S



Security Council

Distr. GENERAL

S/21200 22 March 1990

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE UNITED NATIONS IRAN-IRAQ MILITARY OBSERVER GROUP

(for the period 23 September 1989 to 22 March 1990)

Introduction

- 1. The United Nations Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group (UNIIMOG) was established for an initial period of six months by the Security Council under the terms of its resolution 619 (1988) of 9 August 1988. By the same resolution, the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to keep the Council fully informed of further developments. A preliminary account of the activities of UNIIMOG during its first 10 weeks of operations was submitted to the Council in my interim report of 25 October 1988 (S/20242). Subsequent reports dated 2 February 1989 (S/20442) and 22 September 1989 (S/20862) covered the periods from 9 August 1988 to 2 February 1989 and 3 February 1989 to 22 September 1989 respectively. On 29 September 1989 the Council unanimously adopted resolution 642 (1989) in which it decided to renew the mandate of UNIIMOG until 31 March 1990 and requested the Secretary-General to submit, by that date, a report on the developments in the situation and the measures taken to implement Security Council resolution 598 (1987).
- 2. Accordingly, the present report covers the period from 23 September 1989 to 22 March 1990 and is intended to provide the Council with a comprehensive account of the manner in which UNIIMOG has carried out the mandate entrusted to it during that period and of my efforts to bring about full implementation of resolution 598 (1987).

Mandate and terms of reference

3. The mandate of UNIIMOG was defined in paragraph 3 of my report of 7 August 1988 (S/20093), which was approved by the Security Council in paragraph 1 of its resolution 619 (1988) of 9 August 1988, in the following terms:

- "(a) To establish with the parties agreed cease-fire lines on the basis of the forward defended localities occupied by the two sides on D Day but adjusting these, as may be agreed, when the positions of the two sides are judged to be dangerously close to each other;
 - "(b) To monitor compliance with the cease-fire;
- "(c) To investigate any alleged violations of the cease-fire and restore the situation if a violation has taken place;
- "(d) To prevent, through negotiation, any other change in the status quo, pending withdrawal of all forces to the internationally recognized boundaries;
- "(e) To supervise, verify and confirm the withdrawal of all forces to the internationally recognized boundaries;
- "(f) Thereafter, to monitor the cease-fire on the internationally recognized boundaries, investigate alleged violations and prevent, through negotiation, any other change in the <u>status quo</u>, pending negotiation of a comprehensive settlement;
- "(g) To obtain the agreement of the parties to other arrangements which, pending negotiation of a comprehensive settlement, could help to reduce tension and build confidence between them, such as the establishment of areas of separation of forces on either side of the international border, limitations on the number and calibre of weapons to be deployed in areas close to the international border and patrolling by United Nations naval personnel of certain sensitive areas in or near the Shatt al-Arab."
- 4. In accordance with its mandate, UNIIMOG monitors the cease-fire lines of 20 August 1988. In those limited areas where it has been unable to gain access to the cease-fire lines either because of restrictions imposed on its freedom of movement by the parties (see para. 13 below) or because of the inaccessibility of the terrain, UNIIMOG has conducted its observations from a flank or from the air.
- 5. As reflected in the present report, UNIIMOG continues successfully to monitor compliance with the cease-fire. It has investigated all alleged violations and in most cases has been able, through negotiations at the team site, sector and headquarters levels, to restore the situation if a violation has taken place. There have nevertheless been some changes in the <u>status quo</u> but, with the exception of those mentioned in this and previous reports, they have been minor in nature. As the withdrawal of forces to the internationally recognized boundaries has not yet taken place, parts of UNIIMOG's mandate remain unimplemented. UNIIMOG continues to refine its plans for the supervision of withdrawal to the internationally recognized boundaries once the withdrawal is agreed by the parties.
- 6. The preliminary agreements concerning the status of UNIIMOG which were concluded with the Government of Iraq on 5 November 1988 and with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran on 28 March 1989 remain in effect. They embody the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and of the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations, as well as the experience of

previous United Nations peace-keeping operations, so as to ensure UNIIMOG's ability to function independently and, in particular, the freedom of movement and communications and other facilities that are necessary for the performance of its tasks. The status of the implementation of these agreements is reported in paragraph 26 below.

Composition, command and deployment

- 7. The command of UNIIMOG continues to be exercised by the Chief Military Observer, Major-General Slavko Jovic (Yugoslavia). The Assistant Chief Military Observer on the Iranian side from 9 September 1989 has been Brigadier-General P. Källström (Sweden). On the Iraqi side the Assistant was Brigadier V. M. Patil (India) until 12 March 1990, when the post was assumed by Brigadier S. A. Khan (Bangladesh).
- 8. As of March 1990, the strength of UNIIMOG, including headquarters staff in Baghdad and Tehran, was as follows:

United Nations military observers

Argentina	10
Australia	15
Austria	13
Bangladesh (including the	
Assistant Chief Military	
Observer)	16
Canada	15
Denmark	16
Finland	15
Ghana	15
Hungary	15
India	15
Indonesia	16
Ireland	15
Italy	15
Kenya	15
Malaysia	15
New Zealand	10
Nigeria	16
Norway	15
Poland	15
Senegal	15
Sweden (including the	
Assistant Chief Military	
Observer)	15
Turkey	15
Uruguay	12
Yugoslavia	11
Zambia	9
n Church T Ct	354
	224

Total

elsewhere in the present report.

Air unit

New Zealand 17

Military police unit

Ireland 28

Medical section

403

Austria __4

9. There may be further additions to the military strength of UNIIMOG when the deployment of helicopters and other elements of its air unit is completed. It is still my intention, in accordance with paragraph 3 (g) of UNIIMOG's mandate, to add a small naval unit when agreement has been reached with the parties on the patrolling by UNIIMOG of the Shatt al-Arab and/or adjacent waters in the Persian Gulf. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has notified me of its approval in principle of such patrolling but the Government of Iraq has linked this

question to the wider issues which are the subject of the talks referred to

- 10. One hundred and four international staff and 98 local civilian staff members are in the mission area at present. This leaves an appreciable number of posts vacant. The shortage of staff in the mission has created a number of problems and has caused backlogs to accumulate in several important areas. Procedural problems concerning the recruitment of local staff in the Islamic Republic of Iran, which again persisted during the current mandate, are being gradually relaxed and the filling of some vacancies has started. As soon as agreement is reached on the deployment of the United Nations naval unit and United Nations-operated helicopters, additional recruitment will have to be initiated.
- 11. The deployment of UNIIMOG as of March 1990 is shown on the map annexed to the present report.
- 12. As I reported in September 1989, the activities of UNIIMOG in Iraq and the Islamic Republic of Iran are directed by the Chief Military Observer and his senior staff (the "Command Group") who spend alternate weeks at the Baghdad and Tehran headquarters. The United Nations military observers in the field continue to be deployed in four sectors on the Iranian side, with headquarters at Saqqez, Bakhtaran, Dezful and Ahwaz, and three on the Iraqi side, with headquarters at Sulaimaniyah, Ba'quba and Basra. Each sector headquarters controls a number of team sites which send out the patrols on the cease-fire lines. The length of cease-fire line monitored by a team site varies from 70 kilometres in the southern part of the operational area to 250 km in the mountainous north. The locations of team sites and sector headquarters on both sides are generally satisfactory, but negotiations and preparations are continuing in both countries to adjust the

location of some sector headquarters and team sites in order to improve UNIIMOG's operational effectiveness.

Operations

- 13. The operations of the UNIIMOG military observers remain as described in my reports of 25 October 1988 (S/20242, para. 9), 2 February 1989 (S/20442, para. 12) and 22 September 1989 (S/20862, para. 12). UNIIMOG deploys each day an average of 64 patrols that operate around the clock by vehicle, by boat, by air and on foot. Patrolling is co-ordinated between UNIIMOG sectors on the two sides of the cease-fire lines to ensure effective coverage of the entire front. The fundamental patrolling principle continues to be to position patrols at the right place at the right time to prevent cease-fire violations or to contain and resolve such violations when they occur. Quick reactions by patrols to serious incidents, such as firing, have succeeded in defusing potentially explosive situations. As noted in paragraph 4 above, the United Nations military observers are still denied access to certain operational areas by both parties. Whenever necessary, such interference with their freedom of movement is protested to the party concerned. During the current mandate the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has agreed to the use of UNIIMOG vehicles in all sectors in that country, thereby greatly improving UNIIMOG's operational effectiveness (see para. 22 below). Some patrols on the Iranian side are still being cancelled because of lack of liaison officers, interpreters or escort officers but this problem has lessened considerably during the mandate thanks to the provision of more Iranian liaison officers.
- 14. There has been no progress in UNIIMOG's efforts to obtain the opening of three crossing points to enable United Nations personnel and vehicles to cross from one side to the other.
- 15. Throughout the mandate period there was a general calm along the cease-fire lines and a significant and encouraging decline in the number of major violations. Two serious firing incidents occurred in December 1989 but they were resolved by UNIIMOG and did not spread to adjacent areas. It is encouraging that both parties responded positively and promptly to UNIIMOG's efforts to bring these incidents to an end. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of either party's responses to a number of long-standing and continuing violations, mostly involving movement forward into no man's land. Despite repeated protests by UNIIMOG a number of major breaches of the status quo in no man's land by both parties persist. On the positive side, it can be noted that most cease-fire violations were minor in nature, involving small improvements and adjustments to existing defences, and many of them were successfully resolved by UNIIMOG. The Group's new standing operating procedures for violations went into effect during the mandate and helped to simplify the system for reporting, processing and resolving violations.
- 16. At several points on the cease-fire lines, the parties continue to remain dangerously close. UNIIMOG has proposed to both parties that they co-operate in moving their forces back from these areas of possible confrontation but with only partial success.

- 17. I regret to have to report that the flooding of no man's land by the Islamic Republic of Iran that began on 13 September 1988 and was described in paragraph 14 of my report of 2 February 1989 (S/20442) and in paragraph 18 of my report of 22 September 1989 (S/20862) persists. UNIIMOG has so far been able to prevent renewed confrontation over it but it remains essential that the status quo be restored without further delay.
- 18. I also regret to have to report that efforts by UNIIMOG to persuade the Iraqi authorities to allow the fires in the three oil and gas wells that are burning in no man's land on Iranian territory in the Dehloran area (see S/20442, para. 15) to be extinguished have continued to be unsuccessful. In February 1990, the Islamic Republic of Iran moved heavy machinery, civilian workers and troops into no man's land at the southernmost well and started preliminary work to cap it. As this constituted a violation of the status quo, UNIIMOG persuaded the Iranian authorities to withdraw all personnel and equipment. I am continuing my efforts to persuade the Iraqi authorities, on economic and environmental grounds, to agree to a civilian operation, under UNIIMOG supervision, for the capping of the three wells, an operation which would in no way change the military status quo.
- 19. Each side continues to complain that it is exposed in the north to cross-border insurgent activities launched from the other side. UNIIMOG has not directly observed any such activities, which it believes take place at night and in areas where its freedom of movement is most restricted by both sides. It has investigated a number of alleged incidents of this kind in no man's land or in the immediate proximity of the cease-fire lines but has not been able to reach definitive conclusions about what had happened. It is important that neither side should permit activities on its territory which could jeopardize the maintenance of the cease-fire.
- 20. It has continued to prove impossible to obtain the agreement of both parties to the establishment of the mixed military working group and the group has not been convened so far. Despite this, the Chief Military Observer has continued to pursue a number of measures that have helped, or could help, to ease tension between the parties:
- (a) Repatriation of war dead. A total of 168 Iranian and 252 Iraqi war dead were repatriated during the current mandate. This activity is of obvious humanitarian value and fosters goodwill between the parties and towards UNIIMOG. UNIIMOG continues to attempt to persuade the parties to agree to expansion of recovery of war dead into no man's land under UNIIMOG supervision. These attempts have not so far succeeded;
- (b) Prisoners taken since the cease-fire. UNIIMOG continues to make representations to Iraq for the release of several hundred Iranian soldiers who were taken prisoners in a serious incident near Ein Khosh shortly after the cease-fire on 23-24 August 1988. UNIIMOG has also pursued its efforts to obtain the release of other prisoners captured by both sides since 20 August 1988, including, most recently, three Iraqi soldiers captured by the Islamic Republic of Iran in December 1989. However, it has not proved possible thus far to reach agreement on these cases;

(c) <u>Economic reconstruction</u>. Both parties have expressed their strong desire to proceed with economic reconstruction and UNIIMOG has on several occasions been able to assist this process by providing United Nations military observers to monitor reconstruction activities close to the cease-fire lines and to assure the other party that no work is being done for military purposes.

Logistics

- 21. The standard of accommodation provided by the respective host Governments, both official and residential, varies considerably but is generally satisfactory. In some locations, it needs further improvement and in some forward areas relocations are required in the light of experience and changed circumstances. Restrictions on recreational travel by UNIIMOG personnel have lessened but the lack of freedom of movement allowed to UNIIMOG personnel in some locations on both sides continues to be a problem.
- 22. Since mid-January 1990, UNIIMOG has been able to drive its own vehicles in all sectors of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the mission is now entirely self-sufficient in land transport on both sides. A number of security restrictions concerning the movement of UNIIMOG vehicles, including movements between detachment headquarters, sector headquarters and team sites, particularly in the Islamic Republic of Iran, need to be relaxed in order to render UNIIMOG's operations more efficient and give it adequate capacity to meet emergency situations.
- 23. UNIIMOG continues to have at its disposal three fixed-wing aircraft; a Jetstream provided free of charge by the Government of Switzerland, which is principally used to enable the Chief Military Observer and his Command Group to commute between Baghdad and Tehran; a contracted Canadian Twin Otter aircraft, stationed in Iraq; and an Andover aircraft from the Royal New Zealand Air Force stationed in the Islamic Republic of Iran, which is used for the transport of personnel and supplies to sectors and team sites. The latter two aircraft are also used occasionally for commuting between Baghdad and Tehran. The difficulties over the deployment of United Nations helicopters and additional aircraft in the Islamic Republic of Iran have not yet been resolved. The host Governments continue to provide helicopters for transport purposes. UNTIMOG's inability to use United Nations-operated helicopters for patrolling the cease-fire lines remains a major impediment to its full effectiveness.
- 24. The United Nations communications network established and operated by United Nations civilian radio technicians is now well in place. The required extension and improvement of that network is, however, handicapped by the non-availability of additional radios and spare parts in the Islamic Republic of Iran where, since the spring of 1989, none of the required equipment has been released from customs. The United Nations satellite station in Iraq is completed and operative. However, the related equipment has been held in customs in the Islamic Republic of Iran since the beginning of the mission, and no progress has yet been made in persuading the Iranian authorities to comply with the provisions of the agreement on the status of UNIIMOG and permit UNIIMOG to install and operate satellite communications. This greatly inhibits UNIIMOG-Tehran's ability to communicate with United Nations

Headquarters in New York and with UNIIMOG-Baghdad, especially in emergency situations when rapid communication between UNIIMOG's two headquarters is essential if incidents on the cease-fire lines are to be brought under control and prevented from escalating.

Relations with the parties

- 25. During the period covered by the present report, UNIIMOG has continued to receive co-operation from the two parties. As will be clear, however, from the preceding sections of the present report, I am not yet in a position to report that either party is giving all the help UNIIMOG needs if it is to carry out the tasks entrusted to it by the Security Council.
- 26. In the Islamic Republic of Iran there have been some welcome improvements in the conditions for UNIIMOG's operations, notably permission, since the beginning of 1990, for UNIIMOG observers to drive UNIIMOG-owned vehicles in all sectors on the Iranian side of the cease-fire lines. However, UNIIMOG patrols are still denied freedom of movement several times each day; and the use of UNIIMOG satellite communications and UNIIMOG helicopters has still not been accepted. The flooding of no man's land is another case in which the Islamic Republic of Iran has not so far found it possible to respond positively to repeated efforts by the United Nations to re-establish the status quo.
- 27. In Iraq, implementation of the preliminary status agreement for UNIIMOG has generally proceeded satisfactorily. Recently, however, the Iraqi authorities have proposed restrictions on the movements of UNIIMOG personnel between Iraq and the Islamic Republic of Iran. These restrictions have been protested and discussions between the Government of Iraq and the United Nations continue with a view to a mutual. Acceptable solution. On a number of substantive issues, notably the capping of the Dehloran oil and gas wells, the release of prisoners taken since 20 August 1988 and patrolling by UNIIMOG of the waters off the mouth of the Shatt al-Arab, Iraq has not yet been able to agree to proposals that would strengthen the cease-fire and create conditions conducive to a solution of the wider issues related to the full implementation of Security Council resolution 598 (1987).

Financial aspects

28. By its resolution 44/189 of 21 December 1989, the General Assembly authorized the Secretary-General to enter into commitments for the operation of UNIIMOG at a rate not to exceed \$6,401,333 gross (\$6,237,333 net) per month for the six-month period beginning 1 April 1990 and \$7,068,000 gross (\$6,904,000 net) per month for the six-month period beginning 1 October 1990, subject to obtaining the prior concurrence of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions for the actual level of commitments to be entered into, should the Security Council decide to continue the Group beyond 31 March 1990, as authorized under its resolution 642 (1989). If the Council decides to extend UNIIMOG beyond its current mandate period the costs to the United Nations for maintaining the Group during the

extension period will be within the commitment authorized by the Assembly in its resolution 44/189, assuming continuance of the existing responsibilities of UNIIMOG.

29. As at the beginning of March 1990, unpaid assessed contributions to the UNIIMOG Special Account for the mandate periods since its inception up to 31 March 1990 amounted to \$21.2 million.

Implementation of Security Council resolution 598 (1987)

- 30. In pursuance of my efforts aimed at implementing Security Council resolution 598 (1987), I met in New York with the Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mr. Ali Akbar Velayati, on 29 September 1989 and the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq, Mr. Tariq Aziz, on 4 October 1989. The Ministers reiterated their acceptance of the suggestion that my Personal Representative, Ambassador Jan Eliasson, engage in intensive consultations in the course of a shuttle visit between Baghdad and Tehran in the first half of November 1989. Through a statement issued by the President of the Security Council on 27 October 1989, the members of the Council expressed their support for that visit.
- Accordingly, from 1 to 16 November 1989, my Personal Representative and his team visited Baghdad and Tehran three times and held discussions with President Saddam Hussein, with President Hashemi Rafsanjani as well as with the Foreign Ministers and senior officials of both countries. In the course of those visits the reaction of the two sides was sought to the framework for the pursuance of my efforts as contained in paragraph 41 of my report to the Council of 22 September 1989 (S/20862). At the conclusion of his visits, Ambassador Eliasson made a detailed presentation to the Foreign Ministers of Iraq and the Islamic Republic of Iran which contained specific suggestions on how to finalize a concrete programme of work. In particular, he put forward a specific list of issues to be implemented as an integrated whole, bearing in mind the urgency which the resolution has attributed to some of its provisions. The presentation made clear that the process of direct talks between the Foreign Ministers of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq under my auspices had been recognized as the appropriate vehicle for developing a common understanding, in accordance with my 8 August 1988 letter, on the implementation of resolution 598 (1987). Such talks, appropriately structured, should permit the finalization of the understanding with a view to implementation.
- 32. During his visit to Tehran my Personal Representative was informed by the Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran that his Government, in the weeks ahead, would unilaterally release a number of sick and wounded prisoners-of-war, without pre-conditions and irrespective of whether they had been registered by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Iraq declared its readiness to reciprocate. The Iranian side, in early January 1990, released a limited number of prisoners; and the Iraqi side responded on a proportional basis that reflected the numbers of prisoners-of-war registered by ICRC. Furthermore, on 13 March 1990, 20 non-Iraqi prisoners-of-war were released by the Iranian authorities.

- 33. I met in New York on 11 and 13 December 1989 with the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Iraq and on 12 and 15 December 1989 with the Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran. During those discussions I emphasized the need to bring about appropriately structured direct talks under my auspices with a specific agenda based or my September report to the Council.
- 34. On 27 February 1990, after informing the members of the Security Council of my efforts, I asked for its concrete and clear support, bearing in mind comments I had made on the format, agenda and duration of the talks which I intended to propose to the two parties.
- 35. In its response (S/21172), the Council, at its 2908th meeting, expressed its support for my efforts and for the holding of appropriately structured direct talks between both parties under my auspices, for a period of two months and with a specific agenda, the elements of which I had outlined to the members of the Council on the basis of the concluding observations contained in my report of 22 September 1989.
- 36. Accordingly, on 6 March 1990, I met with the Permanent Representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq respectively and suggested, for acceptance by their Governments, a draft agenda for those talks. Since then my Personal Representative has been continuing his contacts with both sides with the aim of arranging a new phase of direct talks to bring about the implementation of resolution 598 (1987).
- 37. Until now, no final answer has been received from either Government, although there have been public statements by high-level Iranian officials commending the steps taken by the United Nations. Both sides have asked questions to which my Personal Representative has responded in meetings which have taken place up to 22 March.

Observations

- 38. Since my report of 22 September 1989 (S/20862), I have made a major effort to explore in detail the positions of the two Governments with regard to the various elements of the resolution yet to be implemented. Ambassador Eliasson's extended visit to the region in November 1989 was aimed at encouraging both sides to focus on an agenda for a new phase of direct talks. Despite some difficulties which he encountered, he concluded his visits to both capitals by making a presentation of a possible programme of work (see para. 31 Love), which he outlined in identical terms to both sides for their consideration.
- 39. Following the visits, I continued my efforts, emphasizing the need for appropriately structured direct talks based on a specific agenda. However, in December 1989, it seemed that progress would not be obtained without concrete support for my efforts by the members of the Security Council.
- 40. Against this background, the statement issued on 27 February by the Security Council (S/21172) constitutes an important step in the efforts aimed at implementing resolution 598 (1987). It is an indication of what the international

community considers to be a reasonable way to proceed. The particular urgency of the provisions referring to withdrawal without delay and to release and repatriation of prisoners-of-war without delay and in accordance with the Third Geneva Convention of 1949, 1/ as well as the need to implement the resolution as a peace plan and an integrated whole have been fully recognized.

- 41. It is my firm expectation that the consultations that my Personal Representative is having with the parties in order to bring about the appropriately structured direct talks based on a specific agenda, for a period of two months, will indicate that both Governments are determined to take advantage of this opportunity and the momentum created by the Security Council's statement of 27 February.
- 42. Such talks would make it possible to achieve an implementation plan including timings and procedures for all aspects of the resolution. The implementation plan would thus reflect the understanding of the two sides on how implementation should be carried out.
- 43. I believe it is time for the leadership of the two nations to notify me of their acceptance of the proposed agenda and to give added political impetus to the talks by indicating to each other their sincerity and their determination to implement resolution 598 (1987). Once the talks start it will also be necessary to make all efforts to conduct the talks, not in hostility or as victor and vanquished, but in a spirit of goodwill and good-neighbourliness.
- 44. Meanwhile, I believe it will be clear to the members of the Security Council that UNIIMOG continues to play an indispensable part in ensuring the maintenance of the cease-fire and that its continued presence is an essential condition for further progress towards the full implementation of resolution 598 (1987). Both the parties have assured me of their support for UNIIMOG and of their agreement to an extension of its mandate. I accordingly recommend to the Security Council that the mandate be renewed for a period of six months, that is until 30 September 1990.
- 45. I again pay tribute to Major-General Slavko Jovic, the Chief Military Observer, and to all the men and women under his command, both military and civilian, for the skill and determination with which they continue to carry out their difficult assignment. Their performance and bearing have been of a high order, reflecting credit on themselves, on their countries and on the United Nations. Finally, I wish to recognize here the important role played by Brigadier V. M. Patil, the former Assistant Chief Military Observer on the Iraqi side, during the critical first year of UNIIMOG's existence and to commend him for his lasting contribution.

Notes

1/ United Nations Treaty Series, vol. 75, No. 972.





