2
Developments since UNSCR 687 (1991)

The years since the end of the Gulf conflict in April 1991 have seen significant developments both in the consideration of the situation in Iraq by the UN and in international non-proliferation regimes. It was initially perceived that the Special Commission (UNSCOM) set up in April 1991 would complete its task within some three months on the basis that Iraq would cooperate fully by making full and complete disclosures of its proscribed weapons programmes and providing its remaining proscribed weapons and associated equipment for destruction under the supervision of UNSCOM. In the event, it became all too clear within two months that Iraq was not cooperating and both then and subsequently throughout the following years the Security Council has necessarily had to address the situation in Iraq at rather frequent intervals. Although there was an early acceptance by Iraq of UN Security Council Resolution (SCR) 687 (1991) and of the privileges and responsibilities of UNSCOM and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in respect of Iraq, there has been a continuing series of denials by Iraq of access and refusals to provide the required information, which has necessitated consideration by the Security Council resulting in additional Resolutions or statements by the President on behalf of the Security Council admonishing Iraq and stressing the necessity of compliance with the requirements of the relevant Security Council Resolutions.

Over the past few years it has become ever clearer that Iraq has never taken the political decision to abandon its weapons of mass destruction, and has deliberately sought to conceal its capabilities thereby prolonging and making the work of UNSCOM and the IAEA very much more difficult. The overall success of UNSCOM through its dogged persistence in the face of so much outright obstruction by Iraq is all the greater. Indeed as UNSCOM has over time acquired information and evidence of Iraq’s proscribed programmes, the shortcomings in the information provided by Iraq have become ever more compelling – and the obstructions introduced by Iraq have become yet more blatant.
This chapter provides an overview of UNSCOM activities – and Iraqi obstructions – along with the development of the capabilities of UNSCOM against which two later chapters (Chapters 4 and 5) set out the gradual uncovering of the Iraqi chemical and biological weapon programmes respectively. It is convenient in considering the achievements of UNSCOM in respect of chemical and biological weapons to regard this in several phases:

4. Ongoing monitoring and verification (November 1993 onwards).

The accounts in these three chapters draw heavily from the reports made by UNSCOM to the Security Council as these provide an authoritative and accurate perception of the developing UNSCOM and international appreciation of the Iraqi proscribed programmes. There are essentially two main series of UNSCOM reports: the first being reports on UNSCOM at six-monthly intervals to the Security Council and the second being reports on ongoing monitoring and verification (OMV) again at six-monthly intervals to the Security Council. As might be expected, there was some overlap between the material reported in these two series so they were eventually amalgamated into a single series of six-monthly reports in 1996 following adoption of UNSCR 1051 (1996). In addition, other reports are made intermittently on particular events or high-level visits to Baghdad.

The setting up of UNSCOM and the initial inspections (1991)

On 3 April 1991 the Security Council adopted Resolution 687 (1991) establishing detailed measures for a ceasefire which included several elements: deployment of a United Nations observer unit; arrangements for demarcating the Iraq–Kuwait border; the removal or destruction of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction and measures to prevent their reconstruction, under the supervision of a special commission and the Director General of the IAEA; and creation of a compensation fund to cover direct loss and damage resulting from Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait.

This book is primarily concerned with Section C (paragraphs 7 to 14) of SCR 687 (1991) (see Appendix) – the removal or destruction of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction and measures to prevent their reconstitution. The first of these paragraphs (para 7) invited Iraq to reaffirm unconditionally its