



REVIEW OF INTELLIGENCE ON
WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION:
IMPLEMENTATION OF
ITS CONCLUSIONS

Presented to Parliament by
the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
by Command of Her Majesty

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Introduction

1. Lord Butler presented the report of his Committee of Privy Counsellors to the Prime Minister on 14 July 2004. On the same day, the Prime Minister, in a statement to the House of Commons, accepted fully the report's conclusions.

2. In that statement, and subsequently in opening the Debate on the report on 20 July 2004, the Prime Minister said that the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) would be addressing the conclusions that related to them. In a Written Statement to the House of Commons on 15 November 2004, the Foreign Secretary set out how the wider programme of work was being taken forward. Overall responsibility for addressing the conclusions would lie with Sir David Omand, the Security and Intelligence Co-ordinator. He had established an oversight group of senior officials (the Butler Implementation Group) which had decided to approach implementation in two ways:

- through the actions of individual Departments and Agencies, for those conclusions which affected only one, or at most a small number, of organisations; and
- through a study into analytical support to the intelligence community, led by a senior FCO official, for those conclusions which went more widely.

3. The study team presented its conclusions to the Butler Implementation Group on 31 January 2005. The Butler Implementation Group submitted a report to Ministers on 10 March 2005 with recommendations on the implementation of all the conclusions of the Butler Review which require action.

4. The Government has considered the Butler Implementation Group's recommendations, which incorporate the study team's findings and the actions taken or proposed by individual parts of the intelligence community. We set out here actions taken, or being taken, to address the conclusions in Lord Butler's review. What follows uses the approach adopted in Chapter 8, Summary of Conclusions, of that review and addresses each conclusion requiring action. Quotations are from Chapter 8, with the Government's response following.

Chapter 1 – The nature and use of intelligence

5. The Government welcomes the very useful description in this chapter of the nature of intelligence and the process by which it is made available to customers, and the acknowledgement of its important role, particularly in combating terrorism and serious crime and in informing policy. The Government intends to maintain a world class intelligence capability built on the three intelligence and security Agencies and the Defence Intelligence Staff (DIS), working collectively with the wider community within Government. Lord Butler's report stresses the value of bringing to bear on intelligence material analytical skills from across Government and drawing the results together within the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) machinery. This ensures that there is a good understanding across a wide community in Government of the special nature of intelligence and its limitations. Nonetheless, the Government accepts that improvements to this machinery are necessary. The response to the detailed conclusions in Lord Butler's report, set out below, explains what has been or is being done to achieve this.

Chapter 2 – Countries of concern other than Iraq and global trade

“All four of the case studies we discussed (AQ Khan, Libya, Iran, North Korea) were to a greater or lesser extent success stories. ... It requires close collaboration between all involved, in agencies and departments, to build the jigsaw, with teams able to have access to available intelligence and to make the most of each clue. It also depends on continuity of shared purpose amongst collectors and analysts, and between the intelligence and policy communities, in gathering, assessing and using intelligence in tackling proliferation and nuclear, biological and chemical weapons programmes which are destabilising in security terms.” (Paragraphs 1 and 2)

6. The Government welcomes this conclusion. As the cases analysed by Lord Butler demonstrate, success is possible in this complex area when the efforts of all parts of Government are effectively harnessed to a common purpose. Without intelligence and its careful assessment, the achievements described in this chapter of Lord Butler's report would not have been possible. Our successes, which also draw on close international collaboration, are due in no small part to the expertise that exists within Government on these issues and the dedication and hard work of members of the intelligence and security Agencies and the Government analytical community.

Chapter 3 – Terrorism

“All of the UK intelligence agencies are developing new techniques, and we have seen clear evidence that they are co-operating at all levels.” (Paragraph 3)

“JTAC has now been operating for over a year and has proved a success.” (Paragraph 4).

“Staff of the UK intelligence and security agencies are today in much wider contact with their opposite numbers throughout the world. We note these initiatives, but remain concerned that the procedures of the international community are still not sufficiently aligned to match the threat.” (Paragraph 5)

7. The Government agrees that the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre (JTAC) has proved a success, which has been copied by some key intelligence and security partners. It also agrees that the Agencies have further developed existing co-operation, working closely together to develop new techniques and capabilities. International co-operation is essential to countering current terrorist threats. UK Agencies have built on existing bilateral relationships and developed others to ensure that there is extensive international co-operation. Since 9/11, co-operation, information exchange and personal contacts have significantly increased. However, there remain complexities and difficulties in these international relationships. The Agencies and policy departments are continuing to work to overcome these constraints both bilaterally and multilaterally.

Chapter 4 – Counter-proliferation machinery

“Intelligence performs an important role in many aspects of the Government’s counter-proliferation work. It helps to identify proliferating countries, organisations and individuals through JIC assessments, DIS proliferation studies and operational intelligence. It can help to interdict or disrupt the activities of proliferators either nationally or in co-operation with other countries. It can support diplomatic activity by revealing states’ attitudes to counter-proliferation or by informing the assessments of international partners. It can also support inspection, monitoring and verification regimes and on occasions military action. Intelligence can play an important part in enforcing export controls, particularly in relation to ‘dual-use’ goods and technologies.” (Paragraph 6)

8. The Government agrees with this conclusion.

Chapter 5 – Iraq

The sources of intelligence

“... We conclude that part of the reason for the serious doubt being cast over a high proportion of human intelligence reports on Iraq arises from weaknesses in the effective application by SIS of its validation procedures and in their proper resourcing. Our Review has shown the vital importance of effective scrutiny and validation of human intelligence sources and of their reporting to the preparation of accurate JIC assessments and high quality advice to Ministers. We urge the Chief of SIS to ensure that this task is properly resourced and organised to achieve that result, and we think that it would be appropriate if the Intelligence and Security Committee were to monitor this.” (Paragraph 19)

9. SIS has taken action to remedy this. New procedures have been developed, additional resources provided and revised line management arrangements put in place. A senior officer has been appointed, on a full time basis, to oversee the quality of reporting, the underlying intelligence processes and the effective evaluation of sources.

10. Work has also taken place, on a cross-intelligence community basis, to ensure that source descriptions in various types of intelligence report (human intelligence, signals intelligence etc) use standardised terminology and are consistent.

Assessment

“We accept the need for careful handling of human intelligence reports to sustain the security of sources. We have, however, seen evidence of difficulties that arose from the unduly strict ‘compartmentalisation’ of intelligence. It was wrong that a report which was of significance in the drafting of a document of the importance of the dossier was not shown to key experts in the DIS who could have commented on the validity and credibility of the report. We conclude that arrangements should always be sought to ensure that the need for protection of sources should not prevent the exposure of reports on technical matters to the most expert available analysis.” (Paragraph 24)

11. A procedure has been agreed between the DIS and SIS to ensure that the distribution of sensitive reports can be extended when necessary. This procedure has been widened to cover the Security Service and GCHQ and other Departments in the intelligence community.

“We detected a tendency for assessments to be coloured by over-reaction to previous errors. As a result, there was a risk of over-cautious or worst case estimates, shorn of their caveats, becoming the ‘prevailing wisdom’. The JIC may, in some

assessments, also have misread the nature of Iraqi governmental and social structures.” (Paragraph 28)

“We emphasise the importance of the Assessments Staff and the JIC having access to a wide range of information, especially in circumstances (eg where the UK is likely to become involved in national reconstruction and institution-building) where information on political and social issues will be vital.” (Paragraph 29)

12. The Government accepts these conclusions. Normally, the JIC will aim to present the “most likely” case in its assessments. Occasionally, it will also be right to highlight what the worst case could be, in which case this will be clearly stated. In making its assessments, the JIC consciously tries to take account of the full range of information available. Its assessments have always been and will continue to be all-source. To reinforce this, members of the analytical community are being encouraged to develop closer links with non-governmental sources of information. In addition, as part of the annual establishment of intelligence Requirements and Priorities, the JIC has taken steps to ensure that the priority for collection of political intelligence in a particular field matches closely the requirement for threat-related intelligence.

The use of intelligence

“We conclude that it was a serious weakness that the JIC’s warnings on the limitations of the intelligence underlying its judgements were not made sufficiently clear in the dossier.” (Paragraph 34)

“... We conclude, with the benefit of hindsight, that making public that the JIC had authorship of the dossier was a mistaken judgement, though we do not criticise the JIC for taking responsibility for clearance of the intelligence content of the document. However, in the particular circumstances, the publication of such a document in the name and with the authority of the JIC had the result that more weight was placed on the intelligence than it could bear. The consequence also was to put the JIC and its Chairman into an area of public controversy and arrangements must be made for the future which avoid putting the JIC and its Chairman in a similar position.” (Paragraph 35)

“We believe that there are other options that should be examined for the ownership of drafting, for gaining the JIC’s endorsement of the intelligence material and assessments that are quoted and for subsequent ‘branding’. One is for the government of the day to draft a document, to gain the JIC’s endorsement of the intelligence material inside and it then to publish it acknowledging that it draws on intelligence but without ascribing it to the JIC. ... JIC clearance of the intelligence content of any similar document will be essential.” (Paragraph 36)

“We conclude that, if intelligence is to be used more widely by governments in public debate in future, those doing so must be careful to explain its uses and limitations. It will be essential, too, that clearer and more effective dividing lines between assessment and advocacy are established when doing so.” (Paragraph 37)

13. The Government has already accepted the Committee’s conclusions on the public use of intelligence in its immediate response to the report. Any future presentation of intelligence will separate the Government case from the JIC assessment.

14. A confidential guide for readers of intelligence, describing its nature, collection, assessment and use, has been produced and circulated across Government. This explains and reminds readers of the limitations of intelligence which need to be borne in mind by users.

Reviewing historic judgements

“We conclude that in the case of plague, JIC assessments reflected historic evidence, and intelligence of dubious credibility, rather than up-to-date evidence.” (Paragraph 52)

15. Instructions have been issued to the Assessments Staff always to review past judgements and historic evidence when producing draft assessments. Similar instructions have been given in the Agencies, DIS and JTAC. Where historic JIC judgements are questioned in new product being produced below the full JIC level, any different judgement must be confirmed at JIC level.

Chapter 6 – Iraq : Specific issues

Dr Jones’s dissent

“... It would have been more appropriate for senior managers in the DIS and SIS to have made arrangements for the intelligence to be shown to DIS experts rather than their making their own judgements on its significance.” (Paragraph 55)

16. The Government accepts this conclusion and has put arrangements in hand to prevent the problem arising in future – see paragraph 11 of this document.

Chapter 7 – Conclusions on broader issues

International co-operation

“We note that much of what was reliably known about Iraq’s unconventional weapons programme in the mid- and late-1990s was obtained through the reports of the UN Special Commission (UNSCOM) and of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). These international agencies now appear to have been more effective than was realised at the time in dismantling and inhibiting Iraq’s prohibited weapons programme. The value of such international organisations needs to be recognised and built on for the future, supported by the contribution of intelligence from national agencies.” (Paragraph 57)

17. The Government recognises the valuable role played by the international agencies such as the IAEA. It works closely with them. A present example of the IAEA playing a key role is in relation to the Iranian nuclear programme.

Co-ordination of counter-proliferation activity

“We consider that it would be helpful through day-to-day processes and the use of new information systems to create a ‘virtual’ network bringing together the various sources of expertise in Government on proliferation and on activity to tackle it, who would be known to each other and could consult each other easily.” (Paragraph 58)

18. Experts and analysts in the weapons of mass destruction (WMD) field meet frequently. Apart from participating in formal meetings, they also hold frequent informal forums. A new IT system, SCOPE, is being developed, for the purposes of better disseminating intelligence material on all subjects securely (including relevant maps, photographs and multi-media material) and better allowing analysts to work on intelligence. SCOPE will connect ten Government Departments and Agencies and is being rolled out over the period to mid/late 2007. SCOPE will deliver intelligence faster and to a wider community than hitherto. Customers, and particularly analysts, will be able to “pull” intelligence from a central archive as well as to receive intelligence “pushed” at them. SCOPE will also provide group working facilities.

The Defence Intelligence Staff

“We consider that further steps are needed to integrate the relevant work of the DIS more closely with the rest of the intelligence community. We welcome the arrangements now being made to give the Joint Intelligence Committee more leverage through the Intelligence Requirements process to ensure that the DIS serves wider national priorities as well as it does defence priorities and has the resources which the rest of the intelligence community needs to support its activities.

If that involved increasing the Secret Intelligence Account by a sum to be at the Security and Intelligence Co-ordinator's disposal to commission such resources, we would support that.” (Paragraph 59)

“We recommend consideration of the provision of proper channels for the expression of dissent within the DIS through the extension of the remit of the Staff Counsellor, who provides a confidential outlet for conscientious objection or dissent within the intelligence agencies, to cover DIS civilian staff and the Assessments Staff.” (Paragraph 60)

“We recognise the case for the Chief of Defence Intelligence to be a serving officer so that he is fully meshed into military planning. But we consider that the Deputy should, unless there are good reasons to the contrary at the time when a particular appointment is made, be an intelligence specialist.” (Paragraph 61)

19. The Government recognises that the DIS plays a vital role within the national intelligence community, and agrees that the DIS should serve wider national priorities as well as Defence. In future, the central intelligence Requirements and Priorities process will apply to the DIS, although as an integral part of the Ministry of Defence (MoD), which ultimately remains responsible for its direction, the DIS also has to meet MoD needs where individual priorities may on occasion differ from those laid on the Agencies.

20. The importance of ensuring that proper channels for dissent are available to civilian staff of the DIS is recognised. The MoD has already introduced, since Lord Butler reported, new arrangements for raising issues of conscience and professional concern, including dissent, in order to address, *inter alia*, the concerns expressed by Lord Butler. These arrangements are fully analogous to those available to the Agencies in respect of the Intelligence and Security Staff Counsellor, with a nominated officer fulfilling that role for DIS staff.

21. The advantages of appointing an intelligence specialist as Deputy Chief of Defence Intelligence (DCDI) are recognised by the MoD. As the post requires a skills base wider than intelligence, increased staff development effort, including a leadership programme, for members of the DIS is being introduced which should in future enable more personnel with extensive intelligence experience to be considered for the post.

The Joint Intelligence Committee

“We see a strong case for the post of Chairman of the JIC being held by someone with experience of dealing with Ministers in a very senior role, and who is demonstrably beyond influence, and thus probably in his last post.” (Paragraph 63)

22. The Prime Minister made clear to the House on 20 July 2004 that the Cabinet Office would set about making a permanent appointment to the Chairmanship of the JIC, to take effect during 2005, and that this would be done in accordance with Lord Butler's criteria.

The Assessments Staff

“We recommend that the Security and Intelligence Co-ordinator reviews the size of the Assessments Staff, and in particular considers whether they have available the volume and range of resources to ask the questions which need to be asked in fully assessing intelligence reports and in thinking radically. We recommend also that this review should include considering whether there should be a specialism of analysis with a career structure and room for advancement, allowing the Assessments Staff to include some career members. ...” (Paragraph 64)

“It may be worth considering the appointment of a distinguished scientist to undertake a part-time role as adviser to the Cabinet Office.” (Paragraph 65)

23. **The Assessments Staff.** On the advice of the Security and Intelligence Co-ordinator, the Government has decided to expand the Assessments Staff in several areas. A new team will be established to provide a standing internal review and challenge function for JIC assessments. That team will also co-ordinate regular assessments of countries at risk of instability, and – in the warning function of the JIC – regular papers highlighting significant threats or other issues likely to face the Government in the coming year in the fields of security, defence and foreign affairs. The team in the Assessments Staff dealing with WMD will be strengthened with an officer with scientific experience. All of the Assessments Staff teams will in future also have research analyst support, not least to ensure better capacity to use open sources and research past records. This strengthening of the Assessments Staff will result in it increasing in size by about one-third. Staffing levels and structures within the Assessments Staff will be reviewed again in two years' time.

24. The Chief of the Assessments Staff has been given an additional role of advisory oversight of assessments across Government in the security, defence and foreign affairs fields.

25. The Assessments Staff now have, as the Butler review recommended, access to the Staff Counsellor.

26. **Specialism of Analysis.** The Government has decided to establish a post of Professional Head of Intelligence Analysis, to advise in the security, defence and foreign affairs fields on gaps and duplication in analyst capabilities, on recruitment of analysts,

on their career structures and on interchange within and beyond Government; to advise on analytical methodology across the intelligence community; and to develop more substantial training than hitherto on a cross-Government basis for all analysts working in these fields. The post of Professional Head of Intelligence Analysis will be established in the Intelligence and Security Secretariat of the Cabinet Office, whose Head is the JIC Chairman.

27. **Scientific Advice.** The Chief Scientific Adviser to the Government, currently Professor Sir David King, has responsibility for providing scientific advice to Government including the Cabinet Office. The Government sees no reason to establish separate structures in the Cabinet Office. Sir David King is discussing with the Cabinet Office ways in which the advice provided to the Cabinet Office, and especially the JIC and the Assessments Staff, can be enhanced.

The language of JIC assessments

“The JIC has been right not to reach a judgement when the evidence is insubstantial. We believe that the JIC should, where there are significant limitations in the intelligence, state these clearly alongside its Key Judgements. While not arguing for a particular approach to the language of JIC assessments and the way in which alternative or minority hypotheses or uncertainty, are expressed, we recommend that the intelligence community review their conventions again to see if there would be advantage in refreshing them.” (Paragraph 66)

28. JIC assessments now include an “Assessment Base” box which sets out the extent and depth of secret intelligence and other information drawn upon in an assessment.

29. The Chief of the Assessments Staff has reviewed and re-issued guidance to his staff on language to be used in assessments.

30. Alternative and minority hypotheses or uncertainties exposed at either Current Intelligence Group (CIG) or JIC levels are now being recorded in JIC minutes. In cases when the JIC cannot reach consensus, dissenting views will be reflected by the JIC Chairman in a note on the face of the final JIC assessment.

Machinery of Government

“We do not suggest that there is or should be an ideal or unchangeable system of collective Government, still less that procedures are in aggregate any less effective now than in earlier times. However, we are concerned that the informality and circumscribed character of the Government’s procedures which we saw in the context of policy-making towards Iraq risks reducing the scope for informed collective political judgement. Such risks are particularly significant in a field like

the subject of our Review, where hard facts are inherently difficult to come by and the quality of judgement is accordingly all the more important.” (Paragraph 67)

31. The Prime Minister recognises the importance of Cabinet discussion and, as he said on 20 July 2004, where a small group is brought together to work on operational military planning and developing the diplomatic strategy, in future such a group will operate formally as an ad hoc Cabinet Committee.

32. The Cabinet Office’s role is to ensure that the Cabinet Committee system remains effective and fully functioning. Committees exist to handle all areas of major business with the right people involved. This structure provides a framework for the collective consideration of, and decisions on, major policy issues and issues of significant public interest. It provides the procedures by which issues that are of interest to more than one Department are properly discussed and that the views of all relevant Ministers are considered and that discussions are properly recorded and distributed to those who need to act on them.

33. The Cabinet Secretariat sits in the Cabinet Office but is non-Departmental in function and purpose. It serves the Prime Minister and Ministers, who chair committees, rather than Cabinet Office Ministers themselves (except in their role as Committee Chairmen). The head of the Secretariat is the Cabinet Secretary. The Secretariat is composed of five individual secretariats: Economic and Domestic; Defence and Overseas; European; Civil Contingencies; and the Intelligence and Security Secretariat. The Cabinet Secretariat’s role is to put in place the appropriate handling procedures for committee business, such as the preparation of papers and minutes to ensure the effective functioning of the committee structure.

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