

## GUIDE TO KEY FINDINGS

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**Iraq's WMD programs represented a long-term threat that could not be ignored. They did not, however, pose an immediate threat** to the United States, to the region, or to global security. (p. 47)

**With respect to nuclear and chemical weapons, the extent of the threat was largely knowable at the time.** (p. 47)

- ▶ Iraq's nuclear program had been dismantled and there was no convincing evidence of its reconstitution. (p. 47)
- ▶ Regarding chemical weapons, UNSCOM discovered that Iraqi nerve agents had lost most of their lethality *as early as 1991*. Operations Desert Storm and Desert Fox, and UN inspections and sanctions effectively destroyed Iraq's large-scale chemical weapon production capabilities. For both reasons, it appears that thereafter Iraq focused on preserving a latent, dual-use capability, rather than on weapons production. (p. 47–48)

**The uncertainties were much greater with regard to biological weapons.**

However, the real threat lay in what could be achieved in the future rather than in what had been produced in the past or existed in the present. (p. 48)

- ▶ The biological weapons program may also have been converted to dual-use facilities designed to quickly start weapons production in time of war, rather than making and storing these weapons in advance. (p. 48)

**The missile program appears to have been the one program in active development in 2002.** (p. 48) Iraq was expanding its capability to build missiles whose ranges exceeded UN limits.

**It is unlikely that Iraq could have destroyed, hidden, or sent out of the country the hundreds of tons of chemical and biological weapons, dozens of Scud missiles and facilities engaged in the ongoing production of chemical and biological weapons that officials claimed were present** without the United States detecting some sign of this activity before, during, or after the major combat period of the war. (p. 55)

**How much radioactive and biological material have been lost and whether they have fallen into the wrong hands remain crucial unknowns.** (p. 58–59)

**Prior to 2002, the intelligence community appears to have overestimated the chemical and biological weapons in Iraq but had a generally accurate picture of the nuclear and missile programs.** (p. 50)

**The dramatic shift between prior intelligence assessments and the October 2002 National Intelligence Estimate (NIE), together with the creation of an independent intelligence entity at the Pentagon and other steps, suggest that the intelligence community began to be unduly influenced by policymakers' views sometime in 2002.** (p. 50)

**There was and is no solid evidence of a cooperative relationship between Saddam's government and Al Qaeda.** (p. 48)

**There was no evidence to support the claim that Iraq would have transferred WMD to Al Qaeda and much evidence to counter it.** (p. 48)

**The notion that any government would give its principal security assets to people it could not control in order to achieve its own political aims is highly dubious.** (p. 49)

**Today, the most likely source of a nuclear terrorist threat would be from theft or purchase of fissile material or tactical nuclear weapons from poorly guarded stockpiles in Russia and other former Soviet states, including Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine. The security of Pakistan's nuclear assets, including technology and know how, is also a major concern. (p. 50)**

**Administration officials systematically misrepresented the threat from Iraq's WMD and ballistic missile programs, beyond the intelligence failures noted above, by:**

- ▶ **Treating nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons as a single "WMD threat." The conflation of three distinct threats, very different in the danger they pose, distorted the cost/benefit analysis of the war. (p. 52)**
- ▶ **Insisting without evidence—yet treating as a given truth—that Saddam Hussein would give whatever WMD he possessed to terrorists. (p. 52)**
- ▶ **Routinely dropping caveats, probabilities, and expressions of uncertainty present in intelligence assessments from public statements. (p. 53)**
- ▶ **Misrepresenting inspectors' findings in ways that turned threats from minor to dire. (p. 53)**

**While worst case planning is valid and vital, acting on worst case assumptions is neither safe nor wise. (p. 54)**

**The assertion that the threat that became visible on 9/11 invalidated deterrence against states does not stand up to close scrutiny. (p. 57)**

**Saddam's responses to international pressure and international weakness from the 1991 war onward show that while unpredictable he was not undeterrable. (p. 57)**

**The UN inspection process appears to have been much more successful than recognized before the war. Nine months of exhaustive searches by the U.S. and coalition forces suggest that inspectors were actually in the process of finding what was there. Thus, the choice was never between war and doing nothing about Iraq's WMD. (p. 55)**

**In addition to inspections, a combination of international constraints—sanctions, procurement investigations, and the export/import control mechanism—also appears to have been considerably more effective than was thought. (p. 56)**

**The knowledge, prior experience in Iraq, relationships with Iraqi scientists and officials, and credibility of UNMOVIC experts represent a vital resource that has been ignored when it should be being fully exploited. (p. 51)**

**To reconstruct an accurate history of Iraq’s WMD programs, the data from the seven years of UNSCOM/IAEA inspections are absolutely essential. The involvement of the inspectors and scientists who compiled the more-than-30-million-page record is needed to effectively mine it. (p. 56)**

**Considering all the costs and benefits, there were at least two options clearly preferable to a war undertaken without international support: allowing the UNMOVIC/IAEA inspections to continue until obstructed or completed, or imposing a tougher program of “coercive inspections” backed by a specially designed international force. (p. 59)**

**Even a war successful on other counts could leave behind three significant WMD threats: lost material, “loose” scientists, and the message that only nuclear weapons could protect a state from foreign invasion. (p. 58)**

**The National Security Strategy’s new doctrine of preemptive military action is actually a loose standard for preventive war under the cloak of legitimate preemption. (p. 60)**

**In the Iraqi case, the world’s three best intelligence services proved unable to provide the accurate information necessary for acting in the absence of imminent threat. (p. 61)**

# SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

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## U.S. POLICY

**Create a nonpartisan independent commission, including at least one member with first-hand knowledge of the extensive UNMOVIC, UNSCOM, and IAEA archive to establish a clear picture of what the intelligence community knew and believed it knew about Iraq's weapons program throughout 1991–2002.** The commission should consider the role of foreign intelligence as well as the question of political pressure on analysts and the adequacy of agencies' responses to it. (p. 51)

**No changes in the structure or practices of the intelligence community are worth acting on until the record described above is firmly established. If it reveals that the content and clarity of the intelligence product were significantly affected by the desire to serve political masters, Congress should seriously consider professionalizing the post of Director of Central Intelligence (DCI).** (p. 52)

**Make the security of poorly protected nuclear weapons and stockpiles of plutonium and highly enriched uranium a much higher priority of national security policy.** (p. 50)

**Deter any nation contemplating WMD terrorism against the United States by communicating clearly the national resolve to use overwhelming force** against any state that transfers nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons to a terrorist group. (p. 49)

**The National Security Strategy's dismissal of the utility of deterrence against "rogue" and other potential enemy states merits a focused national debate that has not taken place. (p. 57)**

**The National Security Strategy should be revised to eliminate a U.S. doctrine of unilateral, preemptive war in the absence of imminent threat (that is, preventive war). (p. 61)**

## **INTERNATIONAL ACTION**

**The United States and the United Nations should collaborate to produce a complete history and inventory of Iraq's WMD and missile programs.** UNMOVIC, the IAEA Iraq Action Team, and the enormous UNSCOM technical archive should all be brought into the present effort by the U.S. Iraq Survey Group. Both the United States and the United Nations should be seriously faulted for the failure to do so to date. (p. 56) This work should include sending UNMOVIC and IAEA teams back to Iraq. (p. 51)

**In this joint effort, particular attention should be paid to discovering which of the several international constraints on Iraq were effective and to what degree. (p. 56)**

**The UN Secretary General should charter a related effort to understand the inspections process itself—an after-action report.** The relative value of site visits and analysis needs to be clarified. Also, the various strengths and weaknesses of this pioneering international effort need to be fully understood, including its human resources, access to technology, access to nationally held intelligence, vulnerability to penetration, and contributions to national intelligence agencies. (p. 57)

**If the findings in Iraq and of these studies warrant, the UN Security Council should consider creating a permanent, international, nonproliferation inspection capability. (p. 60)**

**By treaty or Security Council resolution, make the transfer of weapons of mass destruction capabilities by any government to any other entity a violation of international law and a threat to international peace and security. (p. 49)**

**Pursue initiatives suggested by Presidents Bush and Chirac to strengthen the UN Security Council's resolve and capacity to prevent proliferation and ensure compliance with nonproliferation norms and rules. (p. 59)**

**Convene international negotiations to define agreed principles for preemptive and/or preventive action to remove acute proliferation threats. (p. 61)**

## **ASSESSING THREATS**

**Recognize distinctions in the degree of threat posed by the different forms of "weapons of mass destruction." Otherwise, the security risks of actions taken may outweigh the risks of the targeted threat. (p. 53)**

**Congress and the public must learn to recognize red flags indicating that sound intelligence practices are not being followed. (p. 52)**

**Examine and debate the assertion that the combined threat of evil states and terrorism calls for acting on the basis of worst case reasoning. (p. 54)**

**Examine and debate the unexamined assumption that "evil" or "rogue" states are likely to turn over WMD to terrorists. (p. 49)**