

# United Nations

## Press Release

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### SECURITY COUNCIL ISSUES STATEMENT FOLLOWING CONSULTATIONS ON IRAQI NUCLEAR WEAPONS INSPECTION QUESTION

The following statement was issued to the press by the President of the Security Council, Jean-Bernard Merimee (France), following Security Council consultations held today, Monday, 23 September:

"First, I have just informed the Security Council of the answer given to me yesterday as President of the Council, by the Iraqi Government.

"This answer does not meet the requirements set out by the Council. First of all, the Council has received an oral reply whereas it had specifically asked for a formal and written commitment by Iraq that it will implement unreservedly the provisions of resolution 707 (1991). As far as the substance is concerned, the Iraqi Government sticks to the conditions linked to its acceptance of the Security Council resolutions. I must point out that in its answer, the Iraqi Government never referred to resolution 707 but just mentioned resolution 687 (1991).

"The members of the Council unanimously thought that this reply falls short of Council's demand and that I should immediately start bilateral consultations to see what further steps the Council might take.

"Secondly, the Council has been informed by the Chairman of the Special Commission, Ambassador Rolf Ekeus, of a very serious incident which is currently taking place in Baghdad. The nuclear inspection team, which is now in Iraq, entered with short notice, early this morning in Baghdad, a building suspected to be a centre for records and documents related to Iraq's nuclear programme.

"According to the report received by Ambassador Ekeus, the inspectors found in the building a substantial amount of documentation related to Iraq's nuclear activities, inter alia Iraq's fissile nuclear programme, and to nuclear weapons. Ambassador Ekeus told the Council that an early assessment by the inspectors indicates that Iraq was engaged in a nuclear weapons development programme.

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"The Iraqi liaison officer has on instruction from his authorities told the inspectors that they are not allowed to remove the documents and the records. The exit from the building is blocked. The Iraqi authorities have told the team that a decision on the team's request to leave the site with the document will be given at 7:30 p.m., local time. I have been mandated by the members of the Security Council to get in touch immediately with the Iraqi Foreign Minister and to demand, on behalf of the Council, that the inspectors be given the possibility to leave the site with the documents as it is obliged by Security Council resolutions."

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