

UNSCOM Completes First-Phase Inspections in Iraq

No smoking gun but powder burns evident

The UN Special Commission (UNSCOM), established to verify Iraq's compliance with the provisions of Security Council Resolution 687, has completed the survey phase of its inspections. Through this intensive set of first-phase inspections, UNSCOM has compiled sufficient information to give a general picture of Iraq's capabilities and facilities in the nuclear, chemical, biological and missile fields.

Although the proverbial "smoking gun" related to a nuclear weapons production program remains elusive, the evidential "power burns" are clear enough to cause serious concern. Indeed, the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has, for the first time in its history, condemned a member state — Iraq — for violation of its safeguards agreement. It expressed its grave concern about Iraq's "deception and obstruction" of IAEA inspectors. Physical obstructionist tactics displayed by the Iraqis in the second and sixth nuclear inspections, and a general practice of misinformation/disinformation in other areas, continue to be worrisome indicators as the Special Commission turns its attention to the issue of longer-term compliance.

Inspection experience

By the end of 1991, UNSCOM — in concert with the IAEA, which leads on nuclear inspections — had initiated or participated in 24 major on-site inspections in Iraq: seven nuclear; seven chemical; seven ballistic missile; and three biological. There have been almost 500 inspection personnel deployments comprising nearly 300 individual inspectors representing more than 34 nationalities. The accumulated inspection experience is potentially precedent-setting in terms of the multilateral verification process.

December 1991 witnessed the conclusion of first-phase (baseline) inspections. The second phase (verification of removal/destruction) and the third phase (verification of future com-

pliance) are becoming increasingly dominant and will be of longer duration, though the dividing lines are not entirely clear. For example, destruction of the Iraqi ballistic missile capability has been carried out for some time now in tandem with a series of ballistic missiles baseline inspections. As well, in mid-November two Soviet aircraft undertook the removal of nuclear material to the USSR while additional nuclear inspections were underway.

The Soviet airlift, including shipping preparations, is estimated to have cost up to \$1.5 million. A subsequent longer-range British/French removal program could reach into the \$30 million range. As a result of a series of chemical baseline inspections, it is estimated that the chemical weapons destruction phase will take "millions of dollars" and "last for one to two years."

Continuation of the UNSCOM operation will thus be an extended and expensive undertaking. A rough estimate of UNSCOM's costs to the end of 1991 is \$40 million. UNSCOM's high altitude airborne imaging support, provided by a Member State, and the use of two C160 Transall aircraft plus three CH-53 helicopters in support of on-site inspections, constitute other significant expenditures.

Canadian participation

Canadians have participated in inspections in all four weapons categories. Mr. F.R. Cleminson, Head of EAITC's Verification Research Unit and Canada's representative on UNSCOM, participated in the initial nuclear inspection led by the IAEA at the Iraqi nuclear research facility at Tuwaitha in May 1991. Lieutenant Colonel Jim Knapp (Department of National Defence) and Dr. Peter Lockwood (Defence Research Establishment Suffield) have participated in senior positions in a number of chemical weapons inspections at the main chemical weapons facility near Samarra and at other locations. Captain Gilles Clairoux (DND) completed a chemical weapons

inspection in late November that covered a number of Iraqi airbases. Five other Canadians found themselves on CNN during the "parking lot" incident in Baghdad during the sixth nuclear inspection. In all, Canadians have constituted approximately five percent of the inspection personnel deployments. DND's staffing arrangements have shown a high degree of flexibility in responding to short-notice requirements, and UNSCOM has expressed its gratitude to Canada for this.

Nuclear weapons

Following the seventh nuclear inspection, and in spite of the obstructionist tactics displayed including the "parking lot" episode, Iraq provided for the first time formal, though incomplete, written acknowledgement of its nuclear weapons program:

"Various research and studies of the sort to which you refer as 'weaponization' have been carried out. The objective in carrying out such research and studies was to establish the practical, technical and scientific requirements for a program of this nature in the event that a political decision were to be taken to proceed in that direction."

Iraq's recent record in the nuclear area continues to be consistent with, if less dramatic than, its earlier actions. These included the concealment of evidence of plutonium separation, of uranium enrichment and of nuclear weapons development, refusal to permit inspection teams to enter some sites and exit others, and confiscation of documents from inspectors in the course of the sixth nuclear inspection. In sum, Iraq has not cooperated in the critical area of nuclear-weapons-related activity, and UNSCOM and the IAEA remain some distance from achieving the desired degree of transparency.

Chemical weapons

With the data compiled by major survey inspections undertaken at the Al