

## **The Challenge of Weapons of Mass Destruction**

Statement by Dr Hans Blix, chairman of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission, Emeritus Director General of the IAEA, former Executive Chairman UNMOVIC.

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**Check against delivery**

I am happy to be again at the Diplomatic Academy Vienna.

I know it has been active for 250 years in preparing diplomats and civil servants for their jobs and I am happy to offer my congratulations and best wishes for the future.

It is about a year ago that I left my job as head of the UN Iraq inspections. I now serve as the Chairman of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission, which will meet here in Vienna in the next two days at the invitation of the Austrian Government. Before I conclude today I shall explain to you what the Commission aims to do. It is in the early phase of its work and my statement today reflects only my own thoughts and ideas.

In 1754, when this Academy was founded, the outbreak of wars and plague could still be attributed to fate or the will of God. Our generation is aware that sadly we, ourselves, are **responsible for AIDS, global warming and wars**. This awareness should be a challenge for us to shoulder our responsibility and act rationally.

I shall talk about the threat of **Weapons of Mass Destruction**, a concept that is so established that we cannot do without. However, we should be aware that it lumps together nuclear, chemical, biological weapons and missiles and that the result is that the number of states possessing wmds may be several dozens. The number of states which have nuclear weapons, which are incomparably the most dangerous weapons, is still less than 10.

#### *The need for looking forward and for a perspective*

We are still in the midst of the **Iraq drama**. We need to **look forward** but it is also necessary to discuss the events of the past year and **try to learn** from them. It may be useful **first** try to put the problem of wmds **in perspective**. One might get the impression from governments and media in the US and Europe that the risk that reckless groups and governments might acquire wmds is the **greatest problem facing the world**. Let us not forget, however, that to hundreds of millions **hunger** – not wmds – is the existential issue number one and wherever you live on the planet the risk of **global warming and other global environmental threats are ‘existential’**. These are creeping upon us with less drama than nuclear tests and we are doing rather little about them.

Now let me look at the issue of WMDs and the armed invasion to eradicate them in Iraq in a **historical perspective**. The action, which took place without the authorization of the Security Council, was said to constitute **self-defense** and **preempt** use by Iraq of wmds.

#### *The Cold War*

We must recognize that **until the end of the Cold War the security system that was laid down in the UN Charter in 1945 was mostly un-implementable**. A veto would paralyze the Security Council. Security was not supplied by the UN and the Council but by military alliances and assurances. This was true even for those countries, like my own, Sweden, which were not members of any alliances.

Against the ambitions of Soviet Union to expand Communist rule without overt aggression President Truman and succeeding US presidents developed the policy of **containment**, which offered determined resistance but reserved the use of armed force to be a means of

**last resort.** The policy was successfully applied in Greece, Azerbaijan and, indeed, against the Soviet Union itself.

The world avoided an Armageddon. The risk of mutually assured destruction – MAD – which resulted from the ability of the Soviets and the Americans to launch devastating second nuclear blows was a considerable deterrent against direct confrontations. Only in the **Korean war** in 1950 was containment impossible. The naked aggression had to be met with direct armed force. The US succeeded in mobilizing it and the Security Council authorized the action.

Some people seem to look with **nostalgia** to the stable situation of the cold war. I do not. It was a time when, by mistake or miscalculation, the strategic nuclear weapons could have blown our civilization to pieces. Perhaps we were just lucky.

As the two sides in the cold war nervously looked for some stability during their wrestling match they achieved a good deal in the field of **arms control** between themselves. It was also not hard for them to agree that stability could be upset by more states acquiring nuclear weapons – by more fingers on more nuclear triggers. The Non-Proliferation Treaty (**NPT**) was concluded in 1968 to prevent the **spread of nuclear weapons** and another treaty was reached altogether to prohibit biological weapons.

I think we must judge – even today – these arms control efforts as **rather successful**. Nuclear capability did spread during the Cold War beyond the P 5 of the Security Council to Israel and India and South Africa. Concerns arose as several developing countries attained higher technological levels. After the end of the Cold War, however, not only did the Ukraine and Kazakstan transfer their nuclear weapons to Russia but the general détente that developed helped move Argentina, Brazil, Algeria and, indeed, South Africa to renounce nuclear weapons. On the other hand the concerns came true regarding **Pakistan**, and, perhaps the **DPRK** and they could have come true for **Iraq**. **Iran** is still an open question.

**Terrorism** – which is a method of using armed force deliberately ignoring the difference between combatants and civilians – existed **during the Cold War**, but it was largely unrelated to that war: the Baader-Meinhof in Germany, the Red Brigades in Italy, hijacking Palestinians, the groups in the Basque area and in Ireland. Only in Japan did a group use a non-conventional weapon, the chemical agent Sarin.

### *The end of the Cold War*

When the **Cold War ended**, Eastern Europe became free and the Communist system of government and system of economics collapsed. It was like coming into a **new world of hope and freedom**. The effects on international cooperation were enormous. In Africa and Central America tensions disappeared and the settlement of many conflicts became possible. Disarmament and arms control moved forward. The comprehensive nuclear **test ban** was agreed, so was the **Chemical Weapons Convention** and there was much hope that a convention would be concluded to stop all production of fissile material for more nuclear weapons. The **Security Council** experienced its first spring time. Many peace keeping operations were agreed to. The veto was hardly used.

**European integration** moved forward and the expanding union now offers an enormous peace dividend in the relations between states members but also in the relations with Russia. With Poland's entry into the EU **the Oder-Neisse**, which was the lethal border between the

free West and the Communist East, has become **an internal waterway** in the European Union.

### *The Gulf War*

During the 80s **Iraq** under **Saddam Hussein** waged a **war against Iran**. He had a good deal of support from Western states, which feared the fundamentalism of the Iranian rulers. Saddam **used gas** with horrible results on the waves of young boys that Iran sent forward and relatively little reaction in the West. As we know, he also used chemical weapons against Iraq's own Kurdish population at Hallabja.

Saddam continued the development of chemical weapons throughout the 80s but also of biological weapons and of methods of **enriching uranium** to make nuclear arms. In 1990 he launched his attack against Kuwait.

Perhaps to his surprise Saddam, who figured himself a modern Nebuchadnezzar, an emperor of Mesopotamia, discovered that US President Bush took the initiative **to stop his aggression by force** and, thereafter, **to contain him**.

The action was greeted with enthusiasm. It was felt that the **security provisions of the UN Charter were at long last coming to important new life**. Article 51 of the Charter lays down the inherent right of individual and collective self-defense if an armed attack occurs. Here was a case of **naked aggression** and the Security Council endorsed the collective armed defense of Kuwait. Troops were contributed from many countries and costs were shared.

The success of the new broad coalition opened up talks about the central political controversies of the Middle East: the Israel-Palestinian problems. However, the euphoria over a "new international order" did not last long. The discovery that Iraq had violated NPT and been developing nuclear weapons and the subsequent discovery that North Korea had produced more plutonium than it had declared, raised a fear that the NPT was eroding despite ever increasing adherences.

After the terrorist atrocity against the US on 11 September the **policy of containment**, which had served the world well and reduced the use of armed force, was declared insufficient by the US. President Bush said that if an attack was imminent "it was too late" to act. Clearly **any government** being threatened by another 9/11 would seek to prevent it – not wait first to see whether it happened. But, in the absence of an actual armed attack, how do you know that one is coming? The answer will mostly be "through **intelligence**" and the case for preemptive action has not been strengthened by what we have seen of intelligence in the case of Iraq. The Iraqi regime was a horror to its own citizens but Iraq was not a threat to its neighbours, nor to the world.

In a not so distant future perhaps the world community will be ready to accept and authorize armed intervention to stop regimes terrorizing their own peoples, but in March 2003 this ground would not have been enough to secure the support of the US and UK legislatures or of the Security Council.

The US and UK advocated the armed action claiming that Iraq had prohibited wmds. The evidence presented was beginning to unravel already before the invasion was launched and we now know that weapons did not exist: Iraq **had, in fact, been contained** through the diplomatic, economic and military pressure and the presence of inspectors during the 1990s.

While the war had the welcome result of ousting one of the most brutal regimes that the world has seen, there was no preemption of use of wmds because there were no wmds in Iraq.

There is no disagreement, however, that the **world community** must take the continued existence of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, their means of delivery seriously. The risk that reckless government and terrorists might acquire such weapons cannot be ignored. How shall we meet this threat in the future?

Let me start by commenting upon two terms that are central in these issues.

*First the term “proliferation”*

Let us be clear that with the concept “**proliferation**” the agenda has long been slanted somewhat – away from the **existence** of the dangerous weapons in a few states to the danger that additional states might get them. However, the reality is that **any nuclear weapon**, wherever located and in whose hands is a special threat, which we must seek to eliminate. The agenda, therefore, must be **disarmament and arms control, not just non-proliferation**. In the NPT this was recognized through the commitment of the nuclear weapon states to negotiate toward nuclear disarmament and that commitment was confirmed at the latest NPT review.

If any of the 5 nuclear weapon states mentioned in the NPT were now to fail to take that commitment seriously, for instance, by **developing new nuclear weapons or breaking the moratorium on the testing**, it would, by its example, move the world in the wrong direction and weaken the demands that can be placed on other parties to respect their commitments

What we need **today** is not a weakening of the effort to negotiate toward nuclear disarmament but the contrary: a **re-launching of the universal arms control and disarmament effort**, including non-proliferation in the narrow sense.

It is hard to see why this should be so difficult. There is continued **détente between great powers**, continents and blocks. There are no significant **territorial or ideological conflicts** between them. All pursue the **market economy** of various shapes as their economic model. All are bent on pragmatism and none on ideological conquests. The competition and conflicts between them are likely to be mostly in the fields of trade and finance and to play out in those fields.

Does the potential interest by reckless governments and terrorists in nuclear, chemical and biological weapons make it indispensable to develop new nuclear weapons penetrating more **deeply into the ground** and to produce more highly enriched uranium and plutonium? I, for one, believe that a continued global movement away from nuclear weapons through a universal adoption of the **comprehensive test ban treaty** and of a **treaty cutting off further production of nuclear bomb grade material** would be more helpful than waving a threat of use of new nuclear arms.

*The ‘terrorists’*

The horrible acts of 11 September 2001 led to the concern that individuals and movements ready to perform large attacks on purely civilian installations might be ready to use nuclear,

chemical and biological weapons and missiles, if they could only get hold of such weapons and be able to handle them. The risks are made worse as these actors may **not** be susceptible to normal **deterrence**, as they are intent to sacrifice their own lives and as, moreover, the location of their bases may not be known.

The risk of such attacks exists and the question is how they are best countered. Clearly the invasion of Iraq has stimulated, not stifled terrorism. However, in countering these groups we should remember that they **do not live on clouds**, but on the territory of states. It is important to **nailed down the primary duty** to counter them on the **governments** of the states in which they are active.

There will be a strong need to **identify** different groups, examine their various motivations, their reach and their methods of acting. This is hardly an area for unilateral actions but rather one for more **international cooperation, both in day to day field work of police** and financial institutions to track persons and weapons and in international organizations to promote such work and to de-legitimize terrorist methods.

Now to the multiple barriers which we can and do erect against WMDs.

### **The political barrier**

The **first barrier** to the acquisition and possession of nuclear weapons or, for that matter, other WMDs consists in creating such political/security relations globally and regionally that **the incentive** to acquire the weapons is removed or, at least, weakened; that governments and, for that matter, non-state actors, do not feel a need for the weapons. No incentive – no weapons – no use.

This point is perhaps so simple that it **often remains unmentioned** in our elaborate and expert analyses. Military alliances, such as NATO, provided security umbrellas, which many states found sufficient. Security guarantees might give similar assurances. To meet justified – I stress justified – grievances in the domestic spheres of states may also constitute political measures making the ground less fertile for terrorism.

The **end of the Cold War** and the **détente** that followed at the global level drastically reduced the threats led the five big NWS to significant reductions in their arsenals. These reductions could and should go much further. The end of the Cold War also **lowered the tensions generally** in the world, and probably helped the Southern Hemisphere to attain the nuclear-weapon free status, which it now enjoys.

While a continued dead-lock in the disarmament process might undermine what the world has attained, I believe the most important boost to that process would come from some steps in the military/security field.

In the **Middle East** an effectively verified **zone free of weapons of mass destruction comprising Israel as well as Iraq, Syria and Iran** must be the long-term goal. The realization of that concept, while indispensable for peace and stability in the region, must await a successful **resumption of the peace process**. We do not see any signs of that today.

By contrast there are some grounds for optimism that current contacts between **India and Pakistan** might move the controversy over Kashmir toward a solution, reducing tension and making bilateral progress on military/nuclear issues less difficult and their readiness greater to join international schemes, e.g. the comprehensive test ban, a cut off treaty, and arrangements for the control of exports and control of nuclear materials.

The world is rightly concerned today that **Iran** might intend to make use of a capability to enrich uranium to make nuclear weapons.

I share the hope that **Iran** will renounce or at least suspend enrichment plans, move to a fully credible transparency, rely on multilateral assurances of supply of fuel for their nuclear power reactors and perhaps rely on assurances against military attacks.

Looking at the rationales and incentives at work, it must be assumed that Tehran is aware not only that Israel has nuclear weapons and that a sovereign Iraq would inherit the know-how to make them, but also that **Iranian enrichment** of uranium, even if it were not for weapons, would further exacerbate the situation.

Is not the potentially explosive nuclear arms problem crying **for dynamic political efforts** to solve or ease the central political Israel-Palestinian question? A comprehensive approach to it could and should in time lead all the states in the region away from arms races and hair-trigger alerts, dangerous to all of them, to a zone of cooperation and free from weapons of mass destruction. The prohibition of weapons of mass destruction in **Iraq** and the inspection system set up in Iraq were seen in Resolution 687 in 1991 as a first step towards such a zone, and we might do well to remember that.

I'm not at all belittling the measures short of such a broad political approach, but I think governments and arms controllers need to focus as well on what the basic security incentives are for states to move forward or away from weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons.

On the **Korean Peninsula**, a renunciation of nuclear weapons and of the production of enriched uranium and plutonium similarly requires not only elaborate arrangements for **verification** and assistance to the North to issue from its totalitarian, starving structure, but also political measures and assurances allowing the two Korean states to feel secure against any attacks against their territories. Is there really any alternative?

### **Technical barriers**

**An important barrier** to the development of any capability to make nuclear, chemical or biological weapons lies in **technical obstacles**. More effective **export restrictions and cooperative controls** among suppliers and transit states will increase the difficulties for any state and non-state actors bent on acquiring or developing these weapons.

Projects for the better control by governments of fissionable and radioactive material and relevant equipment within their territories have increased and are of importance to reduce the risk of theft of highly enriched uranium, plutonium and material that could be used to create terror, e.g. **dirty bombs**.

Recent schemes for the **interception of transports of WMD material and equipment (IPS)** may be seen as useful export restrictions.

Other technical obstacles to the development of nuclear weapons capability may be created through the voluntary acceptance of some arrangements and restrictions. For instance, renewed efforts are currently made to **convert many research reactors** to the use of low enriched uranium and to seek the return of highly enriched uranium fuel to the suppliers.

As there is no economic reason today to **reprocess spent fuel**, undertakings to refrain from this process should not be burdensome and might usefully be pursued. **Voluntary commitments to renounce all** production of hexafluoride and the **enrichment of uranium** may be highly desirable in specific cases, as in the case of **Iran and the DPRK**. Where such commitments are proposed they will need to be coupled not only with effective inspection but also with multilateral assurances of supply of low enriched fuel for power reactors and – perhaps – some security guarantees.

The acceptance of such commitments creating technical obstacles to proliferation would likely be **less difficult** politically if states, which now use the relevant techniques, including all the nuclear weapon states, were to commit themselves to a **cut off** of the production of highly enriched uranium and plutonium and accepted inspection of the production facilities.

### **Inspection as a barrier**

Another barrier is **inspection**.

With the development and acceptance of the **safeguards system** operated by the IAEA the world moved from an era when perceptions of national sovereignty resulted in everybody rejecting any international control to a stage where everybody will accept some degree of common control.

A crucial question is **what level of confidence** we demand about the absence of prohibited weapons and activities. The answer to this question is decisive for what kind of inspection system we should look for. The tempting answer “**full confidence**” and ‘**clean bills of health**’ regrettably, is not realistic.

We cannot devise inspection systems that give 100 % guarantee about the absence of limited research efforts, or equipment and facilities of limited size. This is true for the nuclear sphere and even more so for the chemical and biological spheres.

**Whether doctors** look for malignancies in our bodies **or international inspections or governments look** for signs of weapons of mass destruction, neither can guarantee that **no small alien** item is hidden somewhere. What you can say is that **the more thorough** the investigation is, the more likely it is that if you do not find any dangerous items there aren't any.

It might be useful to think of the doctors and the governments as **search machines**. The **doctors use** X-rays and electro cardiograms, they measure blood pressure and analyse blood and urine. We have great use of such checks and rely on them even though they do leave residues of uncertainty. The **governments** make use of satellites, electronic eavesdropping,



the control of procurement, **and international inspection** for their information. Taken together these sources give much information to base government action on – but they also leave some residues of uncertainty.

Indeed, today we should understand better than ever before that not even the **complete control** over a territory can give such a guarantee. The small quantities of **sarin** used in the Tokyo subway and the **anthrax** disseminated in the United States had not been spotted by the national authorities in control of those two states and **more than a year of occupation of Iraq** does not seem to have given all US policy makers confidence that there are no stocks of weapons left in the country.

What we can see is that the higher the level of confidence we require the more **fine meshed**, intrusive and expensive the system of inspection has to be. Unfortunately, a system built to be extremely sensitive is also likely to give many **false alarms**, which may cause unjustified international reactions.

We must settle for **something practical**. If, on the one hand, we cannot construct a system that is fool proof, there would be no point, on the other hand, to pay money for an inspection system that is simply **cosmetic**. Indeed, that would be more dangerous than having no inspection at all, because it might lead people to a false and dangerous sense of security.

The **full-scope safeguard system** developed by the state members of the IAEA in the 1970s was the first attempt at extensive inspections through an international organization. It was marked by the reluctance of governments to allow international inspectors to intrude into their sacred sovereignty. Inspections were, as you know, in practice limited to declared sites, and the IAEA had no access to intelligence which might suggest suspected sites.

The **additional protocol** which were adopted in 1997 brought substantial improvements in the agency's right of information and access, and hence, in the effectiveness of safeguards. It is to be welcomed that Japan and the European Union members -- big in nuclear power -- have now accepted the protocol and, thereby, set an example for other states. It should be added that the protocols are a very long way from the verification system which was established by the Security Council for Iraq in 1991. This being said, I note that the new IAEA safeguard system has drawn **inspiration** from the various inspection methods first used in Iraq, for instance, in the greater use of satellite imagery; analysis of environmental samples; and information from **national intelligence** services.

Under the Security Council **Resolution 687**, which was adopted after the Gulf War, UNSCOM and the IAEA were given unprecedented rights of access to sites, people and information. In my view, which I acknowledge is not that precisely of a disinterested witness, both organizations displayed professional skill in their inspection work. They mapped the relevant Iraqi weapons programs on the basis, inter alia, of often inaccurate information from Iraq and information from exporters.

**Iraq reported** that it had itself destroyed considerable quantities of B and C weapons without the presence of inspectors in 1991. The information was confirmed by examination of soil and other means, but the quantities could not be verified. UNSCOM supervised the destruction inter alia of considerable quantities of chemical weapons at Muthanna, at a site declared by Iraq. The IAEA removed all the fissionable material from Iraq by flying it to Russia. Both organizations supervised the destruction of much infrastructure, equipment, chemical precursors and biological growth material.

By 1998, the IAEA was sure that no nuclear material and infrastructure was left and both Mr. Ekeus and Mr. Butler have voiced the view that there could not be much left in UNSCOM's three weapons files. This view was echoed in the report of the panel led by the Brazilian ambassador, Amorim, in early 1999, and probably widely shared by the members of the Security Council at that time. This was particularly true for the nuclear dossier, which all considered exhausted.

Today, most people recognize that there were no stocks or stores of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq in March 2003. For my own part, I had become increasingly skeptical about contentions and evidence presented by the U.S. and U.K. in the first months of 2003. However, UNMOVIC could not exclude, even in March 2003, that weapons unaccounted for could exist. It was only by the end of May 2003, after the occupation, that I concluded they did not exist. By that time, the occupying powers had interrogated large numbers of scientists, administrators and military people, offered them rewards for tips leading to weapons stores, and received no leads. Prior to the invasion defectors had been generous with such leads, but they proved all misleading.

I **take some pride** in the achievements of the international inspections. Professional work on the ground and analysis of documents plus critical thinking steered the inspectors clear of false conclusions that there were weapons of mass destruction. It is obvious to me that having the U.N. **Security Council as boss** and being an international civil service made it easier for the inspection organization than for various national authorities to look objectively at the data and evidence.

This experience is **of importance** for the situations **in the future**, when inspections might be needed in the spheres of biological weapons and missiles, for which there exist no specialized international organizations. Perhaps **UNMOVIC**, with a somewhat modified mandate and with a small core staff of -- and a roster of trained inspectors, **could become a permanent**, relatively low-cost instrument for the Security Council. It might be able to set up and direct inspection teams at short notice, and assist the Council on a continuing basis by providing it analysis and surveys it may need in the more active role that the Council envisages for itself in the sphere of weapons of mass destruction.

UNMOVIC remains in place in New York with a limited staff. It has no contact with the U.S. Iraq Survey Group, which is now in charge of the important inquiry into what happened to the prohibited weapons and programs in Iraq, and when did it happen. I have no doubt that findings by the Iraq Survey Group would acquire considerably greater international credibility if they were shared with the U.N. and IAEA inspectors for corroboration.

If ISG's findings were to assert, for instance, that even though there were no weapons there were **prohibited programs** in operation in 2003, outside the missile area it would be highly desirable that the evidence be presented to UNMOVIC. After what has happened to the evidence presented of the existence of weapons of mass destruction, the world cannot be expected to accept new claims at face value. Such presentations would be all the more appropriate as the mandate given by the Security Council to UNMOVIC to report on the resolution of Iraqi arms issues is still valid.

Today when parliamentary commissions in several countries are trying to find out why their intelligence services did go so wrong I am glad to note that my book "Disarming Iraq" remains on the non-fiction list in the newspapers.

However, my satisfaction is mixed **with some puzzlement** and even dismay that with all the rights inspection had and despite some eight long years of UNSCOM work and three and a half months of UNMOVIC work, the U.N. inspections **were not able to conclude**, as we now do, that there were no weapons of mass destruction. Although UNMOVIC reports show that that **no weapons** – but only infrastructure, precursors etc, -- were destroyed after 1994 we did not figure out for sure **when** the weapons were destroyed. We have to leave it to Mr. Duelfer of the ISG to conclude whether weapons quantities unaccounted for actually were unilaterally destroyed in 1991, as stated by Hussein Kamel and confirmed by my opposite number, Dr. Amir al-Saadi.

Admittedly, it might have been **hard for Iraq to prove the negative**, and even more difficult for the inspectors to do so, facing, as they did up to 1998, Iraqi conduct that suggested the continued presence of prohibited items. Yet for all the obstruction and denial of access that was shown before 1998, should it not have made some impression that when access was obtained after various delays, **no weapons were found**? Delays could have allowed the disappearance of files and diskettes and other minor items, but hardly any significant quantities of weapons and equipment.

This brings me to the important **role played by intelligence**. I have much respect for the many people I have met in these services, and I know that they are indispensable, not least in an era when methods of terrorism are used. The services can greatly assist the international inspection by information from the surveillance of electronic traffic and export activities, and from sources in the field. The international inspection, on the other hand, have an especially valuable ability: they have the right to access everywhere, or nearly everywhere, on the ground. The combination but not the merger of the respective abilities of inspection and intelligence remains desirable.

This being said, the role played by intelligence in the running up to the war against Iraq should be studied and conclusions should be drawn

*Government and intelligence did not examine evidence with sufficiently critical minds*

It is clear to me and most people that in the period leading up to the war in March 2003, several governments and their intelligence agencies did **not apply sufficient critical thinking** in examining the evidence before them. When I pointed out in a conversation with President **Chirac** of France, that the French intelligence service was convinced of the existence of prohibited weapons he said that the intelligence agencies "intoxicate" each other. He was right.

Intelligence services are necessary, not least in an era of terrorist movements. They have a difficult job. If something happens and they have not sensed it in advance and warned, they will be criticized. If they warn when nothing happens they may cause measures that are regretted. Like the IAEA inspectors, regrettably they had not seen Saddam's nuclear program, **which did exist** in 1990. In 2002, unlike the inspectors, regrettably they **did see** Saddam pursuing a nuclear program, which **did not exist**.

If the intelligence service's job is difficult, the governments' is even harder. On the basis of dossiers which are never complete and often full of uncertainties they have to come to conclusions as to **what to do**. Often they cannot afford to wait. They also have to persuade the citizens that the action they propose to take is right and, to do so, they must simplify.

Yet, when all this is said **I don't think it exonerates** either the intelligence service or the governments from exercising critical thinking in assessing the facts – especially if they propose to go to war.

*Need to distinguish between facts and political evaluations*

This brings me to the importance of **distinguishing between facts and policy** making. Different political values and agenda must be allowed to impact on governments' choices of policies. However, we nevertheless want the policies to be based on real facts, diligently assembled and honestly assessed. We do not the inverse to happen, that the policy choices influence the assembling and assessment of the facts.

Let me finish by briefing you about the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission.

The initiative was taken by the Swedish government, acting upon a proposal from then UN Under-Secretary General Jayantha Dhanapala. Its an independent international commission, similar in its setup to earlier commissions, such as the Canberra Commission and the Tokyo Forum, but with a broader mandate. It will study all types of WMDs: nuclear, biological and chemical weapons, and the means of delivering them, such as missiles. It will study the threat of WMDs both at the state level and at the level of non-state actors, such as terrorist groups. Our ambition is to present realistic proposals aimed at the greatest possible reduction of the dangers of these weapons.

Apart from myself, there are also 14 Commissioners in the Commission and some of them are with us here today. The Commission members represent very solid and high level expertise and experience on policies for WMD and international security. The Commission also has a wide geographic coverage.

The second meeting of the Commission will open here in Vienna and I cannot be sure what conclusions and proposals it will come to. However, in these comments I have touched upon some of the questions, which I personally hope the Commission will consider. Other questions will no doubt be added by my colleagues.

Let me end by reiterating the need for the world to **relaunch its arms control and disarmaments efforts**. I hope that our Commission will be able to stimulate those efforts and present helpful ideas.