

# CRS Report for Congress

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## **Iraq: Missiles, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) and The Iraq Survey Group Reports**

Andrew Feickert  
Specialist in National Defense  
Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division

### **Summary**

This report addresses pre-war intelligence estimates of Iraq's missile and UAV programs and the findings of the Iraq Survey Group (ISG). Although Iraq did fire missiles at U.S. forces during Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) in 2003, comprehensive post-war inspections revealed that some aspects of Iraq's missile and UAV programs were different than previously characterized by the Intelligence Community. This report will not be updated. Additional information is provided in CRS Issue Brief IB92117, *Iraq: Weapons, Threat, Compliance, Sanctions, and U.S. Policy* and CRS Report RL31671, *Iraq: UN Inspections for Weapons of Mass Destruction*.

### **Pre-War Estimates of Iraq's Missile and UAV Program**

While there were a number of reports published on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and missile programs, the two most frequently cited unclassified reports were September 24, 2002's "Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction: The Assessment of the British Government," and the October 2002 "Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction Programs," by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Many experts suggest that the Administration relied heavily on the judgements from these documents as the basis of going to war with Iraq in March 2003.

According to October 2002's "Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction Programs," published by the CIA:

Iraq maintains a small missile force and several development programs, including for a UAV that most analysts believe is probably intended to deliver biological warfare agents.<sup>1</sup>

In its report, the CIA also made the following key judgements:

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<sup>1</sup> "Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction Programs," published by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, (UNCLASSIFIED), October 2002, p. 3.

- Gaps in Iraqi reporting to the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) suggested that Iraq retained a covert force of up to a few dozen SCUD-variant short ranged-ballistic missiles<sup>2</sup> (SRBMs) with ranges of 650 to 900 km;
- Iraq was developing its new al-Samud and Ababil-100 SRBMs with ranges in excess of the UN-authorized 150 kilometer (km) range limit;
- Iraq's UAVs - especially if used for delivery of chemical or biological agents - could threaten Iraq's neighbors, U.S. forces in the Persian Gulf, and the United States itself if the UAVs were brought close to or into the country; and
- Iraq was developing medium-ranged ballistic missile capabilities, largely through foreign assistance in building specialized facilities.

Britain's report, issued a month before the U.S. report, contained similar judgements:

- Iraq illegally retained up to 20 al-Hussein missiles (a SCUD variant) capable of carrying chemical and biological warheads to a range of 650km;
- Iraq developed al-Samud and Ababil-100 missiles with the intent of extending their ranges to 200 km in violation of the UN-imposed 150 km limit;
- Iraq constructed a new engine test stand for the development of missiles capable of reaching U.K. bases in Cyprus as well as the NATO countries of Greece and Turkey; and
- Iraq pursued illegal programs to produce materials for use in the illegal development of long-range missiles.<sup>3</sup>

Although Britain's report did address UAVs in connection with chemical and biological weapons, it did not emphasize them directly as a chemical and biological delivery threat unlike the CIA report. The British report, instead, acknowledges past Iraq attempts to develop UAVs that could deliver these weapons.

## **Iraq's Use of Missiles and UAVs in Operation Iraqi Freedom**

Prior to the commencement of U.S.-led Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) on March 19, 2003, U.S. and British intelligence maintained that Iraq had upwards of 20 Al Hussein missiles in violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions as well as numerous shorter-range Al Samud and Ababil-100 (also known as the Al Fatah missile) missiles permitted

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<sup>2</sup> Ballistic missiles are classified by range as follows:

Short Range Ballistic Missiles (SRBMs) = 150 - 799 kms.

Medium Range Ballistic Missiles (MRBMs) = 800 - 2,399 kms.

Intermediate Range Ballistic Missiles (IRBMs) = 2,400 - 5,499 kms.

Intercontinental Range Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) = 5,500 kms and greater.

<sup>3</sup> "Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction: The Assessment of the British Government," (UNCLASSIFIED), September 24, 2002, p. 6.

under the resolutions. Many experts believed that Iraq might use its missiles and chemical and biological warheads against Coalition forces and Israel if regime survival was at stake. During the course of the war, at least 17 Al Samud and Ababil-100 missiles and Frog-7 rockets were fired at Coalition forces.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, one Iraqi cruise missile was known to have successfully eluded missile defenses and struck a target in Kuwait City.<sup>5</sup> Altogether, it was reported that Iraq fired 23 ballistic and cruise missiles during the war and all missiles employed conventional warheads.<sup>6</sup> There were no confirmed reports of SCUD or al-Hussein launches during the war.<sup>7</sup>

## The Iraq Survey Group and the Kay Interim Report

U.S. military planning prior to Operation Iraqi Freedom included extensive provisions and resources for searching for and locating Iraq's alleged WMDs, missiles, and UAVs. The U.S. deployed an ad hoc military organization, the 75<sup>th</sup> Exploitation Task Force, which began conducting operations to locate WMDs and missiles at the outset of the ground campaign.<sup>8</sup> On June 23, 2003, the 75<sup>th</sup> Exploitation Task Force was succeeded by the Iraq Survey Group (ISG), consisting of around 1,400 specialists taken from the U.S. government interagency, as well as experts from the United Kingdom and Australia. The ISG was primarily tasked to search for and eliminate Iraq's WMDs but was also tasked "to collect and exploit documents and media related to terrorism, war crimes, prisoners of war and missing in action issues."<sup>9</sup>

On October 2, 2003, the ISG's Director, Dr. David Kay, presented an interim progress report to Congress.<sup>10</sup> Although efforts to locate proscribed missiles and UAVs had not yielded much physical evidence, ISG allegedly uncovered a significant amount of information on Iraq's missile and UAV programs. Allegations of missile and UAV-related activities from the report include the following:

- Covert capability to manufacture fuel propellant useful only for prohibited Scud variant missiles, a capability that was maintained at least until the end of 2001 and that cooperating Iraqi scientists have said they were told to conceal from the UN;

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<sup>4</sup> Hans Greimel, "Thorough Assessment in Store for Patriot," *Army Times*, April 23, 2003.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> "Iraqi Missile Forces Failed to Impact on 'Iraqi Freedom'," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, April 2004, p. 32.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>8</sup> Steven A. Cambone, "Briefing on the Iraq Survey Group," Department of Defense Briefing, May 30, 2003, [<http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/2003/tr20030530-0231.html>].

<sup>9</sup> "Foreign and Commonwealth Office History of Weapons Inspections," British Government, [<http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1068717339672>], as of November 9, 2004.

<sup>10</sup> See [[http://www.cia.gov/cia/public\\_affairs/speeches/2003/david\\_kay\\_10022003.html](http://www.cia.gov/cia/public_affairs/speeches/2003/david_kay_10022003.html)], for Dr. Kay's statement to Congress.

- Plans and advanced design work for new long-range missiles with ranges up to at least 1,000 km — well beyond the 150 km range limit imposed by the UN;
- A line of UAVs not fully declared at an undeclared production facility that had been tested out to a range of 500 km — 350 km beyond the UN-permissible limit; and
- Clandestine attempts between late-1999 and 2002 to obtain from North Korea, technology related to 1,300 km range ballistic missiles — probably the No Dong — and 300 km range anti-ship cruise missiles, and other prohibited military equipment.<sup>11</sup>

According to Kay's statement, Hussein ordered the development of missiles with a range of at least 400 km up to 1,000 km in early 2000. Another highlight of the report concerns Iraqi attempts to acquire No Dong missiles from North Korea. According to a report, the ISG found "written evidence of a contractual negotiation" between North Korea and Iraq for the purchase of 1,300 km-range No Dong missiles.<sup>12</sup> Iraqi documents indicate that Baghdad made a \$10 million down payment in late 2002 for a single No Dong missile but North Korea failed to deliver the missile allegedly "because they were being watched too closely by the Bush Administration" and also apparently did not refund Iraq its \$10 million.<sup>13</sup> On January 23, 2004, David Kay stepped down as the Director of the ISG and was replaced by Charles A. Duelfer, who had previously served as Deputy Executive Chairman to UNSCOM.

## The Final Report of the Iraq Survey Group

On September 30, 2004, the final report of the Iraq Survey Group titled "Comprehensive Report of the Special Advisor to the DCI (CIA Director for Central Intelligence) on Iraq's WMD" was issued. This three volume report, also referred to as the Duelfer Report, covers the inspection results of the ISG for WMDs, missiles, and UAVs. Highlights of the report's missile and UAV key findings include the following:

- "Desert Storm (1991) and subsequent UN resolutions and inspections brought many of Iraq's delivery systems programs to a halt. While much of Iraq's long-range missile inventory and production infrastructure was eliminated, Iraq until late 1991 kept some items hidden to assist future reconstitution of the force";
- "The Iraq Survey Group (ISG) has uncovered no evidence Iraq retained Scud-variant missiles, and debriefings of Iraqi officials in addition to some documentation suggest that Iraq did not retain such missiles after 1991"; and
- "ISG uncovered Iraqi plans or designs for three long-range ballistic missiles with ranges from 400 to 1,000 km and for a 1,000 km- range

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Fredrick Kempe and David S. Cloud, "Baghdad Records Show Hussein Sought Missiles, Other Aid Abroad," *Wall Street Journal*, November 3, 2003, p. 1.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

cruise missile, although none of these systems progressed to production and only one reportedly passed the design phase.”<sup>14</sup>

Volume II of the Duelfer Report deals specifically with delivery systems and provides additional inspections findings including:

- “After OIF, ISG found evidence for several new, long-range delivery system designs, but has not found evidence for new WMD payloads for these, or any, delivery systems”;
- “By January 1991, Iraq had converted a MiG-21 into a remotely-piloted vehicle (RPV) and had tested biological weapons simulatant dissemination from modified Mirage F-1 drop tanks. The MiG-21 program was cancelled in 1991, but these initial steps likely laid the groundwork for future RPV developments”;
- “In 1995, after the MiG-21 conversion failure in 1991, the Iraqis resumed efforts to convert a manned aircraft into a RPV, this time with L-29 trainer aircraft. Research continued intermittently until 2001 when the program was terminated. ISG judges that the purpose of the MiG-21 program was to deliver chemical and biological weapons.” Statements from senior Iraq officials suggest that the L-29's mission was the same as the MiG-21's;
- “The evidence uncovered by the ISG suggests that the UAV programs active at the onset of OIF were intended for reconnaissance and electronic warfare”;
- “Iraq researched and developed the Al Samud II missile despite UN provisions, which prohibited such a system with its specification ... ISG, which has developed a comprehensive history of the system, has no evidence indicating that Iraq was designing chemical/biological warheads for the missile”; and
- “Al Fatah development allowed Iraq to create and refine technical expertise and develop the infrastructure needed to support the design and production of missiles with ranges beyond those allowed by the UN...ISG has found no evidence to suggest the Al Fatah was intended for use with chemical, biological, or nuclear warheads.”<sup>15</sup>

## Pre-War Intelligence and the ISG Reports

Some critics of the war in Iraq claim that the ISG Reports vindicate their claims that Saddam Hussein had no illicit weapons while others suggest that even though no militarily-significant stockpiles were found, that Iraq had intentions to produce WMDs.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> “Comprehensive Report of the Special Advisor to the DCI (CIA Director for Central Intelligence) on Iraq’s WMD” also known as the Duelfer Report, published by the ISG, September 30, 2004, Volume I, pp. 1-2.

<sup>15</sup> Duelfer Report, Volume II, pp. 3-45.

<sup>16</sup> “Draw Your Own Conclusions,” *Economist.com*, October 7, 2004, p. 1, [[http://www.economist.com/agenda/displayStory.cfm?story\\_id=3261606](http://www.economist.com/agenda/displayStory.cfm?story_id=3261606)].

Despite claims on both sides, some experts suggest that pre-war intelligence was somewhat accurate at least in terms of Iraq's missile and UAV programs.

The major discrepancy between pre-war intelligence and the results of the inspections was the absence of the 20-plus SCUDs and SCUD variant missiles that Iraq had supposedly illegally retained after the 1991 Gulf War. These SCUDs, along with associated chemical and biological warheads, were considered by some the primary threat that Iraq posed to Coalition forces as well as its neighbors in the region, and it was the elimination of this threat that was used to justify Operation Iraqi Freedom. Many feel that the absence of SCUDs and chemical and biological weapons calls into question the legitimacy of the war in Iraq.

Another discrepancy concerns Iraq's UAVs. While the final ISG reports confirms Iraqi experimentation with MiG-21s and L-29s to deliver chemical or biological agents as reported by the CIA, the CIA report failed to acknowledge that both programs had been abandoned by Iraq in 1991 and 2001, respectively. The CIA report further suggests that newer Iraqi UAVs would pose a chemical and biological threat to Iraq's neighbors and to military forces in the region.<sup>17</sup> The Duelfer report, however, judges that Iraq's newer UAVs were for reconnaissance and electronic warfare purposes only.<sup>18</sup>

Some analysts suggest that pre-war intelligence concerning Iraq's Al Samud and Ababil-100 programs, as well as attempts to acquire longer-ranger missiles and associated technology from a third party was quite accurate, given the ISG's findings. It is these findings, in particular, that some cite as clear "Iraqi intent" to renew their WMD programs when the conditions became favorable. Others argue that such intent did not constitute a significant threat nor constitute justification for armed intervention.

Some suggest that while the ISG report does show Iraqi violation of a number of UN Security Council Resolutions and an intent to pursue WMD and missile programs, that unrealistic expectations may make it difficult to fully appreciate the findings of the ISG reports. Some feel that the Administration's repeated insistence that Iraq had active and threatening WMD programs may have led to expectations that Coalition forces would uncover large stockpile of chemical and biological weapons as well as WMD-capable long-range missiles and UAVs. They argue that because these expectations were not met, that many officials are dismissive of the ISGs reports because no "smoking guns" were found in Iraq.

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<sup>17</sup> "Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction Programs," published by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency,(UNCLASSIFIED), October 2002, p. 27.

<sup>18</sup> Duelfer Report, Volume II, p. 42.