombed, apparently there was a large influx in recruits for Al Qaeda, particularly from Saudi Arabia. So, given the perilous situation in the Middle East and the deeply held belief of a number of Islamic fundamentalists that the U.S. is a patron of Israel—in allowing Israel to continue with its occupation of the West Bank and Gaza—these will serve as recruiting points for Al Qaeda. And it serves the larger purpose which is to mobilize the Muslim world in a grand alliance against the West.”

Recently, Germany’s Foreign Minister Joschka Fisher also noted : “We have no illusions about the brutal nature of Saddam Hussein’s regime. We are greatly concerned that a military strike against the regime in Baghdad would involve considerable and unpredictable risks for the global fight on terrorism.” (Barry Schweid, *Associated Press*, January 20, 2003).

⁷ *BBC News World*, January 9, 2003.

⁸ *BBC News World*, January 9, 2003.

⁹ Carla Anne Robbins and Greg Jaffe, *Wall Street Journal*, December 9, 2002.

¹⁰ Robbins and Jaffe, *Wall Street Journal*, December 9, 2002.

¹¹ British intelligence sources believe that Iraq has retained up to 20 al-Hussein missiles from before the Gulf War. British Government, *Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction: The Assessment of the British Government*, September 2002, p. 27 (hereafter referred to as British dossier).

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- ¹² Central Intelligence Agency, *Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction*, October 2002, pp.19-22, (Hereafter referred to as the *CIA Iraq Report*). Available at: www.cia.gov/cia/publications/iraq_wmd/Iraq_Oct_2002.pdf.
- British intelligence sources believe that Iraq has begun to develop missiles with a range of over 1,000 kms. British dossier, p. 27.
- ¹³ *CIA Iraq Report*, October 2002, p. 22.
- ¹⁴ U.S. Department of State, *Illustrative Examples of Omissions From the Iraqi Declaration to the United Nations Security Council*, December 19, 2002, Fact Sheet, Office of the Spokesman, Washington D.C., (hereafter referred to as *State Department Fact Sheet*). Available at: www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2002/16118.htm.
- ¹⁵ Hans Blix, Executive Chairman of UNMOVIC, Notes for briefing the Security Council regarding inspections in Iraq and a preliminary assessment of Iraq's declaration under paragraph 3 of resolution 1441 (2002), December 19, 2002, (hereafter referred to as *Briefing Notes to Security Council 2002*). Available at: www.un.org/Depts/unmovic/recent%20items.html.
- ¹⁶ Hans Blix, Executive Chairman of UNMOVIC, Notes for briefing the Security Council (hereafter referred to as *Briefing Notes to Security Council 2003*), January 9, 2003. Available at: www.un.org/Depts/unmovic/recent%20items.html
- ¹⁷ *CIA Iraq Report*, October 2002, p. 6.
- ¹⁸ *CIA Iraq Report*, October 2002, p. 6.
- ¹⁹ *State Department Fact Sheet*, December 19, 2002.
- ²⁰ British dossier, p. 26.
- ²¹ *CIA Iraq Report*, October 2002, p. 5.
- ²² Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of IAEA, "Press Encounter with Hans Blix, Executive Chairman of UNMOVIC and Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of IAEA," January 9, 2003, (hereafter referred to as *Press Encounter 2003*). Available at: www.un.org/Depts/unmovic/recent%20items.html.
- ²³ *CIA Iraq Report*, October 2002, p. 2.
- ²⁴ *CIA Iraq Report*, October 2002, p. 15.
- ²⁵ British dossier, p. 22.
- ²⁶ *CIA Iraq Report*, October 2002, p. 17.
- ²⁷ British dossier, p. 17.
- ²⁸ Blix, *Briefing Notes to Security Council 2002*, December 19, 2002.
- ²⁹ *State Department Fact Sheet*, December 19, 2002.
- ³⁰ Blix, *Briefing Notes to Security Council 2002*, December 19, 2002.
- ³¹ British dossier, p. 16.
- ³² British dossier, p. 18.
- ³³ *CIA Iraq Report*, October 2002, p. 2.
- ³⁴ *CIA Iraq Report*, p. 8.
- ³⁵ *CIA Iraq Report*, p. 10.
- ³⁶ British dossier, p. 20.
- ³⁷ *CIA Iraq Report*, October 2002, p. 10.

³⁸ *State Department Fact Sheet*, December 19, 2002.

UNSCOM had reported that of the 29,662 munitions declared by Iraq, its inspectors accepted the Iraqi claim that they had destroyed 13,660 of the munitions, both filled and unfilled, although it could not make a full numerical accounting of these munitions due to the destruction method used by Iraq (demolition).

³⁹ Blix, *Briefing Notes to Security Council 2002*, December 19, 2002.

⁴⁰ Blix, *Briefing Notes to Security Council 2002*, December 19, 2002.

⁴¹ Blix, *Briefing Notes to Security Council 2002*, December 19, 2002.

⁴² *Associated Press*, “Baghdad to Encourage Scientists to Speak,” January 20, 2003.

⁴³ *Associated Press*, “Baghdad to Encourage Scientists to Speak,” January 20, 2003.

⁴⁴ *CIA Iraq Report*, October 2002, p. 2.

⁴⁵ *CIA Iraq Report*, October 2002, p. 25.

⁴⁶ *CIA Iraq Report*, October 2002, p. 25.

⁴⁷ Fouad El-Khatib, *Iraq: A New Approach*, p. 52.

⁴⁸ Fouad El-Khatib, *Iraq: A New Approach*, p. 50.

⁴⁹ Mark Matthews, *Baltimore Sun*, January 9, 2003.

⁵⁰ Karen DeYoung and Walter Pincus, *Washington Post*, January 9, 2003.

⁵¹ Karen DeYoung and Walter Pincus, *Washington Post*, January 9, 2003.

⁵² Marge Michaels, *Time*, January 20, 2003.

⁵³ Mark Matthews, *Baltimore Sun*, January 9, 2003.

⁵⁴ Walter Pincus and Karen DeYoung, *Washington Post*, January 11, 2003.

⁵⁵ Nicholas Kraley, *Washington Times*, January 11, 2003.

⁵⁶ Walter Pincus and Karen DeYoung, *Washington Post*, January 11, 2003.

⁵⁷ John Barry, *Newsweek*, January 20, 2003.

⁵⁸ *CNN*, “Russian Role for Iraq, North Korea,” January 16, 2003.

⁵⁹ Walter Pincus and Karen DeYoung, *Washington Post*, January 11, 2003.

⁶⁰ Blix, *Briefing Notes to Security Council 2003*, January 9, 2003.

⁶¹ ElBaradei, Statement of IAEA Director General, January 9, 2003.

⁶² Blix, *Briefing Notes to Security Council 2002*, 19 December 2002.

⁶³ Blix, *Briefing Notes to Security Council 2002*, 19 December 2002.

⁶⁴ Blix, *Briefing Notes to Security Council 2003*, January 9, 2003.

⁶⁵ Ekeus, “Intelligence Support for Weapons Inspectors in Iraq,” *Iraq: A New Approach*, p. 10.

⁶⁶ John Barry, *Newsweek*, January 20, 2003.

⁶⁷ ElBaradei, *Press Encounter 2003*, January 9, 2003.

⁶⁸ David Anthony Denny, *Washington File*, November 13, 2002.

⁶⁹ Karen DeYoung and Walter Pincus, *Washington Post*, September 18, 2002.

⁷⁰ Karen DeYoung and Walter Pincus, *Washington Post*, September 18, 2002.

⁷¹ *CNN*, “IAEA: Year for Iraq Inspections,” January 13, 2003.

⁷² Edwin Chen and Robin Wright, Los Angeles Times, September 14, 2002.

⁷³ Blix, *Briefing Notes to Security Council 2002*, 19 December 2002.

⁷⁴ Estimate by Loren B. Thompson, “The Cost of War,” *Morning Edition*, National Public Radio, January 21, 2003.

⁷⁵ Estimate by Loren B. Thompson, “The Cost of War,” *Morning Edition*, National Public Radio, January 21, 2003.

⁷⁶ Blix, *Briefing Notes to Security Council 2003*, January 9, 2003.

⁷⁷ Blix, *Briefing Notes to Security Council 2003*, January 9, 2003.

⁷⁸ Ian Fisher, *New York Times*, January 21, 2003.

⁷⁹ Ian Fisher, *New York Times*, January 21, 2003

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