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Closer Look at United Nations Inspector Hans Blix

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This is a partial transcript of *Special Report with Brit Hume*, November 18, that has been edited for clarity. Click [here](#) to order the complete transcript.

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BRIT HUME, HOST: So, Hans Blix and his team have now set foot in Iraq with the real test to come when Iraq either continues to deny it has any weapons of mass destruction or refuses access to places where inspectors suspect Iraq may be hiding them. That will be Hans Blix's moment. What sort of man is he? For answers, we turn to Steven Dolley, Research Director at the Nuclear Control Institute who recently published a background paper on what U.N. inspectors are likely to encounter in Iraq. Welcome to you, sir, glad to have you.

STEVEN DOLLEY, NUCLEAR CONTROL INSTITUTE: Thank you.

HUME: In that comment you heard Hans Blix make you know, we got the U.N. on the one hand and Iraq on the other hand and peace is sort of up to both of them and we're just the guys, you know, we're the neutral figures in the middle. It makes Blix sound like somebody who kind of wonders, you know, sort of a neutral figure in all this. What sort of man is he and what sort of attitude is he likely to take?

DOLLEY: Well, Dr. Blix is correctly explaining his position as a diplomat and an inspector, but in the past he sometimes in the IAEA and the International Atomic Energy Agency under his leadership in the earlier inspections...

HUME: Now, he was earlier -- he had a role in the earlier inspection undertakings.

DOLLEY: He did.

HUME: And this goes back to the early '90s.

DOLLEY: The post-Gulf war inspection from '91 to '98.

HUME: Right. He was the atomic side of that right, the nuclear side, yes.

DOLLEY: That's correct. Yes.

HUME: Under the earlier leaders of this.

DOLLEY: That's right and now he's in charge of UNMOVIC, which is handling the chemical, biological, and missile inspections. When the International Atomic Energy Agency did reveal a lot of Iraq's nuclear program and destroyed a good deal of it, but there were many unresolved issues even before the inspectors left in 1998.

And even before the inspectors left, the IAEA said it had reached a point of diminishing returns, even though there were a number of unresolved issues and basically kicked the question back to the Security Council and said they wanted to move to a monitoring posture, rather than continuing the aggressive inspections. We're concerned by that and concerned by sometimes the lack of aggressive follow-up on Iraqi excuses along the lines of the dog ate my homework. We unilaterally destroyed things and that...

HUME: In other words, they would say, yes we know what you're talking about there but we destroyed that already.

DOLLEY: Right.

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HUME: And there would be no attempt to verify that, is that what you're talking about?

DOLLEY: That's right or the Iraqis would give them an enormous pile of debris and say this is what's left, have fun. And, there was not always as aggressive follow-up on that. A number of very important issues, right down to the design of Iraq's nuclear bomb, were not successfully followed up on. We hope that won't be the case this time around.

HUME: Now, UNMOVIC, I won't go into the details of what that stands for, is a successor to UNSCOM, which was the earlier inspection regime. That was adversarial, aggressive. I guess it had to be. What's the difference between UNSCOM as it was constituted and UNMOVIC, the successor agency in terms of the way it was constituted and what it was intended to do?

DOLLEY: Well, under the new resolution, UNMOVIC, the current agency, has much broader authority and there are much stricter requirements of Iraq. There is a sincere effort to eliminate a lot of the excuses and the evasions Iraq has used in the past.

HUME: But UNMOVIC itself, though, previously existed and it existed as the second, it was sort the reconstituted weapons authority. What was the difference between it and UNSCOM when UNMOVIC was first constituted?

DOLLEY: Well, the resolution that preceded the most recent one was not as satisfactory, but the organization structurally is very similar. They have a more of a bureaucracy they need to go through. It has a lot more to do, I think, with how it's actually carried out and that's why we have some of the concerns. Ralph Vicayes, Richard Butler, and the heads of UNSCOM were not as willing to accept the excuses and evasions at face value, whereas, the IAEA often concentrated on being collegial based on their previous peaceful safeguarding experience and that's not always appropriate in this context.

HUME: All right, now they go in there now with a very full grant of authority to go where they need to go, confront the Iraqis when they need to. Nothing is supposed to be off limits. What about these inspectors themselves? When UNMOVIC was created after UNSCOM was disassembled, some of the toughest, most seasoned inspectors were lost to the cause. What about this team? What kind of inspectors do we have here? Are these the right people for the kind of job they have?

DOLLEY: Well, they did a very thorough search for the right people. About three-fourths of them don't have previous experience in Iraq inspections but there is the knowledge of how the previous inspections were carried out, how the Iraqis attempted to thwart them, and I'm sure these inspectors have been well briefed on that.

HUME: Is it a problem that they have not been in Iraq before and so many of them have never been to Iraq before?

DOLLEY: It is a steep learning curve, but I think they've done the best to get the right folks for the job and a lot of it is going to come down to when they run into the excuses, how do they follow-up on them.

HUME: Now, let me just ask you another question that keeps coming up and that is, we're talking here about, you know, kind of a hide-and-peek approach, detective approach, aggressive approach. I've heard people say that the critical element, if that's what it comes down to it can never succeed, that the only thing that would really work would be if Iraq came clean, said what it had, and the inspectors' job was then simply to verify the truth of Iraq's declarations. What if Iraq does not – I mean how important is that and what happens if Iraq is unwilling to do that?

DOLLEY: That's very important and I don't think anyone believes Iraq is going to come clean and just hand over weapons of mass destruction. Also, the inspectors would have to be extremely lucky, even with good intelligence, to find the actual weapons, say chemical and biological weapon shells, let alone the nuclear bomb. I think if the U.S. or other nations, state intelligence agencies knew where that stuff was, they probably would have already bombed it into oblivion.

So, the goal of the inspectors is going to have to be to get a general picture of the program, how far it's advanced and attempt to tease out leads from that. It's not going to be as simple as pulling back a garage door and finding biological weapons.

