

states “The JIC concluded that Iraq had sufficient expertise, equipment and material to produce biological warfare agents within weeks ..” and “... the JIC assessed that Iraq retained some chemical warfare agents, precursors, production equipment and weapons from before the Gulf War. These stocks would enable Iraq to produce significant quantities of mustard gas within weeks and nerve agent within months”¹⁴⁰ The wording of the Executive Summary is again stronger than the main text.

97. This occurs again in relation to the 45 minute claim. The Summary states in paragraph 6 “As a result of intelligence we judge that Iraq has ... military plans for the use of chemical and biological weapons ... Some of these weapons are deployable within 45 minutes of an order to use them.” The main text states “Intelligence indicates that the Iraqi military are able to deploy chemical or biological weapons within 45 minutes of an order to do so.”¹⁴¹

98. In significant respects the Executive Summary is stronger than the main text.¹⁴²

99. On the other hand, the immediate past Chairman of the JIC, Peter Ricketts, “[did] not find anything in the language of [the dossier] at all surprising in terms of the judgments that the JIC reach.”¹⁴³ And Dr Tom Inch thought the dossier was if anything less assertive than he would have wished: “I found that there were too many weasel-words in the report, as I read it. They could do this or they might do that and so on, rather than saying that the evidence was hard.”¹⁴⁴

100. We conclude that the language used in the September dossier was in places more assertive than that traditionally used in intelligence documents. We believe that there is much value in retaining the measured and even cautious tones which have been the hallmark of intelligence assessments and we recommend that this approach be retained.

Did the September dossier present complete and accurate information?

101. We summarised the weapons of mass destruction claims made in the September dossier (and those made in the IISS publication) in our Report of last December on Foreign Policy Aspects of the War against Terrorism.¹⁴⁵ Then, we concluded that “evidence of Iraq's retention and continued development of weapons of mass destruction is compelling, and a cause for considerable concern” and we commended the Government for producing the dossier.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁰ *Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction: The Assessment of the British Government*, para 3

¹⁴¹ *Ibid*, p 19, para 5

¹⁴² For a full comparison of the summary and the main text, see Appendix 2.

¹⁴³ Q 808

¹⁴⁴ Q 227

¹⁴⁵ Second Report from the Foreign Affairs Committee, Session 2002–03, *Foreign Policy Aspects of the War against Terrorism*, HC 196, paras 89–95

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid*, para 96

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