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Update 27 January 2003(as delivered)

THE SECURITY COUNCIL, 27 JANUARY 2003:
AN UPDATE ON INSPECTION

Executive Chairman of UNMOVIC, Dr. Hans Blix

The governing Security Council resolutions

The resolution adopted by the Security Council on Iraq in November last year asks UNMOVIC and the IAEA to "update" the Council 60 days after the resumption of inspections. This is today. The updating, it seems, forms part of an assessment by the Council and its Members of the results, so far, of the inspections and of their role as a means to achieve verifiable disarmament in Iraq.

As this is an open meeting of the Council, it may be appropriate briefly to provide some background for a better understanding of where we stand today. With your permission, I shall do so.

I begin by recalling that inspections as a part of a disarmament process in Iraq started in 1991, immediately after the Gulf War. They went on for eight years until December 1998, when inspectors were withdrawn. Thereafter, for nearly four years there were no inspections. They were resumed only at the end of November last year.

While the fundamental aim of inspections in Iraq has always been to verify disarmament, the successive resolutions adopted by the Council over the years have varied somewhat in emphasis and approach.

In 1991, resolution 687 (1991), adopted unanimously as a part of the cease-fire after the Gulf War, had five major elements. The three first related to disarmament. They called for :

declarations by Iraq of its programmes of weapons of mass destruction and long range missiles;

verification of the declarations through UNSCOM and the IAEA;

supervision by these organizations of the destruction or the elimination of proscribed programmes and items.

After the completion of the disarmament :

· the Council would have authority to proceed to a lifting of the sanctions (economic restrictions); and

the inspecting organizations would move to long-term ongoing monitoring and verification.

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Resolution 687 (1991), like the subsequent resolutions I shall refer to, required cooperation by Iraq but such was often withheld or given grudgingly. Unlike South Africa, which decided on its own to eliminate its nuclear weapons and welcomed inspection as a means of creating confidence in its disarmament, Iraq appears not to have come to a genuine acceptance – not even today – of the disarmament, which was demanded of it and which it needs to carry out to win the confidence of the world and to live in peace.

As we know, the twin operation 'declare and verify', which was prescribed in resolution 687 (1991), too often turned into a game of 'hide and seek'. Rather than just verifying declarations and supporting evidence, the two inspecting organizations found themselves engaged in efforts to map the weapons programmes and to search for evidence through inspections, interviews, seminars, inquiries with suppliers and intelligence organizations. As a result, the disarmament phase was not completed in the short time expected. Sanctions remained and took a severe toll until Iraq accepted the Oil for Food Programme and the gradual development of that programme mitigated the effects of the sanctions.

The implementation of resolution 687 (1991) nevertheless brought about considerable disarmament results. It has been recognized that more weapons of mass destruction were destroyed under this resolution than were destroyed during the Gulf War: large quantities of chemical weapons were destroyed under UNSCOM supervision before 1994. While Iraq claims – with little evidence – that it destroyed all biological weapons unilaterally in 1991, it is certain that UNSCOM destroyed large biological weapons production facilities in 1996. The large nuclear infrastructure was destroyed and the fissionable material was removed from Iraq by the IAEA.

One of three important questions before us today is how much might remain undeclared and intact from before 1991; and, possibly, thereafter; the second question is what, if anything, was illegally produced or procured after 1998, when the inspectors left; and the third question is how it can be prevented that any weapons of mass destruction be produced or procured in the future.

In December 1999 – after one year without inspections in Iraq – resolution 1284 (1999) was adopted by the Council with 4 abstentions. Supplementing the basic resolutions of 1991 and following years, it provided Iraq with a somewhat less ambitious approach: in return for "cooperation in all respects" for a specified period of time, including progress in the resolution of "key remaining disarmament tasks", it opened the possibility, not for the lifting, but the suspension of sanctions.

For nearly three years, Iraq refused to accept any inspections by UNMOVIC. It was only after appeals by the Secretary-General and Arab States and pressure by the United States and other Member States, that Iraq declared on 16 September last year that it would again accept inspections without conditions.

Resolution 1441 (2002) was adopted on 8 November last year and emphatically reaffirmed the demand on Iraq to cooperate. It required this cooperation to be immediate, unconditional and active. The resolution contained many provisions, which we welcome as enhancing and strengthening the inspection regime. The unanimity by which it was adopted sent a powerful signal that the Council was of one mind in creating a last opportunity for peaceful disarmament in Iraq through inspection.

UNMOVIC shares the sense of urgency felt by the Council to use inspection as a

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path to attain, within a reasonable time, verifiable disarmament of Iraq. Under the resolutions I have cited, it would be followed by monitoring for such time as the Council feels would be required. The resolutions also point to a zone free of weapons of mass destruction as the ultimate goal.

As a subsidiary body of the Council, UNMOVIC is fully aware of and appreciates the close attention, which the Council devotes to the inspections in Iraq. While today's "updating" is foreseen in resolution 1441 (2002), the Council can and does call for additional briefings whenever it wishes. One was held on 19 January and a further such briefing is tentatively set for 14 February.

I turn now to the key requirement of cooperation and Iraq's response to it. Cooperation might be said to relate to both substance and process. It would appear from our experience so far that Iraq has decided in principle to provide cooperation on process, notably access. A similar decision is indispensable to provide cooperation on substance in order to bring the disarmament task to completion through the peaceful process of inspection and to bring the monitoring task on a firm course. An initial minor step would be to adopt the long-overdue legislation required by the resolutions.

I shall deal first with cooperation on process.

Cooperation on process

It has regard to the procedures, mechanisms, infrastructure and practical arrangements to pursue inspections and seek verifiable disarmament. While inspection is not built on the premise of confidence but may lead to confidence if it is successful, there must nevertheless be a measure of mutual confidence from the very beginning in running the operation of inspection.

Iraq has on the whole cooperated rather well so far with UNMOVIC in this field. The most important point to make is that access has been provided to all sites we have wanted to inspect and with one exception it has been prompt. We have further had great help in building up the infrastructure of our office in Baghdad and the field office in Mosul. Arrangements and services for our plane and our helicopters have been good. The environment has been workable.

Our inspections have included universities, military bases, presidential sites and private residences. Inspections have also taken place on Fridays, the Muslim day of rest, on Christmas day and New Years day. These inspections have been conducted in the same manner as all other inspections. We seek to be both effective and correct.

In this updating I am bound, however, to register some problems. Firstly, relating to two kinds of air operations.

While we now have the technical capability to send a U-2 plane placed at our disposal for aerial imagery and for surveillance during inspections and have informed Iraq that we planned to do so, Iraq has refused to guarantee its safety, unless a number of conditions are fulfilled. As these conditions went beyond what is stipulated in resolution 1441 (2002) and what was practiced by UNSCOM and Iraq in the past, we note that Iraq is not so far complying with our request. I hope this attitude will change.

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Another air operation problem – which was solved during our recent talks in Baghdad – concerned the use of helicopters flying into the no-fly zones. Iraq had insisted on sending helicopters of their own to accompany ours. This would have raised a safety problem. The matter was solved by an offer on our part to take the accompanying Iraq minders in our helicopters to the sites, an arrangement that had been practiced by UNSCOM in the past.

I am obliged to note some recent disturbing incidents and harassment. For instance, for some time farfetched allegations have been made publicly that questions posed by inspectors were of intelligence character. While I might not defend every question that inspectors might have asked, Iraq knows that they do not serve intelligence purposes and Iraq should not say so.

On a number of occasions, demonstrations have taken place in front of our offices and at inspection sites.

The other day, a sightseeing excursion by five inspectors to a mosque was followed by an unwarranted public outburst. The inspectors went without any UN insignia and were welcomed in the kind manner that is characteristic of the normal Iraqi attitude to foreigners. They took off their shoes and were taken around. They asked perfectly innocent questions and parted with the invitation to come again.

Shortly thereafter, we receive protests from the Iraqi authorities about an unannounced inspection and about questions not relevant to weapons of mass destruction. Indeed, they were not. Demonstrations and outbursts of this kind are unlikely to occur in Iraq without initiative or encouragement from the authorities. We must ask ourselves what the motives may be for these events. They do not facilitate an already difficult job, in which we try to be effective, professional and, at the same time, correct. Where our Iraqi counterparts have some complaint they can take it up in a calmer and less unpleasant manner.

Cooperation on substance

The substantive cooperation required relates above all to the obligation of Iraq to declare all programmes of weapons of mass destruction and either to present items and activities for elimination or else to provide evidence supporting the conclusion that nothing proscribed remains.

Paragraph 9 of resolution 1441 (2002) states that this cooperation shall be “active”. It is not enough to open doors. Inspection is not a game of “catch as catch can”. Rather, as I noted, it is a process of verification for the purpose of creating confidence. It is not built upon the premise of trust. Rather, it is designed to lead to trust, if there is both openness to the inspectors and action to present them with items to destroy or credible evidence about the absence of any such items.

The declaration of 7 December

On 7 December 2002, Iraq submitted a declaration of some 12,000 pages in response to paragraph 3 of resolution 1441 (2002) and within the time stipulated by the Security Council. In the fields of missiles and biotechnology, the declaration contains a good deal of new material and information covering the

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period from 1998 and onward. This is welcome.

One might have expected that in preparing the Declaration, Iraq would have tried to respond to, clarify and submit supporting evidence regarding the many open disarmament issues, which the Iraqi side should be familiar with from the UNSCOM document S/1999/94 of January 1999 and the so-called Amorim Report of March 1999 (S/1999/356). These are questions which UNMOVIC, governments and independent commentators have often cited.

While UNMOVIC has been preparing its own list of current "unresolved disarmament issues" and "key remaining disarmament tasks" in response to requirements in resolution 1284 (1999), we find the issues listed in the two reports as unresolved, professionally justified. These reports do not contend that weapons of mass destruction remain in Iraq, but nor do they exclude that possibility. They point to lack of evidence and inconsistencies, which raise question marks, which must be straightened out, if weapons dossiers are to be closed and confidence is to arise.

They deserve to be taken seriously by Iraq rather than being brushed aside as evil machinations of UNSCOM. Regrettably, the 12,000 page declaration, most of which is a reprint of earlier documents, does not seem to contain any new evidence that would eliminate the questions or reduce their number. Even Iraq's letter sent in response to our recent discussions in Baghdad to the President of the Security Council on 24 January does not lead us to the resolution of these issues.

I shall only give some examples of issues and questions that need to be answered and I turn first to the sector of chemical weapons.

Chemical weapons

The nerve agent VX is one of the most toxic ever developed.

Iraq has declared that it only produced VX on a pilot scale, just a few tonnes and that the quality was poor and the product unstable. Consequently, it was said, that the agent was never weaponised. Iraq said that the small quantity of agent remaining after the Gulf War was unilaterally destroyed in the summer of 1991.

UNMOVIC, however, has information that conflicts with this account. There are indications that Iraq had worked on the problem of purity and stabilization and that more had been achieved than has been declared. Indeed, even one of the documents provided by Iraq indicates that the purity of the agent, at least in laboratory production, was higher than declared.

There are also indications that the agent was weaponised. In addition, there are questions to be answered concerning the fate of the VX precursor chemicals, which Iraq states were lost during bombing in the Gulf War or were unilaterally destroyed by Iraq.

I would now like to turn to the so-called "Air Force document" that I have discussed with the Council before. This document was originally found by an UNSCOM inspector in a safe in Iraqi Air Force Headquarters in 1998 and taken from her by Iraqi minders. It gives an account of the expenditure of bombs, including chemical bombs, by Iraq in the Iraq-Iran War. I am encouraged by the

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fact that Iraq has now provided this document to UNMOVIC.

The document indicates that 13,000 chemical bombs were dropped by the Iraqi Air Force between 1983 and 1988, while Iraq has declared that 19,500 bombs were consumed during this period. Thus, there is a discrepancy of 6,500 bombs. The amount of chemical agent in these bombs would be in the order of about 1,000 tonnes. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, we must assume that these quantities are now unaccounted for.

The discovery of a number of 122 mm chemical rocket warheads in a bunker at a storage depot 170 km southwest of Baghdad was much publicized. This was a relatively new bunker and therefore the rockets must have been moved there in the past few years, at a time when Iraq should not have had such munitions.

The investigation of these rockets is still proceeding. Iraq states that they were overlooked from 1991 from a batch of some 2,000 that were stored there during the Gulf War. This could be the case. They could also be the tip of a submerged iceberg. The discovery of a few rockets does not resolve but rather points to the issue of several thousands of chemical rockets that are unaccounted for.

The finding of the rockets shows that Iraq needs to make more effort to ensure that its declaration is currently accurate. During my recent discussions in Baghdad, Iraq declared that it would make new efforts in this regard and had set up a committee of investigation. Since then it has reported that it has found a further 4 chemical rockets at a storage depot in Al Taji.

I might further mention that inspectors have found at another site a laboratory quantity of thiodiglycol, a mustard gas precursor.

Whilst I am addressing chemical issues, I should mention a matter, which I reported on 19 December 2002, concerning equipment at a civilian chemical plant at Al Fallujah. Iraq has declared that it had repaired chemical processing equipment previously destroyed under UNSCOM supervision, and had installed it at Fallujah for the production of chlorine and phenols. We have inspected this equipment and are conducting a detailed technical evaluation of it. On completion, we will decide whether this and other equipment that has been recovered by Iraq should be destroyed.

Biological weapons

I have mentioned the issue of anthrax to the Council on previous occasions and I come back to it as it is an important one.

Iraq has declared that it produced about 8,500 litres of this biological warfare agent, which it states it unilaterally destroyed in the summer of 1991. Iraq has provided little evidence for this production and no convincing evidence for its destruction.

There are strong indications that Iraq produced more anthrax than it declared, and that at least some of this was retained after the declared destruction date. It might still exist. Either it should be found and be destroyed under UNMOVIC supervision or else convincing evidence should be produced to show that it was, indeed, destroyed in 1991.

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As I reported to the Council on 19 December last year, Iraq did not declare a significant quantity, some 650 kg, of bacterial growth media, which was acknowledged as imported in Iraq's submission to the Amorim panel in February 1999. As part of its 7 December 2002 declaration, Iraq resubmitted the Amorim panel document, but the table showing this particular import of media was not included. The absence of this table would appear to be deliberate as the pages of the resubmitted document were renumbered.

In the letter of 24 January to the President of the Council, Iraq's Foreign Minister stated that "all imported quantities of growth media were declared". This is not evidence. I note that the quantity of media involved would suffice to produce, for example, about 5,000 litres of concentrated anthrax.

Missiles

I turn now to the missile sector. There remain significant questions as to whether Iraq retained SCUD-type missiles after the Gulf War. Iraq declared the consumption of a number of SCUD missiles as targets in the development of an anti-ballistic missile defence system during the 1980s. Yet no technical information has been produced about that programme or data on the consumption of the missiles.

There has been a range of developments in the missile field during the past four years presented by Iraq as non-proscribed activities. We are trying to gather a clear understanding of them through inspections and on-site discussions.

Two projects in particular stand out. They are the development of a liquid-fuelled missile named the Al Samoud 2, and a solid propellant missile, called the Al Fatah. Both missiles have been tested to a range in excess of the permitted range of 150 km, with the Al Samoud 2 being tested to a maximum of 183 km and the Al Fatah to 161 km. Some of both types of missiles have already been provided to the Iraqi Armed Forces even though it is stated that they are still undergoing development.

The Al Samoud's diameter was increased from an earlier version to the present 760 mm. This modification was made despite a 1994 letter from the Executive Chairman of UNSCOM directing Iraq to limit its missile diameters to less than 600 mm. Furthermore, a November 1997 letter from the Executive Chairman of UNSCOM to Iraq prohibited the use of engines from certain surface-to-air missiles for the use in ballistic missiles.

During my recent meeting in Baghdad, we were briefed on these two programmes. We were told that the final range for both systems would be less than the permitted maximum range of 150 km.

These missiles might well represent prima facie cases of proscribed systems. The test ranges in excess of 150 km are significant, but some further technical considerations need to be made, before we reach a conclusion on this issue. In the mean time, we have asked Iraq to cease flight tests of both missiles.

In addition, Iraq has refurbished its missile production infrastructure. In particular, Iraq reconstituted a number of casting chambers, which had previously been destroyed under UNSCOM supervision. They had been used in the production of solid-fuel missiles. Whatever missile system these chambers are intended for, they could produce motors for missiles capable of ranges

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significantly greater than 150 km.

Also associated with these missiles and related developments is the import, which has been taking place during the last few years, of a number of items despite the sanctions, including as late as December 2002. Foremost amongst these is the import of 380 rocket engines which may be used for the Al Samoud 2.

Iraq also declared the recent import of chemicals used in propellants, test instrumentation and, guidance and control systems. These items may well be for proscribed purposes. That is yet to be determined. What is clear is that they were illegally brought into Iraq, that is, Iraq or some company in Iraq, circumvented the restrictions imposed by various resolutions.

Mr. President,

I have touched upon some of the disarmament issues that remain open and that need to be answered if dossiers are to be closed and confidence is to arise. Which are the means at the disposal of Iraq to answer these questions? I have pointed to some during my presentation of the issues. Let me be a little more systematic. Our Iraqi counterparts are fond of saying that there are no proscribed items and if no evidence is presented to the contrary they should have the benefit of the doubt, be presumed innocent. UNMOVIC, for its part, is not presuming that there are proscribed items and activities in Iraq, but nor is it – or I think anyone else after the inspections between 1991 and 1998 – presuming the opposite, that no such items and activities exist in Iraq. Presumptions do not solve the problem. Evidence and full transparency may help. Let me be specific.

Find the items and activities

Information provided by Member States tells us about the movement and concealment of missiles and chemical weapons and mobile units for biological weapons production. We shall certainly follow up any credible leads given to us and report what we might find as well as any denial of access.

So far we have reported on the recent find of a small number of empty 122 mm warheads for chemical weapons. Iraq declared that it appointed a commission of inquiry to look for more. Fine. Why not extend the search to other items? Declare what may be found and destroy it under our supervision?

Find documents

When we have urged our Iraqi counterparts to present more evidence, we have all too often met the response that there are no more documents. All existing relevant documents have been presented, we are told. All documents relating to the biological weapons programme were destroyed together with the weapons.

However, Iraq has all the archives of the Government and its various departments, institutions and mechanisms. It should have budgetary documents, requests for funds and reports on how they have been used. It should also have letters of credit and bills of lading, reports on production and losses of material.

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In response to a recent UNMOVIC request for a number of specific documents, the only new documents Iraq provided was a ledger of 193 pages which Iraq stated included all imports from 1983 to 1990 by the Technical and Scientific Importation Division, the importing authority for the biological weapons programme. Potentially, it might help to clear some open issues.

The recent inspection find in the private home of a scientist of a box of some 3,000 pages of documents, much of it relating to the laser enrichment of uranium support a concern that has long existed that documents might be distributed to the homes of private individuals. This interpretation is refuted by the Iraqi side, which claims that research staff sometimes may bring home papers from their work places. On our side, we cannot help but think that the case might not be isolated and that such placements of documents is deliberate to make discovery difficult and to seek to shield documents by placing them in private homes.

Any further sign of the concealment of documents would be serious. The Iraqi side committed itself at our recent talks to encourage persons to accept access also to private sites. There can be no sanctuaries for proscribed items, activities or documents. A denial of prompt access to any site would be a very serious matter.

Find persons to give credible information: a list of personnel

When Iraq claims that tangible evidence in the form of documents is not available, it ought at least to find individuals, engineers, scientists and managers to testify about their experience. Large weapons programmes are moved and managed by people. Interviews with individuals who may have worked in programmes in the past may fill blank spots in our knowledge and understanding. It could also be useful to learn that they are now employed in peaceful sectors. These were the reasons why UNMOVIC asked for a list of such persons, in accordance with resolution 1441.

Some 400 names for all biological and chemical weapons programmes as well as their missile programmes were provided by the Iraqi side. This can be compared to over 3,500 names of people associated with those past weapons programmes that UNSCOM either interviewed in the 1990s or knew from documents and other sources. At my recent meeting in Baghdad, the Iraqi side committed itself to supplementing the list and some 80 additional names have been provided.

Allow information through credible interviews

In the past, much valuable information came from interviews. There were also cases in which the interviewee was clearly intimidated by the presence of and interruption by Iraqi officials. This was the background of resolution 1441's provision for a right for UNMOVIC and the IAEA to hold private interviews "in the mode or location" of our choice, in Baghdad or even abroad.

To date, 11 individuals were asked for interviews in Baghdad by us. The replies have invariably been that the individual will only speak at Iraq's monitoring directorate or, at any rate, in the presence of an Iraqi official. This could be due to a wish on the part of the invited to have evidence that they have not said anything that the authorities did not wish them to say. At our recent talks in Baghdad, the Iraqi side committed itself to encourage persons to accept

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interviews “in private”, that is to say alone with us. Despite this, the pattern has not changed. However, we hope that with further encouragement from the authorities, knowledgeable individuals will accept private interviews, in Baghdad or abroad.

UNMOVIC's capability

Mr President, I must not conclude this “update” without some notes on the growing capability of UNMOVIC.

In the past two months, UNMOVIC has built-up its capabilities in Iraq from nothing to 260 staff members from 60 countries. This includes approximately 100 UNMOVIC inspectors, 60 air operations staff, as well as security personnel, communications, translation and interpretation staff, medical support, and other services at our Baghdad office and Mosul field office. All serve the United Nations and report to no one else. Furthermore, our roster of inspectors will continue to grow as our training programme continues — even at this moment we have a training course in session in Vienna. At the end of that course, we shall have a roster of about 350 qualified experts from which to draw inspectors.

A team supplied by the Swiss Government is refurbishing our offices in Baghdad, which had been empty for four years. The Government of New Zealand has contributed both a medical team and a communications team. The German Government will contribute unmanned aerial vehicles for surveillance and a group of specialists to operate them for us within Iraq. The Government of Cyprus has kindly allowed us to set up a Field Office in Larnaca. All these contributions have been of assistance in quickly starting up our inspections and enhancing our capabilities. So has help from the UN in New York and from sister organizations in Baghdad.

In the past two months during which we have built-up our presence in Iraq, we have conducted about 300 inspections to more than 230 different sites. Of these, more than 20 were sites that had not been inspected before. By the end of December, UNMOVIC began using helicopters both for the transport of inspectors and for actual inspection work. We now have eight helicopters. They have already proved invaluable in helping to “freeze” large sites by observing the movement of traffic in and around the area.

Setting up a field office in Mosul has facilitated rapid inspections of sites in northern Iraq. We plan to establish soon a second field office in the Basra area, where we have already inspected a number of sites.

Mr. President,

We have now an inspection apparatus that permits us to send multiple inspection teams every day all over Iraq, by road or by air. Let me end by simply noting that that capability which has been built-up in a short time and which is now operating, is at the disposal of the Security Council.

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