

a Pentagon report released in April 2002 identified India, China, Pakistan and Russia as suspect nations. In his speech to the Heritage Foundation in May 2002, John Bolton also added Cuba to that list.⁹ Of course, allegations have been made in the recent past that the United States may itself have BW research projects that violate the BTWC.¹⁰

However, of all the suspect states Iraq provides the most pressing problem. In particular, the dangers to international security of the absence of stringent and stringently enforced BTWC verification procedures are now being vividly demonstrated over the present impasse concerning the re-admittance of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Committee (UNMOVIC) inspectors to Iraq to continue their work.

UNMOVIC was created through the adoption of Security Council resolution 1284 of 17 December 1999. It replaced the former UN Special Commission (UNSCOM) and is intended to continue with the latter's mandate to disarm Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction (chemical, biological weapons and missiles with a range of more than 150 km), and to operate a system of ongoing monitoring and verification to check Iraq's compliance with its obligations not to reacquire weapons prohibited to it by the Security Council.¹¹ In the face of concerted and sustained obstructionism, UNSCOM withdrew its staff from Iraq in December 1998. . As its former Executive Director, Richard Butler, has noted:

Iraq's behaviour has illustrated another point of irreducible significance. In a world of sovereign States ... recalcitrance on the part of any State, refusal to provide the modicum of cooperation required by the Treaty regime, can be a major and possibly insuperable obstacle to the achievement of common objectives.¹²

Over the last few months there have been considerable diplomatic efforts to agree terms by which UNMOVIC could recommence work in Iraq. At the time of writing, the return of weapons inspectors to Iraq seemed close, although the head of the new inspections team, Hans Blix, had been persuaded not to re-enter Iraq without a new Security Council resolution establishing a tougher, more coercive inspection regime.

Continuing concern over renewed Iraqi WMD programmes is a major driver for regional and international instability. It is frequently cited as the main reason for a much-mooted invasion of Iraq. British Prime Minister Tony Blair has been clear in his assertion that as "simply turning our backs on weapons of mass destruction is not an option", confrontation with Iraq must be seriously considered. He goes on to argue that, "we will do it a sensible way, do it in a measured way, but we cannot allow a state of this nature [Iraq] to develop these weapons without let or hindrance".¹³ When questioned whether he would still be in favour of toppling Saddam Hussein if inspectors were let back in, he replied:

⁹ Judith Miller, 'Washington Accuses Cuba Of Germ-Warfare Research', *New York Times*, 7 May 2002.

¹⁰ See, for example, 'When Is A Bomb Not A Bomb? Germ Experts Confront US', *New York Times*, 5 September 2001; and 'International Reaction to Secret U.S. Bio-Weapons Research Muted', *Arms Control Today*, October 2001.

¹¹ See UNMOVIC website for latest information <http://www.un.org/Depts/unmovic/>

¹² Richard Butler, Executive Director of UNSCOM, speech to the 7th Carnegie International Non-Proliferation Conference, 11-12 January 1999, Washington, DC.

¹³ 'Blair faces MPs Anger over Iraq', BBC News Website, 10 April 2002. See http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/1921702.stm