

CRS Report for Congress

Received through the CRS Web

Iraq: Post-War Challenges and U.S. Responses, 1991-1998

Updated March 31, 1999

Alfred B. Prados
Specialist in Middle East Affairs
Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division

ABSTRACT

This CRS report reviews cease-fire terms that followed the Gulf war in early 1991; highlights provisions that Iraq has tended to violate; describes ensuing confrontations between the United States and Iraq since 1991, together with international reactions; and summarizes related points of congressional interest. The report is designed as a source of ready reference for congressional offices interested in previous instances of use of force by the United States against Iraq after the Gulf war. The report will be updated if similar confrontations continue on a large scale. Related CRS products are IB92117, *Iraqi Compliance with Cease-Fire Terms*, by Kenneth Katzman, updated regularly; IB94049, *Iraq-U.S. Confrontation, 1997-1999*, by Alfred B. Prados and Kenneth Katzman, which describes the most recent and on-going confrontations.

Iraq: Post-War Challenges and U.S. Responses, 1991-1998

Summary

Iraq has not fully complied with terms of the cease-fire agreements that followed the expulsion of Iraqi forces from Kuwait in early 1991. Several Iraqi violations of cease-fire provisions have resulted in brief military confrontations between Iraq and the United States, supported in some cases by other allied forces. Iraqi violations prompting a U.S. military response have fallen into four general categories: obstruction of U.N. weapons inspection teams, involvement in international terrorist acts, failure to abide by air exclusion zones imposed by the allies over parts of Iraq, and troop movements that could threaten Kuwait or internal targets of repression by the Iraqi Government.

In January 1993, the United States conducted several air strikes against Iraqi missile facilities and other military targets. The allied strikes followed a series of Iraqi challenges, including violations of no-fly zones, interference with weapons inspections, and unauthorized removal of materiel from the demilitarized zone with Kuwait. In June of that year, the United States launched missile strikes against an Iraqi intelligence headquarters building in response to evidence that Iraq had organized an attempt to assassinate former President George Bush.

Further confrontations took place in the mid-1990s. In October 1994, Iraq moved elite troops south toward Kuwait in an effort to pursue demands that the U.N. Security Council set a firm time table for removal of a ban on oil exports by Iraq. Iraq subsequently withdrew its forces, after the United States began deploying more forces to the Gulf region. In August 1996, Iraq moved three divisions into the allied-protected Kurdish enclave in northern Iraq, allegedly at the invitation of one of the two rival Iraqi Kurdish factions. The United States responded with air and sea-based missile strikes directed against military targets in southern Iraq. Although Iraqi forces quickly withdrew from the Kurdish enclave, several news reports indicate that the Iraqi incursion disrupted a U.S. covert action aimed at toppling the Iraqi regime.

The United States began a force build-up in the Gulf region in late 1997, in response to Iraq interference in the conduct of U.N. weapons inspections. Military action was averted on two occasions by last minute agreements with Iraq in November 1997 and February 1998. Tensions mounted once again in late 1998 after Iraq reneged on its earlier promises to cooperate with the U.N. weapons inspection regime, leading to further confrontations.

International support for U.S. employment of force against Iraq has eroded, especially in cases when Iraqi actions do not appear to threaten Kuwait or other neighbors directly. Middle East countries, in particular, have become uneasy over U.S. military action against Iraq and are increasingly reluctant to provide facilities for such operations.

Prior to the 1991 Gulf war, Congress authorized military action to force Iraqi compliance with U.N. Security Council resolutions by H.J.Res. 77 (P.L. 102-1). The Bush and Clinton Administrations have consulted with Congress during subsequent military confrontations, although there has been criticism from some Members who felt that consultation was insufficient in specific cases.

Contents

Cease-fire Terms and Violations	1
The Agreements	1
Resolution 686	1
The Safwan Accords	1
Resolution 687	2
Other Terms and Conditions	2
Iraqi Violations	2
Weapons Inspections	3
Terrorism	3
No-Fly Zones	3
Troop Movements	4
The Course of the Confrontations	5
Early Incidents, 1991-1992	5
January 1993 Confrontation	6
No-Fly Zone Violations	6
Obstruction of Weapons Inspections	6
Iraq-Kuwait Border Incursions	7
Allied Air Strikes	7
Iraqi Reactions	8
Further Actions	8
Bush Assassination Attempt	9
The Alleged Plot	9
U.S. Missile Strikes	9
U.N. Camera Installation	10
October 1994 Troop Movements	11
Iraqi Moves	11
U.S. Response	11
The Crisis Recedes	12
Iraqi Defections to Jordan	13
The Incursion of August 1996	14
Events and Responses	14
Aftermath	16
Further Confrontations: 1997 and Beyond	17
The Mounting Crisis over Inspections	17
The February 23, 1998 Agreement	17
Force Deployments and Drawdown	18
Epilogue	19
International Reactions	20
Reactions during Earlier Crises	20
Recent Reactions	22
Trends	23
Role of Congress	24

List of Figures

Map 1. Iraq: No-Fly Zones	4
Map 2. Kurdish Inhabited Areas	15

Iraq: Post-War Challenges and U.S. Responses, 1991-1998

In February 1991, a U.S.-led coalition of allied military forces expelled Iraqi forces that had occupied Kuwait since August 1990. Several cease-fire agreements followed the termination of hostilities on February 28, 1991. Periodic Iraqi violations of cease-fire terms and other provocative acts by Iraq precipitated a series of brief confrontations with the United States over the next six years. A more extended series of confrontations began in late 1997.

This report reviews cease-fire terms that followed the Gulf war in early 1991; highlights provisions that Iraq has been prone to violate; describes resulting confrontations between the United States and Iraq between 1991 and 1998, together with international reactions; and summarizes related points of congressional interest. The purpose of this report is to facilitate ready reference to the circumstances surrounding previous uses of force, or preparations to use force, by the United States against Iraq in the years following the Gulf war of 1991.

Cease-fire Terms and Violations

The Agreements

Cease-fire arrangements following the war consisted of three agreements that are summarized below. The first two were temporary and the third established a permanent cease-fire. Some additional requirements have been levied on Iraq as well.

Resolution 686. On March 2, 1991, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 686, which imposed several conditions on Iraq. Resolution 686 demanded that Iraq cease all hostile actions against allied forces, accept earlier U.N. resolutions, release Kuwaiti citizens and others detained in Iraq, begin returning property seized in Kuwait, and accept liability for damages resulting from its invasion of Kuwait. Also, the resolution demanded that Iraq appoint military commanders to meet with allied military commanders to arrange the military details of a cease-fire.

The Safwan Accords. The Safwan Accords refer to the cease-fire agreements made between allied military commanders and Iraqi officers, under the provisions of Resolution 686, above. On March 3, 1991, the U.S. commander, U.S. Army General H. Norman Schwarzkopf and other allied commanders met with Iraqi officers at the town of Safwan in southern Iraq and agreed on several matters: return of prisoners of war, removal of mine fields, and procedures to prevent any further outbreaks of fighting between Iraqi and allied forces. The Safwan Accords also provided for a temporary cease-fire line, with the understanding that allied forces would remain in

southern Iraq until a permanent cease-fire agreement came into effect. Furthermore, the Accords banned flights by Iraqi fixed wing aircraft throughout Iraq to avoid threats to allied forces temporarily remaining in southern Iraq, but permitted flights by Iraqi helicopters (with some restrictions on armed helicopters). The ban on Iraqi aircraft flights was relaxed when allied forces left Iraq in May 1991; however, the United States and western allies believe it continues to apply over areas in which allied combat aircraft still operate in support of U.N. resolutions (i.e. the no-fly zones over northern and southern Iraq, as discussed below).¹

Resolution 687. On April 3, 1991, the U.N. Security Council passed Resolution 687, which established a formal cease-fire and imposed a number of long-term requirements on Iraq. Resolution 687, sometimes known as the omnibus cease-fire resolution, provided for demarcation of the border between Iraq and Kuwait, a U.N. guarantee of the border, and a U.N. observer force to monitor the border area. The resolution called on Iraq to return Kuwaiti property it had seized and to release Kuwaiti and foreign citizens it had detained, required Iraq to compensate victims of its aggression, and demanded that Iraq agree to refrain from terrorist acts. In addition, the resolution required Iraq to agree to the removal or dismantling of its weapons of mass destruction and to end its programs to develop such weapons (i.e., chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons and longer range missiles). The resolution retained restrictions on imports to Iraq, except for food, medicine, and essential civilian supplies; banned shipments of military equipment to Iraq; and continued to ban Iraqi exports until the U.N. Security Council is satisfied that Iraq is free of mass destruction weapons. Of note, Resolution 687 was enacted under Chapter VII of the U.N. charter (peace and security); hence, the provisions of this resolution can be enforced through military action.

Other Terms and Conditions. Since passing Resolution 687, the Security Council has adopted over 25 resolutions and statements to implement or amplify the terms of the basic cease-fire agreement. Of particular significance was Resolution 688 adopted on April 3, 1991. This resolution, which demanded that Iraq cease repression of its population, was aimed especially at terminating Iraqi reprisals against Kurds in the north and Shi'ite Muslims in the south, both of whom had revolted in the aftermath of the Gulf war. Resolution 688, however, was not enacted under Chapter VII of the U.N. charter, and opinions differ within the international community over the criteria for enforcing its terms.

Iraqi Violations

Iraq reluctantly accepted the omnibus cease-fire Resolution 687 on April 6, 1991; the U.N. Security Council has found Iraq not to be in full compliance with the terms of this resolution. [For more information on Iraqi violations, see CRS Issue Brief 92117, *Iraqi Compliance with Cease-fire Terms*, by Kenneth Katzman, updated regularly.] On seven occasions between 1991 and 1993, the Security Council found

¹The terms of the Safwan Accords have not been formally published. For discussion of the meeting at Safwan and the main points agreed upon, see H.R.H. Prince Khaled bin Sultan, *Desert Warrior*, New York, Harper and Collins, 1995, pp. 421-438. General bin Sultan was the Saudi Arabian commander of joint Arab and Islamic forces in the allied coalition.

Iraq in “material breach” of the provisions of Resolution 687. The Council has not agreed on this wording since June 1993, reflecting to some extent an erosion of the former international consensus behind forcing Iraq to comply with cease-fire terms.² Subsequent resolutions and statements by the Council, however, have continued to warn Iraq of “serious consequences” of violating the terms of U.N. resolutions.

Iraqi actions prompting a U.S. military response have fallen into four general categories, as summarized below. In addition, Iraq has engaged in other cease-fire violations that have not resulted in a direct confrontation with the United States. These include failure to return missing Kuwaiti property and to account for approximately 600 Kuwaitis and other foreign citizens who are believed to be still under detention in Iraq.

Weapons Inspections. Resolution 687 established an inspection regime to find and eliminate Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, including chemical and biological agents, nuclear facilities, and missiles with ranges exceeding 150 kilometers (93 miles). The resolution also stipulated that Iraq was to provide the U.N. Secretary General a list of all such weapons in its possession within 15 days. In addition, Resolution 707 requires Iraq to allow U.N. weapons inspectors to use their own aircraft, and Resolution 715 provides for long term monitoring of Iraqi facilities that could be used to develop mass destruction weapons. Iraqi authorities have interfered frequently with the conduct of inspections, concealed important evidence of programs to develop weapons of mass destruction, and repeatedly provided incomplete and inaccurate declarations of the extent of its past programs to develop mass destruction weapons. U.N. inspectors gradually have discovered weapons plants and programs not initially revealed by the Iraqis in their initial list or in subsequent declarations to the United Nations.

Terrorism. Resolution 687 requires Iraq to assure the Security Council that it will not commit or support terrorist acts. Iraq remains on an annual list of countries identified by the U.S. State Department as supportive of international terrorism. In the spring of 1993, Iraq was implicated in a plot to assassinate former President George Bush while on a visit to Kuwait.

No-Fly Zones. The United States, together with Britain and France, began enforcing air exclusion zones over northern and southern Iraq, respectively, in 1991 and 1992. U.S. officials base the no-fly zones primarily on Resolution 688, which demands that Iraq end repression of its population (notably Kurds in the north and Shi'ite Muslims in the south), and on the Safwan Accords, which forbid Iraq to interfere with allied air operations over Iraq. Some countries question this interpretation, arguing that Resolution 688 was not passed under Chapter VII provisions (peace and security) and does not by itself permit military action to enforce its terms. Iraq maintains that the no-fly zones constitute an illegal infringement on its

²For a listing of occasions when the Security Council found Iraq in “material breach” of cease-fire terms, see Greg Saiontz, “A Chronology of Diminishing Response: UN Reactions to Iraqi Provocations since the Gulf War,” Research Notes, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, June 3, 1997, pp. 1-5.

sovereignty and has occasionally fired on allied planes conducting overflights to enforce these zones. (Map 1 shows the no-fly zones in Iraq.)

Map 1. Iraq: No-Fly Zones



Adapted by CRS from Magellan Geographix. Used with permission.

Troop Movements. In conjunction with establishing the northern no-fly zone in 1991, the United States and its allies warned Iraq not to move ground forces into a portion of the zone where the allies had established a protected enclave for Iraqi Kurds. On at least one occasion, in the summer of 1996, Iraq briefly moved forces into Kurdish controlled areas, as discussed below. Previously, in October 1994, the apparent deployment of Iraqi armored forces toward Kuwait led to Security Council Resolution 949, which demanded that Iraq complete the withdrawal of these units and refrain from threatening its neighbors in the future. (U.S. and British officials

sometimes interpret this resolution as imposing a “no-drive” zone in the south, in addition to the no-fly zone already in place in that area.)

The Course of the Confrontations

Early Incidents, 1991-1992³

Iraqi defiance of cease-fire terms initially took the form of obstructing the work of U.N. weapons inspectors seeking to identify and dismantle Iraqi weapons of mass destruction. Iraqi interference affected the conduct of inspections by two groups: the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), charged with inspecting Iraqi nuclear programs, and the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM), established pursuant to Resolution 687 and charged with inspecting chemical and biological weapons and medium and long range missiles. Listed below are some of the more notable incidents that occurred during the year following the establishment of the U.N. weapons inspection regime in June 1991.

- Between June and August 1991, Iraqi officials periodically denied IAEA inspectors access to sites they wanted to visit, provided information on several weapons programs that later proved to be false, and at one point fired shots over the heads of weapons inspectors.
- On two occasions in September 1991, Iraqi officials refused to allow U.N. inspectors to depart installations where they had gathered documentation, insisting initially that the inspectors return documents they were carrying.
- In January and February 1992, Iraqi officials refused to allow UNSCOM inspectors to destroy certain missiles and related equipment the inspectors had identified as subject to dismantling under relevant U.N. decisions.
- In July 1992, Iraq officials refused to let UNSCOM inspectors enter the Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture, which the inspectors believed to be housing proscribed material.

The Security Council described the confrontations in June-August 1991, January-February 1992, and July 1992 as “material breaches” by Iraq of cease-fire terms. The Council condemned Iraqi obstruction of U.N. inspectors in September 1991 but did not describe it as a material breach. (The January-February 1992 confrontation resulted in two findings of “material breach,” giving a total of four such findings by the Security Council in 1991 and 1992.) None of these incidents led to military action or deployments on the part of the United States or other members of the Security Council. The findings of “material breach,” however, may have strengthened the hand of the United States in responding to subsequent violations, as described below.

³For further information, see Greg Saiontz, “A Chronology of Diminishing Response: UN Reactions to Iraqi Provocations since the Gulf War,” Research Notes, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, June 3, 1997, pp. 1-3.

January 1993 Confrontation⁴

Tensions mounted during 1992 as several developments led Iraq to mount more aggressive challenges to restrictions imposed after the Gulf war. In April 1992, in a step condemned by the Iraqi Government, Kurdish groups in northern Iraq held elections for a provisional parliament under the umbrella of U.S. and allied air protection. In August, the United States, Britain, and France imposed a second no-fly zone, this time over southern Iraq, in response to increasing Iraqi military campaigns against Shi'ite Muslim guerrillas in the south. Later, on November 23, a U.N. commission established by Resolution 687 completed demarcation of the Kuwaiti-Iraqi border, awarding to Kuwait additional territory including a former Iraqi naval base and several oil wells. Iraq condemned the findings of the commission. In addition, the outcome of presidential elections in the United States may have impelled Iraqi President Saddam Hussein to test the willingness of the outgoing Bush Administration and the incoming Clinton Administration to continue enforcing terms of the cease-fire.

The allied air actions that began on January 13 against Iraq were prompted by an intensifying confrontation between Iraq and the United States, its coalition partners, and the United Nations in three areas: violations of the no-fly zones, obstruction of weapons inspections, and incursions into the demilitarized zone between Iraq and Kuwait.

No-Fly Zone Violations. On December 27, 1992, the United States shot down an Iraqi jet that had violated the allied imposed "no-fly zone" in southern Iraq. Subsequently, Iraq redeployed 8 SA-3 and 12 SA-2 anti-aircraft missile launchers in the no-fly zone in a manner threatening to coalition aircraft patrolling the zone. On January 6, 1993, the United States, Britain, France, and Russia gave Iraq 48 hours to move the missiles to their original locations or face possible military action. Despite Iraqi statements that it would not comply, and after examining intelligence reports on the movement of the missiles, the White House announced January 9 that Iraq had complied with the ultimatum. However, the White House noted that action could be taken without warning if Iraq redeployed the missiles in a threatening manner. On January 11, then Director of Central Intelligence Robert Gates said that Iraq was continuing to shift anti-aircraft missiles in the exclusion zones in both southern and northern Iraq, but that it was too early to determine whether or not the deployments threatened allied aircraft. On January 12, the Commander-in-Chief of U.S. forces in Europe, U.S. Army General John Shalikashvili, said that Iraq had put its anti-aircraft missiles in the northern no-fly zone on operational status. On several subsequent occasions, Iraq again activated its targeting radar in the no-fly zones, precipitating confrontations with coalition aircraft.

Obstruction of Weapons Inspections. On January 7, 1993, Iraq told the United Nations that it would no longer permit U.N. weapons inspectors to use their own aircraft to fly into or land in Iraq. It said the inspectors could use chartered Iraqi

⁴For further information, see Facts on File Yearbook 1993, pp. 29-30; issues of *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal* during January and February 1993.

aircraft (all Iraqi air travel is banned by U.N. sanctions, however.) Iraq did not specifically ban U.N. U-2 or helicopter surveillance flights, however. On January 10, Iraq banned the flight into Iraq of 70 inspectors who were returning to Iraq after the holidays. Meanwhile, on January 8, the Security Council called Iraqi interference with U.N. inspections unacceptable, described it as a “material breach” of cease-fire terms, and warned Iraq of serious consequences of its actions.

Iraq-Kuwait Border Incursions. Meanwhile, on November 2, 1992, the United Nations had warned Iraq not to remove weapons from the demilitarized zone between Iraq and Kuwait without permission from the U.N. Iraq-Kuwait Observer Mission (UNIKOM). (UNIKOM was created by Resolution 687 to monitor the Iraq-Kuwait border.) On January 10, 1993, according to a spokesman for UNIKOM, 500 Iraqis (some armed) crossed into the demilitarized zone, seized weapons, including four Silkworm missiles, under guard by UNIKOM, and returned to Iraq. (UNIKOM is a monitoring force, and is neither empowered nor able to resist militarily a large Iraqi incursion across the border.) The equipment had been left behind by Iraq when it retreated from Kuwait in the Persian Gulf war. On January 10, emissaries from the United States, Britain, France, and Russia, visited Iraq’s Ambassador to the United Nations to protest the seizure. The Security Council, which met on January 11, once more found Iraq in “material breach” of cease-fire terms on the basis of its accumulated violations. On the same day, several hundred Iraqis again entered the zone and began dismantling weapons warehouses, and resumed this activity on January 12 and early on January 13. Iraq claimed that UNIKOM gave it permission to clear the weaponry from the zone. Moreover, Iraq initially refused to remove six police posts from territory allotted to Kuwait, although on January 18, U.N. officials said Iraq had done so.

Allied Air Strikes. On January 13, 1993, U.S.-led coalition forces conducted air strikes against eight Iraqi anti-aircraft missile sites and related control facilities in the no-fly zone of southern Iraq (south of the 32nd parallel). Subsequently, Administration officials called the raid a success in that it seriously degraded Iraq’s air defense network, although several targets were not hit. The raid involved 600 U.S. military personnel from the various services and approximately 110 allied aircraft. According to a Defense Department spokesman, the United States and former Desert Storm partners Britain and France participated in the raid; however, there are indications that one or more other countries (possibly from the Persian Gulf region) may have participated as well.⁵ Iraqis said the attack killed 19 and wounded 15, many of them civilians. U.S. officials acknowledged that an apartment building in the southern city of Basra was hit, presumably by mistake. Meanwhile, the United States announced the deployment of the 1st battalion, 19th regiment, 1st Cavalry Division from Fort Hood, Texas (about 1,100 soldiers) to Kuwait to join 300 U.S.

⁵The Defense official, asked by reporters if Saudi aircraft had participated in the strikes, answered: “Members of the coalition, to include the French and the British, participated. I’m not going to name other countries.” Defense Department Background Briefing, Jan. 13, 1993, carried by Reuters newswire. The press noted that the air strike was “joined by Britain, France, and at least one other undisclosed ally.” Barton Gellman and Ann Devroy, “U.S. Delivers Limited Air Strike on Baghdad,” *The Washington Post*, Jan. 14, 1993, p. A1.

Special Forces troops already there and underscore U.S. commitments to Persian Gulf security.

Iraqi Reactions. The raid apparently prompted some early concessions from Baghdad. Despite a defiant post-raid speech by Saddam Hussein, Iraq's Ambassador to the United Nations told the president of the United Nations Security Council that Iraq would permit flights by U.N. inspectors in their own aircraft, and that incursions into the demilitarized zone with Kuwait would cease. However, Iraq vowed that it would continue to resist enforcement of the no-fly zones, and Saddam instructed the military to fire on coalition planes over Iraqi territory.

When Iraq failed to respond to a U.N. request to land a U.N. aircraft carrying weapons inspectors to Iraq, the United States, Britain, and France delivered an ultimatum to Iraq that it provide such clearance by 4:00 PM EST on Jan. 15, 1993. Before the deadline expired, Iraq said the U.N. aircraft could land, but that Iraq could not guarantee its security, since allied operations were taking place in the southern no-fly zone. The U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) conducting the inspections rejected that condition and said it would file a new flight request. On January 16, Iraq said it would permit the flights and guarantee their security, but only if the flights enter Iraqi airspace from Jordan, and not from the south. (The U.N. flights generally enter from the south, flying from Bahrain, where UNSCOM maintains a field office.) UNSCOM again rejected this condition, as well as a January 17 Iraqi proposal that the flights could enter from the south if the coalition suspended its patrols of the no-fly zone during the U.N. flights. On January 19 at 1:30 p.m. EST, as the incoming Clinton Administration prepared to take office, Iraq's ruling Revolutionary Command Council offered a "cease-fire... to enable the new Administration to study the no-fly zones."⁶

Further Actions. Sporadic military action continued from January 17 to January 23, 1993, in response to further Iraqi provocations. Iraq activated targeting radar in the northern no-fly zone and refused to grant unconditional clearance to U.N. inspection flights (January 17); challenged allied aircraft in the northern no-fly zone and, according to a report not confirmed by the Pentagon, fired a Scud missile at the city of Dhahran in Saudi Arabia (January 18); challenged the northern no-fly zone and directed anti-aircraft fire at coalition aircraft (January 19); directed a radar beam search at U.S. aircraft in northern no-fly zone (January 21); tracked U.S. aircraft with air defense radar (January 22); and apparently directed anti-aircraft fire at U.S. aircraft in the northern zone (January 22 or 23). In the latter two cases, Iraq denied tracking or firing at U.S. aircraft.

In retaliation, coalition aircraft conducted a strike at an Iraqi SA-6 ground radar in northern Iraq, shot down an Iraqi MiG-23, and launched 45 cruise missiles at the Zafaraniya manufacturing complex outside Baghdad (January 17); the coalition struck air defense installations in both the northern and southern zones and shot at (probably shooting down) an Iraqi warplane (January 18); the coalition fired cluster bombs and air-to-surface missiles at Iraqi anti-aircraft guns in the northern zone and the United

⁶R. Jeffrey Smith and Julia Preston, "Baghdad Declares Good Will Cease-Fire," *The Washington Post*, Jan. 20, 1993, p. A1.

States moved four U.S. warships (including the aircraft carrier *Kennedy*) toward the eastern Mediterranean on a contingency basis (January 19); U.S. aircraft fired a missile and dropped cluster bombs on Iraqi ground radar in the northern zone (January 21); a U.S. F-4G "Wild Weasel" fired two missiles at an Iraqi air defense battery in the north (January 22); and a U.S. A-6 Intruder aircraft fired a laser-guided bomb at an Iraqi anti-aircraft position in the southern zone (January 22 or 23). Regarding the January 17 missile strikes at Zafaraniya plant (which the Bush Administration said had been used to make components for Iraq's nuclear program), one cruise missile went off course and hit the al-Rashid Hotel in Baghdad, killing at least three civilians. Iraq said 21 were killed in attacks on January 18.

Bush Assassination Attempt

The Alleged Plot. Tensions between the United States and Iraq increased during the spring of 1993, as Iraq continued its failure to cooperate fully with U.N. weapons inspections and reportedly concentrated forces near the Kurdish enclave. In the meantime, the Government of Kuwait informed the U.S. Administration that it had discovered evidence that Iraq sponsored an attempt to assassinate former President Bush and destabilize Kuwait during his April 14-16 visit to Kuwait. The Kuwaitis captured a small van loaded with 180 pounds of explosives, and confiscated detonators, timing devices, and other bomb components. Kuwait apprehended and tried 14 suspects, ultimately sentencing six to death (five Iraqis and one Kuwaiti) and seven to prison terms; one defendant was acquitted.⁷ One of the Iraqi defendants testified that Iraqi intelligence was behind the plot. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) agents and other U.S. intelligence officers were sent to Kuwait to conduct their own investigation, and reported back to the President on June 24, 1993, that their findings confirmed the view that Iraq was behind the plot. Iraq has denied that it sponsored the attempt.⁸

Some in the Administration and Congress called for retaliation, including air strikes, against Iraq if it were clear that Iraq had sponsored the plot; others pointed out that U.S. policy toward Iraq already was strict and few other options were available. Skeptics questioned the validity of evidence obtained from Kuwaiti investigation of the suspects.

U.S. Missile Strikes. On June 26, 1993 (June 27, Baghdad time), the U.S.S. Peterson, a Spruance-class destroyer in the Red Sea, and the U.S.S. *Chancellorsville*, a Ticonderoga-class cruiser in the Persian Gulf, began launching 23 Tomahawk missiles toward the Iraqi intelligence headquarters in western Baghdad. The Tomahawk is a 20-foot long missile that flies at 550 mph about 50 feet above the ground to avoid radar, carrying a 1,000-pound conventional warhead some 700 miles. Tomahawks were used because they are not manned, and therefore do not place U.S. Armed Forces personnel at risk, and because they have a success rate estimated to be

⁷After a long trial, the sentences were finally imposed in June 1994. "Kuwait Sentences Six to Death for Plotting to Kill Bush," *The New York Times*, June 5, 1994, p. 6.

⁸According to one report, the Iraqi intelligence service linked to the plot was headed by a son of Saddam Hussein. R. Jeffrey Smith, "Iraqi Officer Recruited Suspects in Plot Against Bush, U.S. Says," *The Washington Post*, July 1, 1993, p. A18.

as high as 80%. About one hour after launch, 20 of the Tomahawks hit the 6-winged headquarters building in the center of the intelligence complex.

Later that evening, President Clinton said CIA and FBI reports provided compelling evidence that Iraqi intelligence forces were behind the attempted assassination of former President Bush in April and that the United States was justified in acting against Iraq under the self defense provisions of Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. Defense Secretary Les Aspin and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Colin Powell said the intelligence headquarters was selected as the target because the Iraqi intelligence services had been linked to the attempt on President Bush, because it was a discreet target, and because it was at the low end of a spectrum of possible targets that included the Ministry of Defense, the Presidential Palace, military bases, or others. Early U.S. damage estimates described the attack as a qualified success, although three of the Tomahawks missed their targets and hit nearby residential areas, destroying several houses and killing 8 and wounding 12 civilians. (Iraq claims to have shot down four of the missiles.) The President said the raids crippled Iraq's military intelligence capability, but some observers suggested that this capability was not severely damaged because of redundancies in the system.⁹

In brief follow-up actions, on June 27, the United States moved the aircraft carrier U.S.S. *Theodore Roosevelt* and destroyers *Arleigh Burke* and *Spruance* from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea. (The carrier U.S.S. *Nimitz* left the Persian Gulf on June 17 at the end of its 6-month tour.) Two days later, a U.S. F-4G "Wild Weasel" aircraft fired a HARM missile at an Iraqi radar, in response to Iraqi actions that appeared to threaten U.S. planes patrolling the southern no-fly zone over Iraq.

U.N. Camera Installation

In an unrelated incident in early June 1993, Iraqi officials refused to allow a UNSCOM team to install six cameras at two test sites to maintain continuing surveillance of Iraqi weapons programs. Iraq subsequently agreed to their installation. Meanwhile, however, on June 18, a statement by the President of the U.N. Security Council described Iraq's failure action in impeding installation of the cameras and failure to destroy certain banned chemical materials as "a material and unacceptable breach" of relevant provisions of Resolution 687. This was the last occasion on which the Security Council issued a finding of "material breach" against Iraq.¹⁰

⁹R. Jeffrey Smith and Ann Devroy, "Clinton Says U.S. Missiles 'Crippled,'" *The Washington Post*, June 29, 1993; Elaine Sciolino, "Clinton Overstates Impact of Raids, His Aids Warn," *The New York Times*, June 29, 1993, p. 6.

¹⁰Greg Saiontz, "A Chronology of Diminishing Response: UN Reactions to Iraqi Provocations since the Gulf War," Research Notes, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, June 3, 1997, p. 5.

October 1994 Troop Movements¹¹

Iraqi Moves. During the week of October 3, 1994, Iraq issued warnings of unspecified consequences if the ban on exporting Iraqi oil were not lifted in conjunction with the bi-monthly UNSCOM report to the Security Council due on October 10. Iraq also warned that it would stop cooperating with UNSCOM. (The UNSCOM report, formally presented to the Security Council October 11, said that a long-term weapons monitoring program had begun, but, contrary to Iraqi desires, the report did not set a timetable for testing the monitoring system.)

Meanwhile, in early in October, Iraq began ordering at least two divisions (Hammurabi, al-Nida) of elite Republican Guard troops to join approximately 40,000 regular troops in southern Iraq, around the city of Basra. By October 9, according to statements by U.S. officials, Iraq had about 80,000 troops in or heading toward southern Iraq, assuming all Iraqi units were eventually filled out.¹² The lead elements of the Iraqi deployment reportedly went as close as 12 miles from the border with Kuwait. Kuwait responded by moving most of its 16,000-person force to the border with Kuwait, a much larger display of force than it demonstrated in August 1990. Nonetheless, Kuwait's force remained too small and poorly armed and trained to deter Iraq, should Iraq want to invade again, even though Iraq had lost more than half its weaponry in the 1991 Persian Gulf.

U.S. Response. On October 7, Secretary of Defense William Perry called the Iraqi troop movements a cause for concern, and other U.S. defense officials said the troop movements, which included the transport of ammunition and support equipment, were not consistent with routine troop rotations. President Clinton said on October 7 and again on October 8 that "it would be a grave error for Iraq to repeat the mistakes of the past [the August 1990 invasion of Kuwait] or to misjudge either American will or American power." He said the United States would honor a commitment to defend Kuwait and to enforce U.N. resolutions on Iraq. Press reports cited several U.S. defense officials as saying that they not believe Iraq intended to invade Kuwait again, but that Iraq's record of belligerence made it wise to be prepared. At the height of the crisis, there were reports that the Administration was considering striking the Iraqi force even if it did not invade Kuwait, in a possible effort to erode Iraq's military capability even further.

In a rapid response operation entitled "Vigilant Warrior," the United States began reinforcing approximately 13,000 U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine troops already in the Gulf, together with equipment prepositioned in Kuwait. Had the crisis not abated, the new forces would have included: two additional Patriot missile batteries; 350 additional combat aircraft, including B-52 bombers, F-117 Stealth fighters, F-15's, F-16's, A-10 attack aircraft, AWAC's surveillance aircraft, and U-2

¹¹See Facts on File Yearbook 1994, pp. 745-746; issues of *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal* in October 1994.

¹²U.S. officials noted that the Iraqi forces menacing Kuwait were equipped with weapons captured from Kuwait, including over 200 Soviet-manufactured armored personnel carriers and a battalion of U.S.-made M109 self-propelled howitzers. Michael R. Gordon, "As Iraqis Scimp, Their President Lives Lavishly," *The New York Times*, Nov. 14, 1994, p. A3.

reconnaissance aircraft; the 18,000-member 1st Marine Expeditionary Force; and 16,000 Army troops from the 24th Mechanized Infantry Division. An additional 156,000 troops were placed on alert. The United States also moved the carrier U.S.S. George Washington from the Adriatic Sea into the Red Sea, within striking range of Iraq. Among U.S. allies, Britain sent two ships, six Tornado aircraft, and a battalion of troops to the Gulf. France, which had supported the idea of setting a firm timetable for allowing Iraq to resume oil sales, sent a frigate to the Gulf. As the crisis began to wind down in mid-October, however, the United States scaled back the deployment of both ground and air forces to the region.

International reaction tended to condemn the Iraqi troop movements and support U.S. and allied deployments to the Gulf. (See International Reactions, below.) On October 8, the U.N. Security Council expressed grave concern about the Iraqi troop movements and Iraqi threats to stop cooperating with UNSCOM. One option reportedly under consideration by the Clinton Administration was to seek U.N. approval for a military exclusion zone or a “no-tank zone” in southern Iraq, south of the 32nd parallel, to supplement the no-fly zone in that area. On October 15, the United States succeeded in gaining unanimous Security Council approval of Resolution 949, demanding that Iraq remove forces recently deployed to the south and avoid further deployments that would threaten its neighbors. The resolution invoked Chapter VII (peace and security) of the U.N. Charter but did not specify means of enforcement. U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Albright said the resolution gave the United States authority to strike Iraq if it moved Republican Guards near Kuwait again, but other Security Council members did not endorse that view.¹³

The Crisis Recedes. There are strong indications that the U.S. response, together with support from the Security Council and other allies, caused Iraq to rethink its strategy. Between October 7 and 9, Iraqi officials made several conciliatory statements, and in speech to the U.N. General Assembly, Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz hinted that Iraq might even recognize Kuwait. On October 10, Iraq’s Ambassador to the United Nations said Iraq was redeploying troops from the border area because of “Security Council concerns,” although he said Iraq reserved the right to move troops anywhere on its territory. Between October 11 and October 16, U.S. officials noted increasing evidence that Iraqi units were withdrawing, and then Secretary of State Warren Christopher confirmed this trend on October 16. On November 10, 1994, after the crisis had receded, Iraq formally recognized Kuwait in a motion passed by the Iraqi National Assembly and signed by President Saddam Hussein.

Motivation behind the Iraqi troop movements of early October remains obscure. Most analysts believe that Iraqi President Saddam Husayn was attempting to attract international attention to his argument that Iraq has complied sufficiently with certain provisions of Resolution 687 to justify lifting of the oil sale boycott. Some believed Saddam Hussein thought the United States might seek compromise rather than

¹³In nearly identical diplomatic notes on October 20, 1994, the United States and Britain warned Iraq against moving reinforcements south of a line running roughly 150 miles north of the border with Kuwait. Julia Preston and Thomas W. Lippman, “Allies Warn Iraq Against Troop Shifts,” *The Washington Post*, Oct. 21, 1994, p. A1.

military confrontation in view of current preoccupations with Haiti, North Korea, and Bosnia. Still others theorized that internal economic pressures impelled Saddam to demonstrate to the Iraqi people that he was taking decisive action to obtain lifting of economic sanctions. According to a minority view, reportedly shared by some U.S. military officials, Iraq did not plan to threaten Kuwait, and Iraqi troop movements were prompted by fear of heightened allied air operations previously under way.¹⁴

Iraqi Defections to Jordan

No major U.S.-Iraqi confrontations occurred for almost two years after Operation Vigilant Warrior; however, in 1995, a potential Iraqi threat to Jordan prompted a brief augmentation of U.S. forces in the Gulf region. On August 8, 1995, two sons-in-law and key aids of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein defected to Jordan and were given political asylum. One of the defectors, General Hussein Kamil Hassan, was the principal architect of Iraq's programs to develop mass destruction weapons. Following his defection to Jordan, Hussein Kamil reportedly provided information to U.S. and Saudi Arabian representatives on the status of Iraqi weapons programs. At the same time, Jordanian officials emphasized that the decision to grant asylum to Hussein Kamil was taken on humanitarian rather than political grounds. Frustrated in his attempts to gain support from other Iraqi opposition groups or foreign governments, Hussein Kamil and his brother unwisely returned to Iraq in 1996 where they were promptly murdered, probably on orders of the Saddam Hussein regime.

There were initial concerns in August 1995 on the part of U.S. and Jordanian officials that Iraq might retaliate against Jordan for granting asylum to the defectors.¹⁵ The United States took several precautionary steps in August 1995 to protect Jordan under an operation called "Vigilant Sentinel."¹⁶ An aircraft carrier (the U.S.S. *Theodore Roosevelt*) was moved to the eastern Mediterranean within aircraft range of Iraq, while another (the U.S.S. *Abraham Lincoln*) was held in the Persian Gulf for an additional month pending arrival of a replacement, to avoid a one-month gap in carrier coverage. During August, 2,000 to 3,000 U.S. Marines and 4,000 Jordanian troops held a previously scheduled two-week exercise; a joint U.S.-Kuwaiti military exercise was advanced by two months; and an unspecified number of additional U.S. military personnel were alerted for possible deployment to the Persian Gulf. Finally, shiploads of U.S. military equipment normally stationed in the Indian Ocean and

¹⁴David A. Fulghum, "Iraq Invasion Threat Reassessed by Military," *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, Nov. 14, 1994, pp. 18-20.

¹⁵Then U.S. Secretary of Defense William Perry told reporters that "There have been some unusual deployments of Iraqi military forces" but added that there was "nothing that leads us to believe that any invasion is underway or planned." Bradley Graham, "U.S. Speeds Troops to Kuwait, Plays Down Chance of Iraqi Attack," *The Washington Post*, Aug. 23, 1995, p. A24.

¹⁶President Clinton praised Jordan's decision to grant the defectors political asylum and said "the United States considers Jordan our ally and entitled to our protection if their security is threatened as a result of this incident." Alison Mitchell, "U.S. to Protect Jordan from Iraq, Clinton Says," *New York Times*, Aug. 11, 1995, p. A10.

western Pacific were shifted closer to the Gulf region.¹⁷ In the event, Iraq acted with restraint and no further U.S. deployments proved necessary at that time.

The Incursion of August 1996¹⁸

Events and Responses. Meanwhile, internal strife which erupted between the two principal Iraqi Kurdish factions in 1994 provided Iraq and neighboring countries with opportunities to exploit the growing disarray in the allied-protected Kurdish enclave in northern Iraq. (Map 2 shows Kurdish inhabited areas in Iraq and in neighboring countries.) One of the two leading Kurdish factions, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), had seized the Kurdish provisional capital of Irbil after feuding broke out between the two factions in May 1994. In the summer of 1996, Saddam Hussein sought to exploit internecine strife among the Kurds by intervening on the side of a rival faction, the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP).

On August 31, 1996, an Iraqi force estimated at three armored divisions (30,000-40,000 personnel) invaded Irbil, which lies approximately 7 miles within the allied-imposed no-fly zone. Iraq moved at the invitation of KDP leader Massud Barzani. Over the next few days, and without much additional Iraqi help, the KDP captured major Kurdish cities from the PUK, which was supported by Iran. Numerous PUK members and other Kurds fearful of the apparent extension of Iraqi Government influence in northern Iraq sought refuge in Iran. PUK militia subsequently regrouped and launched a counterattack on October 13, recapturing significant portions of territory they had previously lost, and the situation remained fluid. Iran denied allegations by both KDP and Turkish officials that the PUK counterattack received Iranian military support.

The United States expressed grave concern, put forces in the Persian Gulf region on alert, and warned Iraq to withdraw. On September 3, at 12:15 a.m. Eastern Daylight Time (7:15 a.m., Iraq time), U.S. forces launched 27 cruise missiles at military targets in the southern part of Iraq, 14 from the U.S.S. Laboon guided missile destroyer and the U.S.S. Shilo cruiser in the Persian Gulf, and 13 from two B-52 bombers that flew from Guam. President Clinton also announced that he was widening the no-fly zone over southern Iraq (extending it northward from the 32nd to the 33rd parallel) and would not allow a limited oil sale by Iraq under a recent U.N. resolution to take place until Iraq abandons its aggressive policies. On September 4, U.S. forces fired an additional 17 missiles from three surface ships and one submarine, in what a Pentagon spokesman described as a mopping-up operation, designed to destroy Iraqi air defenses that might threaten allied enforcement of an expanded no-fly zone. Subsequently, a U.S. F-16 fighter aircraft fired two anti-radiation missiles at an Iraqi radar. Later on the same day, President Clinton announced that the U.S. mission had been largely accomplished.

¹⁷Bradley Graham, "U.S. Bolsters Gulf Force to Counter Iraq," *The Washington Post*, Aug. 18, 1995, pp. A1, A27.

¹⁸See Facts on File Yearbook 1996, pp. 637-638; issues of *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal* in September 1997.

Map 2. Kurdish Inhabited Areas



Adapted by CRS from Magellan Geographix. Used with permission.

In mid-September, in response to further Iraqi provocations (see below), the United States dispatched eight F-117A stealth fighters to Kuwait, four B-52 bombers to the British base at Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean, two Patriot missile batteries to Saudi Arabia, and a second aircraft carrier along with additional aircraft and air defense units to the region. (The second aircraft carrier returned home in October.) On September 13, a reinforced squadron of U.S. F-16 fighter aircraft was deployed to Bahrain. On September 17, President Clinton ordered approximately 3,000 U.S. Army troops from the 1st Cavalry Division at Ft. Hood, Texas to deploy to Kuwait, joining an additional U.S. 1,200 troops already there. By late September, U.S. troop strength in the region, including personnel embarked on ships, approached 30,000. On November 29, then U.S. Secretary of Defense William Perry said the 4,200 troops in Kuwait would depart before Christmas, but added that 1,800 Marines would remain off shore for rapid deployment and that the F-117A stealth fighters would remain in Kuwait as a warning to Iraq and Iran.

Iraq quickly repaired some damaged air defense missile sites despite U.S. warnings not to do so, and during September 11-13, unsuccessfully fired six SA-6 surface-to-air missiles at U.S. fighter aircraft patrolling northern and southern Iraq. The Administration threatened further responses, and demanded that Iraq stop targeting U.S. aircraft enforcing the no-fly zones and remove mobile surface-to-air missiles from the zones. Iraq, which had earlier threatened to fire at allied planes overflying these zones, announced on September 13 that it would “suspend our military reactions” to allied enforcement of the no-fly zones, while still refusing to acknowledge their validity. Iraqi forces largely evacuated the Kurdish enclave, but some Iraqi intelligence agents reportedly remained in these areas.¹⁹

Aftermath. Unrest in northern Iraq has continued, with recurrent fighting between the rival Kurdish KDP and PUK factions. The scene has been further complicated by several Turkish cross-border operations directed against a dissident Turkish Kurd faction, the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK), who have launched raids against Turkey from safe havens in northern Iraq. Some observers believe Turkey is maintaining a small force in northern Iraq on a more or less permanent basis to forestall further infiltration by the dissident KDP guerrillas.²⁰ Meanwhile, on January 1, 1997, the former allied protective umbrella over northern Iraq, Operation Provide Comfort, was modified and renamed Operation Northern Watch. France, which had joined the United States and Britain in Provide Comfort, does not participate in Northern Watch.

A by-product of the Iraqi incursion and Iraq’s temporary cooperation with the KDP was the disruption of U.S. intelligence operations aimed at toppling the regime of Saddam Hussein. U.S. agents reportedly fled just before Iraqi troops briefly moved north, and Iraqi intelligence officers captured and executed approximately 100 Iraqi opposition figures.²¹ The United States ultimately evacuated over 6,000 persons who had worked on U.S. supported humanitarian programs in northern Iraq and a smaller number (about 600) of opposition figures to Guam where they were screened for political asylum in the United States. Iraq did not repeat its August incursion 1996 into the Kurdish enclave; however, the following year saw an increase in other Iraqi challenges that led to more serious confrontations with the United States and its allies.

¹⁹Tim Weiner, “Iraq Pulling Out, But Leaving Spies Behind, U.S. Says,” *The New York Times*, Sept. 6, 1994, p. A1.

²⁰Kelly Couturier, “Rival Factions Complicate Turkey’s Pursuit of Kurds,” *The Washington Post*, Oct. 25, 1997, p. A13; Umit Enginsoy, “Infighting Hampers Turkey’s Kurdish Security Plan,” *Defense News*, Nov. 3-9, 1997, p. 24. Several Arab states have criticized Turkey’s cross-border operations in northern Iraq.

²¹The Iraqi regime reportedly had already discovered another opposition network in June 1996 and executed 100 Iraqi dissidents belonging to that group as well. R. Jeffrey Smith and David B. Ottoway, “Anti-Saddam Operation Cost CIA \$100 Million,” *The Washington Post*, Sept. 15, 1996, pp. 1, 29; Evan Thomas, Christopher Dickey and Gregory L. Vistica, “Bay of Pigs Redux,” *Newsweek*, March 23, 1998, pp. 36-37.

Further Confrontations: 1997 and Beyond

The Mounting Crisis over Inspections. Between mid-1993 and 1996, members of UNSCOM were able to carry out their inspections of Iraqi weapons programs with relatively little interference by the Government of Iraq. Increasing attempts by Iraq in 1997 to impede U.N. weapons inspections prompted demands by the U.N. Security Council that Iraq cease its interference or face further sanctions. Iraqi officials complained that U.S. pressure on the Security Council and UNSCOM was prolonging economic sanctions against Iraq. On October 29, 1997, Iraq barred participation by U.S. personnel in UNSCOM inspections, demanded the departure of all U.S. UNSCOM personnel within 7 days, and called for termination of U.S.-piloted flights by U-2 reconnaissance aircraft. Iraq followed on November 13 by expelling U.S. inspectors, and chief UNSCOM inspector Richard Butler withdrew most of the other inspectors the following day. A crisis was averted after a diplomatic initiative by Russia, which undertook to work for the speedy lifting of sanctions against Iraq and seek “balanced representation” on U.N. inspection teams. U.S. officials denied that they had agreed to any conditions in exchange for Iraqi compliance with U.N. demands.

Iraqi officials continued to complain about the alleged predominance of U.S. and British personnel on inspection teams, and insisted on their right to bar inspectors from an unspecified number of “presidential sites” on grounds of national sovereignty. On January 12, 1998, Iraq declared three specific locations to be “sensitive sites” and off limits to U.N. inspectors seeking to visit them, although the Iraqis permitted access to them later in the day. On January 16, a U.S.-led team, which was investigating Iraqi methods of concealing mass destruction weapons programs, left Iraq after being barred for three days from conducting an inspection. Iraqi officials asserted that the team was unbalanced inasmuch as it consisted largely of Americans and British and that team leader Scott Ritter, a former U.S. Marine officer and veteran of numerous similar inspections, was engaged in spying on Iraq. U.N. and U.S. officials denied the accusations concerning Ritter and emphasized that Iraq cannot dictate the composition of U.N. inspection teams. The following day, President Saddam Hussein announced that Iraq would expel all U.N. weapons inspectors if sanctions against Iraq were not removed within six months. Also on January 17, the Iraqi Foreign Ministry criticized U.S. rejection of an offer by Russia to replace the U.S. U-2 reconnaissance aircraft with Russian planes. (The U-2 flights have continued despite an Iraqi threat to fire on them.) By early February, U.S.-led retaliatory action against Iraq seemed imminent.

The February 23, 1998 Agreement. Intensive diplomatic efforts in early and mid-February centered on attempts to find a formula for inspecting eight “sensitive” sites under conditions that the United Nations and Iraq would accept. The United States insisted that two principles must govern any agreement on the conduct of inspections: full access by UNSCOM to sites throughout Iraq, and respect for the integrity of the U.N. Special Commission process. On February 17, the U.N. Security Council reportedly endorsed a plan that would give U.N. inspectors full access within Iraq, while allowing diplomats from U.N. Security Council member countries to accompany U.N. inspectors on visits to the eight “presidential” compounds. The presence of diplomats would serve as a face-saving gesture for Iraq by signifying international recognition of Iraq sovereignty. On February 23, after three days of

negotiations, Secretary General Annan and Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz signed an agreement with the following principal provisions:

- Reconfirmation by Iraq that it accepts relevant U.N. resolutions
- Commitment of U.N. member states to “respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq”
- “Immediate, unconditional, and unrestricted access” by UNSCOM and IAEA within Iraq, with respect for Iraqi concerns relating to “national security, sovereignty, and dignity”
- Special procedures to apply to inspections at eight “presidential sites” defined in an annex to the agreement
- Efforts to accelerate the inspection process, and an undertaking by the Secretary General to bring to U.N. Security Council members the concerns of Iraq over economic sanctions.

Under the special procedures governing inspections at the eight sites, the U.N. Secretary General established a “Special Group” comprising diplomats appointed by the Secretary General and experts drawn from UNSCOM and IAEA. Reports by the Special Group were to be submitted by the Executive Chairman of UNSCOM through the Secretary General to the Security Council. Inspections of the eight sites took place between March 26 and April 3, 1998, and revealed no evidence of prohibited weapons systems, but the senior inspector said “It was clearly apparent that all sites had undergone extensive evacuation.”²² Other inspections proceeded relatively smoothly during the next few months, but many questions about Iraq’s weapons programs remained unresolved as of mid-1998.

Meanwhile, on March 3, the U.N. Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 1154, co-sponsored by Britain and Japan, which commended the initiative of the Secretary General in securing commitments from Iraq, stressed that Iraq must comply with its obligations, and warned that “any violation [of the agreement or other pertinent resolutions] would have severest consequences for Iraq.” President Clinton and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright described the agreement as a “step forward” for U.S. policy of containing Iraq, but the President commented that “What really matters is Iraq’s compliance, not its stated commitments.” Secretary Albright said of the agreement that “The proof is in the testing.”

Force Deployments and Drawdown. A U.S. force build-up in the Gulf region began in October 1997 as tensions with Iraq mounted. For several months thereafter, the United States maintained two aircraft carriers in the Gulf, and three during a brief period in February 1998 (the *U.S.S. Nimitz*, *U.S.S. George Washington*, and *U.S.S. Independence*). In November 1997, during the early stages of the crisis, the United States sent six F-117A stealth fighters to Kuwait; eight B-52 bombers to the Indian Ocean base of Diego Garcia (British territory); and an Air Expeditionary Force consisting of 32 combat aircraft (12 F-15 fighters, 18 F-16 fighters, and 2 B-1 bombers) to Bahrain, accompanied by additional personnel to man a Patriot missile battery to protect the aircraft.

²²Barbara Crossette, “Inspectors Report Lack of Progress in Verifying Iraqi Disarmament,” *The New York Times*, April 17, 1998, p. 1.

On February 4, as the crisis intensified, Secretary Cohen announced additional deployments to the Gulf region. According to subsequent press reports, these included the following: the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit (approximately 2,000-2,200 personnel) to the Gulf; 6 more F-117A stealth fighters to Kuwait; 6 more B-52 bombers to Diego Garcia; 6 more F-16s and one more B-1 bomber to Bahrain; and additional U.S. Army troops to join 1,500 already in Kuwait. According to a subsequent order on February 16, the Army troops include approximately 5,000-6,000, comprising mechanized infantry units to complete a brigade, a 24-helicopter aviation unit, and communications personnel. These deployments brought U.S. force levels to a peak level of almost 45,000 personnel (including over 20,000 on ships); approximately 35 combat and support ships, and over 350 aircraft (including approximately 275 fighters and bombers). Force levels of over 35,000 were maintained from March through May. (See Table 2 for comparative U.S. force levels in the Gulf since 1997.)

Meanwhile, Britain moved an aircraft carrier, the *Invincible*, with 19 Harrier jets to the Gulf, as well as 6 more Harriers and 8 Tornado fighters (12 Tornados are already in the region). At least ten other countries offered small contingents. A senior State Department official told reporters on March 4 that some 20 nations were ready to participate in a military coalition against Iraq, but did not name them; on March 17, Secretary of Defense Cohen said a total of 25 nations were ready “to be with the United States should military action become necessary.”)

During May, as the crisis continued to recede, Administration officials became increasingly concerned that the large-scale U.S. military presence in the Gulf was affecting U.S. force readiness and creating domestic problems for U.S. allies. On May 26, President Clinton ordered a reduction of U.S. forces, beginning with the return of one of the two aircraft carriers to the Pacific. Several other units were subsequently withdrawn: the Air Expeditionary Force in Bahrain (approximately 40 combat aircraft) in early June; “Stealth” fighters in Kuwait; a brigade and other ground force units in Kuwait; and some of the 14 B-52 bombers and support aircraft in Diego Garcia. After these and other withdrawals, according to Defense officials, U.S. forces in the Gulf returned to an average of approximately 20,000 personnel, varying perhaps as much as 2,000 above or below that level. Allied countries also reduced or ended their Gulf deployments. U.S. Defense officials noted that the United States was leaving “a very powerful force of cruise missiles” in the Gulf and noted that forces in the region could be quickly reinforced.

Epilogue. A relative lull during the spring and summer of 1998 was followed by increasing tensions in the fall, as Iraq mounted further challenges to U.N. operations. Late in 1998, after testing Iraq’s compliance with yet another pledge to cooperate unconditionally with UNSCOM, the United States once more expanded its forces in the Gulf and, in conjunction with British forces, mounted retaliatory strikes against a wide range of Iraqi targets for a four-day period in December. Smaller scale military strikes against Iraq continued thereafter, in response to a steady patter of Iraqi violations of the no-fly zones over northern and southern Iraq. For more information on developments since mid-1998, see CRS Issue Brief 94049, Iraq-U.S. Confrontations: 1998-1999, and CRS Issue Brief 92117, Iraqi Compliance with Cease-Fire Terms.

International Reactions

Reactions during Earlier Crises

International reactions to U.S. reprisals against Iraq have been mixed, and have varied to some extent according to the nature of the crisis that precipitated a U.S. military response.²³ Much of the international community has supported U.S. retaliation against Iraqi actions that appeared to threaten Kuwait, for example during the crisis brought on by Iraqi troops deployments in October 1994. The international community has been less supportive of U.S. military responses to Iraqi actions that are not perceived as major violations of cease-fire terms or threats to another country. Some countries, particularly in the Middle East, question the imposition of no-fly zones over parts of Iraq and tend to sympathize with Iraqi efforts to assert control over its own territory. For example, many Middle East countries--including some U.S. allies--were critical of U.S. missile strikes against Iraq after its brief incursion into the Kurdish enclave in August 1996. A consistent exception to Arab unease with U.S. retaliation against Iraq has been Kuwait, where memories of the Iraqi invasion remain fresh.

In January 1993, the United States responded to a three-fold Iraqi challenge including border violations, interference with weapons inspections, and defiance of no-fly zones; at least two of these actions were violations of a U.N. resolution (Security Council Resolution 687) passed under Chapter VII (peace and security) provisions. Moreover, the operation was multilateral, in that two European allies, Britain and France, participated in the operation, although France voiced reservations. International reactions were favorable among much of the industrialized world and largely muted elsewhere. Besides Britain and France, countries expressing support included Denmark, the Netherlands, Spain and Japan. Russia first backed the allied raids but later suggested that they might be "out of proportion" to the provocation. Arab governments generally remained silent or balanced their criticism of Iraqi provocation with statements of regret that the United States and western allies did not make similar efforts to enforce U.N. resolutions regarding Bosnia and Israel. Although the Arab Gulf states did not openly endorse the U.S. retaliatory measures, one or more of them may have provided assistance to the allied strikes, as explained above.

The June 1993 strikes in response to Iraq's alleged attempt to assassinate former President Bush represented a unilateral action by the United States under Article 51 of the U.N. Charter, which authorizes actions taken in self defense. Thus, it differed from the January strikes, which represented a combined allied operation to enforce U.N. Resolution 687, and international support for the June operation was somewhat less evident. Western allies and Russia expressed general approval, with strongest support coming from Britain, Germany, and Belgium. Within the Middle East, there

²³For more information on international reactions, see Reuters news wire articles and other press reports during the various confrontation periods described above, for example, John M. Goshko, "U.N. Divided on Role in Iraq Conflict," *The Washington Post*, Sept. 5, 1996, p. A19; Charles Trueheart, "U.S. Raids on Iraq Get Little European Support," *The Washington Post*, Sept. 6, 1996, p. A30.

was little support for the U.S. air strikes, even among members of the former allied coalition, and widespread criticism that the United States had applied a dual standard in attacking Iraq while permitting atrocities against Muslims in Bosnia. With the exception of Kuwait, which praised the U.S. action, Gulf states were officially silent. Criticism or reservations regarding the U.S. attack were expressed by other Muslim, non-aligned, and Communist (or former Communist) countries. China voiced concern and hoped that all sides would avoid actions that might worsen the situation. The Vatican, though not taking sides, deplored the loss of civilian life. A large number of countries, however, remained silent on the subject.

By contrast, in October 1994, much of the international community condemned the Iraqi troop movements toward Kuwait and supported the U.S. and allied deployments to the Gulf. Two factors contributed toward this increased level of international support: first, Iraqi actions were perceived as constituting a threat to Kuwait; and, second, allied reactions were limited to troop deployments rather than direct military action. Russia, France, and Turkey, which had favored some easing of the trade embargo against Iraq, hardened their positions at least temporarily as a result of Iraqi actions. Egypt and the Gulf states all supported the U.S. deployments. Jordan's King Hussein, who was sympathetic to Saddam in the 1990-91 crisis, echoed U.S. warnings to Saddam not to repeat past mistakes. Several Jordanian newspapers, however, appeared to sympathize with Iraq by calling for the easing of sanctions. The Palestine Liberation Organization expressed little support for Saddam during the crisis but its statements were weaker than the United States wanted.

A different picture emerged during the next confrontation in August 1996. The movement of Iraqi ground forces into the Kurdish enclave in northern Iraq, though it violated understandings in place since 1991, was not technically a violation of the allied-imposed no-fly zones. A perception that Iraq was not violating any formal cease-fire arrangements was probably a contributing factor to a lack of widespread support among U.S. allies for the subsequent reprisals undertaken by the U.S. Government.²⁴ Britain, Canada, Germany, and Japan supported the U.S. strikes; NATO formally endorsed them, but some NATO members expressed reservations. France refused to participate in patrolling the expanded portion of the southern no-fly zone and, shortly afterwards, withdrew from patrolling the northern zone. Russia called the situation "extremely dangerous" and China called for restraint from both Washington and Baghdad. The U.N. Security Council deadlocked on a British draft resolution condemning Iraq's actions. In the Middle East, Jordan and Turkey refused to permit U.S. air strikes from their territory and Saudi Arabia did not offer the use of its bases for that purpose.²⁵ Only Kuwait and Bahrain appeared to endorse the U.S. action by agreeing to host temporary deployments of additional U.S. combat aircraft.

²⁴A year later, Saudi Minister of Defense Prince Sultan bin Abd al-Aziz told reporters that "... frankly, the aggressor and the aggressed were both Iraqi, so we felt it was difficult to intervene." Scott Peterson, "Saudi Prince's View: We're the Most Permanent US Ally," *Christian Science Monitor*, Sept. 2, 1997, p. 1.

²⁵Saudi Minister of Defense Prince Sultan told reporters that the use of Saudi basis "was not requested from us. If it was requested we would have rejected it." "Saudi against hosting U.S. raids on Iraq," Reuters newswire, Sept. 11, 1996, 02:53 PET.

Recent Reactions

European and Arab allies agreed that Iraq must honor U.N. Security Council resolutions when Iraq began to challenge U.N. inspections in late 1997; however, most were opposed to using military force or favored it only as a last resort. As the crisis worsened in early 1998, Secretary of State Albright visited regional allies and reported that “the U.S., Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and the Palestinian Authority are of one mind on this crisis caused by Iraq’s defiance of the Security Council.”²⁶ She added that “none of the Arab leaders, specifically, urged me to tell the president not to use force.”²⁷ None except Kuwait, however, voiced enthusiasm over using force against Iraq, and there were widespread expressions of relief in the Arab World over the February 23 agreement which averted retaliatory strikes against Iraq for the time being.

Regional allies were particularly reluctant to serve as staging areas for attacks on Iraq. During the February crisis, only Kuwait agreed to allow U.S. air strikes against Iraq from their territory, although there were conflicting reports over Bahrain’s stance.²⁸ Oman agreed to station U.S. support aircraft (five KC-10 tankers) on its territory. Saudi Arabia’s Defense Minister said his country did not favor strikes against Iraq, and on February 9, Secretary Cohen said he would not seek permission to launch U.S. fighters or bombers from Saudi territory.²⁹ Cohen suggested that Saudi authorities might allow U.S. non-combat aircraft (tankers, transports, radar jammers) to operate from Saudi Arabia and might agree to the movement of U.S. fighter aircraft stationed in Saudi Arabia to other Gulf states for use in combat operations. Another Defense official thought Saudi Arabia would have permitted use of Saudi air space by U.S. combat aircraft based in other Gulf states.³⁰ Turkish officials said they would study any U.S. request to use bases in Turkey for air operations against Iraq, but said they had not received such a request.

In the event, U.S. military reprisals were averted until the end of the year. By late 1998, international support for use of force against Iraq had grown somewhat stronger as Iraq was repeatedly seen to be obstructing U.N. operations and Saddam Hussein called for the overthrow of various Arab regimes. Most regional allies, however, remained unwilling to serve as staging areas for U.S. air or missile strikes

²⁶Mark Huband, “Arabs lukewarm on Albright’s call to back air strikes,” *Financial Times*, February 4, 1998, p. 8.

²⁷John Lancaster and Barton Gellman, “Mideast Leaders Don’t Deny U.S. Support on Iraq,” *The Washington Post*, February 4, 1998, p. A21.

²⁸According to some press reports, Bahrain signaled a willingness to let the United States mount attacks from its territory. Steven Lee Myers, “U.S. Will Not Ask to Use Saudi Bases for a Raid on Iraq,” *The New York Times*, February 9, 1998, p. A1. On February 17, however, Bahrain’s Minister of Information said his country “has not allowed the use of its territories for any military action against Iraq.” Reuters News Wire, February 17, 1998, 12:26 PET.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid. Also, Bradley Graham, “U.S. to Avoid Strikes From Saudi Bases,” *The Washington Post*, February 9, 1998, p. A1.

against Iraq. (See CRS IB94049, Iraq-U.S. Confrontation: 1997-1999, for further information.)

Trends

A review of international reactions to U.S.-Iraqi confrontations since 1991 shows erosion of support for retaliation against Iraq. Indicative of this trend is the reluctance of the U.N. Security Council since 1993 to find Iraq in “material breach” of Resolution 687, despite its frequent attempts to obstruct the work of U.N. weapons inspectors and its failure to observe certain other provisions of the resolution. Some Council members, like Russia, have essentially ruled out a finding of “material breach” by insisting on a narrow interpretation of the term that would exclude most of Iraq’s recent challenges.³¹ Altered international conditions, including growing Arab disillusionment with broader U.S. Middle East policies, U.S.-Russian tensions, Arab perceptions that Iraq is no longer a major threat, and concerns among Arabs and others over the effect of sanctions on the Iraqi population have made it increasingly difficult to replicate the broad-based coalition the United States was able to assemble in response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990.

Declining support within the Arab world for military action against Iraq has been particularly apparent. Although Arab countries formed an important component of the allied coalition that defeated Iraq in 1991,³² subsequent U.S. confrontations with Iraq have not seen comparable levels of Arab support, for several reasons. First, none of Iraq’s subsequent provocations involved the invasion and occupation of another Arab state. Second, Arab public opinion has increasingly blamed the United States for the sufferings of the Iraqi people under U.N.-imposed economic sanctions. Third, as Arab-Israeli peace negotiations have faltered, Arabs have complained that the United States is applying a dual standard, by using force to make Iraq comply with cease-fire provisions but not exerting pressure on Israel to comply with terms of various peace agreements. Finally, some Arab governments that would privately welcome the departure of Saddam Hussein are unwilling to support limited U.S. measures that provoke the Iraqi dictator but do not remove him from power, leaving him in a position to extract future revenge on his neighbors.³³

³¹Russia’s U.N. Ambassador has said, “A material breach of the cease-fire resolution would mean that Iraq invaded Kuwait again.” Christopher S. Wren, “U.N. Resolutions Allow Attacks on the Likes of Iraq,” *The New York Times*, Feb. 5, 1998, p. A6.

³²Nine Arab countries committed forces to the allied coalition. On August 10, 1990, the Arab League voted for a resolution condemning the Iraqi invasion, supporting U.N. Security Council resolutions on Iraq, and endorsing the dispatch of forces to the Gulf. The vote was 12 in favor, 3 opposed, 2 abstaining, 3 expressing reservations, plus one absentee. Foreign Broadcast Information Service--Near East, August 13, 1990, pp. 1-2.

³³There are indications that some Gulf leaders, while fearful of “pinprick attacks” that would leave them exposed to subsequent Iraqi reprisals, would privately support U.S. military actions on a scale sufficient to undermine or overthrow Saddam Hussein’s regime. Douglas Jehl, “On the Record, Arab Leaders Oppose U.S. Attacks on Iraq,” *The New York Times*, Jan. 29, 1998, p. A6.

Role of Congress

Congress authorized the President to use the U.S. Armed Forces to implement pertinent U.N. resolutions in Public Law 102-1 (H.J.Res. 77), passed by Congress on January 12, 1991, and signed into law by President Bush on January 14, 1991, two days before Operation Desert Storm began. Congress reaffirmed its approval of the use of force against Iraq in the Defense Authorization Act for FY1992 (Section 1095, P.L. 102-190, December 5, 1991). According to news reports, the Administration continues to cite P.L. 102-1 as a legislative basis for using force against Iraq.³⁴

The Administration consulted with Congress during subsequent confrontations with Iraq. Prior to taking military action against Iraq on January 13, 1993, President Bush informed congressional leaders of his intention to launch air strikes against Iraqi missile sites. In the first hours after the strikes, several Members of Congress voiced their approval of the use of force. According to reports, President Clinton conferred with selected Members of Congress prior to the June 26, 1993 attack on the Iraqi Intelligence headquarters. Most Members of Congress supported the President's action, although some believed the President should have pursued diplomatic avenues before resorting to military action, and some questioned the wisdom of launching the Tomahawks at night when civilians were more likely to be at home.³⁵ Congress was out of session at the height of the October 1994 Iraqi troop movements crisis but the Administration kept Congress and the public informed through speeches, briefings, and news conferences. The same was true of the response to Iraq's incursion into the Kurdish enclave, which occurred at the end of the 1996 summer recess.

The question of congressional authorization for use of force has arisen again in the context of Iraq's challenges to U.N. inspection teams in late 1997 and 1998. On November 13, 1997, the House of Representatives passed House Resolution 322, which expressed the sense of the House that the United States should assure compliance with U.N. resolutions and supported military action if diplomatic efforts were unsuccessful. On January 28, Senator Trent Lott introduced a resolution (S.Con.Res. 71) with bipartisan support, urging the President to take all necessary and appropriate actions to respond to the threat posed by Iraq's refusal to end its weapons programs. Some Members wanted the resolution to call for a long term plan to eliminate threats posed by Iraq through such measures as overthrowing the regime of Saddam Hussein. In the end, Members were unable to agree on revisions and the resolution did not pass.

Other Members expressed a different concern, namely, that a resolution along the lines of the proposed S.Con.Res. 71 could provide the Administration with a

³⁴P.L. 102-1 has no expiration date, and some specialists in international law agree with the Administration's position that it provides sufficient authority to use force against Iraq. Philip Shenon, "U.S. To Use '91 Law to Justify Air Strikes on Iraq," *The New York Times*, February 4, 1998.

³⁵Rep. Ron Dellums, then Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee (now the House National Security Committee), criticized the Administration for failing "to consult effectively with Congress on the specific exercise of military force." Mary Jacoby, "Dellums Slams Clinton for Not Consulting Hill on Strike," *Roll Call*, July 1, 1993, pp. 1, 17.

“blank check” for military escalation. For example, Representative Roscoe Bartlett introduced House Concurrent Resolution 226, which stated the sense of Congress that the United States should not take military action against Iraq unless authorized by a law enacted after adoption of this resolution. Section 3002 of the House version of H.R. 3579, the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations bill, would have banned offensive action against Iraq unless authorized by a law enacted after the passage of H.R. 3579. This provision was included in a modified non-binding form as Section 17 in the enrolled bill signed by the President (P.L. 105-174, May 5, 1998). According to Section 17, it is the sense of Congress that funds made available by this act should not be used for offensive operations against Iraq unless authorized by a subsequent law.

Congress has also appropriated funds to defray the costs of increased U.S. force deployments to the Gulf since late 1997. The Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for FY1998 (P.L. 105-469, March 27, 1998) contained \$1.31 billion to cover unanticipated costs of the build-up in the Persian Gulf through September 1998. For additional information on costs of U.S. military deployments and operations in the Gulf region, see IB94049, Iraq-U.S. Confrontation: 1997-1999.

Table 1. Comparative Military Strengths and Inventories: Gulf States

Country	Military Personnel	Tanks	Other Armored Vehicles	Field Artillery		Attack Helicopters	Combat Aircraft	Naval Units	
				Towed	Self-Propelled			Surface Combatants	Submarines
Saudi Arabia	162,500	910	3,055	248	200	45	358	8	0
United Arab Emirates	64,500	231	1,148	46	90	49	99	0	0
Oman	43,500	77	92	91	18	0	47	0	0
Kuwait	15,300	249	456	0	41	20	76	0	0
Qatar	11,800	34	248	12	28	18	18	0	0
Bahrain	11,000	106	411	36	13	26	24	1	0
<i>Total: Allies</i>	<i>308,600</i>	<i>1,607</i>	<i>5,410</i>	<i>433</i>	<i>390</i>	<i>158</i>	<i>622</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>0</i>
Iraq	429,000	2,700	2,900	1,800	150	120	316	2	0
Iran	475,000	1,400	1,025	2,170	290	109	315*	3	3

* Includes aircraft flown from Iraq to Iran during 1991 Gulf war.

Source: International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 1998-1999*.

Note: Figures shown here do not include materiel believed to be in storage and inoperable.

Table 2. Comparative U.S. Force Levels in Persian Gulf: 1997-1999

Date	Personnel	Aircraft	Ships	Source of Data
mid-1997	20,000	200	20	News reports and transcripts
03/1998	44,700	355 ^a	34	DOD NB* 05/19/98, 08/12/98
06/1998	29,800	195	21	DOD NB 06/18/98
08/1998	19,650	165	20 ^b	DOD NB 08/12/98
11/1998	23,500	173	23	DOD NB 11/10/98
12/1998	29,900	348	37	AFPS** 12/28/98
03/1999	24,400	189	30	AFPS 03/05/99

a. Interpolated

b. Estimated

* Department of Defense News Briefing

** Armed Forces Press Service

