

RESEARCH REPORT | LMUNA

Committee: United Nations Historical Security Council

Issue: Responding to the Intensifying Situation in Iraq and Determining the Legality and Necessity of Military Intervention (2003)



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Introduction

Iraq became a central focus in a global crisis in 2003. Since the Gulf War finished in 1991, the Iraqi government had been directed by the United Nations to suspend its weapons of destruction programs. Iraq was supposed to put an end to its weapons of destruction programs and also work with UN weapons inspectors. That was why the UN inflicted sanctions against them.

As a result of the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001, concern regarding safety, the threat of weapons of destruction and also weapon proliferation had increased loudly. The US and a certain number of allies claimed that Iraq represented a threat and possessed either chemical, biological and possible nuclear weapons, or produced them, because it had failed to implement Security Council resolutions.

In November 2002 Security Council passed Security Council resolution 1441, which gave Iraq a final opportunity to comply with all its disarmament obligations. The Resolution also set an inspection scheme and Iraq was subsequently required to cooperate in the program with the UN Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission and the International Atomic Energy Agency. Iraqi inspections were resumed on November 27 2002.

By 2003 the Security Council was divided on which course of action they should adopt next. Many countries stated that the inspection process should continue as long as it demonstrated signs of future compliance. Others felt that Iraq's failure to reach full compliance demanded forceful action.

Crucially, the question that bothered the Security Council was not whether Iraq posed a threat or not, but whether military intervention would be legal if deemed necessary, and if all peaceful alternatives have been considered.



Definition of Key Terms

Military intervention- the deliberate use or threat of armed force by a state, coalition, or international organization in the internal or external affairs of another sovereign state.

Humanitarian intervention- the use or threat of military force by a state or coalition inside another sovereign nation—without its permission—to stop severe, widespread human rights abuses or a humanitarian catastrophe.

The Gulf War- the deliberate use or threat of armed force by a state, coalition, or international organization in the internal or external affairs of another sovereign state.

United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC)- a subsidiary body of the UN Security Council created to disarm Iraq of chemical, biological, and missile weapons of mass destruction.

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)- center for cooperation in the nuclear field and seek to promote the safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear technologies.

Major Parties Involved

The United Nations

The United Nations played a central role in the international response to Iraq's alleged weapons of mass destruction programmes. Resolution 1441 of the Security Council (2002) tasked UNMOVIC (United Nation Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission) and the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) with conducting extensive inspections in Iraq. The main goal of this was to verify whether or not Iraq was following the disarmament obligations. No evidence of any ongoing nuclear weapons programmes was found which led to a divided Security Council unsure of whether to continue the inspections or not. [1](#) [2](#) [3](#)

Saddam Hussein

The authoritarian president of Iraq and leader of the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party from July 16, 1979 until April 9, 2003. During his time as the president of Iraq he engaged in three wars. This eventually caused the invasion of 2003, because the US feared he was in the possession of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) even though there was no proof for this. [1](#) [2](#)

Iraq

In the 1990s, Iraq was accused of possessing and developing WMD and failing to comply with UN disarmament resolutions. Although resolution 1441 later ensured Iraq permitted extensive inspections, disagreement over its level of cooperation remained a major point of discussion. This ultimately led to the invasion of 2003. [1](#) [2](#)

The United States

The United States was the main advocate for the military intervention in Iraq. This happened under president George W. Bush. Their argument was that Saddam Husssain's alleged possession of WDM and his failure to comply with UN resolutions posed a serious threat. The United States invaded Iraq together with the United Kingdom and other partners on 19 March 2003. [1](#) [2](#)

The United Kingdom

The United Kingdom was the most important ally of the United States during the invasion. Led by Prime Minister Tony Blair, the UK argued that Iraq breached the obligations of previous Security Council resolutions. Together with Spain and the United States, the UK wanted to pass a Security Council resolution that would further justify military action. This proposal was withdrawn. [1](#) [2](#)

UNMOVIC and the IAEA

The UNMOVIC led by Hans Blix and the IAEA led by Mohamed Elbaradei were responsible for inspecting Iraq's suspected weapon programmes. The IAEA found no evidence of any revived Iraqi nuclear weapons programmes and UNMOVIC found no evidence of continuing or resumed Weapons of Mass Destruction programmes. Several unresolved questions remained. [1](#) [2](#) [3](#)

Timeline of events

May 2003

The Council endorsed the US-led administration in Iraq and lifted economic sanctions. The US administrator abolished the Baath Party and the former regime's institutions.

9 April 2003

US forces took over Baghdad.

20 March 2003

The US-led military campaign to topple Saddam Hussein began.

17 March 2003

The diplomatic process in Iraq ended. US President George W. Bush gave Saddam Hussein 48 hours to leave Iraq or face war, UN arms inspectors were evacuated.

March 2003

The UN chief weapons inspector, Hans Blix, reported to the Council that Iraq had accelerated its cooperation but that inspectors needed more time to verify the country's compliance.

5 February 2003

US Secretary of State Colin Powell addressed the Council claiming that Iraq possessed WMDs.

27 January 2003

UNMOVIC Chairman Hans Blix provided the Council with an update, as required by resolution 1441, sixty days after the resumption of inspections in Iraq.

18 December 2002

Iraq participated on the sidelines of the Tripartite Commission's meeting in Geneva for the first time since its decision to boycott the Commission in 1998.

7 December 2002

Iraq provided UNMOVIC and the IAEA in Baghdad with a declaration of its weapons programmes, required by Council resolution 1441.

December 2002-March 2003

The Council met 12 times to hear briefs by the weapons inspectors and to discuss a possible intervention. France, Germany, Russia, China, Chile, Mexico and Syria opposed the US, while the UK, Spain and Bulgaria were willing to proceed with a military intervention.

Previous attempts to solve the issue

Inspecting the UN weapons:

In the aftermath of the Gulf War the Security Council mandated a comprehensive inspection and disarmament program in Iraq. Resolution 687 (1991) required Iraq to account for its weapons programs and authorized the IAEA and UN inspections team to inspect its weapon programs and supervise destruction of prohibited weapons and related material. [1](#)

UNMOVIC:

In december of 1999 the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Comission was created to replace the United Nations Special Comission (UNSCOM). These new measures were created to ensure that Iraq follows the disarmament rules and learn more about the banned weapons programs.

Economic sanctions and Oil-for-food program:

The United Nations has tried to pressure the Iraqi government with economic sanctions. The sanctions were imposed by the international community after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, and still had links to the Iraq government's compliance with subsequent Security Council resolutions. These sanctions had led to humanitarian concerns in Iraq, and so the United Nations introduced the Oil-for-Food Programme. Iraq is permitted to sell only a certain amount of oil, under UN monitoring, that will fund humanitarian goods such as food, medicine etc. This method tried to balance pressure on the Iraqi regime, with minimizing the effect on the general population. [1](#)

Possible solutions

Increase diplomatic and economic pressure

Making Iraq feel the pressure and risks for the country's economy can lower the chances of Iraq immediately taking violent actions against other Member States and could encourage Iraqi cooperation with inspectors

Set a clear deadline for an Iraqi agreement

This will once again set pressure on the Iraqi government. This also gives Iraq a realistic opportunity to comply. Not only that, but it also lets other Member States and the UN notice whether or not the Iraqi act according to the compliance.

Fund the organizations such as UNMOVIC and IAEA

By receiving more and better funding these organizations would be able to investigate Iraq's weapon programs even better. This was the organization get way more resources they can use to keep the Iraqi on the radar.

Sources

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(some sources have been linked by the sections themself)