

The Path towards Strengthened Safeguards: Experiences in Iraq, South Africa, and North Korea

This video series is a collection of dialogues centered on the immense role played by the IAEA, and in particular how the Agency supports nuclear nonproliferation through the practice of safeguards. This current update is a chronicle of events during the 1990s, Iraq, South Africa, and North Korea, that led to the development of the Additional Protocol.

7.11 Verifying Iraq's Declaration

Jacques: Back to my initial caveat, the fact that no there is not only 3rd party information that provided the basis for the Agency's understanding which is the basis for any verification regime. It starts with a declaration. The Iraqi declaration was not the most reliable. Because I was not there, Rich may remember and Laura too, that the first Iraqi declaration was a one page statement stating that "we do not have a nuclear program", to which the Agency responded, "you can't declare that because you already have a declared nuclear program." The system actually in the Spring of 1992 we received a new FFCD¹ of a few dozens of pages - the full final and complete declaration as requested by the SC - that was still something very sketchy and very skinny. So the declaration grew until we told the Council by late 1996 I think or even 97, for sure when we went to the Council in October that we had an acceptable declaration, in terms of being full, final and complete. And that was then several thousand of pages.

So it developed based on recurring questions. And the consistency of the declaration is one of the power tools that the Agency has assessing the consistency of a declaration, and so just with a declaration, we could have done, and we made lots of progress, making sure that the Iraqis were conscious of the fact that there were key questions, discrepancies, between different areas, and they didn't explain that. So that was absolutely key.

We certainly put lots of effort, and that's an area where in my view the nonproliferation community, and I try to explain it even to JNMM² in an article published last summer, needs to make progress - is the area of analysis. I think that the way we conduct the analysis by having a permanent team, having key experts, but also having an adequate circulation of information – and the scientific background of Zifferero was key for that. He helped us develop a thorough understanding of what was the disconnect between the declaration, the info we were getting from 3rd parties, and of course, what we were gathering from the field. This collection from the field, which is the absolute key for the Agency, the role the Agency has in terms of verification, the niche for us, is the legal access to the field. That makes the difference, and we can make the difference in terms of being the reference for the international community, proving what is the truth.

Of course, it all starts with observations from the inspectors. And the more important is that the knowledge of the inspector in an area, the better observations can be. Hence the competence need, then there is the key issue of technologies. At the time when the Iraq program started, the Agency benefited from the introduction of a technology which was swipe sampling followed by particle analysis. And this allowed to corner the counterparts and have them acknowledge that a facility that was supposed to be for whatever innocuous fabrication – I think Tarmiya was told to be a convertor factory – prove there was

¹ FFCD – Full, Final and Complete Disclosure

² Journal of Nuclear Materials Management - <http://www.inmm.org/publications/ratecard.cfm>

trace of the use of NMs there that couldn't match a purely electrical production. So, it's the combination of the three components – the declaration, the information obtained from multiple sources, and how it fits with what is discovered in the field - that gives the power of the verification analysis.