

## **Carnegie Analysis**

### **And the Winner Is.....**

by Joseph Cirincione  
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After three months of United Nations inspections in Iraq by several hundred UN experts and three months of exhaustive searches by thousands of US, British and Australian soldiers and experts, the UN inspections now look much better than critics at the time claimed. This may have important implications for future inspection efforts. The intrusive inspections approach, while not as coercive as some wanted nor as forceful as the UN Security Council was prepared to go in the weeks before the war, now appears to have been working well in Iraq. If it had been given enough time and enough resources, containment and inspections could have effectively prevented any significant new Iraqi efforts on weapons of mass destruction.

Additionally, the three months of UN inspections and the three months of US searches now make it increasingly clear that the nuclear, chemical and biological weapons programs and the missile programs did not exist on the scale that the administration claimed before the war. It seems impossible that Iraq would have or could have destroyed, moved or hidden the hundreds of tons of chemical and biological weapons, dozens of Scud missiles and industrial facilities for the large, on-going production of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons that officials claim Iraq had, without the US detecting some sign of this activity before, during or after the war. We can now conclude with a fair degree of confidence that a large number of the claims made by senior officials before the war were simply not true. We can judge that others are unlikely to be proven true, and reserve judgment on others pending developments over the next few months.

Finally, it appears that Iraq may have continued programs of research on some weapons, trying to keep intact elements for restarting weapons programs after international inspections or sanctions had ended, but there were not programs involving the large-scale production of ready-to-use chemical or biological weapons or missile systems, nor the prospect that Iraq would soon have a nuclear weapon.

### **No Weapons**

Recently retired intelligence official Greg Theilman provided the following assessment at a July 9 press conference sponsored by the Arms Control Association:

"From my perspective as a former mid-level official in the U.S. intelligence community and the Department of State, I believe the Bush administration did not provide an accurate picture to the American people of the military threat posed by Iraq. Some of the fault lies with the performance of the intelligence community, but most of it lies with the way senior officials misused the information they were provided.

"After three months of intensive searches on the ground, no weapons of mass destruction have yet been found. But while the search is not yet over, I am confident in concluding that as of March 2003, when we began military operations, Iraq posed no imminent threat to either its neighbors or to the United States. Its military, exhausted by the long war with Iran, severely depleted by Desert Storm, and hobbled by continuing sanctions, was significantly less capable than it was when Iraq invaded first Iran and then Kuwait.

"Its nuclear weapons program, largely dismantled by U.N. inspectors in the 1990s, was dormant. Its chemical and biological weapons programs, while illegal and potentially dangerous, were apparently directed at contingent rapid production capabilities rather than

maintaining ready stockpiles. Iraq probably [did not have] ballistic missiles capable of delivering weapons payloads to population centers in Israel, Saudi Arabia, or Iran. There was no significant pattern of cooperation between Iraq and the al Qaeda terrorist operation, which had attacked the United States on 9/11."

### **The Inspections That Could**

Before the war, inspectors from UNMOVIC and from the IAEA visited over 600 suspect sites in Iraq, including 44 sites never previously inspected. They discovered several items in violation of the prohibitions imposed by the UN resolutions and supervised the destruction of 72 al Samoud missiles, which exceeded the allowed 150-kilometer flight-range by some 30 kilometers, as well as related prohibited missile launchers, missile engines, and casting chambers for missile parts. They also discovered and destroyed fuel spray tanks and 122-millimeter rocket warheads that could have been used to deliver chemical or biological warfare agents. These were all violations of UN resolutions, but they were in the process of being discovered and corrected.

At the time, their work was heavily criticized and even mocked by administration officials and pro-war advocates in the media and many research institutes. Now, with the benefit of these three months of searches by thousands of troops and imported experts, we can conclude that in fact the UN inspections were working remarkably well. As the Foreign Affairs Committee of the British House of Commons reported July 7, these troops have now visited over 230 suspected sites but have uncovered, "little evidence of proscribed weapons and materials."

This is an official finding of the obvious. They have scoured all the sites specifically mentioned in pre-war claims as having expanded their production facilities or believed by the administration to be engaged in large-scale production of chemical or biological warfare agents. They have found few signs of prohibited activities at any of these sites, and have been unable to unearth any significant evidence of unmanned aerial vehicles, or UAVs, which formed a central and very dramatic part of Secretary of State Colin Powell's testimony before the United Nations in February. Nor have they found any evidence of the dozens or more Scud missiles, which were said to exist. In his UN testimony, Secretary Powell cited very specific, new intelligence of Iraqi movements of Scuds and Scud warheads filled with biological and chemical warfare agents from Baghdad into western Iraq. He made the UN inspectors look like fools. But they were not fools; they had not missed these Scuds; they had not missed the 100 to 500 tons of chemical agent that Powell said Iraq had. No sign of these missiles or warheads or chemical weapons has been found.

It is now fair to say that the U.N. inspection process was working, and if given the time and resources necessary, could have had a good chance of both preventing any ongoing programs, discovering any activities that were underway, and ending a good deal of this low-level activity, (such as the hiding of critical blueprints and parts recently unearthed in the backyard of an Iraqi scientist), and preventing the restart of any of these programs as long as the UNMOVIC plan had been allowed to continue. The UN-approved plan was always intended to keep inspectors in Iraq indefinitely. Phase Two of the inspections was the imposition of an onsite monitoring and verification regime. There would never have been a time when Saddam would have been allowed freely restart these programs. Inspectors would have always been there, looking over his shoulders able to discover any militarily significant activity.

The derisive critics of the UN inspectors were wrong; the inspections were working. The usefulness of these kinds of inspections deserve a thorough re-evaluation.

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This analysis is based on Part I of a presentation made by Joseph Cirincione at a special press conference sponsored by the Arms Control Association on July 9 at the National Press Club in Washington, DC. For a full transcript of the event please visit the **Arms Control Today** website.

Part II, on the rise and fall of Iraqi threat assessments, will be posted the week of July 14.

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## **More Analysis**

### **Follow the Threat Assessments**

Senior administration officials say they based their escalating warnings of the imminent danger posed by Iraqi weapons on official intelligence assessments. In many cases, the statements went far beyond the classified estimates now available. In other cases, such as Secretary Powell's presentation to the United Nations, they tracked closely with the CIA reports to Congress. These reports themselves, however, underwent a dramatic transformation from 2001 to 2002 after reporting essentially the same data for many years. There is little new evidence in the reports to account for this change. So what triggered the new, alarmist tone in 2002?

### **Understanding the IAEA Report on Iran**

The heat is on for Iran to clarify its nuclear ambitions. On June 19, the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) called on Tehran to stop plans to begin enriching uranium and to allow "all access deemed necessary" to clarify questions over Iran's nuclear program. But the Board stopped short of declaring Iran in violation of its treaty obligations, nor did it refer the matter to the UN Security Council, as some U.S. officials had urged.

### **The DIA on Iraq's Chemical Weapons Program**

On June 7, 2003, the Defense Department released an unclassified excerpt of a 2002 Defense Intelligence Agency study on Iraq's chemical warfare program in which it stated that there is "no reliable information on whether Iraq is producing and stockpiling chemical weapons, or where Iraq has -- or will -- establish its chemical warfare agent production facilities." Significantly, the DIA study also implied that UN inspections could stop Iraq from restarting any chemical weapons program, when the analysts concluded, "...we believe Iraq ...can reconstitute a chemical warfare program in the absence of an international inspection regime."