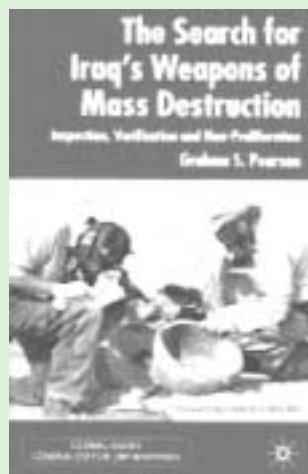


The Search for Iraq's Weapon of Mass Destruction: Inspection, Verification and Non Proliferation by Graham S Pearson, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005

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The book renders a systemic account of the search for chemical and biological weapons in Iraq ever since its war with Iran in the 1980's i.e. across a period of almost two decades. Pearson offers a comprehensive account of the facts related to the search of chemical and biological weapons in Iraq. The case of Iraq pursuing the production of chemical and biological weapons emerged in the backdrop of the Iraq Iran war and largely within the purview of the cold war.



Graham S Pearson has been engaged in the study of chemical and biological weapons much before he joined the University of Bradford, UK as a Visiting Professor in International Security at the Department of Peace Studies. His expertise in the subject therefore flows evenly through the chapters of this book titled, *"The Search for Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction: Inspection, Verification and Non Proliferation."* The book renders a systemic account of the search for chemical and biological weapons in Iraq ever since its war with Iran in the 1980's i.e. across a period of almost two decades. It also strikes the reader with its sense of objectivity and authenticity right at the beginning and by the time it ends, it bequeaths a good deal of intellectual nourishment for people working on this theme.

Graham Pearson has written another book on the same subject titled *"UNSCOM Saga: Chemical and Biological Weapons Nonproliferation"*. The foreword to this book has been written by the former Deputy Executive Chairman of the UNSCOM, Charles A. Duelfer. He has given valuable insights on Pearson's newer piece of work. In this book, Pearson offers a comprehensive account of the facts related to the search of chemical and biological weapons in Iraq. The revelations regarding Iraq's usage of chemical weapons against Iran permeated in the world community during Iran-Iraq war of 1980's. Unfortunately at that point there were minimal efforts made to amend the gravity of the situation. Nonetheless with the further deepening of the crisis in the 1990's, international community began to maneuver to put a curb on the dangerous use of chemical and biological weapons amongst warring nations.

As mentioned, the case of Iraq pursuing the production of chemical and biological weapons emerged in the backdrop of the Iraq Iran war and largely within the purview of the cold war. With the cold war dissipating in due course into a multipolar global order, the threat of the use chemical and biological weapons had been understated. A new threat however emerged:

the use of the CWC by the so called non state actors or the terrorists.

The book comprises twelve chapters which study the four stages of the search for WMD in Iraq; beginning with the United Nations Secretary General Experts in the 1980's, the UN Special Commission (UNSCOM) from 1991-98, by the UN Monitoring, Verification And Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC), November 2002 to March 2003 and finally the Iraqi Survey Group (ISG) to avert the WMD threat from Iraq's 'uncooperative regime.' Not only this, Pearson also dwells on the reasons as to why against all claims no such deadly stockpiles were located in Iraq during the course of inspection over the years. He puts forth the argument that in contrast to the western concept which believed in the storage of such weapons over a period of time for 'retaliatory capability,' the Iraqi strategy of war digressed and concentrated more on the production and immediate usage of these weapons. At the same time though, Iraq intended to sustain the 'production capability' to cater future requirements. This significant argument could be counted as the unique contribution of this work. The war against Iraq is ostensibly the first war against the proliferation. Therefore the author explores what could be appropriately perceived by terms like inspection, verification and non proliferation coined in such practices.

The introduction is followed by the section which deals with what could be the basis of the entire façade created over Iraq's alleged possession of the chemical weapons. The Iraq-Iran quest for territorial gains and strategic advantage eventuated into long drawn war during 1980-1988. This coincided with the offset of the UN Secretary General investigation in Iraq and Iran. In the times to follow, Iraq invaded the Kuwait in the year 1990 which could be obviated only with the counter offensives undertaken by the US led coalition forces and subsequently resulted in the imposition of ceasefire SCR 687 in 1991. The UNSCOM incepted thereafter to continue the similar task till the year 2000. The author admits that this particular chapter draws major inputs from his aforementioned book titled book UNSCOM Saga. Here Pearson opines

that not much has been written about the actual business of the UNSCOM and its work has not been analysed adequately in the context of the non proliferation goals.

The author efficaciously deals with the run up for the second war against Iraq in March 2003. In this context he quotes both the UK Governor Dossier September 2002 and the US CIA Report of October 2002 also tabulates it in a comparative form to facilitate better understanding. It was based broadly on the judgment of these documents that the coalition forces once again launched attack on Iraq with firm belief that it was in possession of WMD. In this aspect, the author argues in favour of fair assessment of the threat posed by chemical and biological weapons which could be ensured only if these exercises are not politically motivated to suit a particular nation's international pursuits.

The author dwells upon the futuristic roles of UNMOVIC expertise in dealing with the WMD threat significantly as its assignment in Iraq has taken a passive course. In the six options advised, Pearson advocates some sort of collaborative endeavors of UNMOVIC with other international organizations and establishments such as UN and the IAEA to procreate effective curbs on the production and cataclysmic usage of WMDs.

The author concludes by saying that the international order has undergone enormous change and therefore the strategy of non proliferation requires suitable and timely alterations. The Iraq experience to a great extent has urged the world to look into the lacunae of such exercises and instead make them more worthwhile. The call is to forge a better understanding amongst nations who desire to wish away the chemical and biological weapons forever.

The book encapsulates the inspection of WMD in Iraq in entirety and in this respect it is undoubtedly a comprehensive and authoritative work. Never in the course of nearly three hundred odd pages, has the author lost the focus of his study. The author's claim of providing a factual comprehensive study

seems to have weight and he has to the extent fullest provided an unbiased and authentic account. He has been careful not to tangle in the intricacies of motives and political biases involved in handling the situation in Iraq. His study is throughout objective and factually crisp. On a critical note, the book at times seems to lose its analytical fervour with the abundance of data and figures. Nonetheless, it is a valuable contribution in the field of non proliferation and a must read for somebody curious about the case of WMD in Iraq.