

The Assessments of the Australian Intelligence Community

*It is a strange disposed time:
But men may construe things after their fashion,
Clean from the purpose of the things themselves.
(Julius Caesar, Act 1 Sc iii)*

The Nature of the Assessments

- 2.1 At the outset, it is important to note that any judgements that are made on pre-war intelligence have to be qualified by the limitations inherent in the small proportion of the assessments received by the Committee. The Director of the Office of National Assessments, Mr Kim Jones, assured the Committee that the selection provided was ‘a reasonable reflection of what we said.’¹ However, the Committee notes that both counterpart committees - in the United Kingdom, the Intelligence Services Committee and in the United States, the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence - were provided with all the pre-war intelligence assessments for scrutiny as part of the post-war inquiries.
- 2.2 The Committee understands the difficulties faced by agencies where information sourced from partner agencies is not theirs to release without permission. The Committee went to elaborate lengths to comply with all security requirements under the Commonwealth’s

1 ONA Transcript, 23 September 2003, p. 16.

Protective Security Manual so that any documents provided could be handled appropriately and securely. Staff were appropriately cleared. At considerable expense, the Committee made physical arrangements that were in compliance with the PSM for both the conduct of the hearings and the processing and storage of transcripts and submissions. Similarly, procedures for the handling of documents were established. While it is disappointing that a more comprehensive set of assessments was not provided to the Committee, its statutory powers preclude it from receiving operational material.

- 2.3 The intelligence assessment agencies, the Office of National Assessments (ONA) and the Defence Intelligence Organisation (DIO), provided unclassified submissions to the inquiry. The ONA submission included extracts from 26 of their pre-war assessments, beginning on 16 February 2000 and ending on 11 March 2003. The Office of National Assessments made oral reports to ministers in addition to the written reports.² The DIO submission included extracts from 14 out of more than 189³ of their pre-war assessments, beginning on 16 February 2000 and ending on 2 April 2003. The first of the assessments, 16 February 2000, was one of two joint assessments made by ONA and DIO, the second being 19 July 2002.
- 2.4 The detail of specific assessments is outlined below. They are dealt with in two separate periods. In the first period, February 2000 to September 2002, ONA and DIO assessments will be dealt with together, as their views are convergent. In the second period, where their views diverge, they will be dealt with separately. The assessments themselves are reproduced as much as possible so that readers can get a clear sense of what was being said in the agencies' own words and because assessments are very specifically worded and cannot be readily summarised without distortion. Assessments will also be considered under the categories set out in the terms of reference:
- The existence of;
 - The capacity and willingness to use; and
 - The immediacy of the threat posed by Iraq's WMD

2 ONA Transcript, 23 September 2003, pp. 5-6.

3 DIO informed the Committee that they had produced 189 reports between September 2002 and March 2003

Qualified Assessments: February 2000 – September 2002

- 2.5 The early assessments, in 2000 and 2001, suggest the possibility of a revival of the WMD programmes in Iraq. However, there are as many qualifications as there are certainties. Both agencies state that it appears Iraq is rebuilding dual-use facilities and Iraq's expertise and interest in developing WMD remains; however, 'the case for the revival of the WMD programs is substantial, but not conclusive.'⁴ These assessments acknowledge that the intelligence on Iraq is 'slight on the scope and location of Iraq's WMD activities'⁵ and 'scarce, patchy and inconclusive'⁶ on its nuclear programme. They suggest 'small',⁷ 'unknown'⁸ or, in the case of anthrax, 'likely sizeable'⁹ quantities of chemical and biological weapons or agents. Iraq's military capability is 'limited'¹⁰ and the country's infrastructure is 'in decline.'¹¹
- 2.6 In general, DIO assessed that 'Iraq probably retained a WMD capability – in the form of actual munitions – even if that capability had been degraded over time. ... Iraq maintained both an intent and a capability to recommence a wider WMD program should circumstances permit it to do so.'¹²

The Existence of Iraq WMD: Assessments February 2000-September 2002

- 2.7 At the beginning of February 2000, the joint report of ONA and DIO argues that Iraq had 'used the absence of UN inspectors to rebuild parts of its WMD infrastructure. Efforts have focussed on dual-use chemical and biological facilities, nuclear expertise and missiles.' A further report in December 2000 reiterates the possible refurbishment of facilities. The dual-use facilities and what they might imply are a repeated feature of the assessments over the next three years. These facilities represent both a possibility and an unknown quantity.

4 ONA assessment, 12 September 2002

5 ONA assessment, 6 September 2002

6 ONA/DIO joint assessment, 19 July 2002

7 ONA/DIO joint assessment, 19 July 2002

8 ONA assessment, 6 September 2002

9 ONA/DIO joint assessment, 19 July 2002

10 ONA assessment, 1 March 2001

11 ONA assessment, 1 March 2001.

12 DIO submission, p. 7.

Several facilities associated with Iraq's pre-Gulf War CBW programmes have been rebuilt or renovated, though there is no firm evidence of new CBW production.¹³

- 2.8 In March 2001, ONA reports that 'the scale of threat from Iraq WMD is less than it was a decade ago and the country's infrastructure is still in decline' and it talks about retention of only 'some elements of its WMD capability'.
- 2.9 The second joint report of ONA and DIO, dated 19 July 2002, talks about suspected 'small stocks of **chemical and biological agents**', but notes that Iraq 'has the capacity to restart its program at short notice and make more weapons within months'. It notes that 'Saddam already knows how to hurdle the BW barriers.' and '[Iraq] most likely kept a sizeable amount of anthrax and other BW agents concealed from UN inspectors'. There were also suspected holdings of 'some artillery shells and bombs filled with mustard' and 'Iraq might have hidden a few SCUD warheads filled with nerve agent'.
- 2.10 Specific reference to Iraq's attempts to rebuild its **nuclear capacity** is seen in the ONA assessment of 8 Feb 2002. 'The reports pointed to ... attempts to acquire aluminium pipes believed to be for gas centrifuges to make weapons grade uranium.' This view is qualified in the 19 July joint assessment which notes:
- All known weapons-grade fissile material was removed from the country after the Gulf War. ... Iraq's attempts over the past two years to buy dual-use items suggest a covert effort to make weapons grade uranium in gas centrifuges, but the evidence is patchy and inconclusive. ... US agencies differ on whether aluminium pipes, a dual use item sought by Iraq, were meant for gas centrifuges. ... Iraq is likely to have a nuclear programme ... though it is unlikely to be far advanced.
- 2.11 On 6 September 2002, ONA reports that:
- Iraq is highly unlikely to have nuclear weapons, though intelligence on its nuclear programme is scarce. It has the expertise to make nuclear weapons, but almost certainly lacks the necessary plutonium or highly-enriched uranium.
- 2.12 However, it also notes that 'procurement patterns are consistent with an effort to develop an enrichment capability.' ONA believes that

13 ONA assessment, 12 September 2002.

'Iraq may be able to build a basic nuclear weapon in 4 – 6 years. This timeline would be shorter in the unlikely event that Iraq was able to acquire fissile material from elsewhere.'

- 2.13 In general therefore, in this period, the agencies' view on the existence of Iraq's WMD is that, while there is a capacity to restart programmes, chemical weapons and biological weapons, if they exist at all, would be in small quantities and that the existence of nuclear weapons is doubtful.

Capacity and Willingness to Use: Assessments February 2000-September 2002

- 2.14 In this period, on the matter of Saddam's capacity and willingness to use his weapons, ONA and DIO argue that Hussein's capacity to use his weapons is low and his willingness to use them is assessed to be defensive:

The current doctrine for use and control of WMD is not known, but Iraq is assessed as unlikely to carry out an offensive first strike on coalition forces. However, the probability of Saddam authorising use of WMD is likely to increase in proportion to the threat against his power.¹⁴

Iraq is a long way from having a ballistic missile able to reach the US. But it has in the past built ballistic missiles, including extended range SCUDS, with the range to reach Israel. Most, if not all, of the few that are still hidden away are likely to be in poor condition.¹⁵

Ability to deliver WMD over long ranges reduced by destruction of almost all of his ballistic missiles.¹⁶

A Divergence of Opinion: September 2002 – March 2003

- 2.15 After the middle of September 2002, there appears to be a divergence in emphasis and judgement between the Defence Intelligence Organisation and the Office of National Assessments. From the beginning of September 2002, the number of intelligence reports being received on Iraq's WMD increased exponentially and the amount of reporting from the agencies to government also increased.

14 DIO assessment, 2 August 2002

15 ONA/DIO, joint assessment, 19 July 2002

16 ONA assessment, 6 September 2002

- 2.16 There is one report, produced on 13 September 2002, which stands out. The agencies produced an unclassified intelligence community compilation of views on Iraq, although DIO notes in its submission that ‘the final product was not cleared formally by the contributing agencies.’¹⁷
- 2.17 This report was ‘drawn upon by ministers in some of their parliamentary and public statements.’¹⁸ This unclassified compilation precedes the first major government statement on Iraq delivered in both chambers of Parliament on 17 September 2002. ONA stated in its submission that drafts of the Prime Minister’s five major speeches on Iraq were checked by ONA ‘for accuracy of references to intelligence information and assessments.’¹⁹

ONA Assessments: September 2002-March 2003

Existence of WMD

- 2.18 From this date, the language of the ONA assessments tends to be much more definitive. The changes are ones of emphasis. The ‘no firm evidence²⁰ of new CBW production ‘in the assessment of 12 September and the ‘likely small stocks of chemical and biological weapons’ of 19 July become ‘A range of intelligence and public information suggests that Iraq is highly likely to have chemical and biological weapons’ and ‘Iraq has almost certainly been working to increase its ability to make chemical and biological weapons.’²¹ The ‘patchy and inconclusive’ evidence on nuclear weapons became ‘there is no reason to believe that Saddam Hussein has abandoned his ambition to acquire nuclear weapons.’²² The aluminium tubes mentioned in the assessment of 19 July become, without the caveat of the US dispute, a more accepted part of the evidence on Iraq’s nuclear programmes.

Australian intelligence agencies believe there is evidence of a pattern of acquisition of equipment which could be used in a

17 DIO submission, p. 3

18 ONA submission, p. 8.

19 ONA submission, p. 8.

20 Emphasis added.

21 ONA assessment, 13 September 2002

22 ONA assessment, 13 September 2002

uranium enrichment programme. Iraq's attempted acquisition of aluminium tubes may be part of that pattern.²³

- 2.19 The exception to this change in emphasis is in the 20 September ONA report on the UK Dossier. In this assessment, ONA expresses some of its previous doubts. For example, while ONA comments that the [UK dossier's] 'most striking assessment is that Iraq has chemical and biological agents and weapons available both from pre-Gulf War stocks and more recent production,' it notes that there is no 'killer fact' in the dossier. It also states that ONA has not seen this intelligence, and that it remains cautious about the aluminium tubes and the claim that Iraq has sought uranium from Africa.²⁴
- 2.20 After this report of 20 September, the language in ONA assessments is again more assertive.²⁵ Despite its cautious reaction to the UK September dossier, it appears that after this date ONA is influenced by the more assertive claims being made in Britain and the United States at that time. There are six reports listed in the ONA submission in October, November and December 2002. In these assessments, there are still observations that the intelligence is inconclusive. The preamble in most sentences is still that intelligence 'suggests' or 'indicates'. However, the subsequent statements are in the indicative rather than the subjunctive mood, thereby denoting greater culpability on Iraq's part and certainty on the part of the analyst.
- Iraq has been taking further steps to hide its WMD capability²⁶
 - Iraq was moving chemical and biological weapons away from storage depots²⁷
 - Iraq is adept at hiding its WMD capabilities, including moving equipment frequently and using mobile laboratories²⁸
 - Saddam remains intent on concealing his WMD²⁹
 - Many of his WMD activities are hidden within civilian industry or in mobile or underground facilities³⁰

23 ONA assessment, 13 September 2002

24 This caution on 20 September had not prevented ONA from using the aluminium tubes in the unclassified assessment a week earlier as part of a pattern of acquisition indicating a possible uranium enrichment programme.

25 It may be that the ONA views expressed at this time are increasingly influenced by the UK Dossier where firmer judgements had been made.

26 ONA assessment, 10 October 2002

27 ONA assessment, 10 October 2002

28 ONA assessment, 1 November 2002

29 ONA assessment, 27 November 2002

- 2.21 There is also a greater concentration on Iraq's concealment activities. This concentration assumes the existence of the weapons of mass destruction and, increasingly, the failure of the UNMOVIC inspectors.

There is only a slim prospect UN inspectors will find better evidence of Saddam's WMD activities. ... Intelligence indicates that Saddam is going to great lengths to hide his WMD activities, including the concealment of some scientists and officials, and the bribing, threatening and coaching of others, and substituting intelligence officers for site officials during inspections.³¹ ... [Inspectors] have gained only a few glimpses into Saddam's WMD programmes.³²

- 2.22 The Iraqi Declaration of 7 December 2002 is analysed on 19 December 2002. ONA says, in categorical terms, that [the declaration] fails on a number of grounds:

- It offers little new information on Iraq's chemical and biological weapons programmes, or its nuclear and ballistic missile activities;
- It fails to counter the specific concerns about Iraq's recent WMD activities outlined in the UK and US public dossiers
- [It] fails – perhaps deliberately – to declare the previously acknowledged import of about 100kg of yeast extract, enough to make about 5,000 litres of anthrax. There is no mention of mobile BW labs - even to deny their existence – though there is a passing reference to refrigeration vehicles. There is no new documentation to support Iraq's claim that it destroyed all BW seed stocks acquired before the Gulf War.
- [It] fails to address adequately the fact that 500 mustard filled shells and thousands of empty CW munitions remained unaccounted for. It does not resolve concerns about Iraq's weaponisation of VX. It says that Iraq excavated and repaired chemical equipment 'destroyed' under UNSCOM supervision, and installed the equipment in a chemical plant – an apparent violation of UNSCR687. [It] denies that Iraq's unmanned aerial vehicles programmes are connected with CW or BW.
- [It] ignores Iraq's attempted procurement of aluminium tubes and its apparent effort to procure uranium outside Iraq.

30 ONA assessment, 12 December 2002

31 ONA assessment, 17 January 2003

32 ONA assessment, 24 January 2003

- 2.23 These views of Iraq's culpability and deceit accumulate in the ONA assessments of January and February 2003. By then ONA is reporting more strongly on the existence of Iraq's WMD:

there is a wealth of intelligence on Saddam's WMD activities, but it paints a circumstantial picture that is conclusive overall rather than resting on a single piece of irrefutable evidence.³³ [However] so far no intelligence has accurately pointed to the location of WMD.³⁴

- 2.24 Nevertheless, ONA makes its most emphatic statement about the existence of Iraq's WMD in this report:

[A]n Iraqi artillery unit was ordered to ensure that UN inspectors would not find chemical residues on their equipment. ... Such intelligence leaves little room for doubt that Saddam must have something to hide – he must have WMD – and confirms his deception efforts are so systematic that inspectors could not find all his WMD even if given years to do so.³⁵

- 2.25 Finally, by February 2003, ONA comments that the presentation of the United States Secretary of State, Mr Colin Powell, to the United Nations Security Council 'provides confirmation that Iraq has WMD, since Iraq's concealment and deception are otherwise inexplicable.'³⁶ And further, 'Intelligence points to continuing Iraqi concealment and deception, confirming Saddam has something to hide.'³⁷ 'Baghdad remains defiant and claims it has no WMD to declare: US and UNMOVIC assessments say the opposite.'³⁸

Willingness and Capacity to Use WMD

- 2.26 In this period, there are scant references in the ONA assessments provided to the Committee on Iraq's **capacity or willingness to use WMD**. The view it shared with DIO on 19 July of 'a few extended range SCUDS hidden away, [with] some at least in poor condition' becomes less qualified. On 12 September ONA observes that 'Iraq's ballistic missile program has been active since 1998' and 'Iraq is also seeking new kinds of unmanned aerial vehicles.' As the war draws

33 ONA assessment, 31 January 2003

34 ONA assessment, 31 January 2003

35 ONA assessment, 31 January 2003.

36 ONA assessment, 6 February 2003

37 ONA assessment, 18 February 2003

38 ONA assessment, 11 March 2003

closer in January and March 2003, ONA puts forward views on Hussein's willingness to use WMD:

Saddam may go beyond just threatening the use of WMD – for example, chemical-filled artillery shells to slow the battle or increase US casualties, even at the expense of his own people. ... Saddam is procuring equipment and antidotes to protect his own troops in a CBW environment. ... The risk of WMD use would sharply increase once Saddam's own survival looks doubtful.³⁹

Finally, on 19 March 2003, ONA reports that 'intelligence about the likelihood and scale of chemical weapon use is conflicting.'

DIO Assessments: September 2002 – March 2003

- 2.27 In its reports, DIO concentrates in greater measure on Iraq's military capability. It is generally supportive of the intelligence in the UK dossier of 24 September, saying that 'it is accurate, but provides no new intelligence. It contains some information that was highly classified until yesterday, and many of the supporting details remain classified.'⁴⁰
- 2.28 DIO expresses a number of views that are the same as, or similar to, those of ONA. For example:
- What is not known about Iraq's programmes is as worrying as what is known;
 - Saddam is well versed in concealment and dispersal; and
 - Iraq's declarations on its past programme remain inadequate, especially for VX and CW munitions and precursor material.⁴¹
- 2.29 However, the detailed reports from DIO after the middle of September 2002 remain more sceptical and circumspect than those of ONA in the same period.

Existence of WMD

- 2.30 In this period, DIO remains consistent to its previously stated views on the existence of biological weapons and chemical weapons – that quantities are likely to be small, and, while it is possible, there is no evidence of new production. In its assessments, made between

39 ONA assessment, 30 January 2003

40 DIO assessment, 25 September 2003

41 DIO assessment, 10 October 2002

September 2002 and March 2003, DIO argues the following on the existence of **chemical weapons**:

- Iraq probably retains a limited stockpile of chemical weapons, possibly stored in dual-use facilities;⁴²
- Due to the difficulties in storage and the possible degradation of some chemical agents, the capacity for Iraq to effectively employ weaponised CW agents is uncertain;
- Iraq has the capacity to restart CW production, but we have no evidence that this has occurred;
- There is no known CW production.⁴³

2.31 On **biological weapons**, having cited the history of Iraq's deceptions on biological weapons, DIO argues the following:

- We assess that Iraq retains BW agents and technical knowledge, with the ability to reconstitute a military BW capability within weeks to months. It may also have retained some SCUD warheads and bombs loaded with BW agents.
- In UNSCOM 's absence, Iraq is probably at least consolidating any retained BW capabilities, which could include agents and weapons. Iraq has the necessary civil, and possibly hidden military, assets to have resumed limited production, although there is no specific evidence of this.
- Iraq probably has the anthrax, botulinum toxin, plague, c.perfringens toxin or spores, aflatoxin and ricin agents and has possibly weaponised them. It has probably conducted research and development on brucella. It would use aerial bombs, missiles, artillery rockets and shells and probably helicopter, aircraft or UAV-mounted spray rigs as delivery means.⁴⁴

2.32 However, in a report dated 31 December 2002, DIO argues that:

- There has been no known offensive [BW] research and development since 1991, no known BW production since 1991 and no known BW testing or evaluation since 1991.

2.33 In addition, on 10 March 2003, DIO cast further doubt on the biological weapons programme:

- Documents discovered to date relate to procurement of dual use mobile biological laboratories, but have yet to

42 UNSCOM figures are supplied – likely agents are mustard, sarin and VX. DIO assessment, 10 October 2002

43 DIO assessment, 31 December 2002

44 DIO assessment, 10 October 2002

confirm a mobile BW production capability. – Iraq could claim this evidence relates to legitimate medical, biotechnology or agricultural purposes.

- Confirmation of a mobile BW production capability would require the discovery of semi-trailers or rail cars containing BW production equipment and evidence of BW agent use.
– This level of evidence has not yet been found.

2.34 On the existence of **nuclear weapons**, DIO recognises that the ambition and the knowledge and expertise probably remain from past programmes, and that ‘elements such as personnel, dual-use equipment and documentation probably remain’. Nevertheless, DIO remains sceptical. It argues that:

As a worst case – if Iraq had begun fissile material production after UNSCOM inspections ceased in 1998 – it may be able to manufacture a crude nuclear weapon by 2006-2008. In the unlikely event that Iraq was to obtain fissile material from a foreign source, it would take 12 months to develop a nuclear weapon – assuming it already possessed a useable weapon design.⁴⁵

2.35 In addition, the assessment notes that ‘its expertise has been in decline through natural attrition and loss of skills.’⁴⁶ The intelligence on recent attempts to buy dual-use items for the production of weapons grade uranium is ‘patchy and inconclusive.’ Finally, DIO is definitive on the question of the current existence of nuclear weapons:

- We assess Iraq does not have nuclear weapons.⁴⁷

Willingness and Capacity to Use WMD

2.36 More appears to be said in the assessments about Iraq’s capacity to use WMD, than about its willingness to do so.

2.37 On **capacity**, DIO reports in September and November stress the attempts by Iraq to develop missiles in contravention of UN resolutions. For example, in the unclassified compilation of 13 September 2002 and in an assessment of 14 November 2002, DIO notes that:

- Iraq has continued to seek to maintain and develop its ballistic missile capability since the Gulf War, in contravention of UN Security Council resolutions.

45 DIO assessment, 10 October 2002

46 DIO assessment, 10 October 2002

47 DIO assessment, 10 October 2002, 31 December 2002

- Iraq possibly has up to 40 prohibited 650km range Al Hussein ballistic missiles in covert storage, but we assess that probably less than a dozen of these would be ready for immediate use.⁴⁸

2.38 However, DIO makes a number of statements in this period, which mostly point to the limitations and restrictions on Iraq's capacity:

- Press reports of Iraq converting Mig-21s into UAVs, to deliver biological and chemical weapons are incorrect;⁴⁹
- Iraq is a long way from having a ballistic missile able to reach the US. But it has in the past built ballistic missiles, including extended range SCUDS, with the range to reach Israel. Most, if not all, of the few that are still hidden away are likely to be in poor condition.⁵⁰
- DIO assesses that weapon systems stored since the Gulf War would require extensive refurbishment. CBW agents deteriorate over time, and missile systems would require maintenance before they could be launched.
- DIO assesses that Iraq's capability to deliver a CBW agent in any substantial quantity to be restricted – the delivery of an agent by ballistic missile ... would probably only result in limited casualties. This suggests that, in the short term, Iraq's capability will be limited to a weapon of mass effect rather than a weapon of mass destruction.⁵¹
- Although Iraq probably retains the capability to do so, there is no evidence that CW warheads for Al Samoud, or other ballistic missiles, have been developed. We assess any stored systems would require extensive refurbishment, requiring some months, before they could be launched.
- Iraq has previously weaponsied aerially-delivered dusty sulphur mustard bombs. ... Although Iraq has previously weaponsied dusty mustard in bombs, there is less certainty about Iraq's capacity to deliver dusty agents using rockets or artillery. While DIO assesses that Iraq is unlikely to be able to produce bulk dusty agent munition fills, there is the potential for exposure to specialist personnel in exploitation activities at captured Iraqi facilities. DIO does not, however, have evidence identifying facilities or locations where dusty agents may be located.⁵²

48 DIO assessment, 14 November 2002

49 DIO assessment, 19 September 2002

50 ONA/DIO joint assessment, 19 July 2002

51 DIO assessment, 10 October 2002

52 DIO assessment, 2 April 2003

2.39 There is considerably less discussion in the assessments presented to the Committee on the **willingness of Iraq to use WMD**. The general proposition put forward in the preamble to the assessments, however, is that he has used them in the past and would again. Specifically, DIO says that the intelligence is not available or reliable on the question, but suggests that the use of WMD is likely to be defensive rather than offensive:

- The current doctrine for use and control of WMD is not known, but Iraq is assessed as unlikely to carry out an offensive first strike on coalition forces. However, the probability of Saddam authorising use of WMD is likely to increase in proportion to the threat against his hold on power.⁵³
- There is no reliable intelligence that demonstrates Saddam has delegated authority to use chemical or biological weapons (CBW) in the event of war.⁵⁴

However, DIO speculates on possibilities, based on historical experience:

Despite the lack of firm evidence, precedent suggests that this is a likely scenario. During the 1991 Gulf War, Saddam authorised Iraqi commanders to use CBW if Saddam was killed or coalition forces entered Baghdad.⁵⁵

Immediacy of the Threat

2.40 The agencies provided hardly any explicit assessment on the question of the immediacy of threat posed by Saddam Hussein. In March 2001, ONA was of the view that ‘the scale of threat from Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction is less than it was a decade ago.’ However, there are, in the more recent assessments, highly qualified references to Iraq’s capacity to ‘restart CW and BW programs within weeks and manufacture within months’.⁵⁶ But, agencies repeatedly say in respect of this that ‘there is no evidence that Iraq has done so’⁵⁷ and that ‘some CW stocks will have deteriorated.’⁵⁸ Neither of the Australian

53 DIO assessment, 2 August 2002 and 31 December 2002

54 DIO assessment, 24 February 2003

55 DIO assessment, 24 February 2003

56 ONA/DIO joint assessment, 19 July 2002 and DIO assessment, 10 October 2002

57 DIO assessment, 10 October 2002 and 31 December 2002

58 ONA/DIO joint assessment, 19 July 2002

assessment agencies, in the extracts provided to the Committee, repeats the 45 minute claim made in the UK dossier.

- 2.41 On nuclear weapons, the time frame is even more qualified – 4-6 years,⁵⁹ depending on the availability of fissile material and a useable weapon design. The possibility that Iraq could have a nuclear weapon in 12 months is countenanced, but is dependent on obtaining fissile material from a foreign source, and this is described as ‘unlikely’.⁶⁰ In addition, Iraq would have to possess a useable weapon design, trained scientific staff (in decline through natural attrition and loss of skills)⁶¹ and suitable facilities.⁶²

59 ONA assessment, 6 September 2002, DIO assessment, 10 October 2002

60 DIO assessment, 10 October 2002

61 DIO assessment, 10 October 2002

62 DIO assessment, 31 December 2002

