Historical Security Council
Topic Area A: The Situation between Iraq and Kuwait

Iraq has been a topic of discussion in the Council since Iraq invaded neighboring Kuwait in 1990. The Security Council condemned this action in Resolution 660. At the end of the conflict, sanctions were leveled and Iraq was ordered to comply with UN weapons inspections. Sanctions remain in place to this day, and weapons inspection compliance has been debated on and off since 1991. The effectiveness of sanctions, Iraq's refusal to comply with weapons inspections, and the possibility of a renewed military campaign against Iraq have been the most recent points of discussion in the Council.

Over the past decade, it has become clear that the current sanctions are ineffective and are harming the Iraqi people while not seriously affecting the government. Sanctions have become subject to multiple violations, by both neighboring states and several major powers. In an effort to ease the burden of sanctions on the Iraqi people, the Council passed a revised sanctions regime on 14 May 2002. The new "smart sanctions," described in Resolution 1409, revise the Goods Review List and allow greater flexibility in the goods which Iraq may purchase. On 30 December 2002, the Security Council adopted resolution 1454 which approved adjustments in the biological, chemical, and missile-related areas of the Goods Review List of the Iraq "oil-for-food" programme to allow for a greater amount of humanitarian assistance items to pass through.

The United States has recently begun a campaign within the Council, pushing for military action against Iraq for its failure to fully comply with inspection requirements. The US cites the original resolutions against Iraq as justification for Member States to take "all means necessary" to limit the Iraqi aggression. In the current case, the US administration has accused Iraq both of supporting terrorism and of continuing to pursue programs to develop weapons of mass destruction. The push for military action has the support of the UK within the Council, but the issue has been divisive on the whole.

In late 2002, the Council came to a consensus on the need to verifiably disarm Iraq. Holding Iraq in "material breach" of its obligations under previous resolutions, the Security Council decided to afford it a "final opportunity to comply" with its disarmament obligations, while setting up an enhanced inspection regime for full and verified completion of the disarmament process established in 1991 by resolution 687. Resolution 1441 was adopted unanimously on 8 November 2002.

Through this resolution, the Security Council instructed that inspections were to resume within 45 days, and decided it would convene immediately if there were reports that Iraq was interfering with the inspections. The Council demanded that Iraq confirm its intention to comply fully with the Resolution. On 13 November, Iraq delivered its acceptance of Resolution 1441. Under the new inspection regime established by Resolution 1441, the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) would have "immediate, unimpeded, unconditional and unrestricted access" to any sites and buildings in Iraq. They would also have the right to remove or destroy any weapons, or related items, they found. On 27 January, the Security Council heard formal briefings by the heads of the weapons inspections regime in Iraq. The Executive Chairman of UNMOVIC, Hans Blix, stated that it appeared Iraq had decided in principle to cooperate with

inspections. At the same time, Blix drew attention to some outstanding issues and questions: UNMOVIC had conflicting information regarding chemical agents, including indications that particular agents had been weaponized; a number of chemical bombs containing some 1,000 tons of chemical agent were unaccounted for; and several thousand chemical rockets were also unaccounted for. On biological agents, Blix said Iraq had provided little evidence for its declared production of 8,500 litres of anthrax and no convincing evidence of its destruction. Blix also noted that significant questions remained as to whether Iraq had retained SCUD-type missiles after the Gulf War. The Director-General of the IAEA, Mohamed ElBaradei, told the Council that, to date, the Agency had found no evidence that Iraq had revived its nuclear weapons program.

Questions to consider from your government's perspective on this issue include the following

- Has time run out on the issue of compliance? If it has, what actions should the Council take; if it hasn't, what can the Council or your country do to ensure that Iraq will fully comply with weapons inspections requirements?
- Should sanctions be continued? Modified? Are they effective?

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UN Documents

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S/2002/323, 28 Mar 2002, SG Report on the Iraq/Kuwait Observer Mission

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S/2001/505, 18 May 2001, SG Report on Iraq

S/2001/287, 28 Mar 2001, SG Report on Iraq-Kuwait

S/2001/186, 2 Mar 2001, SG Report pursuant to paragraph 5 of resolution 1330 (2000) - Iraq

S/Res/1454 (2002)

S/Res/1447 (2002)

S/Res/1443 (2002)

S/Res/1441 (2002)

S/Res/1409 (2002) -- includes revised sanctions procedures

S/Res/1360 (2001)

Additional Web Resources

http://www.un.org/Depts/unmovic/new/pages/chronology.asp - UNMOVIC

http://www.historycommons.org/timeline.jsp?timeline=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq -- History Commons