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STATUS ON IRAQ

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, DC, March 7, 1997.

Hon. NEWT GINGRICH,
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). This report covers the period from January 7 to the present.

Saddam Hussein remains a threat to his people and the region. The United States successfully responded to the increased threat resulting from Saddam's attack on Irbil in late August 1996, but he continues to try to manipulate local rivalries in northern Iraq to his advantage. The United States and our coalition partners continue uninterrupted enforcement of the no-fly zone over northern Iraq under Operation Northern Watch, the successor mission to Operation Provide Comfort. France chose not to participate in Operation Northern Watch, but the United Kingdom and Turkey remain committed to the same enforcement of the no-fly zone above the 36th parallel that existed under Operation Provide Comfort. Enforcement of the southern no-fly zone also continues, and France remains engaged with our other coalition partners in conducting Operation Southern Watch.

Besides our air operations, we will continue to maintain a strong U.S. presence in the region in order to deter Saddam. U.S. force levels have returned to approximate pre-Operation Desert Strike levels, with land- and carrier-based aircraft, surface warships, a Marine amphibious task force, a Patriot missile battalion, and a mechanized battalion task force deployed in support of USCINCCENT operations. On February 20, 1997, an air expeditionary force consisting of 30 F-16s and F-15s deployed to Doha, Qatar, to further strengthen the U.S. deterrent in the region. On February 22, an F-117 squadron deployed to Kuwait since last autumn was redeployed to the United States upon the completion of its mission. USCINCCENT has completed the initial phases of Operation Desert Focus, with the relocation and consolidation of all combatant forces in Saudi Arabia into more secure facilities throughout Saudi Arabia. To enhance force protection throughout the region, additional military security personnel have been deployed for continuous rotation. USCINCCENT continues to closely monitor the security situation in the region to ensure adequate force protection is provided for all deployed forces.

United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 949, adopted in October 1994, demands that Iraq not utilize its military forces to threaten its neighbors or U.N. operations in Iraq and that

it not redeploy troops or enhance its military capacity in southern Iraq. In view of Saddam's reinforced record of unreliability, it is prudent to retain 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.

Regarding northern Iraq, we have conducted three rounds of talks, along with our British and Turkish partners, with the major Kurdish parties in northern Iraq—the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). Our immediate goal is to strengthen the U.S.—brokered cease-fire of October 23, which continues to hold, and to encourage political reconciliation between the PUK and KDP. This Administration continues to warn all concerned that internecine warfare in the north can only work to the advantage of Saddam Hussein and Iran, which we believe has no role to play in the area. In this connection, we remain concerned about Iraqi Kurd contracts with either Baghdad or Tehran.

The United States is providing political, financial, and logistical support for a neutral, indigenous Peach Monitoring Force (PMF) in northern Iraq that has demarcated the cease-fire line and will monitor the cease-fire. The PMF likely will be fully deployed in the next few weeks. Our support is being provided in the form of commodities and services in accordance with a drawdown directed by me on December 11, 1996, and in the form of funds to be used to provide other non-lethal assistance in accordance with a separate determination made by former Secretary of State Christopher on November 10, 1996.

We also are encouraging both Kurdish groups to take steps toward reconciliation. At the latest round of higher-level talks in Ankara on January 15, the Iraqi Kurds agreed to establish joint committees to cooperate in such areas as education, health, and transportation. Local representatives of the two Kurd groups, the three countries and the PNF continue to meet biweekly in Ankara and move forward on other confidence-building measures. All our efforts under the Ankara process, like all our efforts concerning Iraq, maintain support for the unity and territorial integrity of Iraq. The United States, working through the United Nations and humanitarian relief organizations, continues to provide humanitarian assistance to the people of northern Iraq. We have contributed more than \$15 million this fiscal year to programs in the north administered by the United Nations programs in the north administered by the United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Program (WFP). Security conditions in northern Iraq remain tenuous at best, with Iranian and Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) activity adding to the ever-present threat from Baghdad.

The oil-related provisions of UNSCR 986, which authorized Iraq to sell up to \$2 billion of oil during an initial 180-day period (with the possibility of UNSC renewal of subsequent 180-day periods), went into effect on December 10, 1996. This resolution requires that the proceeds of this limited oil sale, all of which must be deposited in a U.N. escrow account, will be used to purchase food, medicine, and other materials and supplies for essential civilian needs for all Iraqi citizens and to fund vital U.N. activities regarding Iraq. Critical to the success of UNSCR 986 is Iraq's willingness

to follow through on its commitments under 986 to allow the U.N. to monitor the distribution of food and medical supplies to the Iraqi people. While Iraq has already sold nearly 80 percent of the oil allowed for the first 90-day period, Iraqi efforts to impose restrictions on the access and freedom of movement of the U.N. monitors tasked with overseeing the equitable distribution of humanitarian supplies have slowed such distribution.

Since my last report, the Government of Iraq has continued to flout its obligations under UNSC resolutions in other ways. Under the terms of relevant UNSC resolutions, Iraq must grant the United Nations Special Commission on Iraq (UNSCOM) inspectors immediate, unconditional, and unrestricted access to any location in Iraq they wish to examine, and access to any Iraqi official whom they wish to interview, so that UNSCOM may fully discharge its mandate to ensure that Iraq's weapons of mass destruction program has been eliminated. Iraq continues, as it has for the past 5 years, to fail to live up either to the letter or the spirit of this commitment.

On February 23, UNSCOM Chairman Rolf Ekeus obtained permission from the Iraqi regime to remove more than 130 SCUD motors from Iraq for extensive testing in the United States and France. Iraq agreed to this action after 3 months of stalling, and only after a December 30 Security Council Presidential Statement deplored Iraq's failure to comply with its obligation to cooperate with UNSCOM. Ekeus continues to believe that Iraq maintains significant numbers of operational SCUD missiles, possibly with CBW warheads. As long as Saddam refuses to cooperate fully with U.N. weapons inspectors, UNSCOM will be impeded in its efforts to fulfill its mandate. We will continue to fully support the mandate and the efforts of UNSCOM to obtain Iraqi compliance with all relevant U.N. resolutions.

Implementation of UNSCR 1051 continues. It provides for a mechanism to monitor Iraq's efforts to reacquire proscribed weapons capabilities by requiring that Iraq notify a joint unit of UNSCOM and the International Atomic Energy Agency in advance of any imports of dual-use items. Similarly, countries must provide timely notification of exports to Iraq of dual-use items.

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. It has also failed to return all of the stolen Kuwaiti military equipment and the priceless Kuwaiti cultural and historical artifacts, which were looted during the occupation.

Iraq's repression of its Shi'a population continues with policies that are destroying the Marsh Arabs' way of life in southern Iraq as well as the ecology of the southern marshes. The human rights situation throughout Iraq remains unchanged. Saddam Hussein shows no sign of complying with UNSCR 688, which demands that Iraq cease the repression of its own people.

The Multinational Interception Force (MIF) has been increasingly challenged in the last few months. In the first 6 weeks of the year, 12 merchant vessels were diverted for sanctions violations. This represents the highest volume of smuggler traffic we have seen since maritime sanctions enforcement began. Most of these

smugglers take gas oil illegally from Iraq via the Shatt Al Arab waterway and sell it on the spot market for enormous profit. As I have noted in previous reports, these smugglers use the territorial waters of Iran to avoid the MIF inspection in the Northern Gulf. With the help of the Iranian government, which profits from these activities by charging protection fees, these smugglers are able to export between 40,000 and 65,000 metric tons of gas oil through the Gulf each month.

To counter the efforts of those who engage in illegal trade with Iraq, we have taken a number of steps to minimize the smuggling activity. We have adjusted the positioning of our naval forces to take maximum advantage of known trade routes. We are working closely with our friends in the Gulf Cooperation Council to develop greater cooperation in border patrol and customs inspection procedures. We have publicized the involvement of the Iranian government at the United Nations and in press reports.

It is important to remember that these sanctions violations not only aid Saddam and his policy of resisting U.N. mandates, but also slow the flow of humanitarian aid to the Iraqi people who are in such great need. Committing scarce MIF assets to counter the smuggling trade results in fewer ships available to process the legal humanitarian shipments that bring food to Iraq under the provisions of UNSCR 986 and the humanitarian exceptions to sanctions.

We continue to work closely with our maritime partners in the MIF. Recently, The Netherlands informed us that they will send a frigate and an aircraft to join the MIF in the near future. Canada will also soon be sending a ship to join the MIF. The continuing support of the international community is critical to the success of this multinational operation.

Since the implementation of UNSCR 986 in December, the MIF has not encountered any serious problems in processing the maritime traffic involved in lifting oil from the Mina Al Bakr offshore terminal. While it is still too early to tell if the inbound shipments will go as smoothly, we are hopeful that our advance planning and preparation in this area will pay off.

The United Nations Compensation Commission (UNCC), established pursuant to UNSCR 687, continues to resolve claims against Iraq arising from Iraq's unlawful invasion and occupation of Kuwait. The UNCC has issued over 1 million awards worth approximately \$5.2 billion. The UNCC has authorized to date only limited payments for fixed awards for serious personal injury or death because additional funds to pay awards have been unavailable due to Iraq's refusal to comply with all relevant UNSC resolutions. With the advent of oil sales under UNSCR 986, however, 30 percent of the proceeds will be allocated to the Compensation Fund. These proceeds will be used to make installment payments on awards already made and to finance operations of the UNCC.

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 United Nations Security Council resolutions. My Administration will continue to pose any relaxation of sanctions until Iraq demonstrates its peaceful intentions through such compliance.

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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.

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