

This fact sheet is part of a series of publications produced by CESR for its Emergency Campaign on Iraq, which aims to inform public opinion and influence policy towards promoting peace and protecting human rights for resolving the crisis in Iraq.

The broad use of the term “weapons of mass destruction” (WMD) to include chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons is misleading.¹ While protection against chemical and biological weapons is possible for military forces on the battlefield and amongst prepared civilians, no such protection exists against nuclear weapons. Given their power, delivery method, heat radiation, and radioactivity, nuclear weapons are indiscriminate in their destructiveness.²

The United States and Britain maintain policies of nuclear first-strike and a stated willingness to use nuclear weapons against states that do not have them.³ The US, which became the only state ever to use nuclear weapons when it dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, recently loosened safeguards in its nuclear strike policy.⁴

IRAQ AND WMD

“The IAEA expects to be able, within the next few months...to provide credible assurance that Iraq has no nuclear weapons programme.”⁵

Iraq developed a WMD program with the help of over 150 American, British, Russian, French and German corporations, and with the knowledge



“Among the people instrumental in tilting U.S. policy toward Baghdad during the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq War was Donald H. Rumsfeld, whose December 1983 meeting with Hussein as a special presidential envoy paved the way for normalization of U.S.-Iraqi relations.”⁶

and military aid of the US government.⁷ Both Iran and Iraq deployed chemical weapons during the Iran-Iraq War, with Iraq using mustard gas and tabun against Iranian troops on 9 separate occasions between August 1983 and October 1987.⁸

In March 1988, Iraq used mustard gas against Iranian soldiers, and Iraqi-Kurdish insurgents and civilians in the village of Halabja.⁹ While mustard gas was implicated in the deaths of hundreds, and likely thousands of Kurds,¹⁰ the Reagan Administration blamed Iran for the attack on civilians in Halabja, and only acknowledged Iraq’s involvement under pressure from human rights activists.¹¹

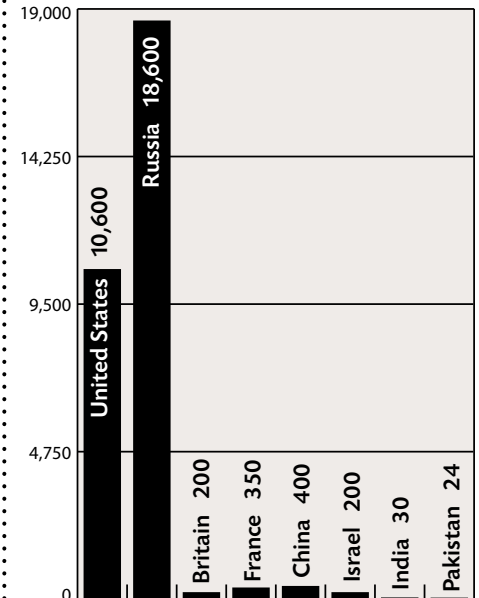
FIRST ROUND OF INSPECTIONS

“UNSCOM is the most intrusive verification regime ever devised...”¹²

The 1991 Persian Gulf War ended with Iraq’s acceptance of UNSC Resolution 687, requiring it to implement a disarmament program monitored by the UN Special Commission (UNSCOM) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) before a crippling system of economic sanctions imposed on the country could be lifted.¹³ The resolution called for Iraq to unconditionally destroy and to never use, develop, construct, or acquire non-conventional weapons or ballistic missiles with a range greater than 150 km.

Over the next seven years, UNSCOM conducted hundreds of inspections, destroying the majority of Iraq’s thousands of tons of weapons, as well as much of the infrastructure used to develop and produce them.¹⁴ In 1998, UNSCOM began inspecting Iraqi presidential sites and government defense and security buildings, leading to a series of confrontations between the US and Iraq. While the US claimed that Iraq was hiding proscribed weapons, Iraq claimed that the US was using the inspections for espionage.¹⁵ Iraqi allegations were later proven true: as early as 1995 US intelligence had infiltrated UNSCOM and used the inspection process as a cover for spying on the Iraqi government.¹⁶

Current Nuclear Warhead Stockpiles



Source: National Resources Defense Council, *Nuclear Notebook: Global Nuclear Stockpiles, 1945-2002* (12-02-02)

On December 16, 1998, the UN withdrew its inspectors in advance of an unauthorized three-day bombing campaign by the US over claims of Iraqi noncompliance.¹⁷ When Iraq refused to let inspectors return¹⁸ the US pressured the Security Council to pass Resolution 1284,¹⁹ which declared the Council’s intention to “suspend” sanctions if Iraq complied with weapons inspectors, rather than its previously stated obligation to lift them. A few months later, a Security Council panel concluded that as of March 1998, “the bulk of Iraq’s proscribed weapons programs [had] been eliminated,”²⁰ although “important elements still [had] to be resolved.” Contradicting UN resolutions, US policy makers have consistently stated that sanctions will not be lifted as long as Hussein remains in power.²¹

1 Harigel, G.G. “The Concept of Weapons of Mass Destruction: Chemical and Biological Weapons, Use in Warfare, Impact on Society and Environment” Seventh ISODARCO – Beijing Seminar on Arms Control. Xi’an. (Oct. 8-13, 2000)
 2 International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War; Harigel, G.G. “The Concept of Weapons of Mass Destruction: Chemical and Biological Weapons, Use in Warfare, Impact on Society and Environment” Seventh ISODARCO – Beijing Seminar on Arms Control. Xi’an. (Oct. 8-13, 2000)
 3 Rogers, Paul. “Iraq: Consequences of a War.” Oxford Research Group. UK (Oct. 2002)
 4 Arkin, W.M. “The Nuclear Option in Iraq: The US has lowered the bar for using the ultimate weapon” L.A. Times (Jan. 26, 2003)
 5 IAEA, Update Report for the Security Council (Jan. 27, 2003)
 6 Dobbs, M. “U.S. Had Key Role in Iraq Buildup: Trade in Chemical Arms Allowed Despite Their Use on Iranians, Kurds” Washington Post (Dec. 30, 2002); See also Newsweek, “How Saddam Happened” (Sept. 23, 2002); Scahill, J., “The Saddam in Rumsfeld’s Closet” CommonDreams.org (Aug. 2, 2002)

7 The Independent “Leaked report says German and US firms supplied arms to Saddam” (Dec. 18, 2002)
 8 Hajjar, S., “Security Implications of the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Middle East” US Strategic Studies Institute (Dec. 1998); CIA, “Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction” (Oct. 2002)
 9 Physicians for Human Rights, “The Use of Chemical Weapons: Conducting an Investigation Using Survey Epidemiology” JAMA Vol. 262 No. 5 (Aug. 4, 1989); CIA, “Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction” (Oct. 2002)
 10 Pelletier, S. “A War Crime or an Act of War” NY Times (Jan. 31, 03)
 11 Newsweek, “How Saddam Happened” (Sept. 23, 2002); NY Times, “Officers Say U.S. Aided Iraq in War Despite Use of Gas” (Aug. 17, 2002); Tyler, P., “Officers Say U.S. Aided Iraq in War Despite Use of Gas” NY Times (August 18, 2002)
 12 SIPRI, Iraq: the UNSCOM Experience. Fact Sheet (Oct. 1998)
 13 UN Security Council Res. (SCR) 687 (April 3, 1991)
 14 SIPRI, Iraq: the UNSCOM Experience. Fact Sheet (Oct. 1998)
 15 Smith, R., “U.N. Inspectors or Spies?” Washington Post (Feb. 16, 1998)

16 Gellman, B., “Annun Suspectious of UNSCOM Role” Washington Post (Jan 6, 1999); Gellman, B. “U.S. Spied on Iraq Via UN” Washington Post (March 2, 1999); FAIR, “Spying on Iraq from Fact to Allegation” (Sept. 24, 2002)
 17 Arms Control Association, “Iraq: A Chronology of UN Inspections & an Assessment of Their Accomplishments” (Oct. 2002); Broder, J. and Crossette, B. “With Advance Word on U.N. Report, Clinton Set Strikes in Motion on Sunday” New York Times (Dec. 18, 1998)
 18 Ritter, S., “The Case for Iraq’s Qualitative Disarmament” Arms Control Today (June 2000); Cortright, D. and Lopez, G., “The Limits of Coercion” Bulletin of Atomic Scientists (Nov/Dec 2000)
 19 SCR 1284 (Dec. 1999) France, Russia, and China all abstained.
 20 UN Amorim Report, “Concerning disarmament & current and future ongoing monitoring & verification issues” (March 27, 1999), S/1999/100UNSC
 21 Department of State, “White House Reiterates Regime Change in Iraq is U.S. Policy” White House Report (Aug. 19, 2002)

SECOND ROUND OF INSPECTIONS

"Sanctions and the pressure of sanctions are part of a strategy of regime change..."²²

Iraqi and UN officials met three times in 2002 to negotiate the return of weapons inspectors. Each attempt was overshadowed by US accusations of violations or plans for invasion. When Iraq agreed to a new round of inspections, Richard Perle, a key Bush advisor, stated that the US would attack even if inspectors found Iraq to be in compliance with UN resolutions.²⁶ Bush Administration tactics prompted Hans Blix, head of UNMOVIC (the successor to UNSCOM) to publicly condemn US behavior.²⁷

Iraq and Links to Terrorism

"Osama bin Laden wants to lead the Muslim world, Saddam Hussein wants to lead the Arab world."²⁸

US intelligence experts dismiss a connection between Iraq and al-Qaeda, pointing out that Iraq, as a secular, "socialist" regime, is anathema to bin Laden.²⁹ During the Gulf War, bin Laden even offered to lead a "jihad" against Hussein.³⁰ The Bush Administration's attempts to tie Iraqi intelligence with the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and hijacker Mohammed Atta have also failed.³¹ Not only is there no evidence of such links, but Hussein is unlikely to forge ties with any terrorist groups simply because such a move would threaten his own survival, which is seemingly his primary concern.³²

On January 27, 2003, Blix and Mohamed ElBaradei, head of the IAEA, briefed the Security Council on the results of more than 350 preliminary inspections. While stating that "Iraq appears not to have come to genuine acceptance...of disarmament that was demanded of it,"³³ Blix challenged assertions that time was running out

for disarming Iraq through peaceful means and disputed Bush Administration claims that Iraq was hiding and moving illicit materials, was preventing scientists from being interviewed, or had links to Al Qaeda.³⁴ ElBaradei stated that the IAEA had "to date found no evidence that Iraq has revived its nuclear weapons programme since the elimination of the programme in the 1990s."³⁵

CURRENT IRAQI WMD CAPABILITIES

President Bush's repeated claim that the threat from Iraq is growing makes little sense...and these statements should be viewed as transparent attempts to scare Americans into supporting a war.³⁶

Nuclear: In 1995, UNSCOM reported that Iraq's nuclear development infrastructure had been successfully destroyed, that Iraq would be unable to fund a new program, and that if somehow managed to do so, any such program would be easily detected.³⁷ The IAEA is confident that Iraq does not possess fissile material, which is extremely difficult to acquire and an essential component of any nuclear weapon. Iraq is a state party to the Treaty on Nuclear Nonproliferation (NPT).

Biological: Iraq has not fully accounted for biological weapons research and development programs in the 1980s. Yet the ability to stabilize biological agents requires an advanced research and industrial infrastructure that Iraq currently does not possess. It is unlikely that any biological weapons (as opposed to stock material) Iraq may have produced in the 1980s would remain viable to this day.³⁸ Iraq has ratified the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC).

Chemical: Although Iraq has not fully documented its claims that it destroyed previously existing chemical weapons, most chemical agents would have degraded by now. UNSCOM has noted that "taking into consideration the conditions and the quality of CW-agents and munitions produced by Iraq at that time, there is no possibility of weapons remaining from the mid-1980's."³⁹ Iraq has not signed the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).

ALTERNATIVES TO WAR

"We still have a choice today: nonviolent coexistence or violent coannihilation."⁴⁰

Bush insists that war is the only way to ensure that Iraq does not threaten the US. Yet war threatens to bankrupt the economy,⁴¹ further destabilize the Middle East, instigate more terrorist attacks,⁴² and kill and injure civilians.⁴³

There are peaceful solutions, which include:

- The "establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of [non-conventional weapons]" as called for in SCR 687.⁴⁴ The UN should sponsor a regional conference aimed at eliminating non-conventional weapons from the entire region.⁴⁵
- The creation of a viable, long-term inspections and monitoring system for Iraq with realistic demands.⁴⁶ Contrary to US claims, it is not possible to build a nuclear bomb, weaponize biological agents, or mass-produce stable chemical weaponry in a basement or mobile laboratory.
- International efforts to rid the world of weapons of mass destruction through the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, Chemical Weapons Convention, and the creation of an enforcement mechanism for the Biological Weapons Convention.
- The cessation of US arms sales to the region. The US is the world's leading arms merchant and since 1991 has sold over \$60 billion worth of weapons to the Middle East alone.⁴⁷

Chemical Warfare Campaigns

Both sides in World War I	1914-18
(Britain, France, Germany, U.S.)	
Spain in Morocco	1923-26
Italy in Ethiopia	1935-40
Soviet Union in China	1934, 1936-37
Japan in China	1937-45
U.S. in Vietnam	1961-69
Iraq in Iran and Iraq	1983-88

Source: Federation of American Scientists

22 Financial Times, "Interview with Colin Powell" (2-13-02)

23 Voices in the Wilderness, UK, "Torpedoing the Inspectors" (July 10, 2002)

24 Financial Times, "US to Present Evidence of Iraq Weapons Activity" (March 5, 2002)

25 Shanker, T. and Sanger, D.E. "U.S. Envisions Blueprint on Iraq Including Big Invasion Next Year" NY Times (April 28, 2002); Schmitt, E. "U.S. Plan for Iraq is Said to Include Attack on 3 Sides" NY Times (July 5, 2002)

26 Gilfeather, P. "Bush Aide: Inspections or Not, We'll Attack Iraq" The Mirror UK (Nov. 21, 2002)

27 Smith, H. and MacAskill, E. "As Arms Inspectors Arrive, Row Erupts Over US Smears" (Nov. 19, 2002)

28 Stanley Bedlington, a former CIA counterterrorism analyst, quoted in Zakaria, F. "Powell Speech Will Not Focus on Qaeda-Iraq Linking" Reuters (Feb. 4, 2003)

29 CBC News, "Experts doubt Iraq, al-Qaeda terror link" (Nov. 19, 2002); Benjamin, Daniel, "Saddam Hussein & Al Qaeda Are Not Allies" NY Times, (Sept. 30, 2002)

30 Special Report, "Holy War on the World" Financial Times (Nov. 30, 2001)

31 Risen, J., "The View From Prague: Prague Discounts an Iraqi Meeting" NY Times (Oct. 21, 2002)

32 Peterson, S., "Can Hussein be deterred?" Christian Science Monitor (Sept. 10, 2002)

33 Leopold, E., "Blix Raps Iraq for Gaps in Arms Document" Reuters (Jan. 27, 2003)

34 Miller, J. and Preston, J. "Blix Says he Saw Nothing to Prompt a War" NY Times (Jan. 31, 2003)

35 IAEA, "Update Report for the Security Council Pursuant to Resolution 1441 (2002)" (Jan. 27, 2003)

36 Mearsheimer, J.J. and Walt, S.M. "An Unnecessary War" Foreign Policy (Jan./Feb. 2003)

37 UN Amorim Report, "Concerning disarmament & current and future ongoing monitoring & verification issues" (March 27, 1999), S/1999/100; Ritter, S., "The Case for Iraq's Qualitative Disarmament" Arms Control Today (June 2000); interview with Scott Ritter, former UNSCOM weapons inspector, "Talk of the Nation" Transcript National Public Radio (Aug. 28, 2002)

38 Cortright, D. and Lopez, G., "The Limits of Coercion" Bulletin of Atomic Scientists (Nov/Dec 2000); Ritter, Scott, "The Case for Iraq's Qualitative Disarmament" Arms Control Today (June 2000)

39 Ritter, Scott, "The Case for Iraq's Qualitative Disarmament" Arms Control Today (June 2000)

40 King, M.L., "Beyond Vietnam" (April 4, 1967)

41 Nordhaus, W., "The Economic Consequences of a War with Iraq" New York Review of Books (Nov. 2002)

42 Mitchell, A. and Hulse, C., "C.I.A. Warns That U.S. Attack May Ignite

Terror" (Oct. 9, 2002); New Scientist, "Iraq invasion could 'worsen terrorist threat'" (Sept. 18, 2002)

43 MedAct, "Collateral Damage: the health & environmental costs of war on Iraq" (Nov. 2002); Rogers, Paul "Iraq: Consequences of War" Oxford Research Group (Oct. 2002)

44 SCR 687 (April 1991)

45 Cortright, D., Millar, A., Lopez, G., Fourth Freedom Foundation, "Sanctions, Inspections & Containment" (6-02); Federal Commission to Assess the Organization of the Federal Government to Combat the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, "Combating Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction" (July 1999); Union of Concerned Scientists, "Statement on Iraq and the Proliferation of WMD" (Sept. 24, 2002); USIP Briefing for Congressional Staff, Summary (Nov. 20, 2002)

46 Wright, Robert, Financial Times, "A Costly Way to Search for Bioweapons" (Aug. 20, 2002); Cortright, D. and Lopez, G., "Disarming Iraq: Nonmilitary Strategies & Options" Arms Control Today (Sept. 2002)

47 Zunes, S., "10 Things You Should Know about US Policy in the Middle East" (Sept. 26, 2001); Myers, S. "Led by US, Arms Sales Surge Globally" NY Times (Aug. 21, 2000); Denver Rocky Mountain News, "US keeps its place as global leader-in int'l arms sales" (Aug. 25, 2001)

