

[Select Committee on Foreign Affairs](#) [Written Evidence](#)**Memorandum from Terence Taylor, International Institute for Strategic Studies-US**

1. If I can make a useful contribution to the Committee's deliberations it would be to set the context in which the government's highest-level decision-makers were determining and explaining their policies with regard to Iraq. My perspective of the issues concerning Iraq are those of an independent analyst with an intimate knowledge of the UN inspection process in the 1990s as a Commissioner with the UN Special Commission on Iraq (UNSCOM) and as a Chief Inspector in the field in Iraq. In the former capacity I had a good overview of all the inspection activities in all areas of concern, nuclear, biological, chemical and missiles. In the latter capacity I experienced first hand the Iraqi regime's persistent denials, elaborate concealment measures and information attack on the UN communications at all points of our operations from New York to Baghdad. As far as UNSCOM was concerned it was through years of dedicated and professional work of inspectors from 44 different countries that parts of the clandestine weapons programmes were brought to light as the Iraqi regime failed to meet its obligations under the UN Security Council Resolutions to declare and show these prohibited activities. Also clear evidence of efforts to continue these weapons programmes was discovered while inspectors were in the country.

2. The Iraqi regime's behaviour and responses are important considerations for the Committee to take into account as a key element in high-level decision-makers deliberations. These aspects rightly had to weigh heavily in assessments of the risks involved in failing to deal effectively with the Iraqi's persistent non-compliance with the obligations placed on them by the various UN Security Council resolutions. This factor, in addition to national intelligence and the mountain of evidence provided through the years of UN inspections by UNSCOM, the successor organisation the UN Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), had to be a vital element in putting the classified and open source information into context. The Iraqi regime was repeatedly found to be acting in bad faith, doing the minimum necessary to give a semblance of co-operation and making admissions only when it was certain that UN inspectors had uncovered the truth. This was the case from 1991 through to 2003 during two generations of inspection efforts.

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3. Even without the intelligence information there was substantial evidence from UN sources that programmes continued. As far as the general public was concerned this substantial evidence became obscured by pressure from some quarters for "smoking guns", that is to say more immediate and "new" information. It is the UN sourced information that convinced the Security Council to repeatedly take the consensus view that Iraq had failed to reveal all that it should about its weapons programmes. Even during the period of inspections following Resolution 1441 of November 2002 there was no serious dispute over the view that Iraq continued to be in breach of its legal obligations.

4. From the information available from UN sources alone it would not have been a safe assessment to conclude that Iraq did not pose a serious risk to its neighbours and to the wider world from its nuclear, biological and chemical capabilities, particularly if given the opportunity, to regenerate them. There was evidence from UN sources of efforts to acquire materials for these programmes while inspections were in progress, let alone the information deriving from national intelligence agencies. Other weighty considerations included the weapons programme personnel that remained in place and the "mobilisation" production techniques employed in, for example, the biological weapons programme to help avoid detection and reduce the vulnerability of what, for the Iraqi regime, were high value military assets.

5. In UNSCOM's final report of 1999 the then Executive Chairman concluded that Iraq continued to hide substantial information about prohibited programmes and probably continued to develop them. Subsequently an independent panel of international experts headed by Ambassador Amorin endorsed this opinion. What is more UNMOVIC reviewed this evidence at the start of their work and came to the same conclusion. In his official reports to the Security Council Dr Hans Blix, the head of UNMOVIC, repeatedly asserted that the Iraqi regime failed to meet its obligations to provide convincing answers on the outstanding issues and, in his words "played catch as catch can", with the inspectors instead of meeting the clear obligation to declare and show verifiable evidence of their claims. Thus in the final phase of inspections the Iraqi behaviour, in the words of the Spanish Foreign Minister Sra Ana Palacio, in her statement in the final Security Council meeting before military operations began, "confirmed our worst fears" that Iraq was playing the same game as in the 1990s. That is to draw out the inspection process as a form of negotiation in the hope that, as in the latter part of the inspection process of the 1990s, the military pressure would ease and the regime could survive and continue rebuilding its weapons capabilities so central to Sadaam Hussein's strategy.

6. With the information available to members of the Security Council in March 2003 it would have been hard to conclude anything other

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than Iraq presented a serious threat to international security. There was no credible evidence that more inspections would resolve the issue and, in any case this activity could not be considered as the "serious consequences" that all fifteen members of the Security Council had agreed to in Resolution 1441 if Iraq continued to be in breach of its obligations (which none of them disputed).

7. I believe it is essential that the Committee take account of these considerations in assessing whether or not the government misled Parliament and the public about the seriousness of the risks posed by Iraq's continued defiance of the UN. Finally the Iraq Survey Group, composed of a large number of specialists with the right kind of scientific and technical expertise and including a significant number of personnel with substantial experience of inspections in Iraq, has yet to be fully deployed. It is likely that more evidence will be unearthed on Iraq's nuclear, biological, chemical and missile programmes over the coming months.

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