

Remarks on the Passage of a United Nations Security Council Resolution on Iraq *November 8, 2002*

Good morning. With the resolution just passed, the United Nations Security Council has met important responsibilities, upheld its principles, and given clear and fair notice that Saddam Hussein must fully disclose and destroy his weapons of mass destruction. He must submit to any and all methods to verify his compliance. His cooperation must be prompt and unconditional, or he will face the severest consequences.

The world has now come together to say that the outlaw regime in Iraq will not be permitted to build or possess chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons. That is the judgment of the United States Congress. That is the judgment of the United Nations Security Council. Now the world must insist that that judgment be enforced.

Iraq's obligation to disarm is not new or even recent. To end the Persian Gulf war and ensure its own survival, Iraq's regime agreed to disarm in April of 1991. For over a decade the Iraqi regime has treated its own pledge with contempt. As today's resolution states, Iraq is already in material breach of past U.N. demands. Iraq has aggressively pursued weapons of mass destruction, even while inspectors were inside the country. Iraq has undermined the effectiveness of weapons inspectors with ploys, delays, and threats, making their work impossible and leading to 4 years of no inspections at all.

The world has learned from this experience an essential lesson: Inspections will not result in a disarmed Iraq unless the Iraqi regime fully cooperates. Inspectors do not have the power to disarm an unwilling regime. They can only confirm that a government has decided to disarm itself. History has shown that when Iraq's leaders stall inspections and impede the progress, it means they have something to hide.

The resolution approved today presents the Iraqi regime with a test, a final test. Iraq must now, without delay or negotiations, fully disarm, welcome full inspections, and fundamentally change the approach it has taken for more than a decade.

The regime must allow immediate and unrestricted access to every site, every document, and every person identified by inspectors. Iraq can be certain that the old game of cheat-and-retreat, tolerated at other times, will no longer be tolerated. Any act of delay or defiance will be an additional breach of Iraq's international obligations and a clear signal that the Iraqi regime has once again abandoned the path of voluntary compliance.

With the passage of this resolution, the world must not lapse into unproductive debates over whether specific instances of Iraqi noncompliance are serious. Any Iraqi noncompliance is serious because such bad faith will show that Iraq has no intention of disarming. If we're to avert war, all nations must continue to pressure Saddam Hussein to accept this resolution and to comply with its obligations and his obligations.

America will be making only one determination: Is Iraq meeting the terms of the Security Council resolution or not? The United States has agreed to discuss any material breach with the Security Council, but without jeopardizing our freedom of action to defend our country. If Iraq fails to fully comply, the United States and other nations will disarm Saddam Hussein.

I've already met with the head of the U.N. inspections program and the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, which has responsibility for nuclear matters. I've assured them that the United States will fully support their efforts, including a

request for information that can help identify illegal activities and materials in Iraq. I encourage every member of the United Nations to strongly support the inspection teams. And now the inspectors have an important responsibility to make full use of the tools we have given them in this resolution.

All patriotic Iraqis should embrace this resolution as an opportunity for Iraq to avoid war and end its isolation. Saddam Hussein cannot hide his weapons of mass destruction from international inspectors without the cooperation of hundreds and thousands of Iraqis, those who work in the weapons program and those who are responsible for concealing the weapons. We call on those Iraqis to convey whatever information they have to inspectors, the United States, or other countries, in whatever manner they can. By helping the process of disarmament, they help their country.

Americans recognize what is at stake. In fighting a war on terror, we are determined to oppose every source of catastrophic harm that threatens our country, our friends, and our allies. We are actively pursuing dangerous terror networks across the world. And we oppose a uniquely dangerous regime, a regime that has harbored terrorists and can supply terrorists with weapons of mass destruction, a regime that has built such terrible weapons and has used them to kill thousands, a brutal regime with a history of both reckless ambition and reckless miscalculation.

The United States of America will not live at the mercy of any group or regime that has the motive and seeks the power to murder Americans on a massive scale. The threat to America also threatens peace and security in the Middle East and far beyond. If Iraq's dictator is permitted to acquire nuclear weapons, he could resume his pattern of intimidation and conquest and dictate the future of a vital region.

In confronting this threat, America seeks the support of the world. If action becomes necessary, we will act in the interests of

the world. And America expects Iraqi compliance with all U.N. resolutions.

The time has come for the Iraqi people to escape oppression, find freedom, and live in hope.

I want to thank the Secretary of State, Colin Powell, for his leadership, his good work, and his determination over the past 2 months. He's worked tirelessly and successfully for a resolution that recognizes important concerns of our Security Council partners and makes Iraq's responsibilities clear. I also thank our Ambassador to the United Nations, John Negroponte, and his team at our U.N. mission in New York for their hard work and outstanding service to our country. Secretary of State Powell's team has done a fine job.

The American people are grateful to the Security Council for passing this historic resolution. Members of the Council acted with courage and took a principled stand. The United Nations has shown the kind of international leadership promised by its charter and required by our times. Now comes the hard part. The Security Council must maintain its unity and sense of purpose so that the Iraq regime cannot revert to the strategies of obstruction and deception it used so successfully in the past.

The outcome of the current crisis is already determined: The full disarmament of weapons of mass destruction by Iraq will occur. The only question for the Iraqi regime is to decide how. The United States prefers that Iraq meet its obligations voluntarily, yet we are prepared for the alternative. In either case, the just demands of the world will be met.

Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:44 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Hans Blix, Executive Chairman, United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission; and Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General, International Atomic Energy Agency.