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### Launching the WMDC report: the first two weeks

The Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission (WMDC) released its report entitled *WEAPONS OF TERROR: Freeing the World of Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Arms* on 1 June 2006. Commission Chairman Dr. Hans Blix presented it to the United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan at the UN Headquarters in New York, and thereafter to the President of the United Nations General Assembly, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Mr. Jan Eliasson, to whom Dr. Blix expressed his and the Commission's gratitude to the Swedish Government for having established and assumed the main financial responsibility of the WMDC.

Simultaneously, in Geneva, Commissioner Patricia Lewis presented it to the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva and Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) Sergei Ordzhonikidze.

At the same time, the report in its entirety was placed on the Commission's website [www.wmdcommission.org](http://www.wmdcommission.org), so that the interested public could download it.

Before the formal presentation of the report in New York, in Vienna, Dr. Blix – en route to New York – had informed the Presidency of the European Union, the Austrian Foreign Minister, and the Acting Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency about the report.

Following the presentation of the report to the United Nations, Dr. Blix presented it, in the Indonesian Lounge at the United Nations, to the Organization of Islamic Conferences (OIC), represented by its envoy to the United Nations, Ambassador Abdul Wahab, and the Permanent Representatives at the UN of the OIC foreign minister level troika Kazakhstan, Turkey and Yemen.

After this, WMDC Chairman Hans Blix gave a press conference at the UN, the first part of which was carried live on both BBC World and CNN; the whole press conference was available on both the UN and the WMDC website. This was followed by a luncheon for diplomats, journalists, international civil servants and representatives of non-governmental organizations, hosted by Dr. Jennifer Simons, the Simons Foundation, Vancouver, Canada, whom Dr. Blix thanked for the generous financial contribution by the Simons Foundation to the Commission throughout its work.

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Throughout 1 June, Dr. Blix gave a number of interviews – both live and recorded as well as for print media – and made a number of public statements, all told some 20 longer or shorter appearances, including a late-afternoon seminar at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York.

In parallel, the printed report began to be circulated throughout the world, including to all United Nations representations in New York, delegations in Geneva, the Hague and Vienna, as well as EU and NATO representations in Brussels, to scholars, journalists, non-governmental organizations and interested individuals. Within two weeks, the first printing of 10.000 copies was exhausted and another 5.000 copies ordered.

A few days before launch, Dr. Blix had given an oral presentation to the diplomatic missions in Stockholm. As part of the global launch scheme, all diplomatic missions in Stockholm were able to receive their own copies of the printed report as it was being transmitted to the UN Secretary-General in New York.

After launch day, throughout the month of June, the report will be presented to both governments and non-governmental organizations, in official as well as non-official formats, at a series of events in North America, Europe and Asia.

Here is a selection of such events in the first half of June.

On 2 June, Dr. Blix took part in a variety of activities in Philadelphia, stretching from radio and TV interviews to a presentation before the World Affairs Council, and culminating in an appearance before a large audience – several hundred people – in the Philadelphia Convention Centre.

On 3 June, there was a seminar at the United Nations Church Centre in New York with non-governmental organizations accredited to the United Nations.

On 4 June, Dr. Blix appeared on the NBC television talk show *Meet the Press* with Tim Russert.

On 5 June, Commissioner Lewis gave an interview for the Washington Post about the report and Dr. Blix addressed the International Law Association's biannual conference, held in Toronto.

On 6 June, Dr. Blix spoke with Assistant Deputy Minister James Wright, Foreign Affairs Canada, appeared before the National Press Club, at a seminar hosted by Carleton University, and gave several TV, radio and newspaper interviews.

On 7 June, Dr. Blix first spoke at a morning seminar hosted by the Arms Control Association and the American Bar Association and held at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington. Thereafter, Dr. Blix met with United States Senators Warner, Graham and Nelson and Congressmen Markey and Shays.

Simultaneously, in Stockholm, the report was presented at a full-day non-governmental seminar, hosted by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI),

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featuring Commissioners Arbatov, Bailes and Dhanapala and WMDC Secretary-General Henrik Salander.

On 8-9 June, Dr. Blix visited Brussels, appearing before the foreign relations committee of the European Parliament and the Committee on Foreign and Security Policy of the Ministerial Council, addressing the European Policy Center, meeting with EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy Solana and with EU Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner. While in Brussels, Dr. Blix also held an international press briefing and gave a number of radio, TV and print media interviews.

On 12 June, Dr. Blix was in London for a joint inter-party seminar with concerned MP:s and non-governmental organizations in Parliament, a meeting with Mariot Leslie, Director Defence and Strategic Threat, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and a lecture at Chatham House.

On 13 June, Dr. Blix was received by Italy's President Napolitano, and gave a press conference and spoke at a seminar at the Istituto Affari Internazionali in Rome.

On 14 June, Dr. Blix presented the report to the Pope in the Vatican, at the end of the weekly outdoor mass before thousands of pilgrims in Saint Peter's square and had a meeting with the Vatican's Foreign Minister, Archbishop Giovanni Lajolo.

On 15 June, Dr. Blix was in Geneva to give a lecture in the Palais des Nations, present the report to the Associate Secretary-General of the World Council of Churches Yorgo Lemopolous and meet with non-governmental organizations.

On 16 June, Commissioner Arbatov presented the WMDC report at a press conference at ITAR-TASS in Moscow, attended by 10 mass media corporations, including television, as well as by a number of embassies.

Further, Dr. Blix will participate in seminars on 19 June in Jakarta with Commissioner Fortuna Anwar, on 21 June in New Delhi with Commissioner Raghavan, and on 23 June in Moscow with Commissioner Arbatov. On 28 June, there will be a seminar in Vancouver, where Dr. Blix and Commissioners Azambuja and Pan will participate.

In July, there will be little public activity. Launch activities will continue in the fall.

A review of press reactions is being prepared and will be available shortly.