

**From:** submissions@iraqinquiry.org.uk  
**Sent:** 17 December 2009 14:42  
**To:** submissions@iraqinquiry.org.uk  
**Subject:**

The following submission was made via the Iraq Inquiry website:

1. I was Chief of the Assessments Staff in the Cabinet 1988-91 (later High Commissioner in Nigeria, Pakistan etc). You might find some historical perspective useful, since the Iraq War of 2003 didn't happen out of the blue but followed on from the so-called "Gulf War" of 1991 when Saddam Hussain was chased out of Kuwait. So the JIC had been through many of these issues a decade earlier...

2. For example, John Scarlett's mention of Saddam's biological weapons being, by implication, a credible threat, is nonsense. The Assessments Staff/JIC had carefully considered all that in the autumn of 1990. It was judged then that although SH's regime had carried out research into anthrax and bottilin, as well as other biological nasties, they had no effective means of delivery. No one in the world had cracked the riddle of how to deliver bugs by missile since the explosive warhead would (to put it crudely) fry the bugs... As to crop sprayers, our forces would see them coming from a great distance and easily shoot them down. Nothing I've seen since then has changed that equation. As for the scarecrow (mentioned by John Scarlett) of drones being able to deliver chemical and biological weapons, in the intervening decade Iraq had been under tight international supervision; and the chances of drones (used mainly by the USA and Israel...) being introduced secretly to Iraq were nil. In short, even if Saddam's scientists had continued research work on biological agents, this issue was a sheer diversion, as some basic knowledge of what happened in 1990/91 would at once have shown.

Secondly, John Scarlett's description of how the Assessments Staff/JIC mechanism works is generally accurate. But it omits one absolutely fundamental ingredient. In my day (when the Chairman of the JIC, Sir Percy Craddock, happened to double up as Foreign Affairs adviser to first Margaret Thatcher then John Major), the key to the system was that there were very strong firewalls between the three separate functions of: intelligence-collection and dissemination; analysis (a central function); and policy-making (ultimately a political decision) based on the analysis. This was an essential aspect of how the system worked. It meant that with a fraction of the resources, London often did as well or better than Washington in this area. The intellectual argument for this approach is obvious. Alas! by the time of the Iraq War, these firewalls seem to have been in part dismantled by the Blair government. (I cannot say why since by then I had retired: but I suspect insouciance and an overemphasis on public presentation.) Margaret Thatcher asked Percy Craddock more than once during my time whether specific assessments could not be used in the public domain to bolster the political argument for this or that course of action. Craddock always said "no": and that was that. John Scarlett (or was it Alistair Campbell?) has admitted elsewhere, as I understand it, that 17 words were added to a JIC paper before it was released to the public by no.10 Downing Street. That would have been a resigning matter for me (and, I'm sure, Percy Craddock) a decade earlier. The JIC papers (incidentally, JS didn't mention the Red Book or its circulation) was quite simply the best HMG's combined forces could come up with; and no tinkering with the text by outsiders could possibly have been envisaged.

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Date: 17/12/2009 14:42:16