



Intelligence, verification and Iraq's WMD

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Iraq's programmes to acquire weapons of mass destruction (WMD) have raised significant questions about arms control and intelligence since the 1980s. This chapter seeks to interpret the Iraq experience with regard to the relationship between the verification of compliance with international arms control and disarmament agreements on WMD and the assessment of intelligence about WMD programmes and capabilities. The two activities—verification and intelligence—are not, of course, totally separate and independent. If not essential, interaction between the two is highly desirable despite the potential problems inherent in the relationship. It is therefore sensible to seek out lessons which might have more general relevance to the problem of the proliferation of WMD.

Intelligence and weapons of mass destruction

WMD are deemed to possess exceptional properties which pose a threat to security of a different order to that posed by conventional weapons. National security is the main reason why all governments that can afford to do so invest in gathering and analysing secret intelligence on the existing and possible future capabilities of foreign nations to produce WMD and their intentions with regard to their use.

Generally, to produce intelligence assessments secret material is collected and combined with more readily available open source data to provide a pool of information for analysis. The purpose of the assessments is to inform policy that is designed to reduce the potential threat from WMD. In the United Kingdom, assessments are provided for a wide range of customers—foreign and defence policymakers, arms controllers, export controllers, military strategists, military

commanders, civil defence planners and those responsible for the procurement of civil and military protection.

The verification of a particular nation's compliance with its obligations under international agreements is only one aspect of one element in a layered approach to defending against WMD. The overlapping elements are: to prevent or minimize possession; where this fails, to deter use; and, in the event of use, to reduce the effectiveness of the weapons.

From the intelligence perspective the overall requirement is to know as much as possible about all aspects of the WMD programmes of countries of concern. A country may be of concern if it is likely to pose a threat to national security or to national interests, including by undermining or circumventing an international agreement. The actual possession of WMD, efforts to acquire them or contributions to their proliferation are reasons for concern. The involvement of a particular country in WMD can be revealed by a voluntary declaration on its part or by intelligence that arouses suspicion about possession of WMD or WMD-related activities.

Verification of compliance with WMD agreements

The basic requirement of verification is similar to that of intelligence-gathering for national security purposes. The need is to obtain knowledge that is as comprehensive as possible about all aspects of programmes and activities potentially related to WMD in order to acquire confidence in compliance or, alternatively, to demonstrate non-compliance. Crucial to this is the generation of a good baseline assessment against which to make subsequent comparisons. This is especially important where the process is conducted in a hostile environment when baseline data can be used to develop specific criteria against which compliance can be judged. An important difference between the requirements of verification and the general intelligence requirement is that verification applies exclusively to states parties that have signed and/or ratified an international treaty.

Verification of compliance is ultimately the responsibility of the international organization established by the treaty parties to help implement their agreement. However, such organizations are not directly supported by their own secret intelligence collection system. Rather, they rely on the obligation on treaty parties to provide declarations for study and analysis and to submit to such inspection regimes

as are agreed. Some member states, in addition, conduct their own process of verification using contributions from their national intelligence collection and analysis system. Where they develop concerns about compliance, they generally have the option of investigating and perhaps resolving issues bilaterally, or even multilaterally, before referring them to the treaty authority, including by providing intelligence or intelligence-derived information to that body.

The challenges of detecting and identifying WMD capabilities

Nuclear, biological and chemical weapons are very different in many important respects and failure to recognize this creates problems for intelligence and verification alike. Use of the term 'WMD' can itself sometimes cause problems. The following observations illustrate some of the important differences between the three types of WMD that relate specifically to intelligence.

Nuclear weapons are generally the least difficult of the three from an intelligence perspective. A national nuclear weapons capability would require the involvement of many experts and a large dedicated infrastructure, even if the weapons were supplied by another nation. It would be difficult to hide a mature or maturing programme from a competent national intelligence organization or from intrusive and comprehensive compliance monitoring. A full nuclear test is likely to be detected, but it is not essential for a state to conduct such a test in order to have confidence in its nuclear capability. Once it has been acquired, there is probably little advantage for a nation to keep its nuclear weapons capability secret, deterrence generally being its most valuable property.

It would be virtually impossible for non-state actors such as terrorists to develop a nuclear capability comprising a permanently available stockpile of weapons. It would not be impossible, but it would still be very difficult for terrorists to acquire even one nuclear weapon much less a small number of them. To do so they would probably need the witting or unwitting assistance of a nuclear-capable state, especially in the supply of appropriate fissile material. It could be difficult for intelligence agencies to detect such activity.

Biological weapons (BW) are a much more challenging intelligence target. The few kilograms of biological warfare agent required to produce large numbers of casualties can be made by a state or knowledgeable terrorists within days, using

dual-purpose equipment in a very small facility involving one or two experts. Relatively simple devices can be made to spread the agent, for example by spraying. It would not be difficult to conceal such a programme and capability, even from the best intelligence organizations or the most comprehensive and intrusive compliance monitoring processes. However, large-scale field testing to ultimately validate the effectiveness of the systems involved would be highly desirable in a military programme, even for use by special forces, and this would be more vulnerable to detection. The biological weapon produced would be much easier to conceal and transport than a nuclear weapon.

Chemical weapons (cw), although far from being easy to detect, are not quite such a difficult intelligence target as bw. A few kilograms of chemical warfare agent can also be made by a state or knowledgeable terrorists within days with dual-purpose equipment in a very small facility employing one or two experts. But such quantities would not be of great value to an offensive national military programme, and, if used by special forces or terrorists, would not have the same potential impact as the bw equivalent. Yet, large legitimate chemical plants which had been modified to provide a standby capability for the production of chemical warfare agent in time of crisis would provide a degree of disguise which would not be possible for nuclear weapons.

As with bw, relatively simple devices can be made to spread the chemical warfare agent (for example, by spraying), but a given quantity of chemical has a much smaller potential to produce casualties than the same quantity of biological agent. Additionally, chemical warfare agents are generally more difficult to handle and transport because they have a rapid effect on those exposed, for example, as a result of accidental leakage. There is less risk of an attempt to use biological warfare agents failing because an operator has been exposed.

Military programmes tend to use suitably modified munitions such as warheads, bombs and shells. It would not be so easy to conceal a national military offensive cw programme and capability which would require quantities of hundreds or thousands of tons of agent and weapons. Large-scale field testing to validate the effectiveness of the systems involved would probably be essential in a military programme and would add to their vulnerability to detection. The cw produced would be as difficult or more difficult to conceal and transport than a nuclear weapon.

Iraq and WMD

In the 1980s Western intelligence organizations identified Iraq as pursuing all three types of WMD. By the end of the decade it became clear that Iraq possessed chemical weapons, including nerve agents, and was able to use them effectively on the battlefield, at least against a poorly protected enemy. It was also assessed that Iraq possessed an offensive biological warfare programme and it was suspected that it had an actual capability. It was further believed that it had an active nuclear weapons development programme but that it was still years from fruition.

This estimate was made in the context of Iraq's eight-year war with Iran in which the numerical superiority of the Iranian conventional forces had occasionally threatened to overwhelm Iraq. Iran, in the throes of its Islamic revolution, was avidly anti-Western. Many in the West saw the preservation of a balance of power as an important factor in a region responsible for the supply of strategic quantities of energy to the global economy. Iraq used chemical weapons—probably mustard gas—on the battlefield against the Iranians from 1982, gaining experience and improving its capability until the ceasefire in 1988, by which time a number of nerve agents and improved delivery systems had been developed.

The West's muted response to Iraq's development and use of chemical weapons possibly resulted from a recognition that Iraq needed the force-multiplying advantage of such weapons to resist the human wave attacks being mounted by Iran. Presumably, it was perceived that the problems of longer-term regional stability and the nonproliferation of WMD could be tackled once the Iran–Iraq war was ended. In any case, it was not contemplated that Western forces would become directly involved in a conflict in the region. It seems likely that Iraq's use of its rapidly advancing CW capability was an important factor in the negotiation of a ceasefire with Iran in August 1988.

Iraq's disarmament and the role of UNSCOM and the IAEA

The invasion and occupation of Kuwait by Iraq in 1990 was a cathartic event. The US mobilized a political and military coalition of nations to eject Iraq from Kuwait with the full authority of the United Nations (UN). Arguably, the political decision in favour of military intervention did not initially take full account of Iraq's known and potential WMD capabilities. It was only after the political commitment

was made that the coalition was forced to contemplate the possibility that Iraqi resistance might include the use of chemical and/or biological weapons. The direct WMD threat to coalition forces brought the issue into sharper focus than ever before for the modern generation of political and military leaders, not least because shortcomings in the level of preparedness emerged and required rapid attention and some 'quick fixes'. The ejection of Iraq from Kuwait in 1991 also led to the inclusion in the ceasefire terms of the requirement that Iraq should relinquish its WMD capabilities and programmes, verifiably demonstrate that it had done so, and submit to long-term monitoring to ensure they were not reconstituted. The exact requirements were defined in United Nations Security Council resolution 687 of 3 April 1991.

Responsibility for verifying Iraq's compliance with this resolution was given to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in relation to nuclear weapons and to a new, specially created United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) for chemical and biological weapons and ballistic missiles.¹ The IAEA is a large permanent organization that has existed since 1957, with responsibility for verifying compliance with the 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). UNSCOM was not envisaged as a permanent body and comprised only a small core of permanent staff at the UN in New York. Both organizations made extensive use of temporarily recruited experts to support their core staff, especially to conduct missions to inspect facilities, examine records and interview Iraqi personnel.

Even prior to obligations being imposed on it by resolution 687, Iraq was party to several international agreements relating to WMD. It had ratified the NPT in 1968 and its safeguards agreement with the IAEA entered into force in 1972. It had signed the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) when it was opened for signature in 1972, but had not ratified it until effectively required to do so by resolution 687. Since the BWC does not have a verification regime, Iraq was not, in any event, subject to inspections in regard to that treaty. While the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) was not agreed until late 1992 (and Iraq never indicated that it would become a party to it), it was party to the 1925 Geneva Protocol which bans the use of chemical and biological weapons. In respect of its use of CW against Iran, however, Iraq claimed never to have used them on territory it did not believe to be its own and that it was therefore not in violation of the Protocol.

The requirements accepted by Iraq under resolution 687 for disclosure and inspection thus far exceeded those under its existing treaty obligations. As a result, the implementation of resolution 687 provided a rare opportunity for the intelligence community to compare its pre-war estimates to Iraq's declarations of its WMD capabilities and the discoveries of the IAEA and UNSCOM. It also provided a unique opportunity to test methodologies for the verification of compliance.

Iraq's initial response

Despite the strict and intrusive requirements accepted by Iraq, the environment in which verification was attempted proved hostile. It was made much more difficult by President Saddam Hussein's decision, in contravention of resolution 687, to commence dismantlement and destruction unilaterally. Had this not been the case, the direct contact which subsequently developed between the IAEA/UNSCOM and the national intelligence communities might have been much less necessary. Had Iraq co-operated, national governments, receiving verification reports through the UN Security Council, would simply have required their own intelligence organizations to endorse Iraq's declarations as being credible and complete.

But Iraq's initial disclosures were not credible. It denied that any of its nuclear facilities, equipment and materials were part of a programme to acquire nuclear weapons and, despite the fact that incontrovertible evidence to the contrary began to accumulate in the first few months of the IAEA investigation, continued to do so for several years. It tried to explain away some of the evidence by suggesting that it represented embryonic research to inform a political decision should Iraq's security require the development of a nuclear weapons capability in the future. It acknowledged no more than a similar incipient interest in BW, but proof of the existence of a more advanced programme proved to be difficult for the UNSCOM inspectors to find. It was to be some years before significant progress was made on the BW problem. Iraq's possession of large numbers of chemical weapons meant that it could not deny having an offensive CW capability. However, it soon became apparent that the regime was not willing to co-operate unreservedly even on the CW issue.

With Saddam Hussein still in power, Iraq remained a closed society ruled by terror. There was no ready source of secret informants and individuals feared

being open with the inspectors. The inadequacy of Iraq's initial response in terms both of its declarations and of its co-operation in the conduct of inspections and inquiries created suspicion. In order for progress to be made the verification agencies recognized that intelligence from national governments was necessary to assist with their investigations. Additionally, the UK and US in particular were beginning to understand the need for the integration of intelligence with verification processes following their experiences in attempting to deal with the Soviet Union's CW and BW capabilities and programmes in the early 1990s.²

Designated IAEA and UNSCOM inspectors were thus given detailed intelligence briefings by the UK and US national intelligence authorities, which allowed disclosure of information to them at very high levels of security. Arrangements were also made to provide appropriate lower-level but comprehensive briefings for multinational teams about to embark on specific missions in Iraq. Recognizing the challenge of meeting this unique requirement, the Deputy Chief of the Defence Intelligence Staff (the UK intelligence community's analytical arm) established a small cell of analysts to focus on the intelligence requirements of UNSCOM and the IAEA. The activity and the cell were identified as Operation Rockingham.

Progress to 1998

Despite Iraqi obfuscation, rapid progress was made by the IAEA and UNSCOM in the nuclear and CW fields, respectively. It transpired that the intelligence estimate of Iraq's CW capability and programme had been highly accurate in terms of the facilities and senior personnel involved in the programme, the type and quantity of agents produced, and the nature and size of the weapons stockpile. Using some of this information and its own inspection and interrogation resources, UNSCOM was able to press Iraq towards ever more credible 'full, final and complete' declarations. However, Iraq's reluctance to be more forthcoming than was absolutely necessary to placate the Security Council created the impression, shared by intelligence and UNSCOM officials alike, that Iraq was seeking to retain as much of a CW capability as possible.

There had been less confidence in the original intelligence picture provided of Iraq's BW capability. There had been certainty that a programme existed. Some, but by no means all, of the facilities, personnel, agents and delivery systems of

interest proved to have been identified in intelligence assessments. It had been estimated that an offensive capability probably existed and the possibility that Iraq possessed ballistic missile warheads filled with anthrax spores and botulinum toxin had been reported. Although no 'smoking gun' evidence was available to be provided to UNSCOM during the years before Iraq admitted possession, the intelligence information available, together with suspicions arising from UNSCOM's own tenacious investigations, was sufficient to keep the inspectors engaged long enough for the breakthrough to be made in 1995.

It was the persistence of the inspectors, particularly in the matter of bacterial growth media that could be used for the production of some biological warfare agents, that forced Iraq to admit to the production of large quantities of the micro-organisms for anthrax and of botulinum toxin, but it took the defection of General Hussein Kamel Hassan, Saddam's son-in-law, to prompt the fuller disclosure that led to the acknowledgment of BW production. The capability and programme that Iraq admitted to in a progressive series of declarations between 1995 and 1997 indicated that intelligence assessments had been conservative. Progress with a few BW agents was more advanced than estimated and at least one undetected agent (aflatoxin) was declared to have been loaded into bombs and possibly ballistic missile warheads.

Kamel's defection also pushed Iraq to finally acknowledge the existence of the extensive nuclear weapons programme that IAEA inspectors had uncovered. It transpired that the programme was considerably more advanced than intelligence had estimated before the war with respect to both the production of weapons-grade fissile material and the design and development of an implosion device.

It may be instructive to speculate on why knowledge of the nuclear programme which was so quickly revealed after the Gulf War was significantly more limited before it. It has been suggested that the focus by intelligence analysts with a background in advanced Western nuclear technology on the sophisticated Soviet nuclear weapons programme had reduced the sensitivity of the intelligence community to signatures of the more primitive aspects of the programme that Iraq was pursuing. Another factor may be that, as a party to the NPT subject to IAEA safeguards, Iraq was not afforded a high priority for close monitoring by stretched intelligence services which were, justly, preoccupied with the much

more urgent Soviet and Chinese threats and with the activities of four non-NPT parties—India, Israel, Pakistan and South Africa. Perhaps there was a general presumption, albeit unwarranted, that the IAEA had Iraq covered. The question that follows from this is whether membership of the NPT and apparent verification of compliance by the IAEA by means of nuclear safeguards provided some advantage for Iraq in the concealment of its illegal activities. The IAEA and its membership at least implicitly acknowledged this by strengthening nuclear safeguards after this episode.

During the post-Gulf War period up to at least 1995–96 there was a high degree of co-operation and collaboration between the IAEA/UNSCOM and national intelligence organizations. It was later, when the IAEA effectively closed the book on the nuclear programme but UNSCOM was unable to do the same, that significant problems arose. The problem, especially in the BW field, was that, although no ‘smoking gun’ could be found, UNSCOM did not feel confident that Iraq’s declarations and future intentions were honourable. This uncertainty was shared by most of those in the intelligence organizations that were closely involved. It resulted in the UK and US governments demanding that the verification process be kept alive. There was consequentially a demand on intelligence to provide leads for the inspectors to follow up. In the absence of tangible physical evidence, this led to UNSCOM being provided with increasingly speculative information.

There were contradictory pressures for progress from some member states which appeared to believe that, in the absence of ‘proof’ of non-compliance, Iraq should be given the benefit of the doubt, despite the reservations of at least some of their intelligence agencies. Humanitarian organizations highlighted the severe impact of economic sanctions on the long-suffering Iraqi population, while the Iraqi leadership benefited disproportionately from the UN’s Oil for Food programme.

Iraq claimed, apparently with justification, that it had discovered injudicious intelligence collection activity by certain participants in UNSCOM missions and used this to end its co-operation with the UN inspectorate in the second half of 1998. All IAEA and UNSCOM inspectors were withdrawn before the US and the UK in December 1998 launched Operation Desert Fox to destroy ‘WMD-related facilities’ by aerial bombardment. Ultimately this led to UNSCOM being disbanded and to the absence of inspectors from Iraq until late 2002.

The United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission

The United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) was created to replace an UNSCOM which was seen by many as having been discredited by its association with the collection of intelligence. To avoid this problem, UNMOVIC's Executive Chairman, Hans Blix, presumably supported by his College of Commissioners and on the recommendation of the 1999 Amorim report, insisted that intelligence agencies be kept at arm's length.³ He also appeared determined to ensure that some of the leading personalities in UNSCOM were not dominant players in the new organization.

As a result, some long-established links at the working level between individual UNMOVIC inspectors and intelligence analysts were lost and Blix apparently had no channel by which he might discover the views of specialist intelligence analysts, as distinct from high-level political projections of intelligence assessments. This was important because there had been no new intelligence to stimulate the change in UK and US policy towards a more alarmist view of Iraq's WMD capability in the first half of 2002. As has subsequently become clear, the intelligence on which much of the political rhetoric was based in the period up to the war was not as voluminous as that rhetoric implied, nor was it judged to be of high quality by the experts. Although senior UNMOVIC personnel were briefed by national intelligence analysts, those involved have noted a significant reduction in the degree of interaction compared to that which took place with UNSCOM. Once inspections began again and the political stakes grew, the insights that might have come from working-level contact between individual inspectors and their national intelligence organizations could have better informed the UNMOVIC leadership.

Misjudgement of the status of Iraq's WMD programmes

The verdict of the Iraq Survey Group (ISG), an Australian/UK/US inspection team deployed to Iraq after the coalition invasion in March 2003, was that, after 1991, Iraq had not systematically retained biological or chemical weapons, although a few 'forgotten' and apparently barely usable munitions were found. Moreover, although the ISG judged that an intention to eventually do so existed, Iraq had no significant programmes for reconstituting its pre-war WMD capabilities or any tangible plans to re-establish such programmes.⁴ The question must therefore be asked why

Iraq failed to convince UNSCOM of this and why UNSCOM was unable to verify it (the IAEA was largely content with verification of Iraq's programmes after 1995). Equally important is the question why intelligence failed to establish that this situation existed.

Secret offensive CW and BW capabilities and programmes are difficult intelligence targets. The existence of militarily significant stockpiles of CW should not be difficult to establish because the industrial-scale production and storage of toxic agent and weapons require careful handling that is hard to conceal. However, the possession of a breakout capability by rapid production in weeks or months using facilities converted from legitimate activity is difficult to detect and, therefore, also difficult to dismiss as a possibility. Although field trials and exercises using chemical weapons, which the military would normally consider essential, would tend to be 'visible', they can be concealed as defensive in nature. However, such activity would arouse suspicion. Their absence in Iraq, especially in the earlier part of the 1990s, was not considered especially significant because Iraq's knowledge and experience of the use of CW on the battlefield would have been retained from the war against Iran. Furthermore, there was a continuing undercurrent of evidence of covert attempts to procure dual-use chemicals and equipment that had relevance to CW agent production.

This circumstantial evidence from intelligence, together with the absence of any clear, positive indications that Saddam had ordered the elimination of all of Iraq's WMD programmes, fed into a verification process in which Iraq did not seem concerned to inspire trust and was unwilling or unable to account for relevant materials and weapons.

As for BW, strategically significant quantities of some biological warfare agents are so small that detection of their secret production might be highly unlikely even for the most advanced intelligence capabilities. Under such circumstances, especially where a previous capability has been established, there is a great onus on the suspected country to inspire trust. By failing throughout to fully characterize the nature, objectives and concepts of use of its previous BW programme, even when its acknowledgement had been unavoidable, Iraq created a high degree of suspicion among intelligence analysts and verification experts alike.

Arching over the deep suspicions of both groups was a failure to comprehend that, having been deprived, or having divested himself, of his WMD capabilities

and programmes, Saddam might still be unwilling to adopt a more positive approach to UNSCOM. It seemed implausible that he would not have grasped the opportunity to relieve Iraq of the sanctions that were so constraining its economic and military recovery. With the benefit of hindsight a number of possibilities arise that might explain the situation:

- Did Saddam, whose supporters gave him great credit for Iraq's apparently successful defiance of the West, feel that he could not lose face by submitting and acknowledging that Iraq had been disarmed? Hans Blix has suggested that such considerations might explain why so much of Iraq's programmes were quietly and unilaterally destroyed by Iraq away from the glare of humiliating publicity.
- Or could it have been that for reasons of Iraq's security in a region where several states either possessed or were pursuing WMD Saddam felt unable to acknowledge that he no longer possessed a deterrent?
- Or was Saddam encouraged to continue this deception by the growing support of some Security Council members for the removal of sanctions?

An important further question is whether a better understanding of Iraqi culture and Saddam's personal traits could have led to an appreciation of these possibilities. These aspects have not figured significantly in the debate over Iraq. They would also appear to be a variation on a theme relating to North Korea's attitude to WMD—that Pyongyang sees them as a politico-diplomatic tool as much as a military or security capability. Such possibilities should be a more significant feature of arms control and disarmament discourse, and indeed may have been newly recognized as part of the negotiations aimed at securing the WMD disarmament of Libya.⁵

A workable interface between intelligence and verification

Access to good intelligence is a highly desirable requirement for those concerned with the verification of compliance with international agreements related to WMD. For a variety of good reasons it is unlikely that the international bodies would wish to become directly involved in secret intelligence collection. The need is for national intelligence organizations to provide appropriate guidance to the international bodies, which must in turn develop the capacity to be wise users and guardians of intelligence.

There are several reasons why nations and their intelligence agencies will be concerned about passing secret information to an international body and, in the process, losing control over how it is used. The protection of the sources from which intelligence is derived is the most obvious, but the reasons will also include a reluctance on the part of different countries to provide general indications of their technical capabilities and capacities in collecting intelligence. From a security perspective, there will also be a danger that limitations in either intelligence or defensive capability might be deduced directly from the information offered or indirectly from what is not forthcoming. A further consideration may be a concern about the impact of a particular verification initiative on broader national policy objectives.

One possible solution is that the organization associated with verification could include on its permanent or semi-permanent staff individuals from states parties with significant national intelligence capabilities who are recognized by both sides as conduits for intelligence information. The inclusion of individual national intelligence experts to advise inspection teams on specific missions has been considered and rejected in the past because of fears of spying. The suggestion here is that the individual acting as the conduit should not be a serving national intelligence officer but an international civil servant and that his or her status should be declared publicly in order to counter accusations such as that made by Iraq against UNSCOM, that it was providing cover for national spies. The onus would be on the state to accurately qualify the intelligence advice that it provided to the conduit, otherwise the individual concerned could be placed under intolerable pressure. The national incentive would be the advantage gained by assisting in the establishment of general confidence in the status of the individual by demonstrating his or her legitimacy. The international body would, of course, retain the right to veto the continued employment of the individual should that confidence not be established or retained.

It is ironic that the UK, having recognized a specific need to dedicate part of its intelligence effort to the Iraq WMD inspection process through Operation Rockingham, should subsequently be accused of the deliberate misuse of intelligence to create a false impression of the continued existence of Iraq's programmes. While political imperatives may have led to the unusual circumstances in which

speculative suggestions from intelligence were transmuted into more significant advice for inspectors, the concept of national intelligence organizations creating groups focused on supporting international efforts at verification of compliance is, potentially, a good one.

Another possibility would be for the verification body to provide a focal point for the receipt of intelligence, probably in the form of a small unit of specialists, the membership of which would be agreed by all the nations involved. However, the difficulties of assembling a universally accepted and trusted group are obvious, and there are always likely to be limits to the degree of openness and transparency in such an arrangement. The inhibition might be reduced if the nation supplying intelligence had the option of limiting access to only those specialists it was content should see the information.

While none of these suggestions would provide an ideal solution, they would establish a transparent process by which intelligence could be introduced and help develop an improved capability for the verification body to make its own judgements about what was offered.

Conclusion

There seems little doubt that the verification and intelligence communities will have to continue to operate in an environment that is sometimes subject to strong influences from national political interests. Such influences hampered attempts to verify Iraq's compliance with its obligations to the UN Security Council and it is sensible to acknowledge that there will always be a danger of this sort at the interface between verification and intelligence. It will generally be easier for an international verification organization to operate independently of such pressures than national intelligence agencies. The onus must therefore be on the verification organization to continuously review the quality of intelligence advice on the basis of direct experience and to consider this as a factor in making its assessments.

However, national governments need to recognize both the long-term advantage of cultivating trusting relationships with international organizations and the dangers of abusing their access to the verification process. With respect to intelligence,

the guiding principle might be for national intelligence organizations to treat the international body as though it were an intelligence ally.

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Endnotes

- 1 For further analysis of UNSCOM and the IAEA in Iraq, and of the later UNMOVIC, see the chapter by Trevor Findlay in this volume, and Trevor Findlay and Ben Mines, 'UNMOVIC in Iraq: opportunity lost', in Trevor Findlay (ed), *Verification Yearbook 2003*, Verification Research, Training and Information Centre (VERTIC), London, December 2003, pp. 45–63.
- 2 See David Kelly, 'The Trilateral Agreement: lessons for biological weapons verification', in Trevor Findlay and Oliver Meier (eds), *Verification Yearbook 2002*, VERTIC, London, December 2002, pp. 93–109.
- 3 Hans Blix, *Disarming Iraq*, Bloomsbury Publishing, London, 2004, p. 50.
- 4 us Central Intelligence Agency, *Comprehensive Report of the Special Advisor to DCI*, 30 September 2004, www.cia.gov/cis/reports/iraq_wmd_2004/index.
- 5 See the chapter by Jack Boureston and Yana Feldman in this volume.

