

IRAQ'S COMPLIANCE WITH THE U.N. SECURITY
COUNCIL

COMMUNICATION

FROM

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

TRANSMITTING

A REPORT ON THE STATUS OF EFFORTS TO OBTAIN IRAQ'S COMPLIANCE WITH THE RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE U.N. SECURITY COUNCIL, PURSUANT TO PUB. L. 102-1, SEC. 3 (105 STAT. 4)



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THE WHITE HOUSE,
Washington, March 3, 1999.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Consistent with the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution (Public Law 102-1) and as part of my effort to keep the Congress fully informed, I am reporting on the status of efforts to obtain Iraq's compliance with the resolutions adopted by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). My last report, consistent with Public Law 102-1, was transmitted on December 18, 1998.

OVERVIEW

As stated in my December 18 report, on December 16, United States and British forces launched military strikes on Iraq (Operation Desert Fox) to degrade Iraq's capacity to develop and deliver weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and to degrade its ability to threaten its neighbors. The decision to use force was made after U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) Executive Chairman Richard Butler reported to the U.N. Secretary General on December 14, that Iraq was not cooperating fully with the Commission and that it was "not able to conduct the substantive disarmament work mandated to it by the Security Council."

The build-up to the current crisis began on August 5 when the Iraqi government suspended cooperation with UNSCOM and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), except on a limited-range of monitoring activities. On October 31, Iraq announced that it was ceasing all cooperation with UNSCOM. In response to this decision, the Security Council on November 5 unanimously adopted Resolution 1205, which condemned Iraq's decision as a "flagrant violation" of the Gulf War cease-fire Resolution 687 and other relevant resolutions. Resolution 1205 also demanded that Iraq immediately rescind both its October 31 decision and its decision of August 5. This came after the passage on March 3, 1998, of Resolution 1154, warning Iraq that the "severest consequences" would result from Iraq's failure to cooperate with the implementation of Resolution 687.

Iraq ignored the Security Council's demands until November 14, when U.S. and British forces prepared to launch air strikes on Iraq. Baghdad initially tried to impose unacceptable conditions on its offer of resumption of cooperation; however, the United States and Great Britain insisted on strict compliance with all relevant Security Council resolutions. Subsequently, Iraq agreed in writing in letters to the U.N. Secretary General to rescind its August 5 and October 31 decisions and to resume full cooperation with UNSCOM and the IAEA in accordance with Security Council resolutions. Iraq

informed the Security Council on November 14 that it was the “clear and unconditional decision of the Iraqi government to resume cooperation with UNSCOM and the IAEA.”

On November 15, the Security Council issued a statement in which it stressed that Iraq’s commitment “needs to be established by unconditional and sustained cooperation with the Special Commission and the IAEA in exercising the full range of their activities provided for in their mandates.”

UNSCOM and the IAEA resumed their full range of activities on November 17, but Iraq repeatedly violated its commitment of cooperation. As Chairman Butler’s report of December 14 details, Iraq has, over the course of the last 8 years, refused to provide the key documents and critical explanations about its prohibited weapons programs in response to UNSCOM’s outstanding requests. It refused to allow removal of missile engine components, denied access to missile test data, restricted photography of bombs, and endangered the safety of inspectors by aggressively maneuvering a helicopter near them. Iraq failed to provide requested access to archives and effectively blocked UNSCOM from visiting a site on November 25.

On December 4 and again on December 11, Iraq further restricted UNSCOM’s activities by asserting that certain teams could not inspect on Fridays, the Muslim sabbath, despite 7 years of doing so and the fact that other inspection teams’ activities were not restricted on Fridays. Iraq blocked access to offices of the ruling Ba’ath Party on December 9, which UNSCOM held “solid evidence” contained prohibited materials. Iraq routinely removed documents from facilities prior to inspection, and initiated new forms of restrictions on UNSCOM’s work. We also have information that Iraq ordered the military to destroy WMD-related documents in anticipation of the UNSCOM inspections.

Iraq’s actions were a material breach of the Gulf War cease-fire resolution (UNSC Resolution 687), the February 23, 1998, Annan-Aziz Memorandum of Understanding, and Iraq’s November 14 commitment to the Security Council. The threat to the region posed by Iraq’s refusal to cooperate unconditionally with UNSCOM, and the consequent inability of UNSCOM to carry out the responsibilities the Security Council entrusted to it, could not be tolerated. These circumstances led the United States and the United Kingdom to use military force to degrade Iraq’s capacity to threaten its neighbors through the development of WMD and long-range delivery systems. During Desert Fox, key WMD sites and the facilities of the organizations that conceal them, as well as important missile repair facilities and surface-to-air missile sites, were attacked. Operation Desert Fox degraded Saddam’s ability to threaten his neighbors militarily.

UNSCOM and IAEA inspectors withdrew from Iraq on December 15 when Chairman Butler reported that inspectors were not able to conduct the substantive disarmament work required of UNSCOM by the Security Council. The United States continues to support UNSCOM and the IAEA as the agreed mechanisms for Iraq to demonstrate its compliance with UNSC resolutions concerning disarmament.

Since December 18, the Security Council has discussed next steps on Iraq. It decided on January 30 to establish three assessment panels to address disarmament issues, humanitarian issues, and Kuwait-related issues. The panels, under the chairmanship of the Brazilian Ambassador to the United Nations, are due to complete their reviews by April 15.

The United States also continues to support the international community's efforts to provide for the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people through the "oil-for-food" program. On November 24, 1998, the Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1210 establishing a new 6-month phase (phase five) of the oil-for-food program (phase four ended November 25). In January, the United States announced its support for lifting the ceiling on oil sales under the oil-for-food program so that Iraqi civilian humanitarian needs can better be met.

As long as Saddam Hussein remains in power, he represents a threat to the well-being of his people, the peace of the region, and the security of the world. We will continue to contain the threat he poses, but over the long term the best way to address that threat is through a new government in Baghdad. To that end, we—working with the Congress—are deepening our engagement with the forces for change in Iraq to help make the opposition a more effective voice for the aspirations of the Iraqi people. Our efforts are discussed in more detail below.

U.S. AND COALITION FORCE LEVELS IN THE GULF REGION

Saddam's record of aggressive behavior compels us to retain a highly capable force in the region in order to deter Iraq and deal with any threat it might pose to its neighbors, the reconstitution of its WMD program, or movement against the Kurds in northern Iraq. We demonstrated our resolve in mid-December when forces in the region carried out Operation Desert Fox to degrade Iraq's ability to develop and deliver weapons of mass destruction and its ability to threaten its neighbors. We will continue to maintain a robust posture and have established a rapid reinforcement capability to supplement our forces in the Gulf, if needed.

Our forces in the region include land and carrier-based aircraft, surface warships, a Marine Expeditionary unit, a Patriot missile battalion, a mechanized battalion task force, and a mix of special operations forces deployed in support of U.S. Central Command. To enhance force protection throughout the region, additional military security personnel are also deployed. Because of the increased air-defense threat to coalition aircraft, we have also added a robust personnel recovery capability.

OPERATION NORTHERN WATCH AND OPERATION SOUTHERN WATCH

The United States and coalition partners continue to enforce the no-fly zones over Iraq through Operation Northern Watch and Operation Southern Watch. Since December 23, following the conclusion of Desert Fox, we have seen a significant increase in the frequency, intensity, and coordination of the Iraqi air defense system to counter enforcement of the no-fly zones. Since that date, U.S. and coalition aircraft enforcing the no-fly zones have been subject to multiple anti-aircraft artillery (AAA) firings, radar illuminations,

and over 20 surface-to-air missile attacks. Subsequent to Desert Fox, Iraq significantly increased its air defense presence in both the north and south, but it has since returned to pre-Desert Fox levels. Despite the decrease, however, Iraq has not ceased threatening coalition aircraft.

In response to Iraq's increased and repeated no-fly zone violations, and in coordination with the Secretary of Defense's advice, our aircrews have been authorized by me to respond to the increased Iraqi threat. United States and coalition forces can defend themselves against any Iraqi threat in carrying out their no-fly zone enforcement mission. On over 50 occasions since December, U.S. and coalition forces have engaged the Iraqi integrated air defense system. As a consequence, the Iraqi air defense system has been degraded substantially further since December.

THE MARITIME INTERCEPTION FORCE

The Multinational Maritime Interception Force (MIF), operating in accordance with Resolution 665 and other relevant resolutions, enforces U.N. sanctions in the Gulf. The U.S. Navy is the single largest component of the MIF, but it is frequently augmented by ships, aircraft, and other support from Australia, Belgium, Canada, Kuwait, The Netherlands, New Zealand, the UAE, and the United Kingdom. Member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) provide logistical support and shipriders to the MIF and accept vessels diverted for violating U.N. sanctions against Iraq. Kuwait was especially helpful providing significant naval and coast guard assistance. Additionally, they accepted over 15 diverted sanctions violators.

Although refined petroleum products leaving Iraq comprise most of the prohibited traffic, the MIF has intercepted a growing number of ships smuggling prohibited items into Iraq in violation of U.N. sanctions and outside the parameters of the humanitarian oil-for-food program. In early December, the MIF conducted the latest in a series of periodic surge operations in the far northern Gulf near the major Iraqi waterways. These operations disrupted smuggling in the region. Kuwait and the UAE have stepped up their own enforcement efforts. Although partially repaired and back on line, damage to the Basra refinery inflicted during Desert Fox had a significant impact on Iraq's gas and oil smuggling operations in the Gulf.

In December 1998, Iraq relocated surface-to-surface missile batteries to the coastal area of the Al Faw Peninsula. The missiles in question, with a range of nearly 60 nautical miles, could reach far into the North Arabian Gulf and posed a serious threat to the MIF. The deployment of these missiles to a position from which they could engage coalition naval forces was carried out in concert with the increased attempts to shoot down aircraft enforcing the no-fly zones and constituted an enhancement of Iraq's military capability in southern Iraq. Coalition aircraft responded with air strikes to the threat posed by these missiles and are authorized to continue to do so as necessary.

CHEMICAL WEAPONS

After Iraq's November 15, 1998, pledge of unconditional cooperation with weapons inspectors, UNSCOM began to test the Iraqi promise. In a November 25 letter, Iraq continued to deny that it ever weaponized VX nerve agent or produced stabilized VX, despite UNSCOM's publicly stated confidence in the Edgewood Arsenal Laboratory finding of stabilized VX components in fragments of Iraqi SCUD missile warheads. Iraq alleges that the presence of VX was a deliberate act of tampering with the samples examined in the United States.

On November 26, Iraq agreed to cooperate with UNSCOM efforts to determine the disposition of 155mm shells filled with mustard chemical agent, and UNSCOM agreed to proceed with such an effort when logistically possible. Iraq also agreed to cooperate in verifying the tail assemblies of R-400 bombs, and in determining the precise locations of pits that had been used for the field storage of special warheads at Fallujah Forest and the Tigris Canal.

On November 30, the Iraqis failed to meet a deadline to provide various documents Chairman Butler requested pertaining to Iraq's chemical weapons program. Included in this request was the Iraqi Air Force file of documents found previously by UNSCOM inspectors that details chemical weapons expended during the Iran-Iraq war. We understand that UNSCOM believes the file indicates that Iraq's official declarations to UNSCOM have greatly overstated the quantities of chemical weapons expended, which means that at least 6,000 chemical weapons are unaccounted.

In a January 25, 1999, report to the U.N. Security Council President, UNSCOM identified as a priority chemical weapons disarmament issues: VX, the 155mm mustard shells; the Iraqi Air Force file of chemical weapons documents; R-400 bombs filled with CBW (field inspections needed); and chemical weapons production equipment (field verification is needed for 18 of 20 shipping containers UNSCOM knows were moved together). On monitoring, the report identified as priorities the ability to verify Iraqi compliance at listed facilities and to detect construction of new dual-use facilities.

BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS

Iraq has failed to provide a credible explanation for UNSCOM tests that found anthrax in fragments of seven SCUD missile warheads. Iraq has been claiming since 1995 that it put anthrax in only five such warheads, and had previously denied weaponizing anthrax at all. Iraq's explanations to date are far from satisfactory, although it now acknowledges putting both anthrax and botulinum toxin into some number of warheads.

Iraq's biological weapons (BW) program—including SCUD missile BW warheads, R-400 BW bombs, drop-tanks to be filled with BW, spray devices for BW, production of BW agents (anthrax, botulinum toxin, aflatoxin, and wheat cover smut), and BW agent growth media—remains the “black hole” described by Chairman Butler. Iraq has consistently failed to provide a credible account of its efforts to produce and weaponize its BW agents.

During the period November 17 to December 2, 1998, an undeclared Class II Biosafety Cabinet and some filter presses were

discovered; these items are subject to declarations by Iraq and biological monitoring.

On November 18 and 20, Chairman Butler again asked Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister for information concerning Iraq's biological weapons programs. Iraq has supplied none of the information requested.

In the January 25, 1999, report to the U.N. Security Council President, UNSCOM identified as a priority biological weapons disarmament issue Iraq's incomplete declarations on "the whole scope of the BW program." The declarations are important because "Iraq possesses an industrial capability and knowledge base, through which biological warfare agents could be produced quickly and in volume." The report also identified the importance of monitoring dual-use biological items, equipment, facilities, research, and acquisition at 250 listed sites. The effectiveness of monitoring is "proportional to Iraq's cooperation and transparency, to the number of monitored sites, and to the number of inspectors."

LONG-RANGE MISSILES

Iraq's past practices of (1) refusing to discuss further its system for concealment of longer range missiles and their components, (2) refusing to provide credible evidence of its disposition of large quantities of the unique fuel required for the long-range SCUD missile, and (3) continuing to test modifications to SA-2 VOLGA surface-to-air missile components appear intended to enhance Iraq's capability to produce a surface-to-surface missile of range greater than its permitted range of 150 km.

While UNSCOM believes it can account for 817 and 819 imported Soviet-made SCUD missiles, Iraq has refused to give UNSCOM a credible accounting of the indigenous program that produced complete SCUD missiles that were both successfully test-flown and delivered to the Iraqi Army.

In its January 25, 1999, report to the U.N. Security Council President, UNSCOM identified the following as priority missile disarmament issues: 50 unaccounted SCUD conventional warheads; 500 tons of SCUD propellants, the destruction of which has not been verified; 7 Iraqi-produced SCUDs given to the army, the destruction of which cannot be verified; truckloads of major components for SCUD production that are missing; the concealment of BW warheads; and the lack of accounting for VX-filled warheads. The report identified as priorities the capability to monitor declared activities, leaps in missile technology, and changes to declared operational missiles. There are 80 listed missile sites.

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

After Iraq unconditionally rescinded its declarations of non-cooperation on November 15, the IAEA began to test the Iraqi pledge of full cooperation. The IAEA Director General Mohammed El-Baradei's December 14 report on Iraqi cooperation stated: "The Iraqi counterpart has provided the necessary level of cooperation to enable the above-enumerated activities [ongoing monitoring] to be completed efficiently and effectively." In its 6-month report to the Security Council on October 7, the IAEA stated that it had a "technically coherent" view of the Iraqi nuclear program. At that time,

the IAEA also stated its remaining questions about Iraq's nuclear program can be dealt with within IAEA's ongoing monitoring and verification (OMV) effort. In the IAEA's February 8 report to the U.N. Security Council it reiterated this position.

Nonetheless, Iraq has not yet supplied information in response to the Security Council's May 14 Presidential Statement. This statement noted that the IAEA continues to have questions and concerns regarding foreign assistance, abandonment of the program, and the extent of Iraqi progress in weapons design. Iraq has also not passed penal legislation prohibiting nuclear-related activities contrary to Resolution 687.

In a February 8, 1999, report to the U.N. Secretary Council President, IAEA Director General Mohammed El-Baradei summarized previous IAEA assessments of Iraq's compliance with its nuclear disarmament and monitoring obligations. The report restates that "Iraq has not fulfilled its obligation to adopt measures and enact penal laws, to implement and enforce compliance with Iraq's obligations under Resolutions 687 and 707, other relevant Security Council resolutions and the IAEA OMV plan, as required under paragraph 34 of that plan." The IAEA states that the three areas where questions on Iraq's nuclear disarmament remain (lack of technical documentation, lack of information on external assistance to Iraq's clandestine nuclear weapons program, and lack of information on Iraq's abandonment of its nuclear weapons program) would not prevent the full implementation of its OMV plan.

The IAEA continues to plan for long-term monitoring and verification under Resolution 715. In its February 8 report, the IAEA restated that monitoring must be "intrusive" and estimated annual monitoring costs would total nearly \$10 million.

DUAL-USE IMPORTS

Resolution 1051 established a joint UNSCOM/IAEA unit to monitor Iraq's imports of allowed dual-use items. Iraq must notify the unit before it imports specific items that can be used in both weapons of mass destruction and civilian applications. Similarly, U.N. members must provide timely notification of exports to Iraq of such dual-use items. Following the withdrawal of UNSCOM and IAEA monitors, there is no monitoring of dual-use items inside Iraq. This factor has presented new challenges for the U.N. Sanctions Committee and is taken into consideration in the approval process.

THE U.N.'S "OIL-FOR-FOOD" PROGRAM

We continue to support the international community's efforts to provide for the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people through the oil-for-food program. Transition from phase four to phase five (authorized by U.N. Security Council Resolution 1210) was smooth. As in phase four, Iraq is again authorized to sell up to \$5.2 billion worth of oil every 180 days. However, because of a drop in world oil prices, Iraq was only able to pump and sell approximately \$3.1 billion worth of oil during phase four. Since the first deliveries under oil-for-food began in March 1997, food worth \$2.75 billion, and over \$497 million worth of medicine and health supplies have been delivered to Iraq.

As of January 19, under phase four of the oil-for-food program, contracts for the purchase of over \$2.3 billion worth of humanitarian goods for the Iraqi people have been presented to the U.N. Office of the Iraq Program for review by the Sanctions Committee; of these, contracts worth over \$1.6 billion have been approved; most of the remaining contracts are being processed by the Office of the Iraq Program. As of February 4, the United States had approved 584 contracts in phase four and had placed 28 on hold pending clarification of questions about the proposed contracts.

With regard to funds set aside for imports of parts and equipment to increase oil exports, as of February 4, 333 contracts with a total value of nearly \$178 million have been approved; 94 contracts are on hold. In January, the United States released a number of holds on oil spare parts contracts. Up to \$300 million had been set aside in phase four of the oil-for-food program to pay for spare parts and equipment to increase Iraqi oil exports and thus increase available humanitarian funding. The United States had requested holds on contracts that did not directly boost oil exports. As the current phase of oil-for-food again sets aside \$300 million for this purpose, the United States decided to remove holds on lower priority contracts.

The Security Council met in January to discuss the humanitarian situation in Iraq. The United States supported an examination of the current situation and exploration of ways to improve the humanitarian situation, particularly with regard to vulnerable groups such as children under age five, and pregnant and nursing women. The United States has expressed its support for lifting the cap on Iraqi oil exports under the oil-for-food program, and has suggested some streamlining of approval of food and medicine contracts in the U.N. Sanctions Committee.

Three assessment panels are being formed to look at Iraqi disarmament, the humanitarian situation in Iraq, and Iraq's obligations regarding Kuwait. The panels are expected to complete their work by the middle of April.

Resolution 1210 maintains a separate oil-for-food program for northern Iraq, administered directly by the United Nations in consultation with the local population. This program, which the United States strongly supports, receives 13 to 15 percent of the funds generated under the oil-for-food program. The separate northern program was established because of the Baghdad regime's proven disregard for the humanitarian needs of the Kurdish, Assyrian, and Turkomen minorities of northern Iraq, and its readiness to apply the most brutal forms of repression against them. In northern Iraq, where Baghdad does not exercise control, the oil-for-food program has been able to operate relatively effectively. The Kurdish factions are setting aside their differences to work together so that Resolution 1210 is implemented as efficiently as possible.

The United Nations is required to monitor carefully implementation of all aspects of the oil-for-food program. The current phase marked by Resolution 1210 anticipates infrastructure repairs in areas such as oil export capacity, generation of electricity, and water purification. The U.N. monitoring regime is presented with increasing challenges, as UNSCOM monitors are no longer in Iraq.

Humanitarian programs such as oil-for-food have steadily improved the life of the average Iraqi living under sanctions (who for example, now receives a ration basket providing over 2,000 calories per day, a significant improvement in nutrition since the program began) while denying Saddam Hussein control over oil revenues. We will continue to work with the U.N. Secretariat, the Security Council, and others in the international community to ensure that the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people are met while denying any political or economic benefits to the Baghdad regime.

NORTHERN IRAQ: KURDISH RECONCILIATION

Since their ground-breaking meeting with Secretary Albright in September, Massoud Barzani, President of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), and Jalal Talabani, Chairman of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), have met three times to continue their work towards full reconciliation. Both parties have condemned internal fighting, pledged to refrain from violence in settling their differences, and resolved to eliminate terrorism by establishing stronger safeguards for Iraq's borders. Our deep concern for the safety, security, and economic well-being of Iraqi Kurds, Shias, Sunnis, and others who have been subject to brutal attacks by the Baghdad regime remains a primary focus of our Iraq policy.

On November 4, the Governments of Turkey and the United Kingdom joined us in recognizing and welcoming the cooperative achievement of Mr. Barzani and Mr. Talabani. The three states reiterated the importance of preserving the unity and territorial integrity of Iraq and noted, with pleasure, the prominence the KDP and PUK have accorded this principle. We also welcomed the commitment by the KDP and PUK to deny sanctuary to the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) to eliminate all PKK bases from the region, and to safeguard the Turkish border. The parties believe that key decisions on Iraq's future should be made by all the Iraqi people together at the appropriate time and in a regular political process. Their work to achieve the principles embodied in the Ankara Statements are thus meant to implement a framework of regional administration until a united, pluralistic, and democratic Iraq is achieved.

On January 8, the two leaders met without recourse to U.S., U.K., or Turkish interlocutors, in Salahidin in northern Iraq. They reiterated their determination to implement the September agreement, made concrete progress on key issues of revenue sharing and closing down PKK bases, and agreed to stay in close contact.

The United States is committed to ensuring that international aid continues to reach the north, that the human rights of the Kurds and northern Iraq minority groups, such as the Turkomen, Assyrians, Yezedis, and others are respected, and that the no-fly-zone enforced by Operation Northern Watch is observed. The United States will decide how and when to respond should Baghdad's actions pose an increased threat to Iraq's neighbors, to regional security, to vital U.S. interests, and to the Iraqi people, including those in the north.

THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN IRAQ

The human rights situation throughout Iraq continues to be a cause for grave concern. As I reported November 5, the Iraqi army has stepped up repressive operations against the Shia in the south. In mid-November, we received unconfirmed reports from the Iraqi opposition that 150 persons had been executed at Amara, with three bodies left hanging on the city's main bridge over the Tigris River as a warning to those who oppose the regime. An additional 172 persons, some detained since 1991, were reported to have been summarily executed in Abu Gharaib and Radwaniya prisons; as in prior waves of summary prison killings, bodies showing clear signs of torture were reportedly returned to their families. Reports reached us in December that a mass grave containing at least 25 bodies was found near the Khoraisan River in Diyala province, east of Baghdad.

The Iraqi government continues to work toward the destruction of the Marsh Arabs' way of life and the unique ecology of the southern marshes. In the past 2 months, 7 more villages were reportedly destroyed on the margins of the marshes, with irrigation water cut off and the vegetation cut down and burned. Those who could not flee to the interior of the marshes—particularly the old, infirm, women, and children—were said to have been taken hostage by regime forces.

On February 19, the Shia Grand Ayatollah Mohammed al-Sadr was murdered in Iraq along with several of his relatives. Opposition sources indicate this murder was the work of the Saddam regime. The regime also violently suppressed demonstrations that followed in Baghdad and other cities opposing the murder.

In the north, outside the Kurdish-controlled areas, the government continues the forced expulsion of ethnic Kurds and Turkomen from Kirkuk and other cities. In recent months, hundreds of families have reportedly been expelled from Kirkuk with seven new Arab settlements created on land seized from the Kurds. Reports from the Kurdish-controlled areas where the displaced persons are received indicate that they are forced to leave behind almost all of their personal property. Due to a shortage of housing, they are still living in temporary shelters.

A conference of the research and treatment of victims of chemical and biological weapons attacks in northern Iraq, organized by the Washington Kurdish Institute and sponsored by the Department of State was held on November 18–19, 1998. The conference focused on the long-range effects of the Iraqi chemical attack on the village of Halabja, where nearly 5,000 persons were killed in 1988. According to panelists, the hideous combination of mustard gas, tabun, sarin, VX, tear gas, and possibly aflatoxin that the Iraqi military used in the attack has resulted in dramatically increased rates of cancer, respiratory problems, heart failures, infertility, miscarriages, and possibly genetic damage in the surviving population.

On December 1, the London-based INDICT organization announced that 12 senior Iraqi officials—including Saddam Hussein, his sons Uday and Qusay, his half-brother Barzan al-Tikriti, Vice President Taha Yasin Ramadan, and Deputy Prime Minister Tariq

Aziz—would be the focus if its campaign for prosecution by an international tribunal.

The Iraqi government continues to stall and obfuscate attempts to account for more than 600 Kuwaitis and third-country nationals who disappeared at the hands of Iraqi authorities during or after the occupation of Kuwait, despite a Security Council resolution requiring it to do so. Baghdad still refuses to allow independent human rights monitors to enter Iraq, despite repeated requests by the U.N. Special Rapporteur for Iraq, Max Van der Stoep. The U.N. Human Rights Commission has issued a strong condemnation of the “all-pervasive repression and oppression” of the Iraqi government.

THE IRAQI OPPOSITION

We are deepening our engagement with the forces of change in Iraq, helping Iraqis inside and outside Iraq become a more effective voice for the aspirations of the people. We will work toward the day when Iraq has a government worthy of its people—a government prepared to live in peace with its neighbors, a government that respects the rights of its citizens, rather than represses them. On October 31, I signed into law the Iraq Liberation Act of 1998. It provides significant new discretionary authorities to assist the opposition in its struggle against the regime. On January 19, I submitted to the Congress a notification of my intent to designate certain groups under the Act; I designated those groups on February 4. The assessment of additional groups that may qualify for assistance under the Act is progressing. Also on October 31, Radio Free Iraq began operations. Its broadcasters are being heard in Iraq and its message profoundly displeases the regime.

On November 17, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, Martin Indyk, met with 17 London-based representatives of the Iraqi opposition. He heard the full range of views of the parties present, and outlined the new U.S. policy toward the opposition. Indyk urged them to work together toward the common purpose of a new government in Baghdad; the United States will help, but the opposition itself must take the lead. He urged them to do all they could to get a message to the people of Iraq that there is an alternative to Saddam Hussein, adding that the United States will support the campaign to indict Saddam as a war criminal.

Former Iraqi Foreign Minister Adnan Pachachi outlined a number of agreed points to Indyk. The group: (1) welcomed the new U.S. policy toward the opposition; (2) will work to create a democratic government in Iraq; (3) will redouble efforts to get all groups to work together; (4) wants the opposition to serve as an interlocutor for the Iraqi people with the international community; and (5) expressed thanks for the U.S. role in the recent Kurdish reconciliation.

On January 21, Secretary of State Albright announced the appointment of Frank Ricciardone as Special Representative for Transition in Iraq (SRTI). We will abbreviate his current tour as Deputy Chief of Mission on Ankara, and take up his new responsibilities in early March. He traveled with the Secretary of State to London, Riyadh, and Cairo in later January to discuss U.S. policy on this issue. He outlined U.S. intentions to help Iraq resume its rightful

place in the region—a goal the United States believes can only be achieved under new Iraqi leadership. He emphasized U.S. desire to work with Iraqis—who alone can make this happen—inside Iraq and outside Iraq, as well as with Iraq's neighbors who share the same objectives.

There are, of course, other important elements of U.S. policy. These include the maintenance of Security Council support for efforts to eliminate Iraq's prohibited weapons and missile programs, and economic sanctions that continue to deny the regime the means to reconstitute those threats to international peace and security. United States support for the Iraqi opposition will be carried out consistent with those policy objectives as well. Similarly, U.S. support must be attuned to what Iraqis can effectively make use of as it develops over time.

THE UNITED NATIONS COMPENSATION COMMISSION

The United Nations Compensation Commission (UNCC), established pursuant to Resolutions 687, 692, and 1210, continues to resolve claims against Iraq arising from Iraq's unlawful invasion and occupation of Kuwait. The UNCC has issued over 1.3 million awards worth approximately \$7 billion. Thirty percent of the proceeds from the oil sales permitted by Security Council resolutions have been allocated to the Compensation Fund to pay awards and to finance operation of the UNCC. Pursuant to decisions of the UNCC Governing Council, certain small claims are to receive initial payments of \$2,500 toward the amounts approved on those claims before large claims of individuals and claims of corporations and governments may share in the funds available for claims payments. As money from Iraqi oil sales is deposited in the Compensation Fund the UNCC makes these initial \$2,500 payments on eligible claims in the order in which those claims were approved by the UNCC. To date, the United States Government has received funds from the UNCC for initial installment payments on approximately 1,435 claims of U.S. claimants.

CONCLUSION

Iraq remains a serious threat to international peace and security. I remain determined to see Iraq comply fully with all of its obligations under Security Council resolutions. The United States looks forward to the day when Iraq rejoins the family of nations as a responsible and law-abiding member. I appreciate the support of the Congress for our efforts and shall continue to keep the Congress informed about this important issue.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON.

