

# The Remilitarization of Iraq

by Kenneth R. Timmerman

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Despite the most rigorous sanctions ever imposed on any nation since World War II, Iraq has managed to reconstruct approximately 80% of its military manufacturing capability.

Weapons plants known by the names of 1,000-year-old Islamic heroes--Nasser, Huteen, Qaqaa, Muthena, Salah al Din--are back up and running again, much as they were before Operation Desert Storm.

According to reports from the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM), and from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna, Iraq has been able to rebuild its weapons despite UN sanctions intended to punish it for its aggression in Kuwait. How has this been possible? It is because the manufacturing equipment needed to make weapons such as T-72 tanks, or ballistic missiles with ranges less than 150 kilometers, is "not covered" by the UN Security Council resolutions.

A few examples, which were recently the focus of a House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee staff report, are worth mentioning:

- Iraq is currently operating over forty major weapons establishments and is manufacturing everything from main battle tanks (under an old license from an Eastern European country) to 155 mm artillery munitions. None of this is proscribed directly by the United Nations.

- Using spare parts and equipment salvaged after the war, Iraq has managed to return to service most of the 2,500 tanks and 250 fixed-wing combat aircraft that survived Desert Storm. Even though Iraq is not allowed to deploy these weapons beyond the exclusion zones, in recent months Iraqi aircraft have been flying "training" missions near Shiite areas in the south, while Iraqi ground forces have massed along the border with the Kurdish-controlled area in the north.

- Despite UN sanctions which prohibit Iraq from selling its oil and which ban nations from selling industrial goods to Iraq, Saddam Hussein continues to find the financial

resources necessary to survive. Iraq continues to draw from billions of dollars tucked away in secret bank accounts in Switzerland, Jordan, and Austria, which the international community has no will to close down. Furthermore, Iraq continues to truck oil across its borders to sell in Jordan and Iran, while Iraqi front companies operate unmolested in Jordan and Western Europe. The Jordanian government acknowledges purchasing more than 50,000 barrels/day of Iraqi oil, but claims it has been exempted from sanctions by the United Nations.

The Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) has been overwhelmed with information provided by Wall Street investigator Jules Kroll and from other sources on Iraqi-controlled entities whose assets could be seized and turned over to the United Nations. This money could and should be used to pay for the dismantling of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, as called for by UN Security Council resolutions. To date, however, nothing has happened, and UN members (including the United States) have had to foot the bill. OFAC is desperately in need of additional staff to investigate these valuable leads.

One such entity currently under investigation is Crescent Petroleum International, a \$700 million oil company operating out of the United Arab Emirates that is owned and controlled by an Iraqi named Hamid Jaffar. Jaffar's brother, Jaffar Dhia Jaffar, is the acknowledged head of Iraq's nuclear weapons program and the principle interface for the IAEA inspectors when they go to Iraq. Documents obtained by the House Subcommittee on International Security establish beyond a doubt that before Operation Desert Storm, Crescent served as a commercial agent for the Ministry of Industry and Military Industrialization, which directs all Iraqi military production facilities. Crescent's director claims, however, that these were just innocent contacts.

The ongoing UN inspections have provided us with extensive knowledge of Iraqi military production today. But UNSCOM and the IAEA are not dismantling the plants

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themselves: they are only making sure that equipment is not being used at the current time to produce an atomic bomb, poison gas, or long-range ballistic missiles.

Obviously, the same equipment that makes conventional weaponry, such as three- and four-axis machine tools and computerized numerical controllers, can and probably will be used to make nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles once the UN inspectors are gone. But the IAEA and UNSCOM complain that they have "no mandate" to destroy such equipment. In fact, the IAEA has gone so far as to inform the Iraqis that they will only destroy equipment "specifically designed" for nuclear weapons production as defined by the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), or that had been "tainted" by actual use in the nuclear weapons program. For example: the IAEA has interpreted UN Security Council resolutions to mean that spin-flowing machines found at a nuclear weapons site can be destroyed, while identical machines, found at a "dual-use" industrial site, may not. This is patently absurd.

It is high time the IAEA and the UN Special Commission stop agonizing over what constitutes "conventional" and "unconventional" weapons capabilities. As Assistant Secretary of State Robert Gallucci declared on June 29 in public testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, the US government believes that Saddam Hussein is "committed to rebuilding a nuclear weapon capability" as soon as the UN sanctions are lifted.

Surely, under these conditions, the IAEA should be erring on the side of caution, not confidence. Instead of trusting Iraqi declarations, and embracing Iraq's avowed intent to abandon the nuclear option, the international community should take this opportunity to destroy Iraq's weapons manufacturing capability altogether. While this will not prevent Iraq from re-launching nuclear weapons research at a later date, it will retard these efforts significantly. Barring such a step, Iraq will once again become a danger to the region and to the community of civilized nations within a very short order.