



U.N.: Iraq had no WMD after 1994

By Bill Nichols, USA TODAY

UNITED NATIONS — A report from U.N. weapons inspectors to be released today says they now believe there were no weapons of mass destruction of any significance in Iraq after 1994, according to two U.N. diplomats who have seen the document.

The historical review of inspections in Iraq is the first outside study to confirm the recent conclusion by David Kay, the former U.S. chief inspector, that Iraq had no banned weapons before last year's U.S.-led invasion. It also goes further than prewar U.N. reports, which said no weapons had been found but noted that Iraq had not fully accounted for weapons it was known to have had at the end of the Gulf War in 1991.

The report, to be outlined to the U.N. Security Council as early as Friday, is based on information gathered over more than seven years of U.N. inspections in Iraq before the 2003 war, plus postwar findings discussed publicly by Kay.

Kay reported in October that his team found "dozens of WMD-related program activities" that Iraq was required to reveal to U.N. inspectors but did not. However, he said he found no actual WMDs.

The study, a quarterly report on Iraq from U.N. inspectors, notes that the U.S. teams' inability to find any weapons after the war mirrors the experience of U.N. inspectors who searched there from November 2002 until March 2003.

Many Bush administration officials were harshly critical of the U.N. inspection efforts in the months before the war. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said in August 2002 that inspections "will be a sham."

The Bush administration also pointedly declined U.N. offers to help in the postwar weapons hunt, preferring instead to use U.S. inspectors and specialists from other coalition countries such as Britain and Australia.

But U.N. reports submitted to the Security Council before the war by Hans Blix, former chief U.N. arms inspector, and Mohamed ElBaradei, head of the U.N.'s nuclear watchdog agency, have been largely validated by U.S. weapons teams. The common findings:

Iraq's nuclear weapons program was dormant.

No evidence was found to suggest Iraq possessed chemical or biological weapons. U.N. officials believe the weapons were destroyed by U.N. inspectors or Iraqi officials in the years after the 1991 Gulf War.

Iraq was attempting to develop missiles capable of exceeding a U.N.-mandated limit of 93 miles.

Demetrius Perricos, the acting executive chairman of the U.N. inspection teams, said in an interview that the failure to find banned weapons in Iraq since the war undercuts administration criticism of the U.N.'s search before the war.

"You cannot say that only the Americans or the British or the Australians currently inspecting in Iraq are the

clever inspectors — and the Americans and the British and the Australians that we had were not," he said.

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