

Claims in Secretary of State Colin Powell's UN Presentation concerning Iraq, 5th Feb 2003

Below, the 44 distinct claims in Secretary Powell's speech of 5 February 2003 are reviewed. The main features of the Powell presentation are as follows:

(a) He makes strong claims about Iraq's retention and development of non-conventional weapons, but the claims that he provides substantive evidence for are either tangential or the evidence is ambiguous.

An example would be how Powell claimed: "We know that Saddam's son, Qusay, ordered the removal of all prohibited weapons from Saddam's numerous palace complexes ... We also have satellite photos that indicate that banned materials have recently been moved from a number of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction facilities." If Powell had been able to show any evidence for either of these claims, that would have constituted much more plausible proof of the US claims.

However, instead of providing proof of any of those claims, Powell instead produced photos of al-Taji ammunition storage facility that shows a small shed and a truck adjacent to the bunker. Powell claimed that these are "a signature item" for chemical bunkers. This seems on the face of it to be a wholly implausible claim: a picture of a truck and a shed by themselves reveal nothing about the contents of the adjacent bunker.

In summary, Powell didn't provide evidence for the stronger claims that he made, instead displaying a satellite photo that reveals very little. This would indicate that the evidence for the stronger claims is either non-existent or contentious.

(b) The recordings only seem to show is that Iraq didn't want its 7 December declaration to be found to be inadequate, not that it was trying to conceal weapons. The two are very different sorts of activities.

According to SCR 687 / 1441, the unilateral destruction of prohibited weapons and their remnants is prohibited. However, if the concern is more with Iraq's retention of weapons than formal observance of the terms of SC resolutions, then Iraq's attempts to dispose of any remaining parts of chemical rockets should not be interpreted as equivalent in security terms to it retaining stocks of weapons.

(c) Powell claimed the US had evidence of prohibited weapons at certain sites, but that Iraq moved them whilst inspectors were in the country to conceal them. Powell took this as evidence of Iraqi violation of SCR 1441.

For example, Powell claimed that the material at al-Taji store was moved on 22 December 2002. The

question then becomes why didn't the US then provide this information to the inspectors as soon as they entered Iraq (27 November), who could have verified those claims, before the material was allegedly moved? Why did the US not allow an independent inspectorate to check its allegations about the contents of al-Taji, if they were genuine in their beliefs?

(d) There is a very strong reliance upon Iraqi defectors. This is a notoriously unreliable source, and many of the claims of the same defectors that Powell implicitly refers to have since been shown to be inaccurate.

An example would be the claims of Adnan Saeed al-Haideri, who Powell refers to without naming him (as an "Iraqi civil engineer"). Haideri did not make any claims about mobile production facilities in his first press conferences in December 2001. It was only after debriefing by the US and a three-week "debriefing" by Nabil Musawi, spokesman for the opposition Iraqi National Congress, in Bangkok, that Haideri started talking about mobile facilities, in mid-2002.

In general, Powell makes some plausible claims that Iraq has not stood by the letter of the law in all respects. However, he does not show that Iraq has developed weapons on any scale, or that it has the potential to threaten Iraq's own people or its neighbours, much less the US. Nor does he show that Iraq may be able to develop its non-conventional capacity if weapons inspectors continue their work in Iraq.

1. Iraqi non-compliance in its 7 December 2002 declaration: "I asked for this session today for two purposes: First, to support the core assessments made by Dr. Blix and Dr. ElBaradei...And as Dr. ElBaradei reported, Iraq's declaration of December 7, 'did not provide any new information relevant to certain questions that have been outstanding since 1998.'"

Powell misses out the next part of ElBaradei's quote of 27 January 2003, where he [explains](#) that these 'certain questions' relate only to "Iraq's progress prior to 1991 related to weapons design and centrifuge development...While these questions do not constitute unresolved disarmament issues, they nevertheless need further clarification". ElBaradei's [core assessment](#) was that:

"we have to date found no evidence that Iraq has revived its nuclear weapons programme since the elimination of the programme in the 1990s...With our verification system now in place, barring exceptional circumstances, and provided there is sustained proactive cooperation by Iraq, we should be able within the next few months to provide credible assurance that Iraq has no nuclear weapons programme."

Powell shows no sign of supporting that core assessment (see points 27-30), a fact that led to several direct contradictions of Powell's statements by ElBaradei in his [14 February 2003 briefing](#) to the Security Council.

"Dr Blix pronounced the 12,000-page declaration rich in volume but poor in information and practically devoid of new evidence"

Blix made this [statement](#) to the Security Council on 9 January 2003. He seemed to revise, and in some ways reverse, this judgement in his [statement to the Security Council on 27 January 2003](#): "In the field of missiles and biotechnology, the declaration contains a good deal of new material and information covering the period from 1998 and onward. This is welcome"

2. Recording of 26/11/02 alleging the concealment of "modified vehicle" from al-Kindi company, which is "a company that is well known to have been involved in prohibited weapons systems activity"

The sound quality of this recording is very poor. It is difficult to make out the word used, which Powell translates as "evacuated." Furthermore, this claim relates to a visit by IAEA head, Dr ElBaradei, and so the link with al-Kindi's [former activities](#)- in missile development - is inapposite.

3. Recording of 20/01/03 of two officers discussing "forbidden ammo", with orders to "clean out all the areas, the scrap areas, the abandoned areas".

The conversation seems more to be about making sure that the weapons inspectors do not find any material that is undeclared in the 7 December 2002 statement. The officers talk about "the possibility there is, by chance, forbidden ammo": in other words, like UNMOVIC found rockets on 16 January (4 days prior to the conversation). The officers seem to be stating that they need to make sure that they have disposed of any such material, not the transfer of known stores away from UNMOVIC's reach.

4. Systematic concealment: "This is all part of a system of hiding things and moving things out of the way and making sure they have left nothing behind...this is part and parcel of a policy of evasion and deception that goes back 12 years, a policy set at the highest levels of the Iraqi regime...Saddam Hussein has what is called "a Higher Committee for Monitoring the Inspection Teams". Think about that. Iraq has a high-level committee to monitor the inspectors who were sent in to monitor Iraq's disarmament not to cooperate with them, not to assist them, but to spy on them and keep them from doing their jobs."

(a) Hans Blix in his [briefing to the Security Council on 14-February 2003](#) gives a much more positive view of Iraqi 'monitoring', and gives details of two assisting commissions which have been set up:

"The Iraqi side also informed us that the commission, which had been appointed in the wake of our finding 12 empty chemical weapons warheads, had had its mandate expanded to look for any still existing proscribed items. This was welcomed. A second commission, we learnt, has now

been appointed with the task of searching all over Iraq for more documents relevant to the elimination of proscribed items and programmes. It is headed by the former Minister of Oil, General Amer Rashid, and is to have very extensive powers of search in industry, administration and even private houses."

(b) Movement of proscribed weapons is questioned by Dr Blix on [14 February 2003](#):

"intelligence has led to sites where no proscribed items were found. Even in such cases, however, inspection of these sites were useful in proving the absence of such items and in some cases the presence of other items - conventional munitions. It showed that conventional arms are being moved around the country and *that movements are not necessarily related to weapons of mass destruction*."

5. Nuclear files: "Thanks to intelligence they were provided...when they [the inspectors] searched the homes of an Iraqi nuclear scientist, they uncovered roughly 2000 pages of documents. Some of the material is classified and related to Iraq's nuclear program"

The classified nature of these papers seems to be refuted by Dr ElBaradei in his [briefing to the Security Council on 14-February 2003](#):

"The IAEA has completed a more detailed review of the 2000 pages of documents found on 16 January at the private residence of an Iraqi scientist. The documents relate predominantly to lasers, including the use of laser technology to enrich uranium. [...] While the documents have provided some additional details about Iraq's laser enrichment development efforts, they refer to activities or sites already known to the IAEA and appear to be the personal files of the scientist in whose home they were found. Nothing contained in the documents alters the conclusions previously drawn by the IAEA concerning the extent of Iraq's laser enrichment programme."

6. al-Taji munitions facility: "Here you see 15 munitions bunkers...the four that are in red squares represent active chemical munitions bunkers. How do I know that?...a facility that is a signature item for this kind of bunker. In side that facility are special guards and special equipment to monitor any leakage...The truck you also see is a signature item. It's a decontamination vehicle"

(a) This seems ostensibly to be a wholly implausible claim: a picture of a truck and a shed by themselves reveal nothing about the contents of the adjacent bunker. It also begs the question why the US did not provide this information to the inspectors as soon as they entered Iraq on 27 November, 25 days before Powell claims al-Taji was evacuated. If they were genuine in their beliefs, why did they not allow the independent inspectorate to check verify their claims?

(b) Dr Blix reminds the Security Council of Powell's false inference on [14-February 2003](#):

"The presentation of intelligence information by the US Secretary of State suggested that Iraq had prepared for inspections by cleaning up sites and removing evidence of proscribed weapons programmes. I would like to comment only on one case, which we are familiar with, namely, the trucks identified by analysts as being for chemical decontamination at a munitions depot. This was a declared site, and it was certainly one of the sites Iraq would have expected us to inspect. We have noted that the two satellite images of the site were taken several weeks apart. The reported movement of munitions at the site *could just as easily have been a routine activity* as a movement of proscribed munitions in anticipation of imminent inspection."

7. Iraqi intelligence forewarning of inspections: "This sequence of events raises the worrisome suspicion that Iraq had been tipped off to the forthcoming inspections at Taji"

Hans Blix denies that this appears to be the case in his briefing to the Security Council on [14 February 2003](#): "Since we arrived in Iraq, we have conducted more than 400 inspections covering more than 300 sites. All inspections were performed without notice, and access was almost always provided promptly. *In no case have we seen convincing evidence that the Iraqi side knew in advance that the inspectors were coming.*"

8. Pre-inspection material removal at Al-Musayyib Rocket Test Facility, Amiriyah Serum and Vaccine Institute, Ibn al Haytham

Again, the presence of trucks in photographs does not substantiate the claim that missiles have been moved, although at Ibn al Haytham Powell does claim a truck-mounted crane was also seen.

9. "Iraq also has refused to permit any U-2 reconnaissance flights"

Iraq has now agreed to allow these flights. As Dr ElBaradei told the Security Council on [14 February 2003](#): "Iraq has accepted the use of all of the platforms for aerial surveillance proposed by supporting States to UNMOVIC and the IAEA, including U2s, Mirage IVs, Antonovs and drones".

10. Access to scientists: "The regime only allows interviews with the inspectors in the presence of an Iraqi official, a minder...Iraqi Vice President Ramadan accused the inspectors of conducting espionage, a veiled threat that anyone cooperating with UN inspectors was committing treason...in mid-December, weapons experts at one facility were replaced by Iraqi intelligence agents...Iraqi officials issued a false death certificate for one scientist and he was sent into hiding...a dozen experts have been placed under house arrest"

(a) Here the US again is relying on allegations that it has not demonstrated. None of these claims have been backed up with any substantive evidence at all by the US.

(b) "The IAEA has continued to interview key Iraqi personnel. We have recently been able to conduct four interviews in private - that is, without the presence of an Iraqi observer." (Dr El Baradei, [comments to the Security Council of 14 February 2003](#)).

11. Incomplete list of scientists: "Iraq did not meet its obligations under 1441 to provide a comprehensive list of scientists associated with its weapons of mass destruction programs. Iraq's list was out of date and contained only about 500 names despite the fact that UNSCOM had earlier put together a list of about 3,500 names."

Iraq has provided lists of 117 persons for the chemical sector, 120 for the biological sector and 156 persons for the missile sector by the end of December 2002. However, Hans Blix had himself suggested that Iraq should give sets of names in stages: "Iraq may proceed in pyramid fashion, starting from the leadership in programmes, going down to management, scientists, engineers and technicians but excluding the basic layer of workers" ([Statement to the Security Council, 19 December 2002](#)). If Powell has a problem with Dr Blix's way of working, he should raise those issues for the Council to discuss with Dr Blix.

ElBaradei in his [briefing to the Security Council on 14 February 2003](#) seems to have expressed satisfaction with an expanded list of nuclear scientists: "In response to a request by the IAEA, Iraq has expanded the list of relevant Iraqi personnel to over 300, along with their current work locations. The list includes the higher-level key scientists known to the IAEA in the nuclear and nuclear related areas."

12. Anthrax: "Iraq declared 8,500 litres of anthrax. But UNSCOM estimates that Saddam Hussein could have produced 25,000 litres...We now know from Iraq's past admission that it has successfully weaponized...anthrax"

The evidence that Iraq produced more anthrax than its declaration is based upon the possibility that Iraq used its fermentors (at al-Hakam) at a greater capacity than it has declared previously. Iraq claimed that it produced 8445 litres of anthrax spores, with some evidence that an un-quantifiable amount was destroyed [[UNSCOM report to the Security Council, January 1999, Appendix III](#)]. UNSCOM's figures about the size of Iraq's fermentors suggest that Iraq could have produced three times this amount.

Iraq's claim that it actually did not produce anthrax spores at the level at which its fermentors could have operated is, however, substantiated by the only documentation found relating to that production. A 1990 report from al-Hakam indicates the levels of production at that facility in that year. It appears that this is the source of Iraq's estimate of the total amount of anthrax spores produced. UNSCOM criticised Iraq for using this report for the "extrapolations into 1989 and earlier". As production of anthrax prior to 1990 seems – by UNSCOM's own account – to have been only operating at "pilot scale" from 1988, the levels of production prior to 1990 are somewhat immaterial compared to the large-scale production after September 1990. It is unclear

why UNSCOM does not consider the 1990 al-Hakam report reliable, as it uses it to verify other points about Iraq's biological weapons production.

Dr Blix provides a different set of figures from the US. He states that "the quantity of media involved would suffice to produce, for example, about 5000 litres of concentrated anthrax" [[update to the Security Council on 27 January 2003](#)], less than 1/5 of the material that the US has claimed that Iraq could produce. It is possible that this involves a different assessment of Iraq's capacity prior to 1991.

Professor Anthony H. Cordesman of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) seems to discount the possibility that the anthrax produced in bulk prior to 1991 can still be effectively weaponised: "Anthrax spores are extremely hardy and can achieve 65% to 80% lethality against untreated patients for years. Fortunately, Iraq does not seem to have produced dry, storable agents and only seems to have deployed wet Anthrax agents, which have a relatively limited life." [[Iraq's Past and Future Biological Weapons Capabilities](#) (1998) p.13]. This is disputed by the IISS report of 9 September 2002 which states that "wet anthrax from the 1989-1990 period – if stored properly – would still be infectious." [p.40] [see below point 12]

13. Mobile biological production facilities: "We have first-hand descriptions of biological weapons factories on wheels and on rails...In a matter of months, they can produce a quantity of biological poison equal to the entire amount that Iraq claimed to have produced in the years prior to the Gulf War...The source was an eyewitness, an Iraqi chemical engineer who supervised one of these facilities...He reported that when UNSCOM was in country and inspecting, the biological weapons agent production always began on Thursdays at Midnight because Iraq thought UNSCOM would not inspect on the Muslim Holy Day, Thursday night through Friday...A second source. An Iraqi civil engineer in a position to know the details of the program confirmed the existence of transportable facilities moving on trailers. A third source, also in a position to know, reported in summer, 2002, that Iraq had manufactured mobile production systems mounted on road-trailer units and on rail cars. Finally, a fourth source. An Iraqi major who defected confirmed that Iraq has mobile biological research laboratories in addition to the production facilities I mentioned earlier...We know that Iraq has at least seven of these mobile, biological agent factories. The truck-mounted ones have at least two or three trucks each. That means that the mobile production facilities are very few, perhaps 18 trucks that we know of – there may be more – but perhaps 18 that we know of"

Much of the speculation about Iraq's mobile production facilities began from the statement from Lt. Gen. Amer Al-Saadi that the creation of such facilities were once considered. However, he – and the Iraqi government – have denied that any mobile biological weapon agents facilities have ever been built.

Powell describes four defectors providing further information. Defectors are a notoriously unreliable source.

Source 1's claim about the 24-hour production cycle is not credible – Raymond Zilinskas, a microbiologist and former UN weapons inspector (now director of Chemical and Biological Weapons Nonproliferation Program at the Monterey Institute of International Studies) was reported in the Washington Post as saying that a 24-hour production cycle was insufficient for creating significant amounts of pathogens such as anthrax: "You normally would require 36 to 48 hours just to do the fermentation. The short processing time seems suspicious to me" ["Despite Defectors' Accounts, Evidence Remains Anecdotal", Joby Warrick, Washington Post, 6 February 2003].

Source 2 seems to be Adnan Saeed al-Haideri. Haideri did not make any claims about mobile production facilities in his first press conferences in December 2001. It was only after debriefing by the US and a three-week debriefing by Nabil Musawi, spokesman for the opposition Iraqi National Congress, in Bangkok, that Haideri started talking about mobile facilities, in mid-2002.

The basic claim about mobile facilities operating without detection is itself problematic. The Washington Post (6 February 2003) further reported that:

"Zilinskas and other experts said the schematic presented by Powell as an example of Iraq's mobile labs was theoretically workable but that turning the diagram into a functioning laboratory posed enormous challenges -- such as how to dispose of large quantities of highly toxic waste."

14. Drying Technology: "By 1998, UN experts agreed that the Iraqis had perfected drying techniques for their biological weapons programs."

According to UNSCOM, *Bacillus thuringiensis* spores – a close relation to anthrax spores – were tested on a spray dryer in December 1989. However, there has been no public evidence that anthrax spores were themselves ever dried by Iraq, and it is unclear if Iraq ever obtained suitable drying equipment for itself.

15. Smallpox: "Saddam Hussein...has the wherewithal to develop smallpox"

This seems to be highly unlikely. Either Iraq had been able to preserve live smallpox virus from the early 1970s (when there was the last outbreak inside the country), without any detection or admission by the former head of its biological weapons programme (who defected in August 1995). Or it must have imported it: the only known stocks are in Russia and the US, and there is no indication these stocks have been compromised. UNSCOM did not consider smallpox to be an item of concern in Iraq, and did not mention it in their reports.

16. Dispersal by Mirage jets: "Iraq had a program to modify aerial fuel tanks for mirage jets....In 1995, an Iraqi military officer, Mujahid Saleh Abdul Latif told inspectors that Iraq intended the spray tanks to be mounted onto a MiG-21 that had been converted into an unmanned aerial"

vehicle, or UAV."

See point 36 below.

17. Unaccounted chemical weapons and agents: "Saddam Hussein has never accounted for vast amounts of chemical weaponry...Saddam Hussein has chemical weapons"

Again, a false inference that lack of corroborative evidence for destruction is equal to continued existence of weapons, as Blix pointedly mentioned in his briefing to the Security Council 14 February 2003: "To take an example, a document, which Iraq provided, suggested to us that some 1,000 tonnes of chemical agent were 'unaccounted for'. *One must not jump to the conclusion that they exist.*"

18. "Saddam Hussein has never accounted for...550 artillery shells with mustard"

Iraq declared that it filled approximately 13,000 artillery shells with mustard prior to 1991. UNSCOM accounted for 12,792 of these shells, and destroyed them in the period of 1992-94. However, Iraq also declared that 550 mustard-filled artillery shells had been lost in the aftermath of the Gulf War. The extent to which these – if they still existed – could constitute an ongoing danger should be assessed in light of the need to deploy large amounts of mustard for effective use: mustard has a high volume-to-effectiveness ratio. As the IISS record in the strategic dossier: "large amounts of mustard are necessary for effective military operations. Roughly, one tonne of agent is needed to effectively contaminate 2.6 square kilometres of territory, if properly disseminated."

Iraq has also cooperated in the destruction of remaining mustard items. 10 artillery shells were found by UNSCOM but were not destroyed before UNSCOM withdrew in 1998. As requested, Iraq kept these shells at al-Mutanna facility, where they were identified by UNMOVIC on 4 December 2002, and are in the process of being destroyed as of 14 February 2003.

19. "Saddam Hussein has never accounted for...30,000 empty munitions"

(a) Artillery shells and Iraq's munitions have a very limited range, and could only be considered a threat to Iraq's own citizenry and those within a few kilometres of Iraq's borders.

(b) Inspections have demonstrated that Iraq has retained at least a small number of chemical warheads, although no evidence that they were ever filled. On 16 January 2003, an UNMOVIC multidisciplinary team visited the Ukhaider Ammunition Storage Area, and found "11 empty 122 mm chemical warheads and one warhead that requires further evaluation. The warheads were in excellent condition and were similar to ones imported by Iraq during the late 1980's." Further samples were taken from the 12th warhead on 18 and 28 January 2003. Both this warhead and the storage building are under IAEA seal – Ukhaider is a well-known storage site for Iraq's permitted

artillery, and is frequently searched by inspectors. According to Raymond Zilinskas, a consultant microbiologist to the Department of State and the US Department of Defence, and former UNSCOM biological weapons inspector: "If there are depots with millions of rounds of artillery shells for conventional use and one box of artillery shells for chemical use, it would be easy to miss. It could have fallen between the cracks" [Los Angeles Times, 17 January 2003]

Iraq also declared 4 more items at al-Taji munitions stores on 20 January 2003, and these were inspected on 21 January 2003. UNMOVIC discovered another single empty warhead on 4 February 2003, and "an empty 122 mm Al Burak chemical warhead and an empty plastic chemical agent canister" on 9 February 2003, at al-Taji Ammunition Depot. The warheads were tagged and secured, and samples have been taken for analysis. Reports say that the range of the rockets for these warheads is 6 miles, and that they are all Sakr-18 warheads.

The UNMOVIC Executive Chairman said "These things were laying in boxes. They had never been opened. They were covered by bird droppings, so they'd been there for some time...They were from pre-1990, so at the time when they were able to have these things legally. But of course, they should have been properly declared and, in fact, destroyed" [CNN Late Edition with Wolf Blitzer, 19 January 2003]

He warned against the over-dramatising the discovery last Thursday of 12 warheads, saying none had produced 'any evidence' of containing traces of lethal chemicals. "We haven't found a gun but a little bit of smoke...we must not forget that these were empty things and in all likelihood they never had anything in them." [The Observer [London], 19 January 2003]

20. "Saddam Hussein has never accounted for...enough precursors to increase his stockpile to as much as 500 tons of chemical agents."

UNSCOM's assessment for each relevant precursor chemical that Iraq held in January 1991 is in Appendix II, para.22 of its January 1999 report. For some precursor chemicals, UNSCOM was able to account for the entire quantity held by Iraq; but with a number of other chemicals (e.g. dimethylaminohydrochloride, for the production of tabun; thionylchloride, for G-agents mustard and VX) UNSCOM was able to verify that destruction of these chemicals had taken place, but was unable to verify the amount. Given UNSCOM's inability to discern the quantities of materials destroyed in 1991, it is difficult to see how Iraq could ever verify that this material no longer exists, particularly the material destroyed when the buildings they were in were bombed. It is also difficult to see how the US has arrived at the figure of 500 tons (not mentioned in any UNSCOM or UNMOVIC reports).

In addition, Iraq has, *pace* the State Department, provided some new information about what happened to other precursors held in 1991. Hans Blix notes that the Iraqi declaration of 7 December 2002 contained "there are some sections of new material. In the chemical weapons field, Iraq has further explained its account of the material balance of precursors for chemical

warfare agent." [notes for briefing the Security Council of 19 December 2002].

21. VX: "UNSCOM also gained forensic evidence that Iraq had produced [four tons of] VX and put it into weapons for delivery. Yet to this day, Iraq denies it had ever weaponised VX. And on January 27, UNMOVIC told this Council that it has information that conflicts with the Iraqi account of its VX program"

- Iraq admitted to producing nearly 4 tons of VX. It is believed that 1.5 tonnes of these remained in 1991. In 1998, UNSCOM found VX degradation products on missile warheads, indicating that Iraq had weaponised it, contrary to the Government of Iraq's own claims.

- However, it is unlikely that the VX nerve agent no longer exist in operational form, because:

(a) Iraq claimed that this quantity of VX was discarded unilaterally by dumping it on the ground. VX degrades rapidly if placed onto concrete. This seems plausible given UNSCOM's testing of the site where the VX was reportedly dumped: "Traces of one VX-degradation product and a chemical known as a VX-stabiliser were found in the samples taken from the VX dump sites" [UNSCOM's January 1999 report, Appendix II, paragraph 16] This did not, however, allow "a quantified assessment" of how much had been destroyed.

(b) VX, even if stabilised, degrades: "Any VX produced by Iraq before 1991 is likely to have decomposed over the past decade...Any G-Agent or V-agent stocks that Iraq concealed from UNSCOM inspections are likely to have deteriorated by now" [IISS strategic dossier, September 2002, pp.52-3].

22. Tareq and chemical weapons: "Iraq has rebuilt key portions of the Tareq State Establishment. Tareq includes facilities designed specifically for Iraq's chemical weapons program and employs key figures from past programs"

23. Cleaning of Al Musayyib transshipment facility: "I'm going to show you a small part of a chemical complex called "Al Musayyib", a site that Iraq has used for at least three years to transship chemical weapons from production facilities out of to the field. In May 2002, our satellites photographed the unusual activity in this picture. Here we see cargo vehicles are again at this transshipment point, and we can see that they are accompanied by a decontamination vehicle associated with biological or chemical weapons activity. What makes this picture significant is that we have a human source who has corroborated that movement of chemical weapons occurred at this site at that time...This photograph of the site taken two months later, in July, shows not only the previous site which is the figure in the middle at the top with the bulldozer sign near it, it shows that this previous site, as well as all of the other sites around the site have been fully bulldozed and graded. The topsoil has been removed. The Iraqis literally removed the crust of the earth from large portions of the site in order to conceal chemical weapons evidence that would be there from years of chemical weapons activity"

(a) It seems highly unlikely that residue of 3 years of chemical transshipment could be completely hidden simply by removing the topsoil; instead, detailed analysis of the facilities at al-Musayyib would be likely to yield physical evidence. This is what inspectors have been trying to find.

(b) "An UNMOVIC multidisciplinary team inspected the Al Musaayaib Ammo Depot, an ammunition storage area south of Baghdad on 10 February. The team inspected bunkers, warehouses, small buildings and storage areas." Any evidence of chemical transshipment will be reported to the Security Council. No such evidence has been reported to date.

24. Chemical/biological equipment procurement: "Iraq procures needed items from around the world using an extensive clandestine network. What we know comes largely from intercepted communications and human sources who are in a position to know the facts. Iraq's procurement efforts include: equipment that can filter and separate microorganisms and toxins involved in biological weapons; equipment that can be used to concentrate the agent; growth media that can be used to continue producing anthrax and bitulinum toxin; sterilization equipment for laboratories; glass-lined reactors and specialty pumps that can handle corrosive chemical weapons agents and precursors; large amounts of thionyl chloride, a precursor for nerve and blister agents; and other chemical such as sodium sulfide, an important mustard agent precursor."

Powell himself admits that "these items can also be used for legitimate purposes." His justification of suspicion that "[w]ith Iraq's well-documented history on biological and chemical weapons, why should any of us give Iraq the benefit of the doubt? I don't" suggests that suspicion rather than fact underpins his assessment of these procurement activities.

25. Recording of a discussion of a nerve agent cover-up: 'Just a few weeks ago we intercepted communications between two commanders in Iraq's Second Republican Guard Corps. One commander is going to be giving an instruction to the other... "Remove." "Remove." "The expression." "The expression. I got it." "Nerve agents." "Nerve agents." "Wherever it comes up." "Got it, wherever it comes up." "Got it, wherever it comes up." "In the wireless instructions." "In the instructions." "Correction, no, in the wireless instructions." "Wireless, I got it"'

Powell did not reveal when the recording was made, nor what the purpose of the conversation was – something that he should have been able to tell from the context of the recording. There is a less threatening interpretation of the discussion: the individuals were drawing up a report, and were discussing the terminology to use. The individuals are explicitly referring to "the expression", not to the items themselves as Powell suggests in his interpretation.

26. Chemical weapons agent stockpile: "Our conservative estimate is that Iraq today has a stockpile of between 100 and 500 battlefield rockets."

27. Human tests: "We also have sources who tell us that since the 1980s, Saddam's regime has been experimenting on human beings to perfect its biological or chemical weapons. A source said that

1,600 death-row prisoners were transferred in 1995 to a special unit for such experiments. An eyewitness saw prisoners tied down to beds, experiments conducted on them, blood oozing around the victims' mouths, and autopsies performed to confirm the effects on the prisoners"

Human sources, not made public – therefore hard to comment on their credibility. However, organisations with detailed knowledge of the human rights situation in Iraq have cast doubt upon the credibility of this report.

"a spokeswoman for Amnesty International said it had no recent reports of such experiments: 'We are aware that that did happen, but it happened in the 1980s. Prisoners were being experimented on, but as far as we know it's not something that is actually happening currently. We do know of political prisoners who are being subjected to systematic torture but as far as we know there are no transfers of prisoners for experiments.'"

["US recycles human test claims"](#), The Guardian, 6 February 2003.

28. Nuclear capabilities and procurement: "Saddam Hussein already possesses two out of the three key components needed to build a nuclear bomb. He has a cadre of nuclear scientists with the expertise and he has a bomb design. Since 1998, his efforts to reconstitute his nuclear program have been focused on acquiring the third and last component: sufficient fissile material to produce a nuclear explosion"

There is no credible evidence that Iraq is continuing to develop a nuclear weapons programme:

"Drawing from satellite imagery and other information available to it, the IAEA identified a number of sites, some of which had been associated with Iraq's past nuclear activities, where modifications of possible relevance to the IAEA's mandate had been made, or new buildings constructed, between 1998 and 2002. Eight of these sites were identified by States as being locations where nuclear activities were suspected of being conducted. All of these sites were inspected to ascertain whether there had been developments in technical capabilities, organization, structure, facility boundaries or personnel. In general, the IAEA has observed that, while a few sites have improved their facilities and taken on new personnel over the past four years, at the majority of these sites (which had been involved in research, development and manufacturing) the equipment and laboratories have deteriorated to such a degree that the resumption of nuclear activities would require substantial renovation. The IAEA has found no signs of nuclear activity at any of these sites." [ElBaradei, update to the Security Council on 27 January 2003 (para.35)]

29. Aluminium tubes: "[Saddam Hussein] has made repeated covert attempts to acquire high-specification aluminum tubes from 11 different countries, even after inspections resumed. These tubes are controlled by the Nuclear Suppliers Group precisely because they can be used as centrifuges for enriching uranium...Most U.S. experts think they are intended to serve as rotors in centrifuges used to enrich uranium."

David Albright, former IAEA inspector and director of the Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS), has argued that the aluminium tubes are more likely to be used in the making of conventional artillery rockets:

- Iraq has imported the same form of aluminium tubes from the 1980s onwards, for non-nuclear purposes.
- That steel or carbon fibre tubes would have been more suitable if Iraq had been planning to use them in the construction of gas centrifuges. Iraq had previously invested in developing steel and carbon fibre parts for its nuclear programme before 1990.
- o These tubes are not critical centrifuge components; the most advanced components (rotors, end caps, bearings) would still need to be imported if Iraq was intent on building gas centrifuges.

[ISIS report, "Aluminum Tubing..", 23 September 2002, updated on 27 September, at: www.isis-online.org/publications/iraq/aluminumtubes.html]

"... all the experts who have analyzed the tubes in our possession agree that they can be adapted for centrifuge use...First, it strikes me as quite odd that these tubes are manufactured to a tolerance that far exceeds U.S. requirements for comparable rockets. Second, we actually have examined tubes from several different batches that were seized clandestinely before they reached Baghdad. What we notice in these different batches is a progression to higher and higher levels of specification, including, in the latest batch, an anodized coating on extremely smooth inner and outer surfaces. Why would they continue refining the specifications, go to all that trouble for something that, if it was a rocket, would soon be blown into shrapnel when it went off?"

ElBaradei's briefing to the Security Council on 9 January 2003 refutes this judgement (paras.9-10; emphasis added): "the IAEA has conducted a series of inspections at sites involved in the production":

and storage of reverse engineered rockets, held discussions with and interviewed Iraqi personnel, taken samples of aluminium tubes, and begun a review of the documentation provided by Iraq relating to contracts with the traders. While the matter is still under investigation, and further verification is foreseen, the *IAEA's analysis to date indicates that the specifications of the aluminium tubes sought by Iraq in 2001 and 2002 appear to be consistent with reverse engineering of rockets*. While it would be possible to modify such tubes for the manufacture of centrifuges, *they are not*

directly suitable for it."

In response to Secretary Powell's comments on the high level of specification of the aluminium tubes, ElBaradei told the Security Council on 14 February 2003 that: "Iraq has been asked to explain the reasons for the tight tolerance specifications that it had requested from various suppliers. Iraq has provided documentation related to the project for reverse engineering and has committed itself to providing samples of tubes received from prospective suppliers."

30. Other gas centrifuge parts: "We also have intelligence from multiple sources that Iraq is attempting to acquire magnets and high-speed balancing machines. Both items can be used in a gas centrifuge program to enrich uranium..."

Evidence suggests these parts were not intended for a nuclear weapons program.

ElBaradei discussed the magnet production line in his update to the Security Council on 27 January 2003, paras.58-59:

"Iraq presented detailed information on a project to construct a facility to produce magnets for the Iraqi missile programme, as well as for industrial applications, and that Iraq had prepared a solicitation of offers, but that the project had been delayed due to 'financial credit arrangements'. Preliminary investigations indicate that the specifications contained in the offer solicitation are consistent with those required for the declared intended uses. However, the IAEA will continue to investigate the matter [...]"

"Intercepted communications from mid-2000 through last summer showed that Iraq front companies sought to buy machines that can be used to balance gas centrifuge rotors...there is no doubt in my mind. These illicit procurement efforts show that Saddam Hussein is very much focused on putting in place the key missing piece from his nuclear weapons program".

Likewise in response to Powell's claims about gas centrifuge rotors, ElBaradei told the Security Council on 14 February 2003 that:

"IAEA inspectors found a number of documents relevant to transactions aimed at the procurement of carbon fibre, a dual-use material used by Iraq in its past clandestine uranium enrichment programme for the manufacture of gas centrifuge rotors. Our review of these documents suggests that the carbon fibre sought by Iraq was not intended for enrichment purposes, as the specifications of the material appear not to be consistent with those needed for manufacturing rotor tubes. In addition, we have carried out follow-up inspections, during which we have been able to observe the use of such carbon fibre in non-nuclear-related applications and to take samples."

31. Nuclear scientists: "He [Saddam] has also been busy trying to maintain the other key parts of his nuclear program, particularly his cadre of key nuclear scientists. It is noteworthy that over the last 18 months Saddam Hussein has paid increasing personal attention to Iraq's top nuclear scientists, a group that the government-controlled press calls openly his 'nuclear mujaheddin'"

(a) ElBaradei refutes claims that personnel are working on a nuclear weapons programme in his update to the Security Council on 27 January 2003, paras.22-23:

"In its CAFCD [Currently Accurate, Full and Complete Declaration, 7 December 2002], Iraq declared that the current and former IAEC sites, as well as the locations to which former IAEC personnel were transferred, are now devoted to the conduct of non-nuclear commercial activities. [...] From the IAEA's assessment to date of the Iraqi declaration, the following conclusions have been drawn: [...] The part of the CAFCD which covers Iraq's programme between 1991 and 1998 is consistent with the conclusions drawn by the IAEA on the basis of its verification activities conducted throughout that period and regularly reported to the Security Council."

(b) Powell's quote involves a misquote, and a mistranslation. The quote refers to a speech of 10 September 2000 and was about, in part, nuclear energy. The transcription of the speech was made at the time by the BBC monitoring service. Saddam Hussein actually refers to "nuclear energy mujahidin", and doesn't mention the development of weaponry. In addition, the term "mujahidin" is often used in a non-combatant sense, to mean anyone who struggles for a cause. Saddam Hussein, for example, often refers to the mujahidin developing Iraq's medical facilities. There is nothing in the speech to indicate that Iraq is attempting to develop or threaten the use of nuclear weapons.

32. SCUD missiles: "Numerous intelligence reports over the past decade from sources inside Iraq indicate that Saddam Hussein retains a covert force of up to a few dozen Scud-variant ballistic missiles. These are missiles with a range of 650 to 900 kilometers"

The claims about a retained stock of ballistic missiles seem unlikely. According to Unscm, by 1997, 817 out of Iraq's known 819 ballistic missiles had been certifiably destroyed. On the worst-case assumption that Iraq has salvaged some of the parts for these missiles and has reconstructed them since 1998, even Charles Duelfer - former US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, deputy head of UNSCOM and strong proponent of an invasion of Iraq - has provided an estimate of only 12 to 14 missiles held by Iraq.

33. Excessive range of missiles: "We know from intelligence and Iraq's own admissions that Iraq's alleged permitted ballistic missiles, the al-Samoud II and the al-Fatah, violate the 150-kilometer limit established by this Council in Resolution 687. These are prohibited systems"

Iraq has admitted that the range of al-Samoud is greater than 150km:

"In the missile area, Iraq has declared the development of a missile known as the Al Samoud, which uses components from an imported surface-to-air missile. A variant of the Al Samoud, with a larger diameter (760 mm) than the standard version (500 mm) has been declared. [...] In the latest update of the semi-annual monitoring declarations, Iraq has declared that in 13 flight tests of the Al Samoud the missile has exceeded the permitted range. The greatest range achieved was 183 kilometres." [Hans Blix, notes for briefing the Security Council of 19 December 2002]

On 27 January 2003, Blix reported:

"During my recent meeting in Baghdad, we were briefed on these two programmes. We were told that the final range for both systems would be less than the permitted maximum range of 150 km. These missiles might well represent prima facie cases of proscribed systems. The test ranges in excess of 150 km are significant, but some further technical considerations need to be made, before we reach a conclusion on this issue. In the mean time, we have asked Iraq to cease flight tests of both missiles."

On 14 February 2003 Blix confirmed that the al-Samoud II was indeed capable of exceeding 150km, and was therefore proscribed. The status of al-Fatah remains unclear: "As for the Al Fatah, the experts found that clarification of the missile data supplied by Iraq was required before the capability of the missile system could be fully assessed"

34. Rocket engines: "UNMOVIC has also reported that Iraq has illegally imported 380 SA-2 rocket engines."

The Iraqi government does seem to have admitted that they managed to import missile parts in violation of the sanctions regime. According to Hans Blix in his notes for briefing the Security Council of 9 January 2003,

"Iraq, in the [7 December 2002] Declaration, has declared the import of missile engines and raw material for the production of solid missile fuel. This import has taken place in violation of the relevant resolutions regulating import and export to Iraq. Inspections have confirmed the presence of a relatively large number of missile engines, some imported as late as 2002. We have yet to determine the significance of these illegal imports relating to the specific WMD-mandate of UNMOVIC."

On 14 February he linked these to the al-Samoud II system: "UNMOVIC inspectors were informed by Iraq during an official briefing that these engines were intended for use in the Al Samoud 2 missile system, which has now been assessed to be proscribed."

35. Testing for long-range missiles: "Iraq has programs that are intended to produce ballistic missiles that fly over 1,000 kilometers. One program is pursuing a liquid fuel missile that would be able to fly more than 1,200 kilometers. [...] Iraq has built an engine test stand that is larger than

anything it has ever had. Notice the dramatic difference in size between the test stand on the left, the old one, and the new one on the right. Note the large exhaust vent. This is where the flame from the engine comes out. The exhaust vent on the right test stand is five times longer than the one on the left. The one of the left is used for short-range missiles. The one on the right is clearly intended for long-range missiles that can fly 1,200 kilometers. This photograph was taken in April of 2002. Since then, the test stand has been finished and a roof has been put over it so it will be harder for satellites to see what's going on underneath the test stand."

This appears to be untrue. This site (the al-Rafah/Shahiyat Test Facility) has been repeatedly inspected, beginning on 27 November 2002. No incriminating usage has been found.

Recent inspections include those of 4 February 2003. The relevant excerpt of the UNMOVIC / IAEA report of 21 January 2003 read: "Another missile team traveled to the Shahiyat Test Facility, about 100 km north of Baghdad, to verify that this site was still abandoned."

Dr Blix made this point explicit in his briefing to the Security Council on 14 February 2003: "The experts also studied the data on the missile engine test stand that is nearing completion [...]. So far, the test stand has not been associated with a proscribed activity."

36. Unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs): "Iraq has been working on a variety of UAVs for more than a decade[...]This effort has included attempts to modify for unmanned flight the MiG-21 and, with greater success, an aircraft called the L-29. However, Iraq is now concentrating not on these airplanes but on developing and testing smaller UAVs such as this. UAVs are well suited for dispensing chemical and biological weapons."

In 1998 small Czech-built L-29 training jets were spotted at Iraq's Talil airbase. A British defence official invoked the possibility that if these drones were flown at low altitudes under the right conditions, a single drone could unleash a toxic cloud engulfing several city blocks. He labelled them "drones of death". The hyperbole is misleading: even if Iraq has designed such planes, they would not serve their purpose, as drones are easy to shoot down. A simple air defence system would be enough to prevent the drones from causing damage to neighbouring countries.

"There is ample evidence that Iraq has dedicated much effort to developing and testing spray devices that could be adapted for UAVs. And in the little that Saddam Hussein told us about UAVs, he has not told the truth. One of these lies is graphically and indisputably demonstrated by intelligence we collected on June 27th last year. According to Iraq's December 7th declaration, its UAVs have a range of only 80 kilometers. But we detected one of Iraq's newest UAVs in a test flight that went 500 kilometers nonstop on autopilot in the racetrack pattern depicted here. Not only is this test well in excess of the 150 kilometers that the United Nations permits, the test was left out of Iraq's December 7th declaration. The UAV was flown around and around and around in this circle and so that its 80-kilometer limit really was 500 kilometers, unrefueled and on autopilot -- violative of all of its

obligations under 1441 [...] Iraq could use these small UAVs which have a wingspan of only a few meters to deliver biological agents to its neighbors or, if transported, to other countries, including the United States."

It is unclear what sort of UAV this was. Certainly the L-29 has a total range of less than 400 miles: it would be all but impossible to use it in an attack on Israel. The only possibility for their use against western targets would be their potential deployment against invading troops. How Iraq could possibly transport planes fitted with a mechanism for dispensing chemical or biological agents into the US is left unexplained, and would appear to be unexplainable.

37. Terrorism – Palestinian groups: "Baghdad trains Palestine Liberation Front members in small arms and explosives. Saddam uses the Arab Liberation Front to funnel money to the families of Palestinian suicide bombers in order to prolong the Intifadah."

38. Terrorism – Assassinations: "And it's no secret that Saddam's own intelligence service was involved in dozens of attacks or attempted assassinations in the 1990s"

39. Terrorism – Iraq and al-Qaida: "But what I want to bring your attention today is the potentially much more sinister nexus between Iraq and the al-Qaida terrorist network...Iraq today harbors a deadly terrorist network headed by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi an associate and collaborator of Usama bin Laden and his al-Qaida lieutenants...Those helping to run this camp are Zarqawi lieutenants operating in northern Kurdish areas outside Saddam Hussein's controlled Iraq. But Baghdad has an agent in the most senior levels of the radical organization Ansar al-Islam that controls this corner of Iraq...Zarqawi's activities are not confined to this small corner of northeast Iraq. He traveled to Baghdad in May of 2002 for medical treatment, staying in the capital of Iraq for two months while he recuperated to fight another day. During his stay, nearly two dozen extremists converged on Baghdad and established a base of operations there"

Powell's claim about the Iraqi government's assistance of al-Qa'ida is based upon the fact that an operative of Ansar al-Islam, and his associates, were in Baghdad. He need not stop there. The head of Ansar al-Islam, Mullah Krekar (Najm al-Din Faraj) is currently living freely in Norway (see http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east?2713749.stm and <http://www.middleeastreference.org.uk/iraqiopposition.html#ansar>)

The US has not requested his arrest. If Iraq is guilty of occasional meetings with second-level al-Qa'ida operatives, then what is the Norwegian government guilty of?

40. al-Zarqawi poison camp: "One of his specialties, and one of the specialties of this camp, is poisons...The network is teaching its operatives how to produce ricin and other poisons."

Luke Harding of The Observer [London] visited the camp and claimed he saw "no sign of chemical weapons anywhere", and that "the terrorist factory was nothing of the kind - more a

dilapidated collection of concrete outbuildings at the foot of a grassy sloping hill" [Revealed: truth behind US 'poison factory' claim' in The Observer [London] on 9 February 2003 at <http://www.observer.co.uk/iraq/story/0,12239,892112,00.html>].

Conversely "[s]enior officials from the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan - the party with which Ansar is at war - insist that the Islamic guerrillas based in the village have been experimenting with poisons. They have smeared a crude form of cyanide on door handles. They had even tried it out on several farm animals, including sheep and donkeys, they claim. The guerrillas have also managed to construct a 1.5kg 'chemical' bomb designed to explode and kill anyone within a 50-metre radius, Kurdish intelligence sources say" [ibid]

41. Worldwide al-Zarqawi Iraq-linked terrorist network: "Zarqawi's terrorism is not confined to the Middle East. Zarqawi and his network have plotted terrorist actions against countries including France, Britain, Spain, Italy, Germany and Russia. According to detainees Abu Atiya, who graduated from Zarqawi's terrorist camp in Afghanistan, tasked at least nine North African extremists in 2001 to travel to Europe to conduct poison and explosive attacks...By our last count, 116 operatives connected to this global web have been arrested"

42. Continuing Iraqi interest in Al-Qa'ida: "Saddam became more interested as he saw al-Qaida's appalling attacks. A detained al-Qaida member tells us that Saddam was more willing to assist al-Qaida after the 1998 bombings of our embassies in Kenya and Tanzania...Iraqis continue to visit bin Laden in his new home in Afghanistan. A senior defector, one of Saddam's former intelligence chiefs in Europe, says Saddam sent his agents to Afghanistan sometime in the mid-1990s to provide training to al-Qaida members on document forgery. From the late 1990s until 2001, the Iraqi Embassy in Pakistan played the role of liaison to the al-Qaida organization. Some believe, some claim, these contacts do not amount to much. They say Saddam Hussein's secular tyranny and al-Qaida's religious tyranny do not mix. I am not comforted by this thought."

Powell presents no substantive evidence to support this claim, which appears to be contradicted flatly by a British intelligence report leaked to the BBC on 5 February, which claimed that there were no current links between the Iraqi regime and al-Qa'ida [<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/2727471.stm>]. The authenticity or completeness of this intelligence is hard, of course, to assess.

43. Human Rights abuses: "Saddam Hussein's use of mustard and nerve gas against the Kurds in 1988...[in which] [f]ive thousand men, women and children died. His campaign against the Kurds from 1987-89 included mass summary executions, disappearances, arbitrary jailing and ethnic cleansing, and the destruction of some 2,000 villages. He has also conducted ethnic cleansing against the Shia Iraqis and the Marsh Arabs whose culture has flourished for more than a millennium. Saddam Hussein's police state ruthlessly eliminates anyone who dares to dissent. Iraq has more forced disappearance cases than any other country"

Indeed.

44. Continuing threat from Iraqi WMD: "The gravity of this moment is matched by the gravity of the threat that Iraq's weapons of mass destruction pose to the world"

The tenor of Powell's report is to conflate strong claims about Iraq's retention and development of non-conventional weapons, with either tangential or ambiguous evidence for those claims. Hans Blix assesses the concrete evidence for Iraqi WMDs more sanguinely on 14 February 2003: **"So far, UNMOVIC has not found any such weapons, only a small number of empty chemical munitions, which should have been declared and destroyed."**