

intelligence information supplied by permanent members of the Security Council which purported to reveal Iraqi nuclear weapons development but which proved false or misleading. This enhanced the credibility of the IAEA's verification judgements in the subsequent cases of Iran and Libya.

North Korea: identifying non-compliance

Unlike the cases of South Africa, Iraq, Iran and later Libya, where the IAEA was as surprised as anyone else about the extent of the nuclear weapon-related activities eventually uncovered, in North Korea the Agency was at the forefront of discovering non-compliance. In 1993, soon after the country's comprehensive safeguards agreement entered into force, the IAEA began routine inspections to verify the initial data declaration submitted by North Korea. The Agency discovered disturbing inconsistencies which the North Koreans were unable to clarify to the Agency's satisfaction. As a result the Agency invoked, for the first and only time to date, its right to request a special inspection. The North Koreans refused, setting off a continuing compliance crisis.

Subsequently the Agency had its first experience of verifying a freeze on a nuclear programme when, under the 1994 US-North Korea Agreed Framework, it was asked to seal the nuclear facility at Yongbyon and safeguard the nuclear materials at the site. However the Agency was never given the opportunity of comprehensively verifying North Korea's purported nuclear freeze and in 2002 its inspectors were expelled, its remote surveillance cameras disabled and the seals at Yongbyon broken. If and when there is a settlement to the current crisis the Agency may be permitted to resume a verification role in the country.

Libya: verifying nuclear dismantlement

The IAEA's role in Libya was carried out in different circumstances again. When Libya announced in December 2003 that it had decided to abandon its WMD capabilities, the US and UK had already been in consultations with the Libyan government for some time and had carried out inspections of Libyan nuclear facilities. There was also apparently an attempt to marginalize the IAEA's involvement in Libya. Following IAEA protests, agreement was reached in January 2004 on a division of responsibilities: while the IAEA would work to verify and dismantle Libya's capabilities, the UK and US would remove and/or destroy the various components. The US at an early stage removed documentation relating to nuclear weapons, as well as equipment such as centrifuges, and materials.

The Libyan experience is adding further to the IAEA's verification repertoire. In addition to inspections, the Agency was again able to use its increasingly powerful environmental sampling techniques, as it has done in the cases of Iran and Iraq. Due to the fact that the Libyan programme, like that of Iran's, was in part supplied by an illegal nuclear smuggling effort led by the 'father' of the Pakistani nuclear weapon programme, A.Q. Khan, the IAEA also has become involved in attempting to track the extent and nature of this activity. This is another first for the Agency.

Iran: attempting to verify non-compliance

To date the IAEA has acquitted its verification role in respect of Iran with professionalism and persistence. It has clearly applied its enhanced verification techniques and technology to the case. This permitted the Agency to reveal, for instance, that centrifuge equipment was contaminated with uranium enriched to a much higher level than the Iranians admitted and forcing them to reveal that the equipment had been imported rather than made in Iran. The Agency was further able to verify