

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.

7.16 Drawing Conclusions

Keywords: development of the “Coherent Picture,” ongoing monitoring and verification

Rich: But the basic kinds of information that somehow or another had to come together, any inconsistencies identified and resolved, is the declaration from the state itself, this is what we did; the information that is generated from the agency activities in Iraq, and that information from open sources or third parties – that all of that information has to come together into some sort of a cohesive picture. And it's through that sort of analysis that the inconsistencies are identified that then become the driving force for activities to be carried out for the next inspection, and this whole iterative process goes on and on.

Jacques: Yes. It's clear. You use the word cohesive. I think we told the Security Council in 1997 “Coherent Picture.” That was at the time, a discrepancy with regard to the way we explain our achievement, versus the way the Council defined the challenge. The challenge was defined as Iraq having to provide a FFCDD. To be frank, from a technical standpoint, a declaration can never be full, final and complete. Simply because we can never know all the details, and in particular we don't need to know the details that are so minute that they are not relevant to the overall assessment.

So we came up with the concept that we were confident that we had developed a “coherent picture” of Iraq's program. The wording at the time, correct me Laura if I'm wrong, that the DG was considering that there was a diminishing return to continuing to dig to all the details, to get something full final and complete. It was recommended to turn our resources to the Ongoing Monitoring and Verification (OMV). The key, and I would say today, in the process of information-driven safeguards, the concept of having a coherent picture of a country's capability is absolutely essential.

We no longer are into verification of declarations as the old approach. When we have to draw conclusions for a state as a whole, we need to have the good enough understanding of the state nuclear program, of the state capabilities that could actually support a nuclear program, and everything that we do on a daily basis serve actually as probes that may collect information to challenge that coherent picture. [Information] that may come next time could challenge that coherent picture. So checking that it is coherent with the picture is key. A new information source that could indicate some experiments that are relevant that are taking place that are not part of the coherent picture...