Yale-UN Oral History Project

Rolf Ekéus
Jean Krasno, Interviewer
February 3, 1998
Washington, D.C.
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Index: Iraqi Weapons Inspections

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Jean Krasno: To begin with, Ambassador Ekéus, for the record would you please provide us with some background on your career as a diplomat and how you came to be Executive Chairman of the United Nations Special Commission to investigate Iraq's capabilities to build weapons of mass-destruction, or as is more commonly referred to, UNSCOM. So, there's two parts to the question, actually.

Rolf Ekéus: I have a law degree, originally from Stockholm, and worked in the law courts for a while before I joined the Swedish Foreign Service. There I served in various positions abroad, in Bonn, Germany, then posted in Africa, and thereafter back in Stockholm where I was the Special Assistant to the Foreign Minister for several years. Then in the 1970s, I served in the Swedish delegation to the United Nations for five years, including the spell that Sweden had in the Security Council at that time. Then, for the first time I came in contact with the Middle Eastern issues, especially the Palestinian-Israeli question, which was starting up when the PLO started to be known. I was Sweden's contact with the Palestinian delegation in New York. I was at that time the first secretary to the Swedish mission. Of course, I was also in contact with the Israelis on the Palestinian issues.

Thereafter I went to The Hague and in 1983 to Geneva as Ambassador and as Permanent Representative of Sweden to the Conference on Disarmament. I was given the

task to be also the Chairman of the international negotiations on the Chemical Weapons Convention. I served as Chairman in the year 1984 and in the year 1987. From 1983 to 1989, I was the coordinator for chemical weapons issues of what was called the Group of 21. The Group of 21 was the group of non-aligned Member States of the Conference on Disarmament. Sweden was not a member of the non-aligned movement, but was partner in the group of non-aligned states on disarmament matters.

I had other jobs in that context, in relation to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and to the biological weapons convention, from 1983 to 1988 in Geneva. Then, in 1989, I moved to Vienna, and became head of the Swedish mission to the European Security Conference. I served as chairman for drafting the Charter of Paris, which was adopted in December 1990 and which is the major document outlining the principles for European security. In early 1991, the Gulf War took place. Immediately after the War, the Security Council and the victorious coalition were looking for a chairman to lead the work on cleaning up Iraq from weapons of mass destruction. At that stage, the consensus was, I would say, that the matter of eliminating these weapons in Iraq was a technical issue, and not a political issue.

Of course, I had some experience dealing with Iraq because of the work I had been doing in the Middle East in the 1970s. So, what the UN was looking for was a person who had special experience in weapons of mass destruction. What that involves was identifying such weapons in Iraq, working out methods of verification, control of weapons-relevant material, etc. The thinking was that Iraq would give up its weapons as quickly as possible because the cease-fire resolution which was adopted in early April contained a provision that if Iraq would give up its weapons it would be entitled to export all its oil capabilities, oil for weapons. Everyone took it for granted that to give up what

remained after the war of such weapons would anyhow be a minor sacrifice. So, therefore we didn't perceive a political problem, we saw it as a purely technical one. The UN looked for a specialist, and they looked for a person coming from a country which had not been on the forefront of the coalition. That was natural, and they turned to Sweden, which of course participated indirectly in the coalition, but with a field hospital and such, not on, I would say, the war-fighting part of the coalition.

So, they turned to Sweden, and there were not many more with that experience than myself. I was the only one left on the beach when the water withdrew. I was asked to take on that job, and I accepted, exactly under my own understanding, that it was complex, that it was a difficult technical task that had to be put together, but it would not be a matter of more than technical solutions to disarm the Iraqi capabilities in a few months.

So, I calculated a six-month period for the work.

JK: You calculated that it would take six months in all?

RE: Yes. But of course we came around to understand that the task was a two-fold task: one was to identify the prohibited weapons and capabilities, and eliminate them, and the other task was to create and put in place a long-term, on-going monitoring and verification system, which would control Iraq's civilian production capabilities and see to it that these capabilities were not turned into production for acquiring weapons. I will give you a simple example, a certain chemical compound can be used for the production of pesticides, herbicides, to support agriculture, but it can also be turned into production

of nerve agents, for instance. So the task was, within six months, to outline a system for monitoring, and launch it.

JK: Right. Well, as you were saying, on April 3, 1991, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 687. Was the mandate in 687 clear for the eventual functioning of UNSCOM? So let's start with that part of the question.

RE: Yes, the mandate is very clear, surprisingly clear. It stated simply, and I paraphrase, that the chemical and biological and nuclear weapons should be identified and destroyed. In addition, it stated that related components and material should also be destroyed, as well as related production capabilities. Concerning missiles, it was a special arrangement, and there the mandate was a little unclear. It said that missiles with a range above 150 kilometers should be accounted for and destroyed, and also production capabilities for such missiles, but it differed from the other three WMDs (weapons of mass destruction), in the sense that WMD research and development were prohibited, but research and development of missiles were not prohibited. I don't know the reason for that, but I think it was the result of a compromise among the Security Council members. It also meant that Iraq was free to produce, and is free to produce, and develop missiles with a shorter range than 150 kilometers. This created insecurity, because a missile can be produced, say, in the 100 kilometer range, but the range is decided by two things: by the size of the rocket and the weight of the warhead. And, if you had a conventional explosive, it's quite heavy, because otherwise it will be very little bang for a very costly delivery system. It is therefore meaningless to build a warhead with a light explosive, it has to be a heavier than that. And then, in the hundred-kilometer range, it's effective. A

nuclear device would also be very heavy, and requires a major missile for delivery. We learned, however, if you filled a warhead with gas (chemical or biological), which by definition is light, then you could make a very light warhead. A 100 kilometers-range normal missile could with a very light load (a gas-filled warhead), reach much further.

JK: Because you are talking about the range of the missiles, why was there a particular cut-off? Was there a range in which they did not want Iraq to reach?

RE: Yes. In the 150-kilometer range, the normal SCUD, which Iraq had acquired from the Soviet Union, had ranges of two to three hundred kilometers, and Iraq modified them to even longer ranges, which made them effective against, say, Tehran in the Iraq-Iran war. These missiles could be used against Saudi Arabia, against Israel. So, that was the cut-off to prevent regional warfare. But I think the consensus, I should not say consensus – the sentiments in the Council were that Iraq should be allowed to keep a conventional force. It was not the meaning of the resolution, as I understand it, to destroy Iraq's capability as a normal state, to defend its borders, to carry out warfare in defense. The idea was just to prevent Iraq from terrorizing the region, and not work as a regional power. But it should be capable of defending itself.

JK: How was this Resolution 687 different from other UN resolutions?

RE: It covered many other aspects obviously. The core element was, for sure, the matter of the weapons, but Resolution 687 was a cease-fire resolution and it has a very interesting provision, namely that it states in one paragraph that Iraq is obliged to accept

the resolution. It's a Chapter VII resolution. Iraq as a member of the United Nations is bound by that resolution, of course, because of its UN membership. But it was added above that, another layer on the cake, namely that Iraq has to accept formally that resolution. And so did Iraq, in the form of notification to the Security Council—I don't remember if it was to the Secretary-General or to the President of the Security Council. But, that was a formal notification. Resolution 687 stated Iraq's formal acceptance would constitute a cease-fire between the coalition supporting Kuwait, and Iraq. So, in addition to being a sort of mandatory Security Council obligation, it established a contractual relationship, which was, I think, a very good element. But it also meant something quite interesting. It made it more difficult for the Security Council to change the rules of the resolution as it had become quasi-contractual as a cease-fire provision.

JK: What kind of contractual relationship?

RE: Because Iraq stated in its notification: "We accept this resolution." My understanding is that this acceptance made the provisions of Resolution 687 legally binding to both Iraq and the coalition. This is something which has been agreed upon, not only dictated—it has that layer under Chapter VII, everyone is bound—but this addition was to constitute a sort of agreement. Iraq accepted this, and that constitutes a cease-fire. This is important when you come to today's history, the crisis we have now. If a material breach of the cease-fire occurs, the cease-fire is no longer valid, it's broken. If there is no cease-fire, new acts of war can legally be undertaken. That's why this construction in 1991 made it possible to attack Iraq because of its violation of Resolution 687; it's therefore different from all other resolutions. The Council sometimes takes the

liberty to interpret its own resolutions, and in this case it makes it a little more tricky because it is not a pure resolution; it has an element of contract in this exceptional case. Then, of course, materially, Resolution 687 contains certain classical elements for a cease-fire: exchange of prisoners, return of stolen property, compensation, accounting for missing persons, and also later on, regulation of the boundary between Iraq and Kuwait. So, it is a very rich resolution, a major, complex resolution.

The resolution also contains two very, very important provisions that I have forgotten to mention. It is what we call the "constitution of the sanctions." As you recall, Iraq attacked Kuwait on the 2nd of August of 1990. A few days after, the Security Council passed a resolution containing two main elements, the prohibition to import from Iraq, in other words the oil embargo, and the prohibition to export to Iraq. The second contained the reservation for food and medicine, which was allowed; there was never a prohibition on that. So, what the Council did in the cease-fire resolution, it added the prolongation of the sanctions, and it had two paragraphs, Paragraphs 21 and 22. These are important to understand.

Paragraph 22, to take that one, is the most disputed paragraph. It states, and I paraphrase, that when the Security Council agrees that Iraq has fulfilled its obligations under the weapons part of the resolution, which involve sanctions, then the prohibition against imports from Iraq shall no longer be enforced. So, it's an automatic link *if* it is shown to the Council's satisfaction that the weapons are accounted for and the system for monitoring is in place, the two tasks which I'd mentioned. Then, technically the oil embargo should be lifted. It's not even a matter of asking for a new decision.

The other paragraph, Paragraph 21, deals with exports to Iraq. As I said, there is the prohibition on exporting items to Iraq, with the exception of food and medicine,

which are free of sanctions. Paragraph 21 talks more loosely about how the export prohibition should be lifted. It states that sanctions—I am not talking about the oil export now, but the sanction on the export to Iraq—sanctions should be eased or lifted in the light of the promises and practices of Iraq. So it gives room for a more subjective, political assessment. Paragraph 22 is rather detailed, has clear language; and paragraph 21 is, I think, designed to give room for freer interpretation. Iraq could of course not import much of anything; the sanctions became very effective for the simple reason that Iraq did not have the funds to pay for anything. It had large debts. It attacked Kuwait to get money to pay its debts, which was a bad miscalculation.

The political discussion has come to focus on this paragraph 22, and you will see many statements from Iraqi officials where they refer to paragraph 22. Paragraph 22 became the carrot to be used by the Commission, saying "Only if you behave, you will get all your money through the lifting of the oil embargo." I used that many times in order to compel Iraq to give up freely its WMDs. That is a very special resolution. So that is the answer to your question.

JK: Yes. Well, I'm glad you went into that because I had felt that it was a particularly unique resolution. How would you describe the authority that UNSCOM was given?

RE: The resolution just tasked the Secretary-General to prepare a commission to carry out this job. The Commission was also tasked to support and assist the Director General of the IAEA to carry out the nuclear weapons part of the mandate. So, the Secretary-General, at that time Pérez de Cuéllar, together, of course, with the leading members of the Security Council, outlined a commission that should be led by the Executive

Chairman, which was a very important provision. It was not an ordinary chairman in the UN lingo. It was a person who has to negotiate an agreement between the several participants. Making the head of the Commission the Executive Chairman made it clear that the operations of the Commission were to be decided on in an executive form and not in the negotiating form. The powers were given to the Executive Chairman. The Commission's job was simply to supervise the implementation of the weapons part of the cease-fire Resolution 687; Iraq should declare all its holdings that were prohibited, which we asked it to identify, and the Commission should ratify the correctness of these, and then supervise the destruction of these prohibited weapons. That was one task.

The other was to put these long-term limits on the system and to work out a system for controlling Iraq's capabilities and see to it Iraq didn't acquire the weapons again. It would be stupid to take out their weapons and then allow Iraq to acquire them again. So that was the second task.

JK: How did UNSCOM operate in relationship to the IAEA?

RE: It is interesting that the resolution doesn't give the task to the IAEA, as such. It states that it is the Director General of the IAEA who is tasked. Fundamentally, his job was to supervise, and to receive Iraq's declaration on its nuclear weapons capabilities in the same way that UNSCOM did. Then to verify the correctness, supervise the destruction of the prohibited weapons, and establish a monitoring system. But, first of all, why the Director General and not the IAEA as such. In every-day language, you would always say "the IAEA" and not the Director General of the IAEA. But it was clear that the Security Council, did not like the idea of letting the IAEA's institutions do this,

because then you will go contrary to the resolution's language as regards the Special Commission, with its Executive Chairman. The Security Council didn't want the Governing Board of IAEA, or the General Conference, to start going in there and negotiating various elements. What the Council wanted to do was to use the technical skills and experiences in the Agency, of the organization, but they didn't want its political governance to have any influence, that's why they did this arrangement. The IAEA was given the main responsibility for the nuclear weapons capabilities in Iraq.

The Commission was given the task to assist and cooperate with the IAEA, well, with the Director General but from now on I'll call it the IAEA, and it was more specifically defined, for instance, the most important provision in this context between the two organizations was that the Commission was tasked—well, the Executive Chairman was the only person—to designate locations not declared by Iraq for inspections. To designate sites of inspections, sites which had not been declared by Iraq. So, in very simple terms, the responsibility for what Iraq declared under the resolution, was the IAEA's job. But regarding the other category, namely locations which Iraq did *not* declare, suspect locations, in other words, it was for the Commission's chairman *alone* to decide which searches were to be undertaken. Normally, the Action Team of the IAEA carried out the actual inspection of the designated site if it was related to nuclear weapons. The reason behind this construction was to protect the IAEA from the tough political confrontations: secret activities, the hidden lies. It was up to UNSCOM to take on this confrontational part of the mandate. The Security Council didn't want to drag the IAEA into some kind of political controversy.

JK: Well, hadn't Iraq been a member of IAEA, and hadn't there been IAEA inspections?

RE: Iraq *is* a member, has been a member. Iraq has signed and ratified the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. It is interesting to see that Iraq acted totally contrary to its obligations under the treaty. It's one of the most gross and reckless violations of international law that I've ever experienced: signing a treaty, ratifying it, and then acting contrary to it. You have signed saying, "We will not acquire nuclear weapons; we are fighting against the proliferation of nuclear weapons." Iraq signed that convention, and then embarked upon a big nuclear weapons program. The signing of the Non-Proliferation Treaty was obviously a trick by Iraq to squelch any suspicion of its nuclear weapons program.

JK: So, the IAEA had been conducting inspections on declared sites prior to the Gulf War. Why were they unable to uncover that Saddam Hussein had a nuclear weapons program?

RE: I think you said it in the question, I mean, the 'declared sites.' The IAEA inspected Iraq in the context of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the safeguard arrangements that are linked to that treaty. So, their inspectors went regularly, and regularly means a couple of times per year to visit the declared reactors and the declared facilities, nuclear facilities, taking samples and counting the amount of fissionable material there and the amount of nuclear material as good bookkeepers, but they were not

tasked to investigate something outside of the declared areas. They had no chance to detect anything.

JK: Did they suspect? Was there any evidence that material was missing?

RE: No. I'm afraid to say that the IAEA reporting gave high marks to Iraq. One should be very skeptical about results like that. Normally there are shortcomings because of sloppiness, but here was a perfect reporting!

JK: It was too perfect!

RE: So, one should be suspicious.

JK: What was your relationship with the IAEA's Director General Hans Blix Isn't he also Swedish?

RE: We are good friends, since long before 1991, and our families are friends. It was not necessarily, in the beginning of the operations an easy professional relation. I think it was partly because of different cultures: the IAEA's Director General is one of the leading international lawyers, highly respected. So his was a very renowned name in international law circles, highly respected. In the mind of the IAEA, the problems were two-fold: first it was, of course, that the IAEA became threatened, as such, because of its short-comings in Iraq, because suddenly international attention was brought to the safeguard system, saying it doesn't function since Iraq could produce nuclear weapons

without being found out. Was it the fault of the organ, of the agency responsible for supervising? Was it totally inept? Of course, that wasn't the case. But that was the debate. So, the organization came under severe scrutiny, even with ideas of radically limiting the organization's responsibilities by building an alternative institution. The Director General had a problem being both the executive under the cease-fire and the leader of a big and significant administration. That is my guess; he had a great responsibility to protect the future of the IAEA. That meant that the IAEA wanted to play down its shortcomings. It became a complicated agenda to handle for Blix. That was one thing.

The other was the legal aspect, in a sense. I think it is very difficult to set up. Of course, the Director General didn't operate alone, obviously, it took a team. He established a special team inside, called the action group, or action team, responsible for Iraq, composed of inspectors, specialists, some taken from Agency personnel and some from elsewhere. But still, that carried the IAEA culture, and the legal culture, from the Director General, namely 'innocent until proven guilty,' which was, I think, a very risky position to have when the inspection activities began. While the Commission under my direction had the opposite starting point—we said 'guilty until proven innocent.' I consider that this was the tenor of the resolution. Iraq had to show what it had, and we should verify that it had shown everything. These different cultures were, I wouldn't say, "clashing," but were in friction, because in the early stages, I think, no one in the IAEA believed, really, that Iraq had a nuclear weapons program. But, the shock came when their own inspection team ran into being blocked. They were shocked that they were being blocked to start with. Why was it they were being blocked? But they were guided by information that had been generated by the Commission, supported by certain

governments. I was the one to designate these non-declared sites and locations. The Agency had to send their teams together with the UNSCOM who went with the Agency to the sites. Then we detected components for the production of nuclear weapons and, of course, there was a lot of heartache before the IAEA would accept that there indeed was a nuclear weapons program in Iraq. It created quite a tension inside the organization. Naturally it created a desire to protect the agency from criticism when it was proven in some significant way that there was a major nuclear weapons program.

JK: So once it was accepted, that there really was a major nuclear weapons program under way, did the relationship between UNSCOM and IAEA then become easier?

RE: Gradually, gradually. UNSCOM insisted, how should we say, on the prerogative of identifying hidden activities. It was still, like, in a sense, putting the agency under a certain control. It was the Commission that identified the prohibited items. It developed with time a *modus operandi* that the IAEA analysts could suspect certain non-declared locations, and they then turned to me to ask for a designation which I gave as a matter of course, and so that loosened things up. The IAEA would ask for a designation of a site and if we responded by designating the site. There could be some cases where we didn't designate a site because it could have been linked to other activities by the Commission, so we didn't want to disclose that and go in there, so to say, prematurely to a site. It was a working system and it was important that the key decisions were in one hand and not doubled. Thus the decisions on the inspection of non-declared sites which constituted the secret part of Iraq's programs, were in the hand of the Commission. That was very important.

JK: Now, eventually we'll get to other things, but I'm still asking questions on the structural relationships of the different entities. So, I wanted to ask you also about UNSCOM's relationship with the Security Council during the time of your tenure.

RE: The relationship with the Security Council was established very quickly in the form that the Council, at my proposal, was to receive regular reports. In the beginning, we sent four formal reports a year.

JK: This was a part of a proposal that you had worked out?

RE: Well, that was worked out like that, yes. In the summer of 1991, after Iraq had blocked the inspectors, the Council adopted a very angry resolution, resolution 707, which set down the reporting obligations. There was also another special resolution, which outlined the reporting obligations, but it had no other substance. It meant that every October and every April, a six-monthly report was issued on the first task, namely search and destroy. And then, there were the June and December reports, which also were six-monthly reports, on the monitoring and how to get the monitoring system operational. In other words, one set of reports addressed the search for old weapons and one set addressed the prevention of the acquisition of new weapons. So these were the four.

JK: That makes sense.

RE: The first time we were blocked, that was an IAEA team led by David Kay. And when he was blocked, he turned for instructions to me because I was the one who had tasked his team. I was headquartered in New York. I took the case to the Council. That meant calling the President of the Council for the month, waking him up early in the morning; we were waking up the Permanent Members, so when it was a dramatic situation like that, normally it happened at two or three o'clock in the morning NewYork time. I let them sometimes sleep until five or six, and then asked them for action, to react. We couldn't shoot our way in to the blocked facilities in Baghdad, so we had to get the political support of the Council. So, the Council then, in the beginning, adopted a formula they still use: issued a statement condemning Iraq's action and asked the Executive Chairman to go to Baghdad and present the Council's position, and report back. So that was the formula which was adopted early on.

From thence on, I had the role that when the new President came in every month on the Council, the first working day I had a session with him, and briefed him about our operations and some of our secrets, like the President of the United States who comes in every fourth year. I had to give the Council President the sense of what could happen this month, and to establish a personal rapport with him. It was important because these are sensitive issues and if you only talk to those who are most enthusiastic, the United States or the U.K., or with the Russians, the permanent members, you will create a sense of dismay among the rank-and-file of the ten others who are not Permanent Members and who may feel they are not part of the decision making process. For me, it was therefore important to establish the principle of briefing the President. When we had a crisis, I always made the point, first, to go to the President of the Council, even if it was a country with very little experience. And then, of course, I talked to the Permanent Members

about the situation. These were secretive events, but the president was put on the spot. He had to make up his mind what to do with the information. I advised him, and then I had fulfilled my responsibility towards the Council. The President probably contacted the major powers on the Council. I couldn't spend time talking to the fifteen individually, giving every detail, but focused upon giving the necessary briefing to the President. The further dissemination of the information was up to him. The Presidents reacted very differently. Some made the judgment that they should keep the information to themselves for the time being and wait for a formal request from me. I did not always make a formal request. I had to assess the situation. Or if they were very nervous they could convene the Council immediately. So every president in their own way handled differently the question of informing the members. I was a little nasty about keeping the president informed.

JK: Why would you say that?

RE: Because, it always put him into a little fix, I think.

JK: In general, was the Council responsive?

RE: Yes.

JK: Did you feel that if you went to them they would respond?

RE: Well, it was excellent; I mean it reacted very well. Of course my friend Tom Pickering, who was the US ambassador in 1991 was an enthusiastic supporter, in the sense that he went far above and beyond his duties to help us. Quite often I was sitting on the thirtieth floor and then later on the thirty-first floor of the UN Secretariat building, and in the breaks of the Security Council meetings maybe on other issues like Somalia or Rwanda, he took the elevator up and came into my room to share the latest news. I almost always had some new things to tell him. So, he kept himself well informed, and that helped us. I tried to keep all members similarly informed but there was a limit to how much one could reach each and every person.

This approach had a down side among other members in the Council, because they were wondering, "Why is Pickering so well informed?" "Why is he privileged?" And then I had to tell them, "Because he is coming to my office on his own and keeping himself informed – you can't expect me to knock on your door all the time and disturb you during meetings of the Council, or attack you in the halls. I have a full job myself."

[end of side #1]

[side #2]

JK: We were talking about your relationship with the Security Council, so you felt fairly satisfied that they put it as a high priority.

RE: Yes. There was a great deal of attention given to our work, especially when there was a crisis. We had a practice of routinely talking when there was no crisis – two cycles of six months. It worked very nicely and smoothly, up until the summer of 1992 when

the US changed its leadership with Ambassador Perkins coming to the UN. The Commission ran into the Ministry of Agriculture [in Iraq]. We had identified through analytical work that a building in the center of Baghdad was used by Iraq to hide weapons-related documents. We had, a full year before, the sensational find in September of another ministerial location within Iraq, which had been part of the nuclear program. This had been a major breakthrough for us. But we felt that in the Ministry building there were missile parts and documents relating to certain WMD programs. So our team went Monday and it was blocked. We then established a siege of the building. We put our team members to watch at both the front and back so we could control the movements in and out of that building.

I went to the Security Council the day after. I presented the problem to a closed session of the Council. Cape Verde was the President for the month. He was very much in the circle, politically, with the Third World delegations who shared the impression that UNSCOM was plotting against Iraq. But he was also a lawyer, so I could put him on the spot and he prepared a tough statement by the Security Council to warn Iraq, and it contained a draft that he and I worked out before the meeting. It stated that this was a serious event and could have serious consequences. It was a violation of Iraq's obligation to Resolution 687.

When the meeting started, the American delegate, Ambassador Perkins, raised his hand and said that maybe we shouldn't say "serious consequences" – we condemn, we criticize Iraq, but we don't say "serious consequences." I was surprised because I had expected a hard line from the US. The statement was issued in the modified version, criticizing Iraq of course, but those who knew what had happened in the closed meeting knew that the US had taken the lead to soften it. If you had seen the two texts, the

President's statement and the actual outcome, you would have understood that here was a problem, even more so if you learned that it had been the US, not Russia or China, who had been intervening to soften the language. Of course, if Iraq had known that, then this threat would not have been especially alarming.

Not surprisingly, we came into a situation where Iraq didn't budge. They continued to refuse us access. I decided to travel to Baghdad, but I had no special mandate. What could I do? I decided to visit our team at the Ministry. I had to go around enormous pressure, violent demonstrations against the inspectors. It was summer so they were sitting in these cars with a high sun, burning them, and the morale was definitely sinking among our people. What should we do? Just sit there, day out, day in, for twenty-four hours a day? Terrible job. They were professional scientists, not security guards or security company guards you see outside doors.

JK: Actually, as long as you are talking about this event, perhaps we should just explain a little bit more about the event. I mean, we are going to do some more of the other events later but we are already into this one. Where were they, and what was the issue? Were they not allowed to leave the parking lot?

RE: No, that was another one. In this case we had locked in Iraq. The parking lot is another event, when we were locked in. Here, we locked in Iraq at the Ministry building, with two doors, one front and one back; we were watching that no major items were brought in or out of the building. We had a siege. We laid a siege on the building. So, I went there and talked with Tariq Aziz, and then he told me—and this is interesting. He said, "You see, we know every word which is spoken in the closed session of the Security

Council." – which was interesting information to me – "We know every word which has been spoken, and we know that the United States has said that there should be no 'serious consequences.' Why do you think we should let you in?" That was interesting information to me. I was shocked, and I understood that we had no chance to prevail in that confrontation – but if we stepped down it would be a terrible setback to the Commission and our credibility. So I was in a real dilemma. When I returned to New York I was concerned. I didn't know what to do. I tried in vain to convince the Americans in New York, but then I decided to go to the White House. I went to see Brent Scowcroft . I told Scowcroft this story, and now we were at the end of August, it had been ten days after the Council's reaction. My first visit took a couple of days, then I went back again to try to do something.

JK: Were the inspectors still guarding the building?

RE: Yes, and the situation was terrible. We had big problems and the morale was low, and we shifted out inspectors and, you know, tried to relieve some of them. So, I told Scowcroft what happened in the Council almost three weeks ago. I said, "The US representative deleted the words 'serious consequences,'" and Scowcroft became very alert and said "Who instructed this? I had not heard about that." His assistant was blushing red and said, "I gave the instruction to delete the phrase "serious consequences.'" And of course, that changed everything.

JK: But do you know why? What was the explanation for why that had happened?

RE: Well, the US administration was tired. As you know, we had already had this parking lot incident. They were not ready for another serious confrontation. But this is significant, this event, because it has a bearing upon today. The administration understood that when they blinked, and they really had been sleeping, not only blinking but also falling asleep, that would destroy the situation and the inspection team. Now they understand that if you allow Iraq to go, you lose momentum.

So, suddenly, they woke up and had to go back and reassess the situation. But, sadly and unfortunately, at that time, our inspectors were starting to be physically attacked with knives. There were really serious situations. So I had to order them to leave the Ministry buildings. It took a couple of days after the inspectors had withdrawn to their hotels before the Council reached agreement and came up with a threat of military action. This was a concrete threat because the US had woken up. But came too late. It was quite dramatic. The US prepared to attack and blow up the building. But attacking the building in the center of Baghdad would be really something extraordinary, and I was concerned about the continuation of the Commission's inspections. So, I had tense talks with al-Anbari who was still the Iraqi Ambassador in New York. The talks took place in my hotel room in Beekman Towers because we couldn't be in the UN buildings since all the press in the world was around. Everyone saw the war coming. We forget how enormously upset everything was at that time. So we had secret meetings at my hotel, and we linked up to Baghdad, talking to the Iraqi leadership by phone. In the end, the Iraqis caved in and permitted inspection of the Ministry building, but on one condition: that I came to Baghdad myself. I didn't mind, then, the delay, because our inspectors had been forced away from watching the building and it was clear that it had been cleansed of incriminating materials. But for the sake of it and to avoid the bombing, I went to

Baghdad. However, we were vindicated in the sense that we could then inspect the building and we didn't find anything. It was cleaned out completely.

JK: It was too perfect!

RE: Yes, there was absolutely nothing in the Ministry of Agriculture, there were no documents of any sort, no papers. It was funny to find a Ministry containing no documents at all. This anecdote gives in a nutshell the complexity, the need to react firmly and clearly. It tells about the bombing threat as a backing up for our inspections. This story contains so much of the whole complexity of the inspection work. But above all, it shows that when the Council is blinking, this has serious consequences for the implementation of its resolutions.

After that, we never experienced wavering, sometimes sagging maybe, but fundamentally the Council was very alert, leading up to January 1993. I think the US was contemplating military action even after, if there had been a new blockage. But then Iraq understood that there would still be risks associated with the Republican convention in August 1992 when President Bush's support started to fall. I believe there was a serious concern in the Republican circles that he was looked upon as not tough enough against Iraq. Therefore there was a strong preparedness to take tough action against Iraq there. It was tense, and I had intensive contacts with Scowcroft and others. Gallucci, who had been my deputy, was then head of political and military affairs in the State Department. He was my first deputy when we set up the Commission and he had moved to assistant secretary. Through the contacts with those two, we learned that the US had been close to military action. But Iraq avoided an outright confrontation with our inspectors during that

time period. Even a minor incident would probably have led to a major attack because it was so tense during that period.

However, during the fall of 1992 tension was building up and in January 1993, in the last days of the Bush administration, Iraq took the steps to block us. This happened when we had our inspectors in Bahrain, most of them, for rest and recuperation over the New Year period. They had to fly back in to Baghdad when made the pronouncement that: "We will not allow you to fly into the no-fly zone, we will shoot you down." I went to the Security Council immediately, and said, "This is a major blockage." The US was ready to take action immediately but other Permanent Members hesitated. However, Iraq immediately modified its stance and said, "If you fly, you may be shot down, maybe not intentionally, but unintentionally." Within hours I responded and said, "This is tantamount to a violation, a blockage," and then they sent back a message, "But our air defense will be so nervous that they will shoot at everything." I said, "This is still a blockage."

I must say, because this is history, I had a problem with the British and the French ambassadors who lost their nerve in that situation. They started to be critical of my actions as chairman, especially that I had rejected the responses by Iraq without consulting the Council. They wanted themselves, the Council, to be involved and discuss these counter-offers. Iraq followed up with a new proposal: "You can fly from Bahrain around the no-fly zone and go via Jordan and into Baghdad." That would have meant, for us, that we couldn't use our aircraft; we had fixed-wing aircraft, big transport airplanes. But they couldn't fly one day, then, they had to stay overnight and go back, which would severely undercut operational capability if we had to make these huge detours from Bahrain where our staging area was. So, I refused that. That lead to a serious dispute

between me and Paris and London, I mean the ambassadors Jean-Bernard Merimee and Sir David Hannay—I was not impressed by them actually. They wanted me to accept the Iraqi bidding. When I complained to Scowcroft, he said, "These guys should recognize instructions from their bosses." And then President Bush rang President Mitterand, woke him up at twelve o'clock at night, it was six o'clock here, and I understand that Scowcroft or Bush rang John Major, one of them rang Prime Minister Major, and then the two ambassadors were ordered to keep quiet. The day after, they silently, but quite angrily, had to accept my refusal of this offer from Baghdad. My refusal was submitted to Iraq after five or six hours of conversation with the President of the Council.

Iraq had exhausted its possibilities and there was a heavy attack on Iraq. It was the only time during my time that there was military action against Iraq, large-scale. We had, of course, these pinprick attacks, which were linked to the operations which were going on in the north, and we had a big attack in the summer of 1993 when President Clinton acted on the report of the assassination plot on President Bush. But that wasn't related to our mandate. Our mandate has been involved in major military action once, which was this one. And then it was a big attack, but limited to one target. It was actually a facility related to nuclear weapons production and was blown up. The Iraqi side had a meeting the day after the attack and decided the Commission team could fly as much as it would like. All blockages were ended, but only after the attack had taken place. This was a little difficult.

JK: You had mentioned Iraq and that Tariq Aziz had said to you that they knew what had been going on in the Security Council. How were they getting that information?

RE: I don't know. They could have because they always had someone as a sympathizer. Egypt was then on the Council and Egypt gave, I think gladly, information to Iraq after the sessions. After Egypt ended its tenure, it could have been another Arab country, perhaps Morocco. It showed how important it is to have a closed debate, given the closed room of Council members only. No formal notes are taken by the Secretariat from these closed sessions. But of course anyone can take his own notes. There are fifteen members and a number of Secretariat personnel. But anyhow the key is that reports of the argument had been carried out of the Council.

JK: That's amazing. Now, the next step in this whole relationship is, what was UNSCOM's relationship with the Secretary-General?

RE: With Pérez de Cuéllar—and that has to do with the individuals—with Pérez de Cuéllar it was excellent. I mean, he was formally the one who nominated me, after consulting with the Council. It is stated frequently, and I may have supported that, that it is the Council that nominates the Executive Chairman, but technically it isn't. Of course at least the Council should approve the Secretary General's selection, but it cannot take the initiative on that. But when we started off, it was a mix. I mean with Pérez de Cuéllar as Secretary-General and as an individual, he was sympathetic and helpful. With his enormous experience it was good for me to go and talk to him. I did the thinking, brought up the new ideas, but he gave me moral support. It was clear however in the UN Secretariat context that we were not particularly liked. They didn't like me and they didn't like Gallucci.

JK: Why is that?

RE: I think that the executive and operational character of the Commission was totally foreign to the UN system. Everything should be filtered up to the Secretary-General, and with this league of various advisors with all their own agendas including self-interest, unfortunately including money, resources, rooms, everything and all sorts. And they made hell for us. I mean there was a really, really, negative attitude from the whole system, with the exception of Pérez de Cuéllar, who understood. However, he was not a man with iron hands. He sent vaguely supporting sounds down, but I remember, we went to the then-legal counsel, a man who would later be a good friend of mine. He is no longer legal counsel. I wanted him to help me, to give me legal advice. When you set up an institution like that, you need someone with knowledge of how to do it.

JK: Who was that?

RE: Fleischhauer.

JK: Oh, yes, of course, Fleischhauer.

RE: I saw him the other day, in The Hague. He is very happy. But he told the story later on, in which he said, "To me came two characters." He said. "One was a cowboy with big boots and, you know, peculiar dress, and the other a Swedish pastor with white hair. And the pastor and the cowboy asked me to provide them with a top legal person. And of course I didn't help them." This is the story he told about our meeting. But, I

didn't know then that he saw me as a Swedish pastor. The cowboy was Gallucci, of course.

JK: And the cowboy was Gallucci.

RE: But I remember he said, "We'll take care of all your legal problems, you just write a memo and send it up to us and we will give you an answer." How can you write that? He needed to see it and to work with us because we had our own extremely complex problems which are the most legally complex issues facing the United Nations, including violence, war, I mean all the elements. So, but that was just typical – and to get space, we, of course, had to pay for all the space.

Secondly, I mean, we got no money from the UN. And the debt situation characterized my relationship with Pérez de Cuéllar.

JK: You got no money from the UN…

RE: No, he gave me money from his, I would say, pocket money, a couple of millions on *loan*, which I had to pay back. But Pérez de Cuéllar and I were agreement, in principle, that the financing of the operation had to be under the UN budget, because it was a sort of peacekeeping operation. But, the US blocked that. They blocked it saying there should be no financing through the UN. What happens if the Security Council begins a peacekeeping operation, it has to be financed, and that goes then to the General Assembly because there is a special budget committee, the ACABQ, the Advisory Board, and you know the structure of the UN so you know how it works. Pérez de Cuéllar and I

were in agreement. We really tried to work closely on this to finance it through the system, but the Americans said, "No." And then it became like that, so we had to raise money. To my surprise, my job there, in addition to being weapons specialist, I was now turning into an Arabist, specialist on the Middle East, and I had to add "fund-raiser" to the list. So, I became a fund-raiser to finance the Commission, to pay back the loan to the Secretary-General. You know, it was really, really tough.

JK: So, UNSCOM was supported through voluntary contributions?

RE: Yes. Plus, there was originally the Iraqi money, so-called "frozen assets," not unlimited, but governments were allowed to take frozen assets according to the Chapter VII resolutions.

JK: "allowed to?"

RE: Yes, because you have only private claims. If you have frozen, say, a hundred million dollars of Iraqi oil money in your bank, probably they have debts for three hundred million. The debtors don't accept that the government is taking their money because they claimed to get paid. Well, no government made use of that more than the United States, so it de-froze over the years totally two hundred million dollars, sixty million was released for us, which was not, far from it, enough. But anyhow, they gave us some breathing space, and we didn't get it in one go. I mean they had to squeeze us. Of course, the other amount was given to compensate the victims, and so on, but we got sixty.

So, I had to go to Saudi Arabia, to Kuwait, to Japan, Germany, to beg for money, beg for in-kind, beg for everything.

JK: I had no idea that was going on.

RE: I spent so much time on fund-raising. At one stage, we were down to two months' money when I signed, I remember, say, ten new six-month contracts with people, and I told my wife, "There were no banks." I was the only one. I was with my name putting the little house we have in Sweden and other little things up…

JK: … for collateral?

RE: … a sort of collateral, yes. My name was the only thing. I signed six-month contracts, because we couldn't stop because we had two months' money. It was scandalous. Pickering at that time told me: "We will never let you down. In the end, we will come in." But when we really came to them, we did not get any cash from the United States cash, its own money. Yes, we got the frozen money. But I was up at the Congress and at that time they were so supportive. Everyone said, "If the administration comes to ask for money, we will give it to you." But that is just talk. When it comes to reality, it is so difficult. It doesn't work.

I had assurances from people like Lee Hamilton, who was Chairman of the House Foreign Relations Committee and Senator Claiborne Pell, but of course there are many appropriations committees and all sorts of delays. However, after a while I started to appreciate this solution, in spite of the hardship, of course, for the chairman to get the

money. It created a freedom from the Secretary-General and the Secretariat. It didn't matter to us when Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar was there, but when Boutros-Ghali came in, to have him to control it, and to decide how much resources you should have, would have seriously compromised our progress, given the operation, the structure, the type of personnel, geographical distribution in recruitment. Appropriate money always came loaded with conditions.

JK: So, ultimately the decision to keep the funding autonomous ended up being a good idea.

RE: It was a productive decision, for the strength of the Commission, its independence. And that's why UNSCOM didn't turn into something like one of the wishy-washy UN operations. Some are very good. In this case, it became a pure Security Council operation. The General Assembly and the membership at large had no influence on it. It operated only under the Council and its political influence.

JK: OK. So, with Boutros-Ghali, then as Secretary-General, an Egyptian, from the Middle East. What was his support of what you were doing?

RE: He has a quick mind and I admire him very much. I had good talks with him, but he just kept his hands off. That meant you didn't get any support either, of course. And we didn't get any support of the administrative staff. We still had to struggle for everything, to get just a room. These were bad working conditions. And we paid rent for the rooms. We had administrative personnel provided by the Secretariat. We paid their

salaries, of course, with money that I had to raise. So, it was no real love, and the system didn't love us. They didn't like the way we were approaching the things. They said, "Now Ekéus has been traveling up and down and now Ekéus is back with the bombing," etc. The language they used against us was unpleasant. So, I was disappointed with the way the Secretariat behaved. It takes a long time to get their trust. They are fundamentally UN loyalists, I mean in the extreme.

Boutros-Ghali himself was not at cross-purposes with us. He never acted against us, the Secretary-General. And he focused on the task of implementing the Food for Oil mechanism, which he did well. It took a lot of pressure off us. He sometimes helped us by putting pressure on his staff. Maybe I should mention that he often said that he had a very skeptical view about Iraq and especially about Saddam Hussein. He didn't believe they would comply or give in to us. He was probably right in his skepticism. Another fact is that when the Iraqis complained to the world, and to him, about UNSCOM and about me specifically, he never came back and put any pressure on us. So in a sense I had a very fair relationship with him. He made some moves in the beginning to get the sort of obligatory reporting to him through his system, which I refused. But then we established a voluntary system. I asked to see him regularly, even if nothing special was happening. If some major problem were coming up in a complicated operation, which could lead to Council action, I gave him a special briefing. But he wasn't terribly interested. So, it was good. We kept our distance. The relationship was independent.

JK: OK. All of this is extremely helpful to understand the dynamics, and of course all of this is still going on today, so it's important to understand.

RE: But it's a different Secretary-General now from then.

JK: Now, were you still serving when Kofi Annan came in?

RE: Oh, yes. I was serving until July.

JK: You were the Executive Chairman until July 1st, right?

RE: 1997.

JK: 1997. So, what was the difference in the change from Boutros-Ghali, then, to Kofi Annan?

RE: Well, it was, I think, a much more cordial relationship, a better understanding, it was a different ambience. There was better support for our modest requests for support of a material character, like getting increased floor area for instance.

[interrupted]

RE: ... just to conclude the relationship with the new Secretary General, was that he and I together worked to get Richard Butler as my replacement. Of course, I had been aiming at him for a long time. I knew his time was ending as Ambassador of Australia to the UN. We were friends; we had worked together in Geneva. He was Australia's permanent representative to the Conference on Disarmament, so we became friends there

in the 1980s. We kept in touch over the years. We worked closely in the Canberra Commission. I had known his qualities, skills; I know that people maybe were somewhat more concerned about his personality, so I worked very closely with Kofi Annan to select Butler. Otherwise, I would probably have stayed, because I didn't want to leave the job without having a strong candidate for a replacement. On the other side, you know, you shouldn't over-stay your welcome.

JK: How many years were you there?

RE: Six – more than six years. Six and a half years. During the last two years, I was looking for a replacement. My family was fed up, and they begged me to leave. I felt it was time for me to go. I wanted to do it. I think we were successful. On the other side, you see people in all sorts of functions believing that they are indispensable. And if you start to believe you are indispensable, I mean, that's the first sign that you are no longer indispensable! So, I was very eager to hand it over. But I didn't want to leave without being replaced. The Commission was a creation almost of my own. We started with nothing, including knowledge of how to get the legal advice, how to get money, to get the whole big operation going, airplanes, everything. So, I didn't want to just let it collapse. I was anxious that there should be a good solid, person who could withstand the enormous political heat in the future.

JK: Perhaps this is a delicate question, and I don't know how much you want to say about it, but your two personalities are quite different, though. I mean, I know that I have met Richard Butler on various occasions. I think he is an extremely bright man…

RE: Yes, he is.

JK: … but you do have different personalities, and I mean, he was even asked about this in the press: "How will your more aggressive personality ever replace the more diplomatic character of Rolf Ekéus?" I don't know if you can comment on that.

RE: No, no. I didn't see the difference that much, maybe, but because I would say our relations were extraordinarily friendly. We never had any confrontations over the years. We worked on the same side on so many issues, the nuclear test ban especially. But, I felt what was more important was the character and the capability to withstand the pressure. Of course, one must be different; you shouldn't have a clone.

JK: You can't really have a clone.

RE: You should be changed. It's good. An organization, a company, anything, has to change. So, that was not my worry. My wish was to have a strong Commission and a technical mission after I left. But the ways to do it should be left to the next person.

JK: In your approach and what you have described, I mean, you did take a very strong stand in many cases. But it seemed as though you did it in a way that was low profile. Was that intentional?

RE: Actually, I think it was unnecessary to create a deadlock. First of all, the face-saving aspect we were very concerned about. Not to put anyone, especially not the Iraqis, unnecessarily in a confrontational position. Sometimes you had to use harsh language with Saddam. That's what he understands. It was a firm language, but still you should show respect, especially for the individuals, because that makes it easier for you. But equally delicate was continually dealing with the members of the Council, especially the Permanent Five. You had to be very, very careful and think through, "What is their real concern?" And try to avoid complicated episodes.

Of course I told you before about briefing the President of the Council, which was a policy I used to see to it that all the time the non-permanent members had a chance to be informed. Because if they saw that they were not listened to, they could react negatively, as critics and skeptics. So, you had to spend a lot of time on information dissemination. And that's why I traveled quite often to the capitals, not only to get money. There you had to be alert about their sensitivities and extremely cautious and supportive of their region and the other countries. But you had, of course, to be delicate in Paris, Moscow, London, and maybe especially with the Chinese, to listen carefully to what they were saying. That was, I would say, the diplomatic side of my profession. There were so many elements you had to deal with, give a lot of attention to, and never be arrogant, keep them informed, always be careful, explain, explain.

The second, of course, was the managerial, the heavy managerial demands.

JK: You had started out by saying in the beginning of the interview that it was envisioned that this would be a technical operation, that you would be overseeing the

technical inspection. Now it sounds as though it turned into as much a political job as well as the technical, and that was not envisioned.

RE: No, it wasn't. The idea came out nicely when Richard Butler replaced me, because I think he met Tariq Aziz on his first day at the office. Tariq Aziz was visiting New York. Richard told him, "Well, in my job I will not be political," which I felt was somewhat critical of me. "It will be a technical job," – and of course I smiled a little, and thought "Wait and see if the job is purely technical!" If you read the resolutions of the Security Council, you will see that they are silent on the political side. But the first time – and that was a couple of days after he took the office – and inspection team was blocked on the road to a facility it wanted to inspect, that was the end of the purely technical. When you have to make a decision how to handle such a situation, you have to raise it to a political level; you have to hold on to the principle that "We have the right to entrance." And as you can't use force yourself, you must find other ways and means to enter the facility. Only by political means can you get entrance. The solution to the problem ends up being political.

[end of side #2]

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Jean Krasno: Last time in our interview we discussed many of the political relationships that UNSCOM had with different entities, and so today I wanted to really discuss more with you the functions of UNSCOM itself and more the technical aspects of it. You were mandated to investigate nuclear capacities, chemical weapons, biological weapons, and the missile delivery systems, which required a very broad scope of expertise – I was wondering if you could explain how you selected your team, and whether you did so solely on expertise or whether there was a balanced nationality?

Rolf Ekéus: Yes – this was perceived, as we talked last time, as first of all a technical job. We expected Iraq to cooperate and it was more a matter of verifying Iraq's declarations. From the outset, therefore, it was to focus on expertise, weapons expertise. We needed to have people who could assist, who had experience in such esoteric things as biological weapons, a very rare commodity as most countries had long since given up such programs or never had started such programs. In the chemical weapons area, there were more experts than in the biological, because the chemical weapons threat has been a more present threat, so many countries, not necessarily had chemical weapons, but many, say, the Scandinavian countries, had defense knowledge, how to defend one's self, you know, the character of gas masks, and all sorts of things. So, there was a passive knowledge about chemical weapons. In both these areas, I recruited personnel whom I

had been familiar with from my old job, as I had served so many years as the chairman of the international negotiations on creating a convention on the ban of chemical weapons, the one which was ratified last year, which I am extremely happy about, the one great success for the international community. So, during this chairmanship I got to know not only the negotiating diplomats but also their support staffs, which were frequently people coming from laboratories, chemical weapons laboratories, involved in trying to protect their national systems from chemical weapons. And even if this was a relatively world-wide concern, most West European states had some expertise, Australia, New Zealand, North Americans and so on. The chemical weapons experts constitute a small club, so I know practically every existing weapons expert in this sense. And I know their personal characteristics.

For me, I recruited chemical weapons experts based on the skills and proven capability to work, which I knew about because I had worked with them as experts for many years. So, that was a relatively easy task. But of course, I tried to widen the geographical distribution to get as many nationalities as possible.

Biological was more difficult. There you had only a few countries with expertise. In these countries, including my own country, Sweden, there are a small number of biological weapons experts, specialized in the protection against biological weapons, but it is a thin layer. You can use one expert a couple of times, but they can't go on forever and when they leave it is difficult to replace them. So, that narrowed the geographic to some of the major countries – so, we had Americans, Germans, Brits, French, and some Scandinavians, Australians, and so on, but six or seven countries provided almost all of them. In some cases, countries may even had had biological programs they kept secret

and therefore they didn't want to show that they had experts, and they were not prepared to lend their expertise to us.

In the nuclear field, it was even more esoteric, of course, since nuclear weapons are fundamentally only known in the five nuclear weapons states. Access to weapons experts even more limited in the nuclear field. We did know – you and I knew – that other states have these same sorts of weapons, and I would, jokingly, tongue in cheek, approach these states and asked them to provide us with experts, but they of course were nonplussed and they answered, "We don't have any nuclear weapons experts."

JK: So, it would be politically impossible for them.

RE: It was impossible to have a geographical spread beyond the five. Of course, when the concern was the fissionable material, then it was a little broader; you can use experts from the IAEA safeguards regime. But in the hard-core weapons analysis, we were stuck with the five. The Chinese had one as a commissioner, but fundamentally we were limited to the four nuclear weapons states. In the missile area, it was even more exclusive because it was about long-range missiles. Therefore, there we had only some major powers, I would say, 'the' major powers, again, the US, the UK, France, Russia, and Germany. Germany because of its historic geographical role, and Germany also because the former East German army had access to SCUDs, SCUD missiles, which were the backbone of the Iraqi program. The Germans were the ones with the detailed knowledge of that type of missiles. But there, you were limited again geographically; you couldn't get any experts, not even in such an advanced country, say, like Italy or Sweden, you couldn't get the missile experts from any of these countries.

JK: Yes – and China?

RE: No, we asked China, but they didn't want to assist, because again they had to protect their programs. What happens is, when you invited the experts, it creates a fraternity, I mean, women and men working together on a daily basis. They may keep their national secrets for a month or two, but then they start to talk to each other, saying "At home, we did it like that," and they compare notes, and they create sort of their own exchange. I think I understand these countries that had some expertise but didn't want to have their experts involved because sooner or later it would spill out. That was the way we did that. Expertise was the absolute priority, geographical distribution only a secondary concern.

JK: How did the team actually function? You spoke about using some of these experts a few times – was there a core group that was consistent?

RE: Yes. If you take, now, first of all, Iraq's prohibited capabilities. UNSCOM started with Iraq's declarations and tried to verify them. As we talked about last time, very soon we detected that the declarations were all false. We established in our headquarters in New York a small core group in each one of the weapons areas. Concerning nuclear weapons especially, we had a smaller specialized group as the bulk of the work was carried out by the action team on nuclear weapons in Vienna, inside the IAEA. But we had close contact. Ours was more of a support than a specialized team. Otherwise, we created small groups of specialized people to work with the declarations;

analyze how much Iraq had achieved; search for information on foreign suppliers for the prohibited programs, a very difficult task; and finally, try, through me as chairman, to get in touch with governments to obtain as much intelligence information as possible on Iraq's weapons programs. At the same time, the experts identified each task that had to be investigated, on the basis of the documentation that they had assembled.

They started planning inspections in Iraq. These early inspections were of an *ad hoc* nature, which meant that each inspection team was composed with a specific task in mind. We had identified three, four, five, six, locations in Iraq that we wanted to inspect. The planning was focused on verifying Iraq's declarations, which meant checking on the data given to us (which was usually incorrect), using photography, very similar to high-aerial reconnaissance, which provided pictures and helped to give an understanding of the different facilities in Iraq and their locations.

[interrupted]

Then we recruited the experts. I was heavily involved in picking our own core groups. I knew most of the members of the core groups through my earlier work. Together we had a broad knowledge of what's out there. So, we recruited a team, normally led by one of the members of the core group, but not always, or of personalities in the weapons specialties. We designated the leader of the team early in the planning process. The leader was going to be working with the core group in New York, and also with the new data system. We created a data-handling system, thus assembling a body of information to serve the three core groups. They identified the problems and went to the chairman with proposals for inspections or other actions. Together we discussed and analyzed the merit of the proposal, and afterwards we put the team together. The

inspection team was put together on the basis of relevant skills. In the beginning, say, we wanted the chemical team to go to the notoriously well-known, well-bombed Muthanna, the big chemical weapons facility in Iraq. There you needed to have such things as chemical laboratory specialists who knew how to take samples and handle samples; you needed the weapons specialists who knew how to recognize a warhead or a bomb; you needed specialists on protection against gas; you needed a medical support team; and you needed an explosive ordnance specialist, I mean an ordnance specialist both for the bombs from the war campaign which were still unexploded and very dangerous *and* for the Iraqi munitions which were also there, and dangerous. You had to put various skills together, good planning and good persons who had good social skills. You *composed* a team, based on a target.

JK: OK. So there were times when you needed a specific kind of expertise?

RE: The teams were tailor-made for every mission, I would say. We contacted governments and asked them to provide us with experts, and we created a team of experts. In Bahrain, in the Gulf, we established a regional headquarters. We assembled the teams there, instead of taking them to New York, to do the planning. The team leader, after having been briefed, prepared and instructed in New York, went to Bahrain and assembled, briefed and trained the inspection team there. There were other experts also, like photographers, computer specialists who could penetrate computers. There were many professions and specialties represented in these teams, highly qualified. There, they organized their work, trained for certain activities, prepared themselves, tested the material which was given to us by governments, I mean the detection

equipment, all sorts of sensors for moving in dangerous areas, gas masks, protection suits, and so on. And then they were flown in to Baghdad. We had our own transport airplanes in Bahrain, two big planes which were ours, a C160 and later a C130. Bahrain was an area where we had the procurement for the operations inside in Iraq – you couldn't buy much in Iraq, so you had to buy it outside. The team was flown in to Iraq and there it was met by the local team we had there. We had a senior Swedish military officer, an admiral, who was organizing our Baghdad monitoring center which we built up gradually in Iraq.

JK: Who was the Swedish commander?

RE: It was Admiral Goran Wallen, who was my senior military advisor when I was leader of the Swedish delegation on the European Security Talks – there again I took someone whom I worked with and trusted – and he was the one who was in charge of local support. We had strong local support. First of all, helicopters, we had a number of helicopters, five helicopters in the end from Chile. In the beginning, there were three big German Sikorskis, CH-53s. These were later exchanged for five smaller helicopters. We had a helicopter crew of some 50 persons who were permanently based in Baghdad with the task of helping to transport the inspectors to the field, to make surprise or quick moves in support of inspection, and to be a platform for close-range photography. We had the U-2, high-range photographs and if we saw something odd on the U-2, we could send out a helicopter and take close-range photography. If it was still even more suspect, then the ground team could take care of it.

The helicopters also gave operational support to the inspections. They were used to survey large locations and in cases in which UNSCOM suspected that Iraq might try to withdraw important equipment out of the back door. We would put a helicopter in there to cover the area, and we were able to keep track of movements both inside and outside the area. UNSCOM's helicopter force was also used for other purposes, but these are the more typical examples.

In the center, we also built various laboratories, big chemical laboratories.

JK: In Baghdad?

RE: In Baghdad. Of course, they couldn't be super-big laboratories. When UNSCOM needed advanced laboratory work, it had to turn to larger laboratories outside of Iraq for that. There's the US, there is the UK, there is Finland, Norway, Sweden, each of them has large and effective big laboratories which helped the Commission with chemical analysis. But for early detection at the most notorious sites, we calibrated mobile laboratories that we put into the Baghdad monitoring center. We could calibrate them to identify most 'common' precursors and chemical warfare agents. In the monitoring center, we had a laboratory team assisting the inspectors so they could take chemical samples from the field during the day and go back in the afternoon and put the chemicals into the laboratory. The inspection team could thus obtain early leads. That helped it in planning for the following day. In the center we also built what we called an operations room, which was a big round room with television screens all over, and they were linked up to cameras that we put out at the different facilities we wanted to survey in a continuous and systematic fashion. Thus, in real-time we could watch locations which

we did not have time to inspect. We just checked on them so we would not need to go back visiting, which expanded the capability of the sample enormously. With U-2 oversights, with the sensors on the cameras, with chemical sensors outside suspected production facilities, our monitoring team could cover practically all of Iraq's suspect activities. Once a week the chemical filters were collected and inspected. It was possible to detect quickly if prohibited items were being produced at the location. This was an effective system.

The monitoring and verification teams in Baghdad were led by Admiral Goran Wallen. We also had medical support there; we had everything needed for a first-class operation. It was a beautiful outfit. We had physical training, and so on, for people participating in sports or which were for relaxation, recreation, and rest.

JK: Did you have security guards?

RE: We had guards. Of course, this was heavily protected.

JK: And they were armed?

RE: Yes. We had UN guards. Outside was a layer of Iraqi guards. So there were two layers. We had our guards, and they had their guards. We were also subject to intensive eavesdropping from Iraq, so therefore we built inside the building protected facilities, especially for sound. I don't want to go in depth in that, but we made it difficult for the Iraqi intelligence service to listen in. Not the whole building could be protected, but you know, we build special 'speak' rooms inside, where you could speak freely. The

telephone communications were also secure. We went to great lengths to protect ourselves against counter-intelligence. All these things were run by Admiral Wallen. He oversaw the inspection teams, but the team leader was the one in charge of the actual inspections.

The inspectors went out in the field, to investigate, look and take samples. Each team normally carried out a series of site inspections. They stayed a week, ten days, two weeks, normally in that time span. One to two weeks, maybe ten days was the norm. Then the team returned to Bahrain to write its report in a more secure location. The report's final conclusions were the responsibility of the leader of the team, but the idea was that it should be jointly produced. If the team members couldn't agree, it was still the leader who signed the report and wrote the conclusions, but those who disagreed had the right to put their disagreement in the report – not only the right, but it was an *obligation*, we tried to make an obligation for that. Then the team leader returned to New York and reported to the Chairman and the core staff in the UNSCOM headquarters. They got more information and that helped plan for the next mission. That was the rotation.

JK: Now, you brought in a lot of information, which I want to pick up at various different times, but I wanted to build on what you were saying in terms of the various countries contributing expertise, technology, and so forth. What kinds of sources of intelligence did you have, in terms of what governments provided for you, and eventually what UNSCOM was able to provide for itself?

RE: One of the first things that I did when I took the post was to write to a large number of governments selected based on the criteria of advancement in weapons area, of proximity to Iraq, or with traditional ties to Iraq, and ask them to provide us with all the information they had regarding Iraq's prohibited weapons programs. In the first round, only one country answered, and that was the United States of America. However, over time, the Commission succeeded in establishing its credibility, so we got more information. And what I mean by credibility was ability to protect information given to us, so we were not suspected of leaking information to other governments or to the media, or anything; it was important to protect the information.

Any 'mistake' there would harm us because the source would immediately dry up. So that put us into some serious confrontation, say, with the American Congress, which wanted the Commission to publish the names of the supplying governments or companies, suppliers of Iraq's prohibited programs, probably to punish them. Our practice was to share information picked up in the field about deliveries to Iraq's weapons program with the government of the country from which the delivery had taken place. We asked that government to give us access to the management of that company so we could interview them and investigate the character of their other deals. They may have delivered only one machine, but there could also have been a matter of hundreds of machines. If the government was nervous about allowing our specialists to carry out the investigation of the company—they were too good, probably – they could undertake the investigation themselves and respond to the Commission. That could be good information, but it was clear that it was frequently filtered. Our policy was to take information on suppliers, keep it for ourselves and only share it with the government

concerned. In that sense, we created a highly protected system, a very professional handling of all the data.

We also obtained other information, such as reports from defectors, photographic information, and with time, we established a good working relationship with many organizations, which could help with certain information. The long-term effect was, however, that the Commission became more knowledgeable about Iraq than any individual government or any individual intelligence agency. None of them could match our knowledge. That was because we had assembled a great deal of information in a comprehensive manner and combined it with the unique material obtained through the inspection activities.

JK: How long did it take to be able to build that, though?

RE: It took several years. We started in 1991; we received some intelligence information from governments had, after the initial dry run. But most of that information was such that it was colored by the providing government's wish to point us in a certain direction, or it was carefully packaged, not anything like raw data, but prepared data, which was often biased by a particular political agenda by the supporting government. We had to look through these things and handle the information provided it in the most responsible fashion. But with time, governments started to understand that our experts had the capability to assess the detailed information, they could put the details, the small pieces of information, into the larger context and see the whole picture – really like being given a piece of a puzzle, you can't understand what it means if you just pick it up, but if you put it into the bigger picture you suddenly see what it means.

Our people had the full puzzle to work on, so these bits and pieces had a meaning to us, even small things had a meaning to us. Say, one statement by a defector, off-hand, could be extremely important. A name about the person operating in Iraq, who said, you know 'Mohammed Adbel Sahaf' or whoever it was, had no meaning for an investigator without access to the big picture. But for the Commission it could become a very decisive piece of information, only the name, nothing else, in the broader context.

We organized the Commission in two major units, one which dealt with 'information collection and analysis,' formally called the Information and Assessment Unit (IAU), which was tasked with analyzing the huge amount of data obtained through inspections or through supporting governments. Then we had an 'operations unit' which planned and prepared the operations. The IAU had to identify missing information and helped me in tasking the operations unit to obtain that information. The beauty of it was that it was an extremely simple organization, and very effective, I mean, cost effective. We kept it to a minimum, and got maximum value.

JK: The next question I wanted to ask you is, how much was revealed through your system of investigation, and then how much was revealed through information sources, in other words, like the two sons-in-law who had defected and then provided information?

RE: Yes, and there is a third source, also. The Iraqi Ambassador to the UN often stated on TV and to the press that the Commission had not found anything on its own and everything it had obtained had been through the Iraqi government. This was not true. Well, Iraq gave us a little in the beginning: in the missile area, they declared only half of their actual holdings of SCUDs. The rest was detected by UNSCOM. Another part of

the Iraqi missile program was a secret program to produce SCUD-type missiles, which was disclosed by the UNSCOM inspectors in spite of Iraq's efforts to hide the program. In reality they declared only 25 percent of their real capability. The rest was discovered by the Commission.

JK: Yes – exactly, because then they had a whole secret program.

RE: Precisely. And they did that because it was known that Iraq had longer-range missiles, attacking Israel and Saudi Arabia, so it couldn't deny that. In the chemical field, Iraq was known as a notorious user of chemical weapons, so there Iraq declared a large amount of chemical weapons in its original declarations. They had to be changed then, of course, I would say some sixty percent of their real holdings were declared. That is quantity-wise, that was mustard gas and that was sarin, tabun, soman, nerve agents, and various sarin-mustard gases. But, they kept totally secret the VX program, this highly advanced nerve agent, which they didn't declare at all. So even there, their reports were faulty. In addition to the false declarations of chemical warfare agents, Iraq only reported a limited part of its chemical munitions, such as rockets. The missile warheads for chemical warfare were detected later.

That was the good news, so to speak. Now, we come to the bad news, which was that in biology, they denied having anything. And that was face-to-face, when they lied. Tariq Aziz, the Deputy Prime Minister at that time, flatly lied and said, "We have no biological weapons." So, that program was 100 percent secret. The Commission's expert detected and identified in 1994-95 a full-scale biological weapons program. And in 1996 the big production facilities were destroyed under the supervision of the

Commission. The same goes for the nuclear area. They said, "We have nothing, we have no nuclear weapons program, we have nothing whatsoever." And then, we cracked 100 percent, I would say, of the nuclear program, very early on, with very good support. So, that became known. The full-scale nuclear program consisted of uranium enrichment for weapons purposes. Enrichment through centrifuge was the best method, and was something they kept for the later stage. The EMIS, electromagnetic isotope separation method, was the one we detected first. Iraq used large calutrons for that. David Kay revealed this one. But they also worked on other enrichment methods, such as chemical enrichment, and they worked on, or tried at least, laser enrichment, but didn't get far with it. But still, it was an effort by them. That was gradually detected by us.

Then on the nuclear weapons warhead side, that was something we had known a little about, suspected, but that came from the breakthrough with Hussein Kamal's defection and the documents which were found. So, they tried to produce nuclear missiles, and the degree of advancement on that, and where the work had been done was disclosed in documents which were handed over to us after Kamal's defection, in August 1995.

JK: In August 1995, Kamal not only told you the information but also gave you documents?

RE: As a consequence of Hussein Kamal's defection, Iraq gave us information about the documents. They didn't give us the documents, but they led us to them. But that was a consequence. But you see, the magnitude of the defection work was done by the inspectors. Then we come to debate about what type of intelligence. We had some

defectors, who briefed the UNSCOM team in 1991, about where Iraq was hiding some important nuclear-related documentation, and it was in September or October, I think, our team went there to a very central location in Baghdad itself. Both Hans Blix and I were quite hesitant to launch that inspection because we understood it could be dangerous for our team. I made the final decision on sending the team and they found in this surprise inspection a huge amount of documents. You will recall they were locked in for several days by the Iraqi authorities who forcibly took some documents from them. In the end Iraq handed back some, but it was clear they had retained some. That was when we got what we called the 'smoking gun.' We got the drawings about the nuclear weapons design; we got the data on the efforts to enrich uranium. This was a major coup by the inspectors, but a coup based upon a tip-off. So, it's always difficult to quantify. But it was always us who took it, you know. We had to act to make anything happen. So, nothing could be done by just giving the information. We had to process the pieces, normally without the full information. We put it to our analytical team, working in labs, and then when we understood the context we tasked the operations people with the operation, and then they came back and had this great success.

To sum up, Iraq on its own declared a quarter of their missile program, 75 percent of the chemical weapons, zero in biological, zero in nuclear weapons did Iraq declare. The Iraqi government thought it could get away with all this.

JK: Now, Iraq was not building all these capabilities completely on its own, indigenously. I mean, they had help from other countries and expertise, over the years, from other countries. Some of this information is coming out in the press, little by little, that the Germans had helped, the French, the Chinese a little bit. There was some

indication that Brazil also had had some people there. How many countries were actually involved in this?

RE: A large number of countries, of course some to a very large extent. I would say governments, I mean countries, companies, specialists. Sometimes, in the beginning of the 1980s, during the Iran-Iraq war, the West was too generous by giving dangerous technology to Iraq. In that sense, there was a government responsibility. However, during the 1980s, they gradually tightened the controls, the West tightened its controls. Less came out of the Western countries.

JK: Is it possible to talk at this point to talk about what companies, or what countries were involved?

RE: No. I think it is still important that this is kept confidential because the country will otherwise not give us information. For example, if country "Y" knows that one of its biggest companies has been involved with Iraq, and if they report to us and we publish it, the US Congress may react by passing legislation against that company and the country will be 'starved,' so to say. So, the process was to trust us, that we would not spill the beans. It's like a journalist having to protect his source. If you reveal your source, you can never reuse that source, and not even just that source, but probably others will feel that they won't be protected by you. You will destroy yourself. We didn't want to self-destruct and that's why we adopted that policy which was unpopular sometimes. But our task was not to punish various people who had been involved in exports to Iraq's weapons programs. We had to find Iraq's weapons and destroy them.

JK: Yes – you needed more information. You mentioned that when you went in the beginning to do your inspections, that some capacities had actually been bombed during Desert Storm. I was wondering what had been actually destroyed during the Gulf War?

RE: Well, that was a big story by Iraq. They wanted to say that *everything* had been destroyed, so that they had nothing to declare. That was the standard answer even when we could prove that they had imported certain capabilities and asked, "Where are these? Where is this fermenter, where is this chemical reactor?" "No, no, no," they would respond. "That was destroyed in the bombings." That type of response was common. But there was one big facility known and that was the al-Muthanna chemical facility, and that was thoroughly bombed, and no doubt a number of chemical storage materials, drums filled with various chemical agents, were destroyed in the bombing. Lots of buildings, bunkers were destroyed. Most buildings that were known were destroyed. The problem was that the biological program was not known, so the whole huge biological weapons production facility was un-touched, it was not hit, not damaged from the bombing. If you go to the missile area, none of Iraq's missiles were hit, in spite of the fact that the missiles were the number one target of the bombing.

JK: How could that happen?

RE: We investigated that and in the end, it was clear that Iraq simply put the missiles on big trucks and kept them moving. In the daytime, they blended the trucks into the traffic. Even if a satellite could spot such a missile, it took time to signal and analyze the

imagery and to order an attack. By then the truck was many, many miles away. With the precision bombing, the US could not destroy huge areas, which was a blessing of course for people in the area. It was pinpoint bombing. So, therefore the US military and missile crews needed exact information. Everything mobile was missed, including huge mobile launchers with an enormous erector arm for lifting up the missile like that.

JK: But they could get it onto trucks and move it around?

RE: Well, they were on big, flat trucks, yes. So, they were highly visible, obviously, but because of the movement, they were not hit.

JK: They were never hit.

RE: No. What was hit, then, were stationary facilities, especially chemical and production facilities, which were known.

JK: Now, you mentioned that they denied that they had any nuclear facilities.

RE: Any nuclear weapons *program*.

JK: Nuclear weapons program, right, right.

RE: They had the nuclear facility at al-Tuwaitha for civilian research, but not for nuclear weapons.

JK: Right. Were any of the nuclear weapons research facilities hit in the bombing?

RE: Yes, the al-Tuwaitha site, which is huge, like Muthannna, and notorious. It was what Israel attacked in 1982. Israel hit one of Iraq's reactors. We now have detected that this reactor indeed had served for weapons purposes, so now in hindsight we must, I guess, thank the Israelis; if you remember the large outcry, at the time. But that attack meant an important setback for the Iraqi weapons program.

[end of side 1]

[side 2]

RE: . . . this is one that we called the 'twin buildings.' Our photo-analyst would look at the outline of a location where we knew that nuclear enrichment had taken place and where the inspectors had been. If he saw a similar configuration at some other place in the country, we would send our teams there, and in at least some cases, it was indeed a twin facility. Iraq sometimes built two facilities of the same type. They had, from one country, for instance Yugoslavia—Yugoslavian construction workers built facilities, not for the weapons program but for enrichment use, or for electrical supplements, and then they said, "bye-bye" to the Yugoslavian workers. Iraq then constructed a similar building, they copied it, and there you got the twin facility unknown to the outside world. We had a number of such successes. However, the Iraqis learned after a while to camouflage the facilities and this made it more difficult for the inspectors.

So, that was only a partial success – more important was again the analytical work. You had to figure out where people had been working before. If Salman Pak were a suspected weapons laboratory, for instance, personnel having worked there were of interest to our analysts.

JK: OK – there were records of their employment?

RE: Yes. The Commission set up certain criteria defining what Iraq had to declare for us. We would ask, for example, "Do you have any places where you have inhalation chambers, or animal cages?" Iraq would declare, "We have this place, Al-Hakam." And so we went there, and we found various pieces of suspicious equipment and indeed animal cages. So, we asked them, "What were you doing?" And the answer: "Well, we are producing chicken feed."

JK: Chicken feed?

RE: Chicken feed, yes. And it was clear that they had done that. But it was a suspect place, and it was especially suspect because it was so remote, I mean, you put dangerous production in remote places from population areas. And it was double fenced. We were always interested in double-fenced locations. If it had a double fence and was protected by watchtowers and guards, there would be reason for suspicion.

JK: So, the U-2 photographs would pick that up?

RE: Yes. So, our analysts, whenever they saw a double-fence, immediately they would circle that location and then we would start to do inspections. We often began by sending a helicopter, and on occasion the aerial inspector would say, "Well, this is a normal military barrack." But it could also be something else. I mean, a chicken feed plant, highly protected by towers, double-fence, distant from everything? You know, if you produce chicken feed, you have to transport it to reach the farmers who would use it, and so on. A remote location was suspect, but we could do nothing about that until our analysts started to get proof of their production. Then, we came back, looked again, and then we could see that the animal cages were big, probably for monkeys, and you don't use such cages if you produce a little feed, I mean, it was for testing larger animals; they must have been testing weapons on them.

JK: Were the animals in the cages?

RE: There were some cages where there were animals left, but fundamentally the size and the structure of the cages were interesting. Then, we found – I was myself involved – when we asked for the drawings of the building, the Iraqis gave us drawings of the walls and the ceiling and the floor, but the middle under the ceiling was missing and they said, "We have lost that part; it has disappeared." What is telling in a biological facility is the ventilation system, which has to be highly specialized, a very advanced system which could trap practically every bacteria and every sort of virus from spilling out into the airways. Because if you brew micro-organisms, you must ventilate. You need oxygen in the room, but you also need to release it – you can't just take in air, you must release it – and without ventilation you release highly toxic material. You must have advanced

filters, and that means an advanced ventilation system. So what was missing from the drawings was that part of the building which contained the ventilation system. I told myself that this must be a biological weapons facility, because it couldn't be a coincidence that all of the parts of the building were represented with the exception of the ventilation system.

We detected separately that Iraq had imported advanced filters for ventilation, HEPA-filters. I led the investigation at that time. So I said, "Very costly, these filters." The Iraqis said, "Well, we have rules that all our farmers should have these filters because of the smell from the cows." The filters were so expensive, however, that the standard farmer couldn't afford to have one filter. So, all the lies – the Iraqis were snaring themselves with lies, beginning with the stories of chicken feed. They even showed us chickens at Al-Hakam, which were just brought there, I guess. They took journalists out there, media people (always very impressed with these things), CNN and others, to look at the chickens. The media then reported that the Commission was ridiculous. It was just a chicken farm and the inspectors were accusing these poor innocent Iraqis for weapons production. However, we would with time prove that Al-Hakam was the world's largest biological weapons production facility, containing inhalation chambers, and the particulars for testing, i.e., cages for animals and other things, and the equipment for biological weapons, fermenters and so on.

We gained a great deal of information from defectors. But many of them were notoriously weak in reading maps. There were sometimes extreme difficulties getting an exact location from a defector. He would say, "We traveled by road, and then we turned left and then we went there. "How long did you travel?" "Well, two hundred meters, maybe a thousand meters." It was often very difficult

JK: Did paperwork help you? Was there a paper trail?

RE: Paperwork was decisive. Very, very important. As I said, in the nuclear field, of course, papers are the practice, in the chemical also. For instance, the VX, we were cracking the program in a most interesting way. During the bombing of al-Muthanna, there was a huge bunker, you know, a concrete bunker, which did not blow up but collapsed. Iraq had tried to clean up all of the facilities after the bombing, but this bunker was too dangerous. There was unexploded ordnance there, bombs and so on. An inspection team went in there in autumn 1996, and entered this bunker. We had the construction engineers, structural engineers with us who went in at great risk because it could have collapsed further. There were broken pillars. It was already collapsed. Digging cautiously into the bombed bunker, it took days for the engineers to enter. And when they came into the inner sanctum, there was the office of the former Director of al-Muthanna. There was a safe which the team managed to drag out of the bunker, again with the help of the structural engineers – it was highly dangerous. So, the inspectors brought out the safe and broke it open. Inside they found reports about the VX production, and the purchase of materials, the precursors for the VX. Iraq by then had only admitted 25 grams of laboratory production of VX. But thanks to the new findings, we could show proof that Iraq had produced 4000 kilos of VX. They had said, "Twenty-five grams of it. We admit that." But 4000 kilos?

Then of course, we detected later on that they had imported 600,000 kilos of VX precursor. VX is the most poisonous of the nerve agents. 600,000 kilos, if you process it for weapons, it ends up as 200,000 kilos of VX warfare agents. Iraq refused to admit that

they had obtained it, or they said it had been destroyed, or bombed, or "We don't know where it is." The disappearance of the VX is still a point of contention with Iraq today.

JK: Today, still as of 1998, we have that clash.

RE: That was just one example of the importance of the paper trail, these fantastic, courageous, innovative things. The man who led that operation is a Dutch man, a Dutch colonel. Up to that point he had been working all his life in laboratories, but suddenly he has to risk his life, risk death. But he couldn't ask someone else; he had to enter the bunker himself with the structural engineer and the explosive ordnance people. These are heroes.

JK: Absolutely. You had mentioned that Iraq was moving missiles around by trucks and so forth. Did they move chemical materials for weapons around?

RE: Yes. We don't know – we haven't got absolute proof for that, but that is our operational theory, that they keep things in a mobile state.

JK: You had come to Yale on two occasions this past fall, and I was there during your presentation. I believe, if I have it correct, that you had mentioned that Iraq was moving these capabilities around, and I think you mentioned that in one case it was suspected that they had been doing it on an ice-cream truck.

RE: Well, it's serious. Not one, but many. What was the company name on the trucks? I have forgotten now. It was a special name, which was painted on the side. There were convoys of them.

JK: Convoys of them? What were they moving and how did you discover that?

RE: Well, we received information from various sources in helping us to identify that, and also the U2-photography was helpful. On the route, too, you could get U2-pictures. But you couldn't catch the trucks because they were not there by the time you arrived. I recall we managed in the end, this being 1997, to catch some of these trucks and investigate them.

JK: Were they carrying chemicals?

RE: At that time they were not, but they probably had been.

JK: You had mentioned at the time that the inspectors had discovered some important papers and then were kept from leaving the parking lot. That was covered in the media. At another time, I believe earlier in June of 1991, Iraq again tried to conceal some of its assets and resorted to intimidation, firing warning shots. Where did that take place, and what was going on?

RE: I think it was Abu-Ghurayb. That was of course David Kay's great moment.

JK: What was going on there?

RE: The inspectors came to a military installation and they were blocked at the entrance. We have some tapes about that. Two inspectors climbed the water tower at the entrance; UNSCOM now has the U-2, but this was the first of the 'over-head' inspections. They were looking down, and they saw the big clouds of sand when the convoy of big trucks were leaving the compound through the back door.

JK: So, that's what they had seen.

RE: So, they reported to the team leader David Kay and the team went around the facility. They were not allowed to enter the facility, as I said. The team went around and out on the steppe to catch up with the trucks that had carried big calutrons.

JK: Oh, and that was the calutrons?

RE: Yes, and the inspectors took good photos of them also. But then the soldiers of the Republican Guard driving the convoy jumped out of the trucks and started shooting. I followed that, from second to second. I sat on the thirtieth or thirty-first floor in UN headquarters in New York. We had a satellite dish with a tape, so David Kay could describe the events like a soccer referee, what was going on: "They are going away, we are going after them; now they are shooting," and that type of thing. Of course, I ordered our team to stop and withdraw, and reported immediately to the Security Council the same morning. This event started at two o'clock in the morning New York time, I

remember that slowly the sun was rising. It was June so it came up quite early. We could show pictures to the Security Council of the convoys and the Iraqi ambassador, al-Anbari said that the trucks were carrying agricultural equipment. Later on we caught the convoy and it carried calutrons, not agricultural equipment – but that was some three, four weeks later, when we managed to catch them. On that occasion, the Council sent me to Baghdad to warn the Iraqi government for the first time of the serious consequences because of that situation.

I met Mr. Hussein Kamal for the first time on that mission. I was leading a mission accompanied by Hans Blix who was the Director of the IAEA, and Yasushi Akashi, who was then Under-Secretary for Disarmament.

JK: Now, eventually you destroyed certain capabilities. How did you decide what to destroy, and how did you go about doing that?

RE: We prepared a program for destruction. It was no problem with weapons and munitions. You either cut it or you blow it up. It depends a little on where it is. The big problem was the artillery rockets filled with chemical agents. We found huge amounts in the south where Iraq had stored them. High-quality munitions were loaded on trucks and brought up to Muthanna, Iraq's largest chemical weapons production site. In Muthanna, we built two destruction facilities. One incinerator where we burnt mustard agent, at high temperatures. It sounds simple but it is a complicated job. If you do it wrong, it produces emissions, which are very dangerous. The incineration has to be totally controlled and it was a gigantic factory. Another way to destroy chemical warfare agents was through chemical manipulation, that method was for the nerve agents. We took

Iraq's production facility and turned it into a destruction facility, which was an elegant solution. We brought the weapons to Muthanna, emptied them, took care of the poison gas, and then destroyed them. So, it depends on what you are dealing with. With chemical weapons it was a great success.

You will recall that the Russians and the Americans now have great difficulties in implementing the chemical weapons convention. Iraq did not have as large quantities as these two powers, maybe a tenth or a twentieth of the Russian stocks. In Russia, they still have not managed to accomplish much destruction of chemical weapons. By comparison, we were able to destroy a considerable quantity of chemical weapons in just three years. So it was not bad.

Chemical reactors were destroyed by cutting. Particularly if the reactors were the glass-lined type, it was possible to cut them so that they could not be repaired because the pressure and demands are such. Buildings we blew up, using high explosives. The same goes for the fermenters, or you crush them. A lot of weapons, you just line them up on the ground, assure yourself that there are no explosives in them, and you run over the weapons with a heavy Caterpillar or something like that. You can't take destroy munitions individually; it takes too long a time. It is an enormous amount of effort.

JK: What about the nuclear weapons?

RE: Iraq had retained highly enriched uranium, corresponding to one nuclear device of say thirty or forty kilos. We removed the uranium from the country. It was a major operation.

JK: Oh, you took it out?

RE: Yes, we had to have an American contractor pack it and then we did something historical, we flew it out. Normally you don't transport highly dangerous nuclear material in that way. We didn't ask anyone for permission. We told ourselves, "This isn't proscribed, so, I hope, we won't be sued." We had to contract someone who would dare to fly that stuff. So, we contracted someone who desperately needed the money, and that was the Ukraine. The company, which was specialized in heavy air transport, was called 'Touch and Go.'

JK: That was the real name?

RE: Yes – 'Touch and Go.' They had rented or leased a big Russian transport plane – gigantic. It was a big Antonov, an enormous plane. So, they flew in. I was there at the Habaniah airbase when the plane landed. I oversaw the loading of the nuclear material, very well-pack stuff, and then they flew it to Russia. The Russians took care of the material, under IAEA authority. Other quantities of low-grade uranium were taken care of locally.

JK: It wasn't highly enriched.

RE: They had a big production facility which was also destroyed and blown up.

JK: That was blown up. And the calutrons, what happened to those?

RE: They were cut. I think we cut them. They were so heavy, they were big, heavy.

JK: And centrifuges?

RE: Centrifuges were found in bits and pieces, and we tried to destroy them, yes. Iraq tried to hide a lot, or manipulate the amount. That was the difficult part, to count the number of items in the nuclear area, because Iraq had melted so many things. Iraq destroyed many missiles secretly. The missiles were often exploded and put in the scrap-yard, so we could count the remnants of engines. In the nuclear field, Iraq had melted weapons components, at least so they say. Melted metal is difficult to identify. That is why melting makes verification much more difficult.

JK: What I wanted to clarify in what you're getting in to now, is that you, or UNSCOM, destroyed some things yourselves, and you were directly involved in it, but then Iraq destroyed some other things.

RE: The practical implementation was that Iraq normally carried out the actual destruction so UNSCOM didn't need to bring in heavy equipment such as Caterpillars to crush the munitions. Even the super-gun had to be cut.

JK: So, they did the work and you sort of supervised.

RE: Yes, in running the big destruction facilities, the management was ours, but the workers were Iraqis.

JK: And in the case of the melting?

RE: No, that was the secret destruction that Iraq did. The secrecy was our problem. In the end, we managed to find out almost everything Iraq had been buying. Also most of what they had produced was quantified. But the problem is to account for where these items are now. Most of the prohibited items we destroyed ourselves or Iraqi personnel under our supervision destroyed them. But then, this large chunk of imported items remains, and Iraq says, "They don't exist, we destroyed them secretly, in 1991 or 1992." Say, the missiles they concealed, they destroyed some of them secretly instead of giving them to us. They kept them and then when they were on the verge of being detected, they destroyed them. And then later on they told us, "Well, all of the non-declared missiles are in the scrap-yard." They didn't want us to go there because an investigation of how many missiles were secretly destroyed would show UNSCOM how many were concealed. It took us years to uncover it.

JK: Now, you were the Executive Chairman of UNSCOM for a number of years, and just handed over in July 1997, I believe. So, during your tenure, how satisfied were you, you were beginning to talk about that, that the capacities were destroyed. Now, if I understand you correctly, you were pretty satisfied that the nuclear weapons capability was destroyed.

RE: Yes. Everything, I would say, on the enrichment side.

JK: Everything on the enrichment side.

RE: We are still concerned about the warhead side, the warhead work. Iraq had explosive devices, and they had learned the techniques of building implosion devices. I am personally nervous about the account that they have given on this. They *had* components of nuclear warheads, and you ask, "There must be remnants," physically it can't disappear. Iraq explained that they had melted the evidence and it was therefore unrecognizable, and then what can you do? Of course, you wanted to see the documents containing the instruction to destroy, and the document containing the report that it has been destroyed, which are meticulously registered by Iraq. Even when they take out a pencil from the storeroom, they have to track this in inventory. I this case, they said, "Oral instruction, no paperwork remains." It is a lie obviously. So, that means if they carried out the destruction, they can show us the records; if they haven't destroyed it, of course, they have no records. So, these are the outstanding issues with us. But anyhow, the IAEA says that as Iraq has no material, it cannot in any event make any more bombs, even if they managed to keep some of the designs.

JK: Then on the missile part, how satisfied are you that they are accounted for?

RE: I think we accounted for practically all SCUDs, and all together 819 SCUDs were reported as imported from the former Soviet Union. We subtract from that number what was used against Iran, used against Saudi Arabia and Israel and so on, and what we

destroyed, and what was secretly destroyed. Recently we finalized that analysis, with the help of laboratories, to investigate which missile engines were fully operational and which were training engines as opposed to operational engines. Practically all have been accounted for.

JK: How many do they still have?

RE: The problem is that they produced 80 engines on their own as part of a secret program. When Iraq was forced to confess this secret production, they claimed that the quality was too poor for making operational missiles. Maybe the quality was poor, but maybe it was not. Again there, there are some serious question marks. We know that some of the missiles were flight-tested successfully, so at least in two or three cases, they were definitely lying when they said that they did not produce functioning missiles.

JK: And were those ground-to-air missiles, is that what they were?

RE: No, no. Ground-to-ground.

JK: Ground-to-ground.

RE: Surface-to-surface. Oh yes, all of them, because they are prohibited. Iraq is not prohibited to have surface-to-air missiles. Iraq had a number of SAM surface-to-air rockets. It is a classified number. What we did, suddenly our experts detected—our German expert—detected that Iraq was manipulating its surface-to-air defense missiles,

surface-to-air missiles, in order to make them surface-to-surface. I don't think you can take surface-to-air missiles of the type they had, they are too weak, to make them into real big missiles, but you can take components, and so to say, cannibalize. At that stage, we ordered Iraq to give us access to all their SAMs. So we now know exactly how many SAMs they have. Iraq had to present SAMs to us. We would tag each one of the SAMs, thus we have tagged every air defense missile in Iraq, which they are allowed to have. And then we regularly call up the numbers; we can say, "Let us see them." I don't want to give you any of the numbers, but you see – for example, we would ask to see 20 SAMs or 50, defined by the serial numbers on the tags.

Next month we are there, and at a given date and a given place, these 50 missiles should appear. UNSCOM missile experts would check them and make sure that they had not been taken out of the system. If Iraq is testing any of these, it has to notify UNSCOM. If they operate one of these, they also have to notify us. No testing is allowed to take place without our prior notification, so our experts who are now permanently based in Baghdad, can be present at the testing. In that sense, we have a complete control of their missile capacity. I, myself, devised the system of counting the SAMs.

However, Iraq has a legitimate right to defend itself. It should be enough that Iraq is able to defend its territory. So, they have the right to have SAMs and therefore we don't bother to know where they deploy the missiles. But UNSCOM reserves the right to count and verify that none of them has been taken out without our notification.

JK: Talking about the fact that it was never your mandate to completely eliminate Iraq's ability to defend itself, its territory. It has been argued that because there are other

countries in the region that either have nuclear or chemical weapons, or are developing them, that Iraq ought to be able to have those as well in its defense. Do you think that is an accurate argument?

RE: It is absolutely wrong. Iraq is special; it has used chemical weapons. No one else has, as far as I know, maybe some Iranians used them but it is unproven. Iraqi use has been proven in all the inspections, UN inspections, which took place during the Iran-Iraq War. No nation should retain these weapons, first of all. Biological weapons, chemical weapons, should be outlawed. No one should have them. Why should Iraq have them? And the same goes for nuclear weapons. Iraq signed the NPT anyhow, undertaking not to acquire the weapons. So, they have no legitimate right at all to nuclear weapons. Nor has Sweden, Germany, and the other non-nuclear weapons states which have signed the NPT.

So, of course these weapons should be destroyed and not be there. Iraq is strong enough to defend itself with conventional weapons. It may be that they had difficulty defeating the Iranians, because there are three times more Iranians, sixty million plus versus Iraq's twenty million plus. But still. That's Iraq's argument against us, that we took away the capability to balance Iran and thereby diminished Iraq's chance to defend itself. But it is obvious that Iraq was the aggressor, used chemical weapons against its own people, against its neighbors, it has attacked Kuwait This is a very small price for an aggressor, a defeated aggressor. What happened with Japan after World War II? Many leaders were executed, the country was forced to adopt a totally new constitution; it was occupied and it had to change its life; and *forever* it was not allowed to have its own military. There you talk of serious steps. Or Germany after the war, cut into pieces, in

the beginning in four cakes but then in two, divided, all the leaders there prosecuted and hanged, and a totally new regime. Everyone involved in the old regime blackballed. There you talk about defeat.

Here we asked Iraq just to give up weapons that no serious country should have. Take Germany: it doesn't have chemical weapons, biological weapons, nuclear weapons, or long-range missile. It is one of the most powerful countries in the world. Japan the same. Why should Iraq have weapons of mass destruction? And they were the aggressors. So I think it is one of the milder responses to an aggressor, it's really nothing, "Just please don't do anything stupid, but just be like any other country." That is our only modest requirement.

JK: Saddam Hussein has continually accused UNSCOM of spying, and to what degree did you and UNSCOM have control over who was selected for the team, or any control over where that information went?

RE: In the beginning we had almost total control. Either I selected a person I knew and had worked with before or this person knew some other reliable individuals who could be recruited. But since then we have carried out more then 220 major inspections and almost 100 more special inspection, and, in addition, thousands of monitoring inspections. Of course, with time you lose this personal handle on it because of the size of the operation, and new people are picked. But the recruitment was still based upon the internal knowledge. We expand, we will take some inexperienced person, he works with you, he gains experience, he proposes a new team member, he is well-behaved, he is interested, he is constructive, he is helpful, he is promoted, and becomes more and more

trusted after a while. If you are unhappy, you talk to the person and don't ask him to come back. You build all the time, it is organic almost. Of course, there can always in that process, creep in a person who is spying on UNSCOM and leaking to Iraq. I don't know if it happens, but that is possible. To prevent that, we have developed operational procedures, and very carefully done, which makes it practically impossible for anyone to successfully spy on our work. The procedure is that you just don't reveal the inspection target. The big secret before an inspection is carried out is the target. So what you do is you don't inform the inspection team about the target. Only the chairman and the mission planner together with the team leader are fully in the picture. Also, the analysts who make the recommendation would have an idea of the target. The chairman makes the final decision, "these places should be inspected." The international team is assembled in Bahrain. The training starts and the team members are not informed where they are to go; they are kept in the dark. When arrive in Baghdad, they still don't know the exact inspection target. They stay in the hotel, they do some preparation; the team assembles at 7:00 in the morning to go out in the field, members still don't know where they should go. Only the chief inspector and his chief of staff know. The Iraqi minders are swarming around them, waiting, and as soon as the team starts going, say, south, they can de-alert east, west, and north of Baghdad. The team comes to a fork in the road and it takes the left, Iraq can de-alert everything down the other branch, on the right. And then the Iraqis work their own computers to calculate, "Which are the facilities ahead? It looks like there are chemists on board, the chief inspector is a known chemical specialist." So, all chemical facilities down the road are alerted: "Hide everything. Do what you can – in a few minutes you will have these inspectors all over." That's how it works, but the team members still do not know. They know when they come up to the door. Then the chief

inspector says we are here, he gives directions to the team, shows them the pictures taken in advance, line drawings, etc. The surprise is important. It influences the choice of platform for overhead photography—U2 or helicopters.

JK: That is very interesting information. What I was asking was really the reverse, is that how were you sure that you were keeping the information that was gathered confidential?

RE: That was, as I say, very important for our credibility to get people to help us. If they leak from us, that would harm the work of the Commission, because governments would be nervous to deal with us, if say, some of those Russian or American – I don't say they are them, but I mean, those are two big countries – would try to obtain information from the Commission. Every inspector signs an undertaking, binding, when he gets his contract, that he is to report *only* to the chairman, and he has no right to inform his own government. He promises to take instructions only from UNSCOM, *not* from any government. If he wants to give data to his national authorities, it has to be with the approval of the chairman. The inspector may ask for permission, and then the chairman decides if he should do it. They can tell some 'war-stories,' as we used to say. "I did that, I did that," you know, how the team operated.

But if he is giving away, for example, the name or number of companies they found on prohibited machines, this is breaking the rules. The government concerned can, however, approach us, and ask for permission. We give out data to those governments that have, I would say, bona fide interests, for instance, to find ways to help us. Or a government that just wants to know whether one of their companies has been involved in

illegal activities, you answer negatively, "No, none of your companies were involved." So that is also the track of information. But that is not spying. It is legitimate.

Principally, the Commission considers that data on Iraq's weapons is not public, more than what should be given to the Security Council in accordance with the resolutions. Thus the prohibited items are reported about, but not normally the foreign supplier. This practice is necessary to protect our access. Of course, there can be someone who sends us someone from a spy agency as an inspector. Frequently, however, we were able to identify the spies, they stick out, because you know, you cannot be a very, very specialized chemical expert without having worked your whole life as a scientist. Normally, you don't work in a spy agency. The agents may have had some chemical experience. Even there you know the background, and their behavior tells. Again, in the system you protect against that. That does not exclude the possibility that some planted agents could tell some stories to their bosses. But this is not, in effect, serious spying; we are very careful.

JK: Why would Saddam make those kinds of accusations?

RE: The overall policy is to undercut UNSCOM, which is the most effective body, through its work methods and the quality of its personnel. Iraq tries to politicize the question of inspections. That has been the policy for several years, to try to undercut the authority of the chairman so he is distracted. For instance, the dream is to influence the targeting of the inspections, to negotiate the selection of inspection sites in advance, which would leak and of course take away the possibility for tough inspections. It is the

hard-fought policy against UNSCOM. If you repeat and repeat, someone in the UN may say, "Oh well, there may be something in that, and this guy looks suspicious."

JK: Well, our time is up. I want to thank you so much for this interview.

RE: You are very welcome.

Yale-UN Oral History Project
Rolf Ekéus
Jean Krasno, Interviewer
February 27, 1998
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Session 3

Interviewer: This is an interview with Swedish Ambassador to Washington, Rolf Ekéus. It is 28 April, year 2000.

What was your exact role as Executive Chairman of the UN Special Commission?

Ekéus: It was to supervise the setting up of the organization, UNSCOM, to recruit personnel, to identify tasks following the directive given in Resolution 687. I normally call it the cease-fire resolution because that resolution constitutes the cease-fire after the war between Iraq and the coalition led by the United States.

Int: Did your role turn out to be different than you expected when you first agreed to join UNSCOM and did it change over the several years that you were Executive Chairman?

RK: Yes, it did. Most of us, including myself, thought that task was a complex, technical arms control hardware task. We didn't believe it would be politically complicated. And the reason was that the cease-fire resolution offered a deal to Iraq that if on one side Iraq cooperated and came clean of all the weapons of mass destruction identified, nuclear weapons, biological weapons, chemical weapons, and missiles of a range of greater than 150 kilometers, if Iraq came clean, then the prohibition against

exports of all Iraqi oil which had been put into place, that prohibition would no longer stay. If Iraq gave up its weapons, it would get its oil and the money it could generate from selling the oil. So, that was to me a very simple deal considering that Iraq is one of the second or third largest oil exporters in the world.

We talked about before the war Iraq was selling some 3.5 million barrels a day, which amounts to at least 15-18 billion dollars a year. Our idea was that Iraq would like to get this 15-20 billion dollars and the price for that was to give up the weapons. I think that was the view of the Security Council members and by me as the innocent one opening up UNSCOM. We thought that Iraq would be eager to cooperate, that Iraq would be eager to get rid of them. Therefore, when I recruited the staff and structured the job, I focused on having a good arms control weapons expertise employed in order to get the task done quickly, to help Iraq out of this. However, it turned out the opposite after a month or two. During our first and second visits to Baghdad in the summer 1991 – we started in 1991 – it was clear that Iraq was misleading and giving false information and I would say, lying, about its capabilities. So, we were confronted with a totally new situation. This was no longer a technical task.

Int: What were the first signs that they were lying and not telling the truth?

RK: Really, the first sign came when we went in with our first chemical weapons team. That team went into Iraq in May. We had recruited international experts very quickly from headquarters in New York. I went with the team. I had worked in chemical weapons as the chairman of negotiations on chemical weapons in the '80s so, I had a

certain experience and knowledge in a more abstract way and I was very curious. When we went to the first known chemical weapons production facility installation, Al-Muthanna, we saw outside the labs that they had been burning documents just before we arrived. There were fragments of massive paper burning. And that was at least warning signal. I still didn't react completely, but to me it was peculiar, why burn papers? Why don't they allow us to look at them? Was it to hide something? At least I got warning signals.

Int: They didn't do that more carefully. I don't understand that.

RK: They were desperate. They were under time pressure. There were ashes and paper fragments. You could see that it was related to chemical formulas and such, how to produce them. This was nothing special because we knew that Iraq had chemical weapons. The second time was in June when we sent one of first teams to look at the nuclear installations together with the IAEA, the International Atomic Energy Agency. It was a joint team. And there the Iraqi side suddenly and dramatically blocked our experts who wanted to enter into a facility where we suspected that components for the production of nuclear weapons were. We had good reason. We had some intelligence, I may say so afterwards, from satellite observations that had guided us to go to that place. But the Iraqi side refused us entry, our team; I wasn't there myself but the team was refused entry. The chief inspector, David Kay, a fine man, a dynamic man, insisted, anyhow, to go in. While they were quarreling at the entry to this big fenced in facility, two members of his team climbed up into a water tower. And from the water tower they

could see with their binoculars at the backside that trucks were leaving, a convoy of trucks were leaving the facility.

They threw themselves into sedans, old American sedans that we had hired in Iraq, because we had not yet gotten in our more modern equipment. They jumped into these big cars with no suspension and they tried to catch up with these trucks, which was foolish but very courageous. The Iraqi's demonstrated their nervousness because in the end the vehicles stopped and out ran personnel with guns who started to shoot at our inspectors. That demonstrated that Iraq was extremely nervous, taking those extraordinary steps. When David Kay called me and reported this event, an ongoing process, I ordered them immediately to withdraw because they were not trained commando soldiers. They were middle-aged nuclear scientists.

Int: They were in the wrong situation.

RK: The conclusion was simply that Iraq obviously was hiding something and was not prepared to declare the exact contents of its prohibited capability.

Int: Obviously. Why do you think you got the job? What kind of experience did you have in the area before getting the assignment? You touched on it a little bit but maybe you could elaborate.

RK: The broad answer to that is again that the Security Council was looking for someone who had the combination of diplomatic experience, obviously, but with a

special focus on weapons issues, arms control and disarmament issues. They were not looking for an Arabist, or a specialist on the region and the region's problems. I had some general knowledge but my specialty and my experience was that I was chairman for the chemical weapons international negotiations. I had been heavily involved in the negotiations as the leader of the Swedish delegation. I was the leader of the so-called global 21 in the Conference on Disarmament. I was heavily involved in the biological weapons convention. I served as the head of our Swedish delegation in Geneva and was aiming at strengthening the Convention by adding rules for better verification, compliance, and control arrangements. So, we had a leadership role actively in the disputes around that.

Int: But at this time, you had no idea about the biological weapons that later on Iraq would be shown to have?

RK: No, to answer the question, we had no idea at that time. But I also had a role in negotiating the non-proliferation treaty, as I had served as the chairman of the drafting committee in 1985 at the successful review conference, one of the few successful conferences. These were my credentials. There was also a political element. Sweden was not a war-fighting partner of the coalition, which defeated Iraq. So, probably one saw it as an advantage to have someone from a non-belligerent country, in this case.

Int: Neutral.

RK: Precisely. Logically, there were not many. I was one of a few that both came from a neutral country and had that experience.

Int: That's great. Were you at all able to prepare yourself for this, specifically?

RK: Not specifically. I was asked very quickly by the Secretary-General through the Swedish government and I accepted after a very short hesitation. I thought that this was going to be a very quick job. I saw it as tailor-made. As I indicated in your first question, I thought this was a technical, fascinating, but technical job, not long, winding, diplomatic security issue. I had the basic knowledge so now it was just to read and prepare myself for the position. I rushed into the job. Both the Security Council and myself felt initially that here we had these weapons and the longer we delayed, the more money Iraq would lose. With the current export situation at the time they could have earned $30 million a day. Now they had an embargo of $30 million a day. So, I felt that if I waited two days to take the job, that would mean that Iraq had lost $60 million in the two days. I couldn't take that on my conscience, so I rushed to start as quickly as possible. It was on-the-job learning.

Int: That's incredible. How did you manage to keep UNSCOM independent? And why was UNSCOM's independence so important?

RK: The Security Council decided when UNSCOM was set up that it should be financed not from the UN ordinary budget but by money generated in the beginning by

voluntary contributions, secondly, by taking frozen Iraqi assets, Iraqi money in banks all over the world which had been frozen in connection with Iraq's attack on Kuwait. So, these frozen assets were declared to be used to finance our operations. The reason why the Council did not want the General Assembly involved was that –I take it the US especially but also some of the others – because they didn't want to have the question politicized. If it were UN financed, that is the General Assembly, which decides, and the process is there, the advice of the budget committee with the special Fifth Committee dealing with administration and funding. That would be cumbersome. This was the cease-fire after the war. Why should the General Assembly be involved?

The idea was to keep UNSCOM clean and that meant also that the General Assembly, or the UN Member States, could not poke their nose into the task or give directives to UNSCOM and say that it should deploy that type of people or another type of people. This gave freedom from the involvement of the General Assembly. That was the most important thing.

Secondly, it was important also that UNSCOM could be free to report directly to the Security Council and not necessarily go through the Secretary-General. Formally, it reported through the Secretary-General but in practice because it was sensed that the Secretary-General would have to take into account political considerations, soften and change the quality of the reporting.

Int: Were you reporting about two times a year?

RK: Yes, it was a main task to report twice, two times a year, formally. Obviously, in between if there were emergencies, we would also report.

Int: Do think that if the IAEA had been more independent would they have been able to manage the situation better than they did?

RK: Even there it was a special setup. The cease-fire Resolution 687 did not say that the IAEA should work with us as an organization. They said the Director General of the IAEA. Again, I think that the thinking was that the governing council of the IAEA, the general body, should not involve itself in the running of UNSCOM. The expertise and technique of the IAEA should be applied but not its political decision-making. So, that is why it said the "Director General." The Director General, at that time Hans Blix, set up a special action team which was not directed by the governing board of the IAEA. There was an effort to keep it independent. I don't think that was a problem for the IAEA.

Int: Do you think that UNSCOM lost some of its independence later on in the process?

RK: Later on, maybe. My effort was to keep all Security Council members involved so they knew what was going on, and especially Permanent Members because these were big power dealings. To be fair, all Council members should know. And in that sense, it was a delicate balance to keep involved, keep them informed. They hated to be surprised. They were even more upset if they had to read about a problem in the newspapers before

it was reported to them. I went to considerable length to prevent such things. I always kept them informed, even bad news, to warn them about it. That was one side of the coin, to keep them involved. But when they came with advice, individual members – it could be the US, Russia, any of the five – "You should do this and you should do that," I listened to all this and I liked advice. But I didn't say that I followed their advice if I didn't find it good. I said, "If you want to force me to do something, then you have to take a joint decision, according to your rules. You have to put a decision in place."

Int: And not come individually.

RK: Or join around a statement by the president [of the Council], so all 15 should be involved. If they could, then I was obviously obliged to follow what they were saying and would do it happily. However, I always defended the independence of UNSCOM. Later on, I don't know, after I left in 1997, a lot of controversies turned up. My successor was accused of taking too much advice from the United States. The others were unhappy.

Int: Richard Butler?

RK: Yes, but it is difficult to put a judgment on that. He has put his own explanation in his book, so we shall see how he explains this and how he answers that question. But we had good cooperation and never accepted to bow to their advice. We said that we were grateful for their advice.

Int: But you weren't obliged to.

Could you describe your relationship initially with the IAEA and did that change? If so, how?

RK: Yes, there were two philosophies colliding when we started. That is my impression, anyhow. Mainly, I felt that we had to take it as a starting proposition of the events that I described before that Iraq was systematically hiding and misleading about its capabilities. And that Iraq, therefore, was obliged to come clean. The burden of proof was on Iraq. I would say that they were guilty until we had proven it innocent. The IAEA approach was linked to IAEA's own culture that has to deal with long-term cooperation, friendly and supporting cooperation with their member governments. So, the IAEA idea was a more classical one.

Int: Obviously more trusting of each other.

RK: Yes, saying innocent until one could prove that they were guilty. So, there were two different philosophies. I think that created some problems in the beginning. The IAEA was also anxious to keep its independence from UNSCOM. You know that UNSCOM was tasked to give support and advice to the IAEA and also had some other responsibilities in the nuclear field even though IAEA was in the driver's seat on nuclear issues. UNSCOM alone was responsible for biological and chemical weapons and missiles. It was a bit problematic in the beginning because of our more suspicious attitude.

Int: How was it that Iraq was able to develop weapons of mass destruction to the extent that it did without anyone doing anything before this?

RK: First of all, they had the capability through money because of the oil exports. They had plenty of money. During the eight-year war with Iran, unfortunately, the West for political reasons was supporting Iraq. This was discretely because the West was very much against the fundamentalists' rule in Iran. That opened up for the export of high quality technology and also expertise and advice from the advanced, industrialized countries. But it was done in a very clever fashion. It was hidden inside so-called civilian programs. There was technical thing made possible: a systematic effort to provide alternative storage. Say, you import chemicals for the production of chemical weapons, you said that this import is for producing pesticides and fertilizers for agriculture.

Int: So, they imported things that had duel uses.

RK: Exactly.

Int: Do you mean that the Western countries actually knew about this a just sort of looked through their fingers and pretended not to see it?

RK: We have to remember that there was plenty of money involved here. The West suspected, I am sure. Even we in Sweden had our suspicions. We were not involved, I am glad to say, but most of us had our suspicions. The suspicion was clear when Iraq actually used chemical weapons against Iran and its own people. Toward the end of the war, at the end of the '80s, there was an improvement, especially on missile technology, which had been flowing quite generously toward Iraq. It was an unfortunate political overlooking.

Int: What criteria would determine the decision to carry out an inspection and had you ever carried out similar inspections previously? Had the IAEA or any other organization carried out inspections in the way UNSCOM did?

RK: No, these were totally new methods that were applied here. First of all, there were two types of inspections. There were the more soft type which were more to identify Iraq's production capability, in general, industrial capability, chemical, pharmaceutical, veterinarian, because there are a lot of poisons introduced in that area. That was mapping out Iraq's capabilities. However, in this process of establishing the knowledge base of understanding Iraqi capabilities, the inspectors because of the quality of their skills and brilliance as scientists detected things that didn't fit the overall picture. That gave signals back to headquarters that we had to do something else. There these findings were analyzed very carefully which led to UNSCOM establishing more pointed inspections toward suspected facilities.

Int: More direct, active.

RK: Yes, it was generated inside the process of mapping Iraq. These anomalies helped to pinpoint directions for the inspections. Secondly, we established very early on systematic over flight. We had a so-called high altitude, reconnaissance plane.

Int: Is that the U-2 plane?

RK: Yes, the U-2 plane. The press called it a spy plane but I didn't like that because we had the right to carry out these inspections under the resolutions. The U-2 turned out to be of the highest value. We had our own leased U-2 from the United States. So, it was flown by an American pilot but the pilot was formally under the command of UNSCOM. That was important because if it had been shot down, he would be arrested and hanged as a spy if he had not been under the UN because he was an American. It was a UN operation, so he was protected by that. These images from the missions that took place once or twice a week gave the analysts in UNSCOM, the photo analysts and the specialists, great help. You could see a factory where some new ventilation system was added to the roof. Why do they need a new ventilation system? Maybe it is a more advanced system. Or we would see an inordinate amount of heavy traffic going someplace. Then we could target our inspection team to go to these places.

Int: According to the photos the U-2 planes took.

RK: We also had helicopters inside the country that were stationed there. They were first run by the Germans for us and then later on by the Chileans. These helicopters could go out and take close range photography and look closer at what had been taken by the U-2. That was very effective and could reach a lot of places very quickly and with surprise. I would say in 90% of the cases it was purely innocent, natural civilian activities when we looked a bit closer. But in 10% there were serious matters. We had contacted foreign intelligence services and asked them to provide us with information. That information was added to the pictures and to our own findings. Putting all this data together, then we decided where to go. So, it was an active dynamic search for evidence. The classical safeguard inspections by IAEA, to take the second part of your question, were aimed at visiting facilities that had been declared by the country in concern, in this case Iraq. It was only declared facilities that they had visited. Saddam decided which facility they were allowed to visit. They had to give ample notice, weeks in advance. The inspectors were to be scrutinized and accepted by Iraq before they could go in. They had to be the right nationality, not unsympathetic to Iraq. UNSCOM had none of this. We went in without screening our inspectors. We decided to go to both declared sites and to non-declared facilities.

Int: I wanted to ask you about the U-2 planes. From where did they fly? Did they fly from the United States or did they leave from somewhere else?

RK: No, we fortunately had an arrangement with Saudi Arabia. They were stationed in Saudi Arabia. We notified Iraq about their flying in. We didn't want any accidents. We

gave Iraq some days notice. From my office we notified Iraq, saying, "In two days time, the U-2 will fly in within a certain window of time." We gave them 14 hours and we also gave them the entry point, the point where the flight would enter Iraq. We told them when it should leave Iraq in order to not give Iraq any reason to attack. We did not tell them where it would fly inside or what were the targets.

Int: Did anything ever happen?

RK: Well, we had some. Our rule was that we notified Iraq and we demanded from the Iraqi that they had to accept formally the notification. That was the assurance to our pilot. It happened on some occasions but rarely that Iraq did not accept the notification. Then we came into a very dramatic situation because the United States government was not prepared to allow its plane to fly in without protection from so called combat air patrol. That meant a very heavy military umbrella would be established over Iraq. Or we could cancel. But if we canceled such a trip, it would mean that by Iraq just not accepting the notification could stop all the overflight. We couldn't take that approach. There were some nervous moments when that happened.

Int: What was the toughest part of your job, personally? Was it the work directly or was it the insecure and unstable situation you were in? Was your job frustrating?

RK: It was not frustrating in the sense that the job itself was. On the contrary, the job was extremely fascinating and stimulating. Because it was like a puzzle, a very complex

puzzle, where you could play against a very shrewd opponent. The Iraqi technique was to refine the method to hide, to mislead, to frighten the opponent, threaten the opponent. That was us. In a sense there was a certain adrenaline run when you had these tremendous stresses and challenges.

No, the frustrating thing the sense that this kept the Iraqi people under such hardship. When we knew that the answer for them would have been that Iraq would just give up these weapons. No one should have such weapons. The Great Powers have some of them, but no one should have nuclear weapons; no one should have biological weapons. Nuclear capability is with a limited set of States, as you know. Major powers like Germany, Japan, Italy, Brazil, Argentina, and even the Nordic countries, we have all said that we shall not have nuclear weapons. There is no reason why we should allow Iraq to have them. Unfortunately, that was frustrating. They insisted on trying to trick us. Sometimes I felt a little angry. Do they believe that I am so stupid so they can trick me, when this is a game that will hurt their own people? If we could clean up these weapons…

Int: It would be better for everyone.

RK: Yes, we could lift the sanctions, provide relief, in every aspect.

Int: Was it difficult to work in this unstable situation, this insecure situation where you actually were?

RK: Well, there were times where there were threats against our personnel. They were frequently shot at. One favorite thing was to drive up against our vehicles in which the inspectors were traveling. But it was not systematic. It came and went in short periods of time. The same with my personal security. There were barrage of attacks in the Iraqi media, in the Iraqi press.

Int: I was going to ask you to tell us about that a bit.

RK: Well, they went at great length. The son of Saddam Hussein, Uday, had his own newspaper.

Int: He still has, right, doesn't he?

RK: When he wrote about me, he always added the prefix, the 'damned Ekéus' even if it were a purely technical article. "Next week, the damned Ekéus will arrive in Iraq," not referring to a specific statement or anything. That set a path that was supported by very aggressive accusations about me and my responsibility for the suffering of the Iraqi people. Also, there was a tribunal set up which was run in Spain but inspired by Iraq, accusing President Bush and me for committing crimes against international law in our policy of starving the Iraqi children. That type of psychological warfare was disturbing. Through counter intelligence on repeated occasions it was picked up that there were preparations to eliminate me under certain circumstances, and I was concerned to some degree but I thought it was politically unwise to do it. I felt there was a certain guarantee

in that it was not in Iraq's own interest to do. I think it was more psychological warfare to terrorize me and get me more humble and friendly. Also, there were rumors and information about the decision to or discussion about poisoning me. At one occasion there was one poison mentioned and I asked my biological weapons expert how does it affect you. Well, he said it would kill you but first it turns your hair white.

Int: And it is already white.

RK: I said, "Oh, that is interesting."

Int: Maybe you already had some of it.

RK: Yes. [laughed] But I don't think the government was really serious. I did not take them seriously. I had been working positively, to some degree within limits, on this relationship. With Tariq Aziz, we had a very good dialogue. He didn't agree with our basic tasks and I didn't agree with his tasks, to hide and mislead us. And he didn't agree with my task to find out. But I think that we respected each other and tried to be fair to each other. And I think that was a certain protection. The final observation of that was, however, there is a risk to the hatred that is built up in the press and the media against someone because it could be that an individual would act on his own without government approval. So, it was unnecessary and irresponsible behavior.

Int: The inspections and the work that your team did took a very long time and was a very slow process. What was the most frustrating thing with the work you did? We talked about what you thought was frustrating about the work. I know that they made it so difficult for you because they kept everything mobile. They kept moving everything.

RK: Yes, that was really frustrating, especially towards the end. In the beginning, I think we had considerable success in identifying the various programs and in destroying their big production facilities and the big storage areas. However, our task was to clean up all the weapons in Iraq. That meant that even if you didn't see any more weapons, that did not mean there were no more weapons. In order to answer that question, we had to understand their weapons programs, their decisions, the resources they had put into them, and where these items were. If Iraq imported 819 SCUD missiles from the Soviet Union, our job was to see that all these missiles were accounted for. Some had been used in the war against Israel and against Saudi Arabia. So, we had to count how many had been used in the war. We had to go to the allies and to the Israelis and to count how many missiles were used. Then we could subtract them from the 819 and that left 500 or something. Then we had to count that every missile was destroyed. Iraq tried to say that, "We had lost them. They disappeared." We couldn't accept such answers. We had to see each one. If they said they had tested it, then we wanted to see the order to test and the program for testing. So, that we could be sure that we could take off that one from the list. The same for when they imported highly sensitive machines, the big fermenters which they used for biological weapons production. We had to see all of them and supervise the destruction.

We could get information from countries that had exported to them. We had to be in touch with all the countries outside. Our technique was in that way was hard work. Then, however, some things were left. We needed documents in order to read them to see if we had seen everything. The list of what they had imported, we wanted to see that list. That way we could go to the Security Council. This happened all the time but especially in 1996 and 1997. That continued even after that. They put the things on trucks, on big caravans, and were moving them around in the country. When our team arrived, they followed our team, sending signals. They would say, "Now the team is going there or there; now it's turning left; now it is going on another road in that direction." Their caravans were moved away from us all the time. We tried to cover that with the U-2 and also with the friendly support of American satellites, but the satellite is not always there. We tried to time our time our trips so we could get signals from the satellites, or from the U-2, or from our helicopters.

Int: A major operation!

RK: It was frustrating them in the sense that in a few cases we managed to corner them, then they blocked us entry. We had no weapons. We could not force ourselves on them; we couldn't shoot. We were a handful of scientists. They were not cowboys or commandos. We had to complain to the Security Council; that created unnecessary frustration. In a way, though, it was fun. It was a big adventure.

Int: What methods did the Iraqis use to hide their weapons programs? Did they try to confuse the UN by other means?

RK: One way that we had developed was to interrogate, not the politicians but the workers, the scientists. Our team went in with Arabic translators and we tried to cross-examine. Our scientists were not trained in this tactic. They had sharp minds. So, I employed a man from Scotland Yard, the British police headquarters, an expert in cross-examinations. We brought in an expert of that quality to be with our teams to help them with cross-examination. These examinations were highly successful if we took one at a time. We interrogated one officer and then we would send him out of the room and then we took in the next. We put to them the same questions. If they were lying, of course, it didn't work because they would contradict themselves. If they immediately told the truth, it would hang together reasonably well. So, we detected their lies and that led Iraq to try to block these interrogations.

We had another major crisis I think it was in the summer 1996. I had to work very hard on Tariq Aziz and tried to mobilize the Security Council. It was not easy. They wondered why it was so important to do these interviews. You had to explain everything in order to pump it into their brains. "Yes, it is important." They wondered why we should make such a fuss over this. Well, I wanted to make a fuss. We often had long arduous discussions before we forced Iraq to agree on a system for interrogation. They insisted that high officers should be present in the room when we investigated low-level personnel. They were frightened, coming in to see this guy there who could send them to jail or kill them. That made them very nervous and that would undercut the quality of the

interview, obviously. The stopped interview when it became dangerous, when we caught them. The officer would jump in and say, "Stop this, stop this!" They would block the poor man or they would try to coach him. They would say, "You remembered wrong; it was not so." He would answer, "Yes, sir." So, it was impossible.

Int: What led to this crisis?

RK: I said that this was unacceptable. "We must be able to freely talk to these individuals who had been involved in the weapons program." We were trying to make what I called a 'coherent picture.'

Int: It was a development problem.

RK: Yes, it was. That was one example. There are many others like that.

Int: Did Iraq try to manipulate other members States of the UN? Did that work? Did you ever discover that they were doing that? Did other countries simply volunteer to help them?

RK: It was a systematic policy of Tariq Aziz, who is a brilliant diplomat, as you probably know. They had some other good people, but he was in a class of his own. He traveled frequently to capitals, to Moscow, Paris, where he was well received. He would travel to Rome, to Madrid. He traveled to China, Beijing. He traveled to India, to many

places, even to Bonn, Germany, occasionally. All the time he spoke badly about us. He said, "Look how they behave. They are insisting; they are not civilized; they are not respectful towards us." He would say, "Our program looks like this and we have accounted for everything, year in and year out."

My problem was that I had to follow his travel schedule. When he went to Moscow, I had to go to Moscow after him and sit down with them. I had to call up their ambassador in New York at the minimum and ask, "What did he say?" If it was serious enough, I had to go myself to have a session with the same people and explain and ask them if they were concerned. "Tell us what you are concerned about." It demanded dynamic diplomacy. It was always searching and counting.

Int: It was like guarding a child.

RK: Sort of, yes, he was an unruly child, in that sense. You had to countlessly see that he didn't do damage. That was more problematic. It was possible, anyhow, because we had the truth on our side. We had the facts on our side. So, I think we won every such incident or competition. The problem was when a matter of economy came into it. Iraq very clearly stated to countries that, "If you support us, we will see to it that you will get part of our oil wealth when things get better. You will get rights to export and set industries in place and work with us." Iraq is a country you can't ignore because of the rich cash flow they have. It is potentially enormous as one of the oil rich countries. After a while you had the feeling that some governments took the money issue into account rather than these obstacles. That was very frustrating and problematic. That demanded a

lot from me as chairman. You are up against promises of hundreds of millions of dollars. It is not easy.

Int: Couldn't the UN do anything?

RK: No, not at all, the UN was scared stiff about this. I wouldn't say the Secretary-General. I had excellent relations with Boutros-Ghali and great relations with Kofi Annan and with Pérez de Cuéllar, in the beginning. All of them were great men. They had different styles and ways of acting, but they were very impressive persons. But, on the contrary, the culture of the Secretariat was not enthusiastic about UNSCOM. Because the UN is created as a body to support and help member States, for food, UNICEF works, education helps out, even peacekeeping operations are based on the approval and welcoming of the governments concerned. They don't want to irritate the governments, as a protection. But we were not asked in; we were not invited by Iraq. We were foisted upon Iraq. The culture of the UN is cooperation, help, support. It was the first time the UN had taken on interference, pressure, a confrontational attitude. We were forced to confront allies with our truth. In the UN as such, we had to base ourselves on the Security Council.

Int: But, UNSCOM was created by the UN. All the countries had agreed on something. It was a way of going behind the back of the UN by carrying on an agreement relationship with Iraq.

RK: Yes, of course, but money talks.

Int: During the time that you worked with UNSCOM, did you see any changes within the Iraqi people, the society, and the living standards?

RK: Yes, definitely. We have to recall that the living standard was very low when we came in. Iraq was close to taking off economically in the late '70s after the great oil price hikes which had taken place between '73 and '78. It was doing splendidly. It has a very hard working population. It was a relatively secular state in Arabic world. The women are liberated there much more. They are much more active, especially in medicine. But, you can imagine 8 years of war that what that did to the economy. The social structure was starting to collapse during the war because all the oil money went to munitions, to tanks, to airplanes. It went into buying technology for weapons of mass destruction. That took many billions of dollars. They used not only oil money, but they borrowed money, especially from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Their economy was really in pieces. That is why I think decided to occupy Kuwait in 1990. That was a quick fix, go in a take Kuwait that was swimming in money and oil, just take it.

Int: They claimed that it used to be an Iraqi province.

RK: Absolutely, and that was a quick fix for the economic problem. When he was thrown out, he didn't succeed in repairing the Iraqi problem. The starting point was low, however, the sanctions which were put in place as a consequence of the invasion of

Kuwait, as I indicated in the first answer, the Security Council kept these sanctions in place. That meant that the standard was low and bad and no real improvement came. It was a difficult situation and the Council recognized that and even said from the very beginning in 1991 that Iraq was allowed to export certain large quantities of its oil to buy medicine and food. That was an offer Iraq rejected for many years. It was not done until 1996. In 1996, one started to come to an agreement and in early 1997, the system of selling oil and getting food came into play.

It is very important for history, for the record, that Iraq had that offer from the beginning, but they rejected it. There was one year on modalities, from 1996-1997, on how distribution of the food should be carried out. The agreement was less than satisfactory in many ways, but it was better than nothing. We see now the result of the agreement between the UN and Iraq, Iraq was given the task to distribute the food. The UN only had the right to, hardly even observe, but to be present and see to it that it was reasonably distributed. Even though this program is going on, there are still serious health problems.

In northern Iraq where Saddam had no control, the UN was given the job to distribute the food itself. There the living standard is higher than it was before the war. It shows that it also the way it is done. You see a couple of UN officers in Iraq, a man called Halliday and another one, two leaders of the control program in central Iraq who came out highly critical of the sanctions. I think they were right because their heart was in the right place. They saw people suffering and they really became upset. But part of their attack on the UN was in part to protect themselves. They knew that they did not carry out the distribution well. We had the Kurdish case, which showed that if it were

done by the UN, it was very effective. In central Iraq it was not effective. One must remember that there is also blame to put on the Iraqi government.

Int: How much did the Iraqi people understand about what UNSCOM was doing? Did the Iraqi people help you in any way?

RK: No, not at all. There was a constant propaganda from the first day, saying we have nothing.

Int: But that is actually from Saddam.

RK: Yes, but the people read that and then they heard that we had detected something and they should think about it. "Didn't he tell us there was nothing?" That happened over and over again. It was proven that there was something. When I went to Moscow I said, "Tariq Aziz told you in 1994 there was nothing left and now in 1995, we have detected so much. Shouldn't you stop trusting him?" The Iraqi people only had access to Iraqi TV and to Iraqi newspapers, Uday's newspaper and others. They had very little to go from.

Int: Didn't they write about what you found? No.

RK: No, very little. It could have been beamed in by Arab speaking BBC, but it was a crime to listen to Iraqi news. The middle class was very hard hit. They had commodities

like carpets which they had to sell to get food. They had to sell refrigerators. If they had books, they tried to sell them. They exhausted everything. It was really tragic to see how their quality of life went down.

Int: You said the middle class was hit the hardest?

RK: Yes, I think so. The farmers came out better because when there was no food and medicine, then they could sell their stuff for enormous prices. They needed full horse drawn carriages to take home all the money. They have very violent inflation there. They had to transport home all the money when they came to the markets.

Int: It must have been a fascinating sight.

RK: Yes, but that changed with the UN program.

Int: The Iraqis gave you a hard time with your work. You have already talked about that. The experts that you had on your team had various nationalities. I have understood that it was very difficult to keep them from briefing their governments about their work that they did with you and that the information that they had ended up in the hands of the Iraqis. Is this true and to what extent?

RK: Some, first of all we had top quality experts. Each one of them had to sign a contract with me where they undertook to report only to me and not to take orders or

instructions or inform their government about the work. If their government wanted to know something, they had to turn to me and I would decide how much they could be told. We gave out information but we protected highly sensitive information that we didn't give out to any government. If some government would say, in order to help us and to help their analysts to give advice to us, they wanted some piece of say an inspection report, they could get that inspection report but we would delete the sensitive things like names of foreign companies having exported to Iraq. We did that in order cooperation with them at a high level. We tried to keep them informed in a legal fashion, a structured fashion. That does not exclude that some may talk a little about their experience. But then they were in violation of what they had signed. I think most of them did not do it. We had concerns that some information was being fed back to Iraq, not details, but warnings like now the team intends to this or that. We sharpened our security arrangements for our own protection very much, limited information to extremely few people, especially our own targeting of plans for where we should go the next time. That was kept highly secret. It was kept solely for myself and the mission planner and the operations officer who knew. Not even the team was allowed to know until they came into Iraq. We had to train them in advance, of course. If you intended to make an underwater exploration.

Int: You did underwater explorations?

RK: Yes, we did because we suspected that some nuclear capabilities had been put underground and water moved them or they threw them in the water. They tried to hide

missile equipment that was smuggled through Russia. The Russians sold it to them in 1995, advanced guidance systems for long-range missiles. These systems ended up in Iraq and they threw them into the Tigris. So, we had to prepare frogmen and others to swim and pick up these things. Then they could figure out when we started train these people that there was something with water. When they flew in, they saw the packages in the airplane, heavy equipment and rubber clothes and so on. They understood that some water operation would happen.

Int: Incredible. During your tenure, were there any secret devices to pick up information on the activities of the Iraqi Special Republican Guard or the special security organization? If so, why did UNSCOM need such devices? Did the Americans or anyone else use this technology for other purposes?

RK: That is the $64,000 question. We had the right, according to the resolution, to use means of investigative technology, high-resolution imaging, photography, and to use sensors. We had lots of sensors of various sorts. A sensor could be a chemical device, which you put around a chemical facility that picks up from the air and that goes into filters and those filters are taken to the laboratory that we had in Baghdad. There we could see what kind of chemicals were there. That was one. We could have water sampling regularly to see if there were nuclear signs. We flew with certain airplanes, taking gamma ray counts so we could find hot spots over Iraq from the radiation from the ground. We could map it out and then send out inspectors to go and see why there was

something radiating out there, in order to detect their various nuclear activities. We had these sensors and other types.

We had sensors that picked up signals under certain circumstances. Iraq was spying on us. Every word was taken down. We had to have strong rules inside Iraq about speaking. I decided we should counter that by listening to what they were saying. We had counter measures. However, I made arrangements that this was a multinational effort. It was not an American privilege, not at all. We had various nationalities involved in that. The lead country was not American. It was a serious operation. I did not want it to be American. That doesn't conclude according to some reports after I left, but that was more under the watch of my successor. One individual, specific person, broke his trust and tried to organize some undercover operation in UNSCOM. I don't know if it is true or not, and I don't say it is not true. I have been on record saying that if it took place it was "stupid beyond belief." But you don't get the truth with a sensor. You have to put it into the context, but this is a piece of the puzzle. Then you can decide if it is of any value. That is why I stand on my statement that it was stupid, if it took place. It was also stupid because it harmed UNSCOM. It made it possible for Russia and others to attack UNSCOM. That was not in the UN interest, I think. Secondly, they didn't get it, I can assure you. It was so amateurish.

Int: What did you think are the reasons that UNSCOM became less effective? Or is this not so?

RK: I think that UNSCOM was very effective, at least in technical terms. It became sharper and sharper. The teams were tough people; they knew better than anyone and were superior to any intelligence service, much better than Americans, Israelis, and Germans, etc., the British, in the full knowledge. No one knew more than UNSCOM. We got sharper and we could act.

Int: Because you wanted to get at it.

RK: Yes, and we were focused on one thing. We could pick up all the others' information and pool it. They didn't get the other information. We were the only ones. So, we were absolutely effective. Politically, after my time, UNSCOM became controversial. That was, of course, politically harmful and that made it less effective. It was blocked and there was no real support. I think the key for my job from day one was to keep the Security Council together; I repeat myself, but especially the five, to beg all the time. I know that if they didn't back UNSCOM, if they would break up – the US would give support but the others didn't – it wouldn't work. It was the only way. That was why I had to travel all the time, to counter Tariq Aziz, to take care of any misgivings. There was a newspaper story in Russia in 1995 or 1996, saying that UNSCOM was giving target advice to the US to bomb Iraq and I protested that. I worked on that so hard and they were forced to take it back. I never ignored an accusation like that. I took it head on. I went to the Russians and said, "Tell me what this is. Give me proof and I can assure you." So, they had to take it back. It took a long time.

Int: It was very important that you did that.

RK: What happened after that, it broke down, unfortunately. The Council broke up and they started to accuse things. The political effectiveness was lost. To answer your question in one sentence: it broke down because of political reasons.

Int: What are your hopes for UNMOVIC? What is its potential?

RK: UNMOVIC is written in a way, Resolution 1284, that is to say there is no presumption in 1284 that Iraq has anything left. It only really actively talks about preventing Iraq from acquiring nuclear capabilities, which is a good record for UNSCOM. It shows that the Security Council thinks that UNSCOM cleaned up everything.

Int: Yes, but now they have had a couple of years of rebuilding.

RK: Yes, but the old Resolution 687 had the presumption that Iraq was hiding things, which was correct. However, I think the new resolution creating UNMOVIC as it is written is capable and has the right to do everything, including searching for prohibited items, not only prevent new things from coming in, but also to do a search. Hans Blix, in his statement when he presented his new report, indicates that very clearly and I am very happy about that. My sense is that UNMOVIC can do the same thing. The key there always boils down to two things: the political support and the quality of the personnel. If

you get good people you can get it done. That's it, the mark of leadership. If you have good leaders, they should take the best persons. That is the mark of success. It is not to say that UNMOVIC is not able to get the best people, but it depends on the leader.

Int: France has always seemed to have a special relationship towards Iraq. Why? Is it due to similarities in nuclear weapons policy, interest in increased trade relationships, or is it something else?

RK: I think that France would like to have a role in the Arabic world. Iraq now is isolated in the Arabic world but potentially it has a hard working population, which is good, oil richness, two rivers. It is a country with extraordinary possibilities, good people, good natural resources, and water. These are the key factors. But they have poor leaders. Otherwise, the country would be a paradise, extremely wealthy. In the long-term, I think it is wise to keep good contacts with Iraq. I doubt that it is wise to keep in good contact with the present leadership, which fundamentally undercuts and destroys these capabilities that it has. France is looking at the long-term economic gains. However, to give France credit, I think they are very solid on the weapons issue. In the military circles in France, I think they are concerned that Iraq not acquire especially nuclear capability. They are supporting the prevention of that and have strong arms control. But they like to have both things.

Int: Do you think that will change in the present?

RK: In France? No, President Chirac was close friends with Saddam. He visited Baghdad once. But I think he has been very fair. I talked with him a couple of years ago, in 1995 I think it was. We had a conversation and he was very supportive. He said, "I promise we back you with support." And they did. They were very supportive. I never complained about them. I just always had to keep them in the picture. I liked that because they were critical; they asked questions. I liked that, instead of sitting at home and be sour. I know that my successor had problems, according to his book.

Int: Do you think that the French want a more friendly, trading relationship?

RK: They would like to come in first, to be responsible for the telecommunications. They would like to have their "El Fen Total," the oil company, involved in exploration and the enormous profits that can come from this. Of course, they are anxious to be number one. And they also compete with the Russians.

Int: Exactly, my next question was just that, what are the reasons for China and Russia for being so Iraq-friendly?

RK: China is not really Iraq-friendly. It is just hanging on. They never take the lead in Iraq-friendliness. They put themselves in solidarity with the Russians and the French, but they never take the lead. That is my experience. They have been cooperative and supportive during my time. However, it is clear that China had cooperated with Iraq earlier in helping them with missile technology. But during my time, we saw no sign at

all and I don't believe they did. I think that China has been quite fair and has not supported Iraq's missile program or any other programs. That was historically so, but many others did, also. China may have been less open about it.

Int: What were UNSCOM's major accomplishments? And what were some of its failures?

RK: The accomplishments are very simple, that was to identify the whole set of programs and the major number one was biological weapons. That was the most secretive, an ultra secret program. It was total denial, "We have nothing to do with biological weapons," written repeatedly, year after year until our inspectors with their skills tracked it. Their defectors, Hussein Kamal in August 1995, told us that that was not true. It is on record that we reported to the Council before the defection about the full Iraqi program. In 1996 when we blew up the big, sprawling biological weapons facility; that was on television. That was a wonderful thing and shows that we had an incredibly strong team of scientists and thinkers and a good combination of people.

Int: Where was this?

RK: It was not far from Baghdad, about 100 kilometers. It was about one hour and a half away, maybe two hours. Al-Hakam, it was called. We took biological samples in that area in 1991, but we didn't see anything. But with DNA technology that was developed during the nineties, that changed. It is fascinating what happened in the

nineties. In 1993 and 1994, we took the old samples back and continued to test them. With these new machines, you take a sample and even if they had washed or cleaned it with detergents to take away every remnant of bacteria, but still there are things left behind. The scientists who worked for us came and said, "Now, through DNA, we can see traces of Anthrax, which is one of the biological weapons. That was fantastic. Then we started with other techniques. It is a long, wonderful story. All these things together, it was a combination of things.

The failure? I don't want to place blame on my successor. But I think that when I left we had been successful. The failure was, if not UNSCOM then someone else's fault, was the collapse of the political backing. That was the main failure. On my watch, I don't know if it was a failure because I think it was OK to start out with a certain innocence, not suspecting, believing that they should come clean. That was maybe a short-term failure, but we quickly corrected that. Maybe when started the search for mobility, I didn't outline the limits of that. My sense was that what we needed to prove with Iraq was also this hiding through mobility. I thought it was important to catch it, but when we had them cornered, they wouldn't let us go in. They just put the gun to the stomach and said, "You don't go in."

Then the Security Council said, "If you don't do it [come clean], then we will bomb you." And if you remember, that happened later on, after me. But I didn't like bombing. I wanted to avoid bombing. If the bombing had helped us get our hands on it, maybe one has to. I was convinced that it wouldn't work. So, I think maybe I should have put a limit on this before I handed it over to the successor.

Int: One last question: could a mechanism like this be used again in the future?

RK: I think definitely so. I may be relatively alone but I think I indicated in my answers, yes.

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