

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on Iraq's Compliance With United Nations Security Council Resolutions

October 23, 1995

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.

Events in Iraq unfolded dramatically in the weeks following my August 3, 1995, letter to you on Iraq in a way that makes absolutely clear our firm policy has been the correct one. In the first half of August, Iraqi leaders, in both public statements and private remarks to U.N. officials, threatened retaliation if the Security Council failed to lift sanctions by August 31, 1995. The retaliation was not specified, but the Iraqi remarks echoed those made before previous Iraqi acts of belligerence. Ambassador Albright and her colleagues from the United Kingdom and France called upon the Iraqi U.N. Ambassador, made clear that such threats were unacceptable, and urged that Iraq implement all relevant Security Council resolutions.

On August 9, 1995, two of Saddam Hussein's sons-in-law left Iraq and were granted refuge in Amman. One of these men, Hussein Kamil, directed Iraq's weapons of mass destruction (WMD) programs while holding various high level government positions during the 1980s and 1990s. Evidently fearful of what the defectors might reveal, Saddam Hussein hurriedly invited U.N. weapons inspectors to Baghdad to examine previously undisclosed information on his weapons programs. Saddam Hussein offered the extraordinary explanation that Hussein Kamil had hid all this information from inspectors and Saddam Hussein himself.

While the international community had long understood that Saddam Hussein had pursued a vigorous and extensive weapons program, the revelations were still staggering. Ambassador Ekeus, head of the U.N. Special Commission on Iraq, reported to the Council that, among other things, Iraq had placed biological agents such as anthrax and botulin into bombs and missiles and deployed these weapons of terror to military bases and airfields in December

1990; lied about the extent of its biological weapons program as recently as a few months ago; launched a crash program after the invasion of Kuwait to produce nuclear weapons within a year; and continued its weapons research and procurement activities, including work on uranium enrichment, after the Security Council cease-fire resolutions, possibly until quite recently.

The August 1995 revelations virtually erased what little credibility Saddam Hussein may have had left. It seems clear that, were it not for the defections, Iraq never would have revealed this information. Saddam clearly planned to hide this weapons information until he could use it to facilitate the reconstitution of his WMD programs. Saddam Hussein's intentions are hardly peaceful. There is every reason to believe that they are as aggressive and expansionist as they were in 1990. It is more important than ever that the Security Council demand Iraqi compliance with all relevant Council resolutions prior to any change to the sanctions regime.

The August 1995 WMD program revelations have overshadowed the fact that Iraq has done nothing to comply with its other obligations. Iraq continues to drag its feet on its obligations to account for hundreds of Kuwaitis and third country nationals missing since the invasion. Iraq has not returned the millions of dollars worth of Kuwaiti property looted during the occupation. The Iraqi Republican Guards still use a large quantity of stolen Kuwaiti military equipment. Iraq continues to provide safe haven for terrorist groups. Given this Iraqi track record of disrespect for its international obligations, the Security Council maintained the sanctions regime without change at the September 8, 1995, review.

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 allies 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. As reported by Max van der Stoep, the Special Rapporteur of the U.N. Commission on Human

Rights, Iraq's repression of its southern Shi'a population continues, with policies aimed at destroying the Marsh Arabs' way of life and important environmental resources. Along with international and local relief organizations, we continue to provide humanitarian assistance to the people of northern Iraq. We have facilitated talks between the two major Kurdish groups in an effort to help them resolve their differences and increase stability in northern Iraq.

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. Iraq announced an "amnesty" in July for all opponents of the regime, but the announcement was seen by most Iraqis and by international human rights observers as an ill-conceived ploy. The regime's recently announced plans to amend the Iraqi constitution are viewed by Iraqi exiles as a transparent effort to bless an extension of Saddam Hussein's presidency.

Last October, the U.N. Security Council adopted Resolution 949, which demanded that Iraq not utilize its forces to threaten its neighbors or U.N. operations, and that it not redeploy or enhance its military capacity in southern Iraq. However, Saddam Hussein has continued to conduct military activities that we believe are intended to threaten Kuwait. The defections of Saddam Hussein's family members, coupled with indications of heightened Iraqi military readiness, increased our concerns that Iraqi leadership might lash out as it did last October when we responded during Operation Vigilant Warrior. In this time of uncertainty, we felt it prudent to improve the deterrence and warfighting capability of U.S. forces within the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility. Accordingly, the deployment of a mechanized task force was accelerated to participate in a scheduled exercise in Kuwait and a ground theater air control system was deployed to improve our command and control capability within the region. Additionally, 13 prepositioning ships were moved into the Gulf to increase our deterrence posture.

We continue to receive good support from the Gulf States in our sanctions enforcement efforts. The Multinational Interception Force (MIF) conducting the maritime enforcement of U.N. economic sanctions against Iraq continues to serve magnificently. Since October 1994, the MIF has diverted to various Gulf ports 14 sanc-

tions-violating vessels, which were carrying cargoes of oil or dates having an estimated cumulative value of over \$10 million. The multinational composition of the MIF has been significantly strengthened. Ships from Belgium, New Zealand, Italy, Canada, and the United Kingdom have been committed to participate in MIF operations for the remainder of 1995.

The expeditious acceptance of two recently diverted sanctions-violating vessels by Saudi Arabia and Kuwait has greatly contributed to the deterrent effect of MIF sanctions enforcement operations and has also freed enforcement vessels escorting the diverted vessels to return to patrol operations. Panama and St. Vincent and the Grenadines have deflagged three sanctions-violating vessels while Honduras has enacted stricter sanctions enforcement measures and has continued deflagging proceedings against vessels involved in violating Iraqi sanctions.

Security Council Resolution 687 affirmed that Iraq is liable under international law for compensating the victims of its unlawful invasion and occupation of Kuwait. Although the U.N. Compensation Commission (UNCC) has approved some 355,000 individual awards against Iraq worth about \$1.39 billion, it has been able to pay only the first small awards for serious personal injury or death (aggregating \$2.7 million). The remainder of the awards cannot be paid because the U.N. Compensation Fund lacks sufficient funding. The awards are supposed to be financed by a deduction from the proceeds of future Iraqi oil sales, once such sales are permitted to resume. However, Iraq's refusal to meet the Security Council's terms for a resumption of oil sales has left the UNCC without adequate financial resources to pay the awards. Iraq's intransigence means that the victims of its aggression remain uncompensated for their losses 4 years after the end of the Gulf War.

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

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.

Exchange With Reporters in New York City Prior to Discussions With Balkan Leaders

October 24, 1995

Balkan Peace Process

President Clinton. Let me begin by saying that I am delighted to have this opportunity to meet with President Izetbegovic and President Tudjman. We are very much looking forward to having the chance to discuss the prospects of peace.

As all of you know, the United States is committed to peace in Bosnia, but an honorable peace, which preserves a unified state that respects the rights of all of its citizens. And we are very much looking forward to the proximity talks, which will begin in a few days in Ohio. And of course, if a peace agreement can be reached, we expect NATO and the United States to help to implement it. And we'll be discussing that today.

Q. Mr. President, are you troubled by Senator Dole's effort to bar President Milosevic from attending those talks?

President Clinton. I believe the proximity talks will be held, and I think they should be. And I don't think anyone in the United States should do anything to undermine the prospects of bringing this horrible war to a close. And I would remind anyone who thinks otherwise to remember the wisdom of Prime Minister Rabin, who told us in 1993 that you cannot make peace with your friends.

Q. How do you rate those prospects, Mr. President? Do you think this is the last best chance for peace in Bosnia?

President Clinton. It's clearly the best chance in the last 4 years. And I think I would rate the prospects as good, thanks in no small measure to the wide range of efforts made by these two Presidents, to the diplomatic mission that Mr. Holbrooke has headed so ably, and to the resolve of NATO and the United Nations in dealing with the violations of human rights in previous agreements. So I think the moment

is here if we can seize it to make a successful peace agreement.

Q. Do you think Dole's proposal, as you say, would undermine the proximity peace talks?

President Clinton. I think the proximity talks are necessary to make a peace. And I believe they—

Q. [*Inaudible*—will undermine that?

President Clinton. I've already answered that. I don't think we should do anything which undermines the prospects of having these talks go forward. And they require people who have been on all sides of the conflict to get together to make peace. That is the responsible position, and it is the one the United States should follow and I believe will follow.

Q. Just what results do you expect out of the talks in Ohio? What is the best possible scenario?

President Clinton. That they will agree to make a peace.

Q. Can there be a solution here in Ohio, do you think, or is this just one more step?

President Clinton. Well, that's up to them. The United States will be there to be supportive. Our Contact Group partners all—Germany, United Kingdom, France, and Russia will be there. We will all be working hard. We'll do our best to get it done.

Thank you.

American Media

Q. Do you think we're a disaster, sir?

President Clinton. That's why I laughed yesterday. I wanted to make sure you got the attribution right. You have to admit it was kind of funny, though. [*Laughter*]

Q. It was.

Q. It was a moment. [*Laughter*]

President Clinton. We all need those moments.