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Biological Weapons

April reports to the UNSC President reconfirmed January's findings that UNSCOM identified as priority outstanding biological weapons disarmament issues Iraq's incomplete declarations on ''the whole scope of the BW program.'' The declarations are important because ''Iraq possesses an industrial capability and knowledge base, through which biological warfare agents could be produced quickly and in volume.'' The report also identified the importance of monitoring dual-use biological items, equipment, facilities, research and acquisition at 250 listed sites. The effectiveness of monitoring is ''proportional to Iraq's cooperation and transparency, to the number of monitored sites, and to the number of inspectors.''

Long-Range Missiles

April reports to the UNSC President reconfirmed January's findings that UNSCOM identified as priority missile disarmament issues: 50 unaccounted for, SCUD conventional warheads; 500 tons of SCUD propellants, the destruction of which has not been verified; 7 Iraqi-produced SCUDs given to the army, the destruction of which cannot be verified; truckloads of major components for SCUD production that are missing; the concealment of BW warheads; and the lack of accounting for VX-filled warheads. The report identified the capability to monitor declared activities, leaps in missile technology, and changes to declared operational missiles. There are 80 listed missile sites.

Nuclear Weapons

In a February 8, 1999, report to the UNSC President, IAEA Director General Mohammed El-Baradei summarized previous IAEA assessments of Iraq's compliance with its nuclear disarmament and monitoring obligations. The report restates that ''Iraq has not fulfilled its obligation to adopt measures and enact penal laws, to implement and enforce compliance with Iraq's obligations under resolutions 687 and 707, other relevant Security Council resolutions and the IAEA OMV plan, as required under paragraph 34 of that plan.''

The IAEA continues to plan for long-term monitoring and verification under Resolution 715. In its February 8 report to the Security Council, it restated that monitoring must be ''intrusive'' and estimated annual monitoring costs would total nearly $10 million.

Dual-Use Imports

Resolution 1051 established a joint UNSCOM/IAEA unit to monitor Iraq's imports of allowed dual-use items. Iraq must notify the unit before it imports specific items that can be used in both weapons of mass destruction and civilian applications. Similarly, U.N. members must provide timely notification of exports to Iraq of such dual-use items. Following the withdrawal of UNSCOM and IAEA monitors, there is no monitoring by UNSCOM or IAEA inspectors of dual-use items inside Iraq, although some limited monitoring in certain sectors can be carried out by OIP inspectors. This factor has presented new challenges for the U.N. Sanctions Committee and is taken into consideration in the approval process. The United States has placed holds on a number of contracts that might otherwise have been approved as a result.

The U.N.'s Oil-for-Food Program

We continue to support the international community's efforts to provide for the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people through the oil-for-food program. Transition from phase four to phase five (authorized by UNSC Resolution 1210) was smooth. As in phase four, Iraq is again authorized to sell up to $5.2 billion worth of oil every 180 days. However, because of a drop in world oil prices, Iraq was only able to pump and sell approximately $3.1 billion worth of oil in phase four; recent increases in world prices should provide increased revenue for this phase of oil-for-food.

As of April 5, under phase five of the oil-for-food program, 340 contracts worth nearly $1 billion have been approved. As of April 5, the United States had 145 phase four and 13 phase five contracts on hold pending clarification of questions about the proposed contracts.

Three assessment panels were formed in January to look at Iraqi disarmament, the humanitarian situation in Iraq, and Iraq's obligations regarding Kuwait. The panels presented their reports to the Security Council in April. The United States supported an examination of the current situation and exploration of ways to improve humanitarian conditions, particularly with regard to vulnerable groups such as children under age five and pregnant and nursing women. The United States has expressed its support for raising the cap on Iraqi oil exports under the oil-for-food program in order to meet humanitarian needs, and for certain other proposals made by the humanitarian assessment panel.

Resolution 1210 maintains a separate oil-for-food program for northern Iraq, administered directly by the United Nations in consultation with the local population. This program, which the United States strongly supports, receives 13 to 15 percent of the funds generated under the oil-for-food program. The separate northern program was established because of the Baghdad regime's proven disregard for the humanitarian needs of the Kurdish, Assyrian, Yezedi and Turkoman minorities of northern Iraq, and its readiness to apply the most brutal forms of repression against them. In northern Iraq areas where Baghdad does not exercise control, the oil-for-food program has been able to operate relatively effectively, as documented by the humanitarian assessment panel. The Kurdish factions have set aside their differences to work together so that Resolution 1210 is implemented as efficiently as possible.

Humanitarian programs such as oil-for-food have steadily improved the life of the average Iraqi living under sanctions (who, for example, now receives a ration basket providing over 2,000 calories per day, a significant improvement in nutrition since the program began) while denying Saddam Hussein control over oil revenues. We will continue to work with the U.N. Secretariat, the Security Council, and others in the international community to ensure that the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people are met while denying any political or economic benefits to the Baghdad regime.

Northern Iraq: Kurdish Reconciliation

Since their ground-breaking meeting with Secretary Albright in September 1998, Massoud Barzani, President of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), and Jalal Talabani, Chairman of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), have met four times to continue their work towards full reconciliation. Both parties have condemned internal fighting, pledged to refrain from violence in settling their differences, and resolved to eliminate terrorism by establishing stronger safeguards for Iraq's borders. In particular, both parties have committed themselves to deny sanctuary to the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), to eliminate all PKK bases from the region and to safeguard the Turkish border. The parties believe that key decisions on Iraq's future should be made by all the Iraqi people together at an appropriate time and through a regular political process. Their work is thus meant to implement a framework of regional administration until a united, pluralistic, and democratic Iraq is achieved. A Higher Coordination Committee (HCC) made up of senior representatives from the PUK and the KDP meets regularly in northern Iraq, and Officials of the State Department are in frequent contact with the parties to further the reconciliation process.

The United States is committed to ensuring that international aid continues to reach the north; that the human rights of the Kurds and northern Iraq minority groups such as the Turkomans, Assyrians, Yezedis, and others are respected; and that the no-fly zone enforced by Operation Northern Watch is observed. The United States will decide how and when to respond should Baghdad's action pose an increased threat to Iraq's neighbors, to regional security, to vital U.S. interests, and to the Iraqi people, including those in the north.

The Human Rights Situation in Iraq

The human rights situation in Iraq continues to fall far short of international norms, in violation of Resolution 688. For over seven years, the Iraqi government has refused to allow the U.N. Human Rights Commission Special Rapporteur for Iraq, Max Van der Stoel, to visit Iraq. U.N. human rights monitors have never been allowed in. Meanwhile,