

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on Iraq's Compliance With United Nations Security Council Resolutions *July 8, 1996*

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

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 U.N. Security Council.

The Government of Iraq crossed a new threshold of noncompliance with its cease-fire obligations in early June when it repeatedly blocked attempts by U.N. weapons inspectors to enter certain Iraqi government facilities. The investigators from the United Nations Special Commission on Iraq (UNSCOM) were attempting to enter Special Republican Guard sites where they believe Iraq may be hiding information on its weapons of mass destruction (WMD) programs.

Under a number of Security Council resolutions, Iraq is obligated to grant UNSCOM inspectors immediate, unconditional and unrestricted access to any location in Iraq they wish to examine. On June 12, the Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1060 deploring Iraq's failure to meet these obligations and demanding that Iraq comply. Upon adoption of the resolution, the Iraqi regime immediately and publicly restated its refusal to grant the required access.

Consequently, on June 14, the Security Council directed the Executive Chairman of UNSCOM, Rolf Ekeus, to travel to Baghdad to try to secure Iraq's compliance. The Council armed Ambassador Ekeus with a strong, unanimous Council statement condemning Iraq's continued intransigence and noting that its behavior constitutes a clear and flagrant violation of a number of Council resolutions, including the cease-fire resolution (687). On June 24, Ambassador Ekeus reported to the Council that Iraq had agreed to meet its obligations regarding the inspections.

Iraq remains out of compliance with numerous other requirements of the Security Council. Iraq continues to stall and obfuscate rather than work in good faith toward accounting for the hundreds of Kuwaitis and third-country nationals

who disappeared at the hands of Iraqi authorities during the occupation. Iraq refuses to return all of Kuwaiti military equipment stolen during the occupation, as well as priceless Kuwaiti cultural and historical artifacts looted on instruction from Baghdad. Iraq continues to provide refuge for known terrorists.

Saddam Hussein's unwillingness to comply with the norms of international behavior extends to his regime's continuing threat to Iraqi citizens throughout the country. We and our coalition partners continue to enforce the no-fly zones over northern and southern Iraq as part of our efforts to deter Iraq's use of aircraft against its population. Tragically, on June 25 a petroleum truck parked near the barracks that housed U.S. military personnel deployed to Saudi Arabia in support of the Operation Southern Watch no-fly zone enforcement operation exploded, killing 19 and wounding over 250 American military personnel, many seriously. This heinous and cowardly attack will not deter our efforts in enforcing the no-fly zone.

Iraq's repression of its southern Shi'a population continues, with policies aimed at destroying the Marsh Arabs' way of life as well as the ecology of the southern marshes. The human rights situation throughout Iraq remains unchanged. Saddam Hussein shows no signs of complying with U.N. Security Council Resolution 688, which demands that Iraq cease the repression of its own people.

The United States, together with international and humanitarian relief organizations, continues to provide humanitarian assistance to the people of northern Iraq. Security conditions in northern Iraq remain tenuous at best, with Iranian and PKK activity adding to the ever-present threat from Baghdad. We continue to facilitate talks between the two major Kurdish groups in an effort to help them resolve their differences and increase stability in northern Iraq.

On May 20, Iraq and the United Nations signed a Memorandum of Understanding setting forth the terms for the implementation of Resolution 986 which, among other things, will permit Iraq to sell \$2 billion of oil to purchase food, medicine, and other materials and supplies

for essential civilian needs. The United States has long supported implementation of Resolution 986 to provide the Iraqi people the relief that Saddam refused to provide. The details of implementation continue to be discussed, and we are hopeful that the resolution will be implemented shortly. We are determined to see the resolution implemented as the Council intended: a mechanism to bring relief to suffering Iraqis, while denying the benefits of the oil sales to Saddam and his associates.

In October 1994, the U.N. Security Council adopted Resolution 949, which demanded that Iraq not utilize its forces to threaten its neighbors or U.N. operations in Iraq and that it not redeploy or enhance its military capacity in southern Iraq. In view of Saddam Hussein's proven record of unreliability, we have felt it prudent to maintain a significant U.S. force presence in the region in order to maintain the capability to respond rapidly to possible Iraqi aggression or threats against its neighbors. Throughout this period, an air expeditionary force has been deployed to Jordan as part of that presence, and a similarly constituted air expeditionary force will shortly deploy to Qatar as the aircraft in Jordan redeploy to the United States.

Since my last report, the Multinational Interception Force (MIF), has successfully countered the latest Iraqi attempt to illegally export petroleum from the Basrah and Khor az Zubayr port facilities. During April and May 1996, MIF vessels intercepted the greatest number of oil tankers, tugs, and offshore resupply vessels in 2 years. New and repeat violators carrying Iraqi petroleum products worth an estimated \$1.2 million and Iraqi dates worth an estimated \$1.1 million were diverted.

For the first time in Iraq sanctions enforcement history, all states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) have accepted diverted vessels and have enforced the U.N. sanctions regime. Once vessels have been turned over, and oil and date cargoes have been seized, the sale proceeds are then deposited in the U.N. escrow account and the vessels' crews deported. As a result of the MIF's enforcement efforts, we are observing an effective deterrence of sanction violations.

We continue to provide reports of MIF diversions to the U.N. Iraq Sanctions Committee as part of our close coordination and consultation with the United Nations and with Security Council members on the issue of maritime Iraq

sanctions enforcement. We have also notified the Sanctions Committee of evidence of continued Iranian complicity in the export of Iraqi petroleum products.

We continue to achieve a significant foreign policy objective in maintaining multinational participation in the MIF. We received firm commitments or serious proposals from New Zealand, Belgium, and Canada to send frigates to participate in the MIF in late 1996 and early 1997.

Other countries have made different but important contributions toward enforcing the U.N. sanctions against Iraq. For example, Honduras recently deflagged four vessels and Belize deflagged three vessels. India has initiated "registry deletion" proceedings against vessels operating under its flag, and the United Arab Emirates is currently considering the deflagging of a vessel diverted twice for violating the sanctions.

The MIF will experience an increase in workload as a result of the Government of Iraq's acceptance of U.N. Security Council Resolution 986. We have revised our Notice to Mariners, which governs the maritime regime in the Gulf, to require prior notification and strict observance of maritime trade with the Mina al Bakr oil terminal. Our policy remains firm: sanctions enforcement measures continue to send a clear message to commercial shippers, and most importantly to the Government of Iraq, that there will be no action to completely lift or modify sanctions until Iraq has established its peaceful intentions by complying with all relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions. The United Nations Compensation Commission (UNCC), established pursuant to Security Council Resolution 687, continues to resolve claims against Iraq arising from Iraq's unlawful invasion and occupation of Kuwait. Currently, the UNCC has issued over 850,000 awards worth more than \$3.3 billion. The UNCC has been able to authorize only limited payments for fixed awards for serious personal injury or death, as Iraq is not in compliance with all relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions, and U.N. sanctions remain in force. However, under U.N. Security Council Resolution 986, if Iraq sells the full amount of oil initially authorized, \$600 million in revenue will go to the Compensation Fund, based on the requirement that 30 percent of oil sales proceeds be transferred into the Fund. Because the UNCC has issued over \$3.3 billion in

awards, funds generated by this sale of oil will be sufficient to pay only a portion of the claims issued to date.

To conclude, Iraq remains a serious threat to regional peace and stability. I remain determined to see Iraq comply fully with all of its obligations under U.N. Security Council resolutions. My Administration will continue to oppose any further relaxation of sanctions until Iraq demonstrates its peaceful intentions through such compliance.

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

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Strom Thurmond, President pro tempore of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 9.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu of Israel July 9, 1996

Prime Minister's Visit

Q. Mr. President, do you think it's a good idea for Prime Minister Netanyahu to sit down with Yasser Arafat personally and try to work out the problems between the Israelis and the Palestinians?

The President. Well, I think it's a good idea for him to sit down with me. And we're looking forward to it. We'll be able to—we'll answer your questions later. I think we should wait until after we have a chance to visit to answer questions.

Terrorist Attack in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia

Q. Has there been any progress in determining who was responsible for the terrorist action in Saudi Arabia?

The President. Well, I got an update yesterday. I think the investigation is progressing. I don't know how to—I don't want to answer your question specifically. I feel confident that the investigation is being handled in the proper way and it is progressing.

Q. If it is state-sponsored, though, is there going to be U.S. retaliation if you can conclude that a state was responsible for this action?

The President. Let me—let's do the investigation first.

Prime Minister's Visit

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, are you bringing the President information about Palestinian violations of the accord, sir?

Prime Minister Netanyahu. First of all, I'm bringing with me to the President a lot of good will from the people of Israel to the people of the United States and from the leadership of Israel to the leadership of the United States. I'm sure we'll have a productive discussion, and I'm sure you'll bear with us until we do.

Terrorist Attack in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, do you think there are any Syrian links to the bombing in Saudi Arabia?

Prime Minister Netanyahu. Well, I thought that the President's suggestion of first investigating and then declaring may be not that frequent among political leaders, but I think it's wise. It's a wise suggestion in which I'll follow.

Q. Do you have any evidence of Syrian involvement? Do you?

The President. Thank you. We'll answer more later. Thank you.

Secretary of Defense William Perry

Q. Mr. President, Secretary Perry seems to be getting a pretty tough grilling right now up on the Hill. Do you still have confidence in Secretary Perry?

The President. Oh, absolutely. He's been a very good Defense Secretary. This is a tough issue. That's why I appointed General Downing to look at it all, to get the facts, and to evaluate the security situation there and elsewhere where our people might be at risk. And we will do a good job of that. But I think the American