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**From:** Nicholas Cannon

**Date:** 16 March 2003

**PRIME MINISTER**

**cc:** Jonathan Powell  
David Manning  
Stephen Wall  
Matthew Rycroft  
Daniel Pruce

## **IRAQ: IRAQI APPROACH TO UNSCOM/UNMOVIC**

You asked for a note on Iraqi tactics in dealing with the UN weapons inspectors. Since April 1991, when Iraq accepted UNSCR 687, its tactics have involved

- Giving the inspectors incomplete documentation, often contradictory.
- Unilateral and secret destruction of material and documentation, making it difficult to verify.
- Repeated so-called full, final and complete declarations on WMD, later found to be incomplete and misleading.
- Concealment of material, documents and personnel relevant to WMD.
- Harassment of UN inspectors, either by physically preventing or impeding inspections, or by repeated demands for their withdrawal.
- Proceeding with new programmes of WMD while supposedly co-operating with the inspectors on dismantling existing programmes.

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In March to May 1992, Iraq admitted the existence of previously undeclared WMD, but claimed it had been (illegally) destroyed unilaterally; threatened to shoot down UN inspection aircraft; and claimed to provide "full, final and complete" disclosure of its CW, BW and missile programmes. This pattern was repeated over and over again. In September/October 1994, Iraq stopped co-operation with UNSCOM, but backed down under threat of military action.

In March 1995, Iraq provided a second full, final and complete disclosure of CBW. By July it had admitted an offensive BW programme, contrary to the disclosure. In August 1995, Iraq provided a third full, final and complete disclosure: this lasted less than a fortnight until revealed to be false by the defection of Saddam's son-in-law. Hussein Kamal. Kamal disclosed a far more extensive BW programme than previously admitted, including weaponisation: the Iraqis pretended that he had pursued the programme personally, without authority. However, knowing that Kamal was interviewed by UNSCOM, the Iraqis released a stash of documents covering the area of his knowledge. UNSCOM reported that the documents showed they had been "very substantially misled by Iraq both in terms of its understanding of Iraq's proscribed weapons programmes and the continuation of prohibited activities even under the Commission's monitoring."

In November 1995, Jordan intercepted prohibited components for missiles. By June 1996 the Iraqis were back to harassing the inspectors, but provided full, final and complete disclosure for BW (fourth time) and CW and missiles (third time). In June 1997, the inspectors were again barred from specific sites. In September 1997, Iraq offered its fifth full, final and complete disclosure on BW.

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In early 1997, UNSCOM discovered equipment used for CW production, hitherto denied by Iraq. In May, the Iraqis admitted that this was VX production equipment. In October to December 1997, UNSCOM was pre-occupied by Iraqi denial of access to Presidential sites and refusal to accept American or British UNSCOM staff. The February 1998 visit to Baghdad by Kofi Annan put UNSCOM back on the rails, but in August Iraq suspended co-operation again, and in December UNSCOM left Iraq.

As UNSCOM said in its final report "Iraq's disclosure statements have never been complete. Contrary to the requirement that destruction be conducted under international supervision, Iraq undertook extensive, unilaterally and secret destruction of large quantities of proscribed weapons and items. It also pursued a practice of concealment of proscribed items, including weapons, and a cover up of its activities in contravention of Council Resolutions ... in response to the Commission's requests for relevant documents, Iraq has repeatedly claimed that they no longer exist or cannot be located, a claim which often has shown to be false, either because inspection activities have in fact located precisely such documents or because Iraq has reversed its stated position and then produced relevant documents".

Iraq's approach to the UN has therefore consisted of:

- concealment and destruction of evidence
- commitment to co-operate alternating with harassment of inspectors
- as new facts become available to UNSCOM, Iraq changes its story to incorporate those facts. There is no genuine effort at openness or honesty.

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The Blix "clusters" paper underlines the inspectors very limited information on the details of, for example, Iraq's BW programme. This is after 12 years of operations and five purportedly full, final and complete declarations by the Iraqis.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "N. Cannon".

**NICHOLAS CANNON**

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