

Iraqi Violations of UN Resolutions since the Gulf War

Oct 30, 1997



Brief Analysis

Iraq's announcement yesterday banning the participation of U.S. citizens in future inspection missions of the UN Special Commission investigating Iraq's weapons of mass destruction program is the latest in a long series of Iraqi challenges to the UN Security Council. Since the end of the Gulf War, however, the Security Council has responded to such challenges with diminishing vigor. Following is a brief chronology of Iraqi violations and UN responses.

June-August 1991: In late June, Iraq obstructed the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) from conducting inspections of locations suspected of housing items prohibited under UNSC 687. The president of the Security Council condemned Iraq's behavior and ordered a high-level mission to Baghdad to obtain guarantees from the Iraqi government that no further obstructions of UN-mandated IAEA and UNSCOM (United Nations Special Commission) inspections would occur. UNSCOM and IAEA inspectors concluded that contrary to Iraqi denials, Iraq was engaged in both nuclear and biological weapons programs and was in possession of proscribed missile materials. The Security Council adopted Resolution 707 on August 15, emphasizing its "grave concern" about Iraq's failures to fully disclose information about its weapons facilities and demanding that Iraq cooperate.

September 1991: Baghdad failed to adequately comply with a request from the Security Council that Iraq provide "formal and written" acknowledgment to the Council of its acceptance of Resolution 707 in addition to Resolution 687. Moreover, the Iraqis insisted on placing conditions on their acceptance of UN resolutions. Iraq also detained a nuclear inspection team at a site where the inspectors had uncovered files documenting Iraq's nuclear weapons program. The president of the Security Council issued several press releases condemning Iraqi detention of the inspection team and demanding that the inspectors be released immediately without conditions and with all the documents.

January-February 1992: From January 27 to 30, UNSCOM held unsuccessful high-level talks with Iraqi officials, imploring them to abide by their obligations under the relevant UN resolutions. On February 14, UNSCOM notified Iraq that certain materials had to be destroyed, but Iraq failed to comply. Iraq refused to grant UNSCOM the sole authority to specify which items to destroy, contrary to Resolution 687. The Security Council responded with statements condemning Iraq's "continuing material breach" of the relevant provisions of Resolution 687 and authorizing a mission to "stress the serious consequences if agreement to implement [was] not forthcoming."

July 1992: On July 5, Iraq denied an UNSCOM inspection team access to Iraq's Ministry of Agriculture, which UNSCOM wanted to inspect. The Security Council responded by demanding that Iraq grant access to the UNSCOM inspectors and by upgrading its definition of Iraqi violations from "material breach" to "material and unacceptable breach."

December 1992-February 1993: On December 27, the US shot down an Iraqi MiG aircraft for entering the southern no-fly zone. Over the next several days, the Iraqis conducted further zone violations and moved surface-to-air missile into the southern no-fly zone. In response to US pressure, Iraq eventually withdrew its anti-aircraft missiles and discontinued its no-fly zone violations. At the same time, however, Iraq raided a weapons depot in Kuwait and

forbade a plane carrying UN weapons inspectors from landing in Iraq to carry out its inspection duties.

The UN Security Council responded by demanding Iraq abide by its obligations, calling Iraqi violations "an unacceptable and material breach" and again warning Iraq of the serious consequences that would follow from continued defiance. Beginning in mid-January, the US aided by France and Great Britain, struck Iraq with a series of cruise missile strikes. On January 19, Iraq agreed to allow UN inspectors to fly in to Baghdad unimpeded. On February 5, the Security Council adopted Resolution 806 to emphasize its continuing support of UNIKOM (United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission) and expanded UNIKOM's mandate to include "the capacity to take physical action" to prevent and redress violations of the DMZ and of the Iraq-Kuwait boundary.

June 1993: On June 10, Baghdad impeded UNSCOM efforts to install cameras and other monitoring equipment to supervise Iraq's weapons programs. Again the Security Council called Iraq's actions "a material and unacceptable breach of the relevant provisions of Resolution 687." This was the last time that a Security Council resolution or presidential statement found Iraq in "material and unacceptable breach."

October 1994: On October 6, Iraq issued an ultimatum to the international community, setting October 10 as a deadline for lifting sanctions and threatening to discontinue cooperation with weapons inspectors if sanctions were not relieved. In addition, on October 7, Iraq deployed 10,000 troops to the Kuwaiti border. Iraq then publicly announced on October 12 that its recognition of Kuwait's territorial integrity was contingent on the easing of economic sanctions. The Security Council called for Iraqi cooperation and called on the secretary-general to ensure that UNIKOM "redouble its vigilance" but fell short of finding Iraq in "material breach." On October 15, in response to Iraq's massing of troops, the Council adopted Resolution 949, in which the Council stressed its determination "to prevent Iraq from restoring to threats and intimidation"-yet again the resolution failed to cite Iraq for "material breach" of its obligations, nor did it warn Iraq of "serious consequences."

April-May 1995: A seminar of international biological weapons experts convened by UNSCOM concluded that Iraq had an undeclared full-scale biological weapons program. A few days later UNSCOM reported to the Security Council that Iraq had not accounted for 17 of 22 tons of biological weapons materials. On May 12, the Security Council extended sanctions against Iraq in light of Baghdad's continued failure to fully disclose the extent of its biological and chemical weapons programs. The Council's continuation of sanctions, however, did not constitute any additional punishment on Iraq because the sanctions come up for renewal every 60 days and have been renewed after every evaluation since their imposition in 1990.

May-August 1995: A team of chemical weapons experts concluded that Iraq had not adequately disclosed its past chemical weapons program. On July 1, Iraq also admitted to having had a full-scale offensive biological weapons program in 1989-90 but claimed that both programs had already been destroyed. Saddam Hussein threatened to end all cooperation with UNSCOM and IAEA if economic sanctions were not lifted by August 31. On August 17, Baghdad finally admitted that it had produced biological weapons, was trying to build nuclear weapons, and had made greater progress in producing nerve agents ballistic missiles than it had previously divulged. Iraq then renewed its pledge to cooperate with UNSCOM and rescinded the deadline.

March 1996: Iraq again barred UN inspectors from a site suspected of holding pertinent military documents. They were allowed access a day later but reported that all important documents had been removed. A few days later they were similarly denied access to a Republican Guard base. The Security Council noted the delays with "growing concern" and demanded Iraqi compliance.

June-August 1996: Iraq repeatedly barred UN inspectors from investigating several military sites. Ambassador Rolf Ekeus, head of UNSCOM, traveled to Baghdad to meet with high-level Iraqi officials about these incidents. The Security Council adopted Resolution 1060 condemning Iraq's behavior.

August-September 1996:In late August, Iraqi forces overran the Kurdish-controlled city of Irbil in northern Iraq. The US responded with cruise missile attacks on Iraqi targets and extended the no-fly zone in southern Iraq to the outskirts of Baghdad. The UN secretary-general temporarily "suspended" the finalization of an "oil-for-food" resolution pending the outcome of the situation in northern Iraq. The report was later issued in December 1996.

December 1996:Ambassador Rolf Ekeus reported to the Security Council that Iraq had prevented him from removing 130 Scud missile engines from the country for analysis, to determine whether they were the original engines sold to Iraq by the Soviet Union as Baghdad claimed. The Security Council reminded Iraq of its obligation to comply with the relevant resolutions.

April 1997:Iraq violated both a ban on international flights and the US-sponsored no-fly zone in southern Iraq by transporting Muslim worshippers to Saudi Arabia for the right of the Hajj. These flights violated UN Resolution 670 which banned all flights to and from Iraq. Iraq violated the Resolution again by transporting worshippers via helicopter back to Iraq. The UN admonished Iraq for not consulting it prior to the flights.

June-August 1997:In June, Iraq interfered with helicopter flights operating in support of inspection sites being looked at by UNSCOM and refused UNSCOM inspectors access to several sites. The Security Council noted "serious concern at the four incidents" and affirmed that Iraq must abide by its obligations. The UNSC also unanimously adopted Resolution 1115, expressing its intention to ban various high-level Iraqi officials from international travel in October if Iraq did not mend its ways by then. Such restrictions would require all states to prevent entry into their territories by all Iraqi officials and members of Iraqi armed forces who were responsible for instances of non-compliance with relevant UN resolutions.

October 1997:On October 23, the Security Council adopted Resolution 1134 expressing its "firm intention" to restrict travel of Iraqi officials if, by April 1998, Iraq had not allowed unrestricted access to sites. On October 29, Deputy Iraqi Prime Minister Tariq Aziz informed the Security Council that the Iraqi government will cooperate with UNSCOM "provided that no individuals of American nationality shall participate in any activity of the Special Commission inside Iraq." The American members of UNSCOM were given a week to leave Iraq. So far, the Security Council has only condemned Iraq for its attempt to dictate the terms of cooperation with UNSCOM and has demanded that Iraq cooperate fully without conditions or restrictions.

Compiled by Eytan Fisch

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