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**From:** David Kelly [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 16 April 2003 20:41  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Therese Delpech - The Weapons Hunt

[REDACTED]

I thought you might like this if you have not already seen it.

Regards,

David

The Weapons Hunt

By Therese Delpech The Wall Street Journal. April 16, 2003. p

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PARIS -- There is a famous Soviet joke about the impossibility of being right. Workers who arrived early at the workplace were accused of espionage, those who arrived late were guilty of sabotage, and those who got there on time were despised for petty bourgeois conformism.

As the war in Iraq winds down, something similar is happening in the debate over weapons of mass destruction. An early discovery by coalition forces would have proven that operational intelligence was not provided to international inspectors, late findings would show that evidence has been planted by the CIA, while no discovery of proscribed weapons would ruin the main justification of the war.

Is it worth arguing in this lose-lose situation? Yes, for more reasons than one

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The fate of Saddam Hussein's weapons stockpile is more of a strategic

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issue than a political one. As long as credible answers are not available to the questions posed by U N inspector teams over the past dozen years, there can be no confidence that Iraq is free of biological and chemical weapons. This is a problem not only for the Anglo-American coalition but even more so for Iraq's neighbors who are less confident than many Western observers that Iraq is "clean." Ironically enough, the greatest pressure to find the alleged weapons stockpile now comes from people and countries that never believed in the legitimacy of the war in the first place. So any finding -- early or late -- will hardly change their views. But no finding may also harden more balanced observers into critics. Aware of the political significance, the U S and Britain should handle the search for these weapons and their international verification with great care.

No firm conclusions can be drawn from the results of searches made by coalition forces so far. The first priority of the military intervention was to reach Baghdad and to defeat Saddam. As a consequence, teams of experts embedded in the coalition forces and looking for weapons have been working hastily, most of the time in warfare conditions, and they were not fully familiar with all the data accumulated for more than a decade on the subject. This remains true even though some Unscm inspectors appear to be already present in Iraq.

The number of sites to be visited is said to be as large as 1,000, and only 100 have reportedly been visited so far. Where the characteristics of what has been found are unclear, the verification method is slow and cumbersome, with first analysis on site performed by mobile facilities and secondary checks in national labs.

Unconventional threats were undoubtedly part of this war. Troops had

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all been vaccinated against anthrax and smallpox and were wearing, in their 450-mile journey, protective suits that they would certainly have preferred to leave at home, given the heat of the Iraqi desert. Masks were available in a matter of seconds.

The stated objective being regime change, the likelihood of a no-holds-barred war was much higher than in 1991. Beyond that, Iraqi conventional forces were only about 40% as effective as they were during the Gulf War, making conventional defense all that much more difficult. But there was more to the fear than that. Iraq imported huge quantities of antidotes against nerve agents just before the war, raising obvious questions about possible stocks of Iraqi WMD. Moreover, even the unsatisfactory declaration that Iraq submitted to Hans Blix's team on Dec 7, in accordance with Security Council Resolution 1441, acknowledged the existence of a huge chemical warfare simulation program. This was seen by many in military establishments as a message not so much to Mr. Blix -- since such a simulation program was not barred -- as it was to the Pentagon. American troops will face unconventional attacks if they dare enter the country, the Iraqis essentially said. Also, a special chain of command used by Iraqi authorities to give orders related to unconventional weapons reportedly was activated at the beginning of the war.

In the last five months of inspections, inspectors found about 10 undeclared chemical-capable rocket warheads, a few mustard-filled bombs already declared to Unscm, remnants of about 100 R400 bombs developed for chemical and biological weapons purposes, and some undeclared drones. Associated UNMOVIC teams succeeded in destroying about 75 al Samoud-2 missiles before leaving the country. But compared to all the outstanding issues, the pace of "discoveries" was very slow.

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indeed because of the incomplete Iraqi declaration

Naturally, the question arises of why unconventional weapons have not been used during the war? Some experts believe that Saddam's desire to be perceived as a "victim" -- a rather difficult role for one of the bloodiest dictators in history -- led to a deliberate "no-use" policy

But other explanations should also be considered U S deterrence -- which included threatening Iraqi field commanders before the war that they would be held accountable individually in case of WMD-use -- may have worked The coalition had contemplated a number of scenarios for possible Iraqi chemical attacks, including strikes in the early hours on troops massed in Kuwait But the most likely scenario was always set in the outskirts of Baghdad, once the "red line" had been crossed By the time the coalition forces breached this line however, Iraqi command-and-control had been so fractured that no such operation could be conducted It was simply too late

It was always logical to try to protect allied troops in Iraq by testing air and water for unconventional weapons, and to visit whatever suspicious facility the force might have encountered But the benefit that can be expected from this method is limited if the objective is to get a comprehensive picture of Iraqi WMD programs In the absence of precise and timely intelligence, particularly if mobile chemical and biological facilities do exist, the best way to proceed is to keep looking at documents and budgets and to interview scientists and technicians Many documents may have been destroyed, but not all of them are gone The most sensitive information may have been concealed, including in third countries, but traces and copies probably still can be found in Iraq

As far as key Iraqi personnel are concerned the list of those wanted

by inspectors is well known. We can expect them to speak more freely now than they did in the past, when Saddam's terror apparatus was still functioning. If some prominent figures on the list are no longer in Iraq, one can ask for -- and expect -- the cooperation of the countries where they have found sanctuary

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When the dust settles, the main job will be to form at last a credible picture of the proscribed programs and weapons. International verification will be absolutely indispensable to win the confidence of the world. Multilateral teams of inspectors will now have to uncover the story of their development and, above all, what is left of them. It should be borne in mind that the most intractable problem faced by inspectors has been Iraq's unverifiable unilateral destructions, conducted after the Gulf War, in breach of the Security Council Resolution 687.

But with Saddam and his terror apparatus gone, much can be learned -- for the benefit of regional and international security.

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