



Germ Gambits: The Bioweapons Dilemma, Iraq and Beyond (Stanford Security Studies)

Amy Smithson

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Arms control and nonproliferation treaties are among the fingers in the dike preventing the unthinkable nuclear, biological, and chemical catastrophe. For decades the ability to ascertain whether states are hiding germ weapons programs has been nonexistent because the 1975 bioweapons ban has no inspection measures. Yet, in 1995 a small United Nations inspection corps pulled off a spectacular verification feat in the face of concerted resistance from Iraq's Saddam Hussein and popular skepticism that it was even possible to conduct effective biological inspections. Working from sketchy intelligence—and hampered by the Iraqis' extensive concealment and deception measures—the inspectors busted open Iraq's cover stories and wrested a confession of biowarfare agent production from Baghdad. This rigorously researched book tells that compelling story through the firsthand accounts of the inspectors who, with a combination of intrepidity, ingenuity, and a couple of lucky breaks, took the lid off Iraq's bioweapons program and pulled off an improbable victory for peace and international security. The book concludes by drawing lessons from this experience that should be applied to help arrest future bioweapons programs, by placing the Iraq bioweapons saga in the context of other manmade biological risks, and by making recommendations to reduce those risks.

While written as an engaging, analytical historical narrative that explains what the biological inspectors knew, when and how they knew it, and how they outmaneuvered the Iraqis, this book's real contributions are the inspectors' blueprint to "get it right" with regard to the verification challenges associated with the bioweapons ban, and the author's roadmap to address the overall biological threats facing the world today.

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