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Foreign &  
Commonwealth  
Office

London SW1A 2AH

2 June 2003

*Dear Matthew*

*ECNC  
JPO  
Rre*

**Iraqi WMD: Third Party Validation**

You asked for an update on third party validation of WMD finds in Iraq.

The hunt for Iraqi's prohibited weapons programme is currently being carried out by Coalition armed forces. Exploitation of sites is being carried out to international standards of verification – in short, the sites are being treated as scenes of crime, with all samples bagged and tagged, and the whole process video-taped. Samples are initially tested in theatre; any that test positive are then subject to further testing in UK and US laboratories.

The specialised units from the armed forces will start withdrawing from the end of this week, to be replaced by the newly established Iraq Survey Group (ISG). The ISG was formally launched on 30 May, and the second in command will be British (Brigadier John Deverell). The ISG will be 1300-1400 strong, drawing on resources from the UK, the US, and Australia, and will focus on the hunt for WMD. The UK will provide 100-120 personnel, and we are looking to include some former UNSCOM weapons inspectors. Peter Watkin's letter of 27 May to Sir David Manning sets out this work in more detail.

The media will provide some independent witnesses for finds in Iraq. DIS are looking to embed an UK journalist in the ISG, and help point the media in the direction of relevant WMD-related information (e.g. are to provide some journalists with background briefing on Iraqi WMD).

But the media cannot provide a professional and expert validation process. Equally, without independent validation of finds by experts, including independent site exploitation, the coalition may well be accused of planting evidence. The validation that would carry most weight where it really matters to us – in the Security Council and with the UK media – would be from the UN. How this would work in practice would need to be agreed. Ideally, we would like to give UNMOVIC inspectors access to any relevant finds; at the least, we believe the

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coalition should undertake to provide a full report of its investigation to the UN, including any test results. (Under UNSCR 1483, the Coalition is 'encouraged' to keep the Council informed of progress in disarming Iraq of its WMD).

The US remains neuralgic, however, on the subject of UNMOVIC. To an extent, US views are coloured by personal distrust of Hans Blix. We are seeking to engage with the US to find an acceptable and credible replacement for Blix when his contract expires on 25 June, and hope to encourage them to buy in to the process of revitalising and reforming UNMOVIC. The Security Council has agreed to look again at the mandates of UNMOVIC and IAEA in Iraq, in due course. I enclose a paper on restructuring which we passed to the Americans on 20 May; they have not yet replied. In the case of the IAEA, the US has agreed that IAEA safeguards experts (not inspectors) can check the security of a store of radioactive material at Tuwaitha.

Although UNMOVIC validation is our strong preference, the US position may not alter. There are other options, such as validation by NATO. We have also approached the Dutch, who have a well-regarded laboratory suitable for testing CBW samples. They have tentatively agreed to test independently any positive samples that we uncover. But they are concerned to have UN cover for doing so.

I am copying this letter to Peter Watkins and Martin Howard (MOD) and to Desmond Bowen (Cabinet Office).

*Yours ever*

*Simon*

(Simon McDonald)  
Principal Private Secretary

Matthew Rycroft Esq  
10 Downing Street

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## UNMOVIC: RESTRUCTURING

UNMOVIC/IAEA still have a UN mandate to disarm Iraq, and for longer term monitoring. This will be a time-consuming and expensive job.

Although the quality of UNMOVIC inspections (and inspectors) has been variable, with appropriate restructuring and new leadership there is no reason inspectors cannot be effective. Crucially, the environment in which they operate will be different: instead of Saddam's obstruction and evasion they will have a fully co-operative administration in Baghdad, positively anxious to expose previous covert WMD programmes. While other forms of independent verification are available, UN inspectors can provide greater international credibility for the coalition's discoveries.

To operate in the new environment, UNMOVIC must be restructured. The requirements of them will be different. Their role will change from semi-detective work (the area in which they have performed worst) to one essentially of expert observation, validation, and reporting of evidence uncovered and tested by others. This will call for different staff, and different operating methods. Close co-operation with Coalition forces will be vital.

It should not require a different mandate. On the contrary, UNMOVIC should be able to take up the role it was always intended to play under SCR1284: observation, monitoring and verification. Restructuring UNMOVIC along the following lines would require changes to UNMOVIC's organisational plan (and possibly also Council endorsement), but should not require a new UN Security Council resolution.

### **Core Tasks**

- Principal tasks: to provide independent international validation of WMD finds; and confirm Iraqi disarmament (including destruction of WMD).
- Secondary tasks: to confirm scale and scope of Iraqi WMD programmes; and to monitor longer-term compliance with relevant UNSCRs (to ensure that WMD programmes are not restarted).

### **Additional tasks**

- To provide technical assistance on developing civilian uses for dual-use facilities (though UNMOVIC would not be the sole agency responsible) This could assist in the rehabilitation of Iraqi WMD scientists/technicians who might otherwise pose a proliferation threat and help the new Iraq's economic development.
- Monitor import/export of dual use equipment (probably in short to medium term only).

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INVO

This paper has focussed on UNMOVIC. Many of the comments apply, *mutatis mutandis* to INVO. But given that the task of Iraqi nuclear disarmament was largely completed by UNSCOM, it should be possible to move more rapidly in this sector to long-term monitoring, which could be carried out through application of IAEA safeguards (Iraq should be required to conclude an Additional Protocol).

Alternatively, additional intrusive inspection requirements could be drawn up (which could have the advantage of setting a precedent for future special inspection regimes for other proliferators).