

FRONTLINE

Support for PBS.org provided by:

What's this?

Back To School Time Just Got Personal
FREE personalization on backpacks, lunch bags, pencil cases and more at the **PBS KIDS Shop** [SHOP NOW](#)

- [PBS HOME](#)
- [PROGRAMS A-Z](#)
- [TV SCHEDULES](#)
- [WATCH VIDEO](#)
- [DONATE](#)
- [SHOP PBS](#)
- [SEARCH PBS](#)

SPYING ON SADDAM

Chronology

» 1991

February Gulf War Ends

Resolution 687 passes in the UN. Saddam stays in power, economic sanctions remain. Saddam must destroy weapons and allow inspection of all weapons facilities by a special UN commission: UNSCOM. Iraq is given 15 days to provide a list of its weapons of mass destruction.

4 April Iraqi deception over weapons of mass destruction begins. Iraqi nuclear scientists are ordered to hide nuclear weapons from inspectors, collect and move computer data and formulate a justification for the existence of Iraqi nuclear labs.

6 April Iraq formally accepts Resolution 687.

18 April Iraq declares some chemical weapons and materials, as required under Resolution 687, but states that it does not have biological weapons program.

19 April Swedish diplomat Rolf Ekeus is appointed Executive Chairman of UNSCOM.

9 June UNSCOM begins first inspection in Iraq.

23-28 June UNSCOM/IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) tries to intercept Iraqi vehicles carrying nuclear related equipment called calutrons. Iraqis fire warning shots in the air to prevent inspectors from approaching vehicles. **David Kay** is chief UNSCOM official for that inspection.

Summer Ekeus arranges for a loan to UNSCOM of an American U2 plane to take surveillance photos of Iraq. Many point to this event as the beginning of UNSCOM's **reliance on various national intelligence agencies** for help in disarming Iraq.

- [home](#)
- [analyses](#)
- [photos](#)
- [interviews](#)
- [what it took](#)

[frontline page](#) | [watch online](#) | [schedule](#) | [bulletin](#) | [search](#) | [rss](#) | [unl home](#)

2 August	UNSCOM's first biological inspection team is told by Iraq that any research into biological weapons was "for defensive military purposes."
15 August	UN Security Council again demands Iraq to provide a full disclosure of its weapons.
September	UNSCOM determines that it needs to be more aggressive to uncover Iraq weapons. Former U.S. Marine intelligence officer Scott Ritter is hired.
21-30 September	IAEA inspectors discover files on Iraq's nuclear weapons program. Iraqis confiscate some documents from inspectors, but inspectors refuse to release other documents. In response, the Iraqis block inspectors from leaving parking lot for four days. Inspectors are freed only after UN Security Council issues a threat of force.
* 1992	
18 February	Special Report of the Executive Chairman of UNSCOM details Iraq's refusal to abide by Security Council disarmament resolutions.
19 March	Iraq declares existence of 89 ballistic missiles and chemical weapons, but also states that they destroyed most of these materials unilaterally the previous summer (in violation of resolution 687).
May-June	Iraq provides its first Full, Final and Complete Disclosure for its prohibited weapons programs.
July	UNSCOM begins to destroy large quantities of Iraq's chemical weapons and production facilities.
6-29 July	Confrontation at Ministry of Agriculture where UNSCOM believes there are important documents on ballistic missiles. UNSCOM stages 17-day sit-in outside of building. UNSCOM inspectors finally leave when their safety is threatened, and when UN Security Council seems unwilling to support UNSCOM with a threat of force.
* 1993	
January	Iraq refuses to allow UNSCOM the use of its own aircraft to fly into Iraq. Iraq also starts incursions into the demilitarized zone between Iraq and Kuwait and increases its military activity in the no-fly zones.
	US forces fire approximately 40 Tomahawk

19 January	cruise missiles at a Baghdad factory linked to Iraq's nuclear weapons program. Iraq then informs UNSCOM that it will be able to resume its flights.
21 January	Clinton Inauguration.
18 June	President of Security Council protests Iraq's refusal to allow UNSCOM to place monitoring cameras at two missile engine test stands.
26 June	Clinton warns Iraq over standoff.
27 June	US strikes Iraq intelligence headquarters, in retaliation for Iraqi complicity in plot to kill former president George Bush during visit to Kuwait.
5 July	UN inspection team leaves Iraq. Iraq subsequently agrees to UNSCOM demands. The inspection team returns.
• 1994	
10 February	Joint statement by Tariq Aziz of Iraq and Rolf Ekeus stating that significant progress had been made in both political and technical areas of weapons verification.
Spring	UNSCOM/Israel intelligence connection begins in earnest. Israel begins to provide UNSCOM with U-2 photo interpretation.
June	Weapons inspectors Ritter and Smidovitch learn, through Israeli intelligence reports, that Qusay Hussein, Saddam's younger son, is the key player in hiding and preserving Iraq's special weapons. Qusay heads the Apparatus of Special Security which is under the umbrella of the Special Security Organization (SSO).
June	UNSCOM completes destruction of large quantities of chemical warfare agents and production equipment.
September-October	Iraq rejects appeals to withdraw threat to stop cooperating with UNSCOM and starts deploying troops in direction of Kuwait. In response, US begins to deploy troops to Kuwait.
8 October	President of UN Security Council states that Iraq's demands are unacceptable and that it must withdraw troops deployed in direction of Kuwait.
15 October	Iraq states that it has withdrawn troops from border with Kuwait.

▸ 1995

- UNSCOM is close to declaring Iraqi weapons inspections completed.
- March Iraq provides the second Full, Final and Complete Disclosures of its prohibited biological and chemical weapons programs.
- Summer By the middle of 1995, the unity of the UN Security Council begins to fray, as certain countries, particularly France and Russia, becoming increasingly interested in the financial opportunities of a post-sanctions Iraq.
- 1 July In response to UNSCOM's evidence, Iraq admits for first time the existence of an offensive biological weapons program, but denies weaponization.
- July Iraq threatens to end all cooperation with UNSCOM and IAEA if there is no progress toward the lifting of sanctions and the oil embargo by 31 August 1995.
- August Iraq provides the third Full, Final and Complete Disclosure for its prohibited biological weapons program.
- August Israeli intelligence report provided to Ritter reveals that Iraq was attempting to purchase missile gyroscopes (guidance devices) from a Russian export company.
- 8 August Hussein Kamel, Saddam's son-in-law and head of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) programs, defects. **Kamel informs UNSCOM** and foreign intelligence agencies about Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programs. In response, Iraq withdraws its third Full, Final and Complete Disclosure for its prohibited biological weapons, and turns over treasure trove of documents on its WMD programs. Iraq claims no knowledge of this and say documents were held secretly by Hussein Kamel.
- November Iraq provides the second Full, Final and Complete Disclosure of its prohibited missile program.
- 10 November Operation Teacup Mission #1: The search for banned missile gyroscopes. Operation Teacup was a series of UNSCOM missions that utilized foreign intelligence to uncover and intercept Iraqi attempts to reconstitute its missile programs. Scott Ritter asked for US help in intercepting a shipment of gyroscopes, but they refused. Israel helped instead. With the added help of Jordan, Ritter intercepted 240 Russian

	gyroscopes and accelerometers en route to Iraq from Russia. However, before UNSCOM could gain access to these gyroscopes, the CIA intercepted them.
16 December	Iraqi scuba divers are directed by UNSCOM to dredge the Tigris River near Baghdad. They find over 200 additional missile instruments and components. These items' serial numbers suggest that they originated in Russia.
• 1996	
February	Stepped up intelligence gathering begins (as result of revelations by Hussein Kamel): UNSCOM brings eavesdropping devices into Iraq. The information is delivered to analysis centers in Britain, Israel, and the US.
	Hussein Kamel, the defector and Saddam's son-in-law, returns to Iraq. Within days he is murdered along with his brother, father, sister and her children.
March	After UNSCOM is denied access to five sites (and can enter them only after significant delays) UNSCOM deploys its "Shake the Tree" tactic. Its goal is to make the Iraqis paranoid and get them to inadvertently reveal their concealment methods.
	The UN Security Council criticizes Iraq for its intransigence, but does not threaten immediate military action.
May-June	UNSCOM supervises the destruction of Al-Hakam, Iraq's main facility for the production of biological warfare agents. (Read a report on this facility)
June	Iraq again denies UNSCOM teams access to sites.
June	US fails in its attempt to marshal support for military action in the UN Security Council.
19-22 June	Rolf Ekeus negotiates with Iraq, gaining the right for UNSCOM to inspect "sensitive" sites, but on what appears to be the Iraqi's terms. Only four inspectors will be allowed in to each of these sites.
June	Iraq provides the third Full, Final and Complete Disclosure of its prohibited biological weapons program.
June	Iraq provides the third Full, Final and Complete Disclosure of its prohibited missile program.

July	Ritter's attempts to conduct surprise inspections on the Republican Guard facility at the airport is blocked by Iraqi officials. By the time he and his team are allowed into the facility a few days later, they find nothing.
Summer	The UN Security Council expresses unease with UNSCOM's confrontational tactics. They want UNSCOM to move their mission toward some sort of conclusion.
August	Iraqi forces attack the city of Irbil in Northern Iraq (known as part of "Kurdistan"). President Clinton responds by expanding the no-fly zones to the southern suburbs of Baghdad, but does not attack Iraqi forces in the north.
September	Increasing tension between UNSCOM and the CIA. Rolf Ekeus meets with CIA Director John Deutch, expressing frustration that the CIA is not sharing sufficient data. Ekeus also requests more advanced technical help from the CIA for future operations.
November	UNSCOM inspectors uncover buried missile parts, but are prevented by Iraqi officials from removing these parts for outside analysis.
9 December	The UN Security Council allows Iraq to make limited oil sales for the purpose of purchasing food and medicine.
30 December	The UN Security Council deplores Iraq's intransigence on the missile parts.
• 1997	
February	Iraq allows UNSCOM to remove missile parts.
26 March	Madeleine Albright delivers speech at Georgetown University in which she argues that sanctions likely will not end until Saddam is replaced. Many observers regard this speech as undercutting UNSCOM's ability to gain Iraqi cooperation.
June	Iraq interferes with UNSCOM's helicopter operations, threatening the safety of the aircraft and their crews.
18 June	The Security Council expresses concern over Iraqi actions against UNSCOM helicopters.
21 June	Iraq again blocks UNSCOM's teams from entering certain sites.
21 June	The Security Council passes a resolution condemning Iraq's actions, but no action is taken.
	Australian diplomat Richard Butler succeeds

July	Rolf Ekeus as Executive Chairman of UNSCOM.
September	Iraq provides the fifth Full, Final and Complete Disclosure for its prohibited biological weapons program.
25 September	UNSCOM inspects a food laboratory. One of the inspectors, Dr. Diane Seaman , enters through the back door and catches men running out with suitcases. These suitcases contain log books for the creation of bacteria and chemicals. The letterhead comes from the president's office and from the Special Security Office (SSO).
	UNSCOM tries to inspect the SSO headquarters but is blocked.
23 October	UN Security Council passes a resolution demanding that Iraq cooperate with UNSCOM, continues the suspension of the periodic sanctions review that it had suspended earlier this year, and foreshadows additional sanctions pending a further report on Iraq's cooperation with UNSCOM.
October	UNSCOM completes the destruction of more large quantities of chemical weapons and related equipment. Iraq only had admitted that some of this equipment had been used to produce VX gas in May 1997.
29 October	Crisis begins: Iraq claims it will throw out US inspectors and will shoot down U2 surveillance planes.
November	Scott Ritter claims that the CIA begins to withhold significant information from UNSCOM.
2 November	Iraq bars three American weapons experts from entering the country.
12 November	UN Security Council passes a resolution condemning Iraq's actions.
13 November	UNSCOM withdraws all weapons inspectors because of Hussein's order to expel all American arms experts.
14 November	Military strikes against Iraq seem likely.
18 November	Boris Yeltsin meets with Aziz. War is averted.
20-22 November	Saddam Hussein agrees to allow UN weapons inspectors to return to Iraq after 3 week suspension.
24-25	New struggle begins over UNSCOM's

- November inspection of Iraqi Presidential Palaces.
- December UNSCOM continues aggressive inspections, including at the Special Security Office, Saddam's personal security force, which UNSCOM believes also is coordinating Iraq's weapons concealment activities. Washington presses UNSCOM to call these inspections off after the first one is vehemently opposed by the Iraqis.
- 12-16 December Richard Butler meets with Tariq Aziz in Iraq over Iraq's refusal to grant inspections of sensitive sites. Butler leaves without an agreement. Clinton reserves right to "consider other options."
- 1998
- January Iraq wants Scott Ritter's team out. They claim that the inspections team is too American-dominated, that "sensitive" sites such as Presidential palaces are off limits, and they say that Ritter is a spy.
- 12 January US responds by threatening force.
- 15 January Ritter gets a call from Butler the night before a surprise inspection at SSO. Butler tells him that US Ambassador to the UN Bill Richardson wants Ritter to call it off and wants him to go back to Bahrain.
- 22 January Monica Lewinsky story breaks.
- 23 January Brink of war: serious threat of military force in the air.
- 31 January Military force likely. Aircraft carrier USS George Washington is off Bahrain coast, poised for military action.
- 18 February Albright, William Cohen, and Sandy Berger visit Ohio for internationally televised "town hall" meeting on Iraq. Angry audience members disrupt the meeting.
- 20 February The UN Security Council passes a resolution that permits Iraq to double its "oil for food" sales, to \$5.25 Billion every six months. [By January 1999, The New York Times is reporting that Kofi Annan is convinced that the Iraqi leadership is not spending the money to alleviate hunger and medical emergencies in his country, and instead continues to blame the suffering of the Iraqi people on sanctions.]
- Crisis defused when UN Secretary General Kofi Annan reaches deal with Saddam, who promises unconditional co-operation with

	inspection team. Inspections resume. Saddam agrees to the inspection of the eight so-called presidential sites.
22-24 February	[Ritter claims that Annan secretly promised Iraq that the confrontational inspections of sensitive sites would occur only once: sometime in the next four months.]
March	US Intercepted communications are sent by satellite relay to the NSA in Fort Meade.
2 March	US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright urges Richard Butler to keep Scott Ritter from heading the inspection team that is to enter Iraqi "sensitive" sites. After other leaders of UNSCOM inspection teams back Ritter in a memo to the Executive Chairman, Ritter returns to Iraq.
20-23 March	Butler states publicly that the agreement UN General Secretary Kofi Annan strikes with the Iraqis has helped to create a sense of cooperation with the Iraqis.
April	Scott Ritter complains to Richard Butler that the US, Israel, and Great Britain have stopped providing intelligence reports, and that the Americans have taken over UNSCOM's operation. American officials disagree, stating that only Ritter was cut off from information because he was needlessly complicating UNSCOM's work.
4 April	UNSCOM completes initial inspection of eight Presidential sites.
8 April	UNSCOM reports to the Security Council that Iraq's declaration on its biological weapons program is incomplete and inadequate.
15 May	Operation Teacup: Romania. An Iraqi delegation goes to Bucharest to meet with individuals who could provide missile guidance systems. UNSCOM sets a trap with the intent of presenting this information to the UN Security Council. But UNSCOM is never able to get this information to the Council.
Spring	An inspection team discovers a dump full of destroyed Iraqi missiles. An analysis of the parts proves that Iraq had made a weapon containing VX.
11-15 June	Butler meets with Tariq Aziz to develop roadmap for concluding inspections.
2 August	UNSCOM begins a planned series of surprise inspections.
	Butler meets with Tariq Aziz who demands

3 August	that inspections must end and that Iraq must be certified as free of weapons of mass destruction. Butler says he cannot do that. Aziz suspends talks.
5 August	Iraq suspends all co-operation with UNSCOM.
7 August	US embassies in East Africa are bombed.
17 August	Clinton admits affair with Lewinsky.
18 August	Brink of war with Iraq.
20 August	US bombs terrorist training camp in Afghanistan and a factory in Sudan in retaliation against Osama bin Laden , the accused mastermind of the East Africa embassy bombings.
25 August	Butler, according to Ritter, asked Ritter to "redefine" his team--meaning Butler wants Ritter to back off from confrontational inspections.
26 August	Ritter resigns from UNSCOM. He accuses the US of undercutting UNSCOM. He calls the UN response to Iraq "a surrender to the Iraqi leadership" and says he will not be a part of it.
9 September	UN Security Council passes a resolution which condemns Iraq's lack of cooperation.
22-23 October	UNSCOM convenes a meeting to discuss the 1998 analysis of samples taken from remnants of Iraq's special warheads. The US charges that these warheads contained traces of chemical weapons.
31 October	Iraq shuts down all UNSCOM inspections.
13-14 November	Clinton orders airstrike on Iraq. Then calls it off at the last minute when Iraq promises unconditionally to co-operate with UNSCOM.
18 November	UNSCOM inspectors return to Iraq.
23-26 November	Iraq makes it clear that it will not cooperate with UNSCOM inspectors, alternately intimidating and withholding information from them.
30 November	Butler meets with US National Security Advisor Sandy Berger to coordinate time lines for possible military strike against Iraq.
9 December	UNSCOM inspectors show up for an unscheduled search of Saddam Hussein's Ba'ath Party headquarters. Only four inspectors are allowed to enter. Butler then calls off the inspection.

- 11
December Iraq announces that inspections can no longer take place on Friday, the Muslim day of rest. They refuse to provide test data from the production of missiles and engines.
- 13
December Clinton secretly approves attack on Iraq.
- 15
December Richard Butler provides a report to the UN Security Council which argues Iraq is still blocking inspections. This report serves as the basis for a military strike.
- 16
December UNSCOM withdraws all weapons inspectors from Iraq.
- 16-19
December Operation Desert Fox: bombing commences against Iraq. The House vote on impeachment is delayed.
- 17
December Some members of the UN Security Council attack Butler, saying that he manipulated the report that the US used to justify the attack against Iraq. Butler vehemently denies the charges.
- 19
December Just before bombing ceases, Iraqi vice-president Taha Yassin Ramadan announces that Iraq will no longer co-operate. He declares UNSCOM's "mission is over."
- 21
December Three of the five permanent members of the Security Council (Russia, France, and China) call for lifting the eight-year oil embargo, recasting or disbanding UNSCOM, and firing Butler. A US official (unnamed) indicates that the US will use its Security Council veto against any such measures.
- 1999
- 4 January The Washington Post reports that Kofi Annan obtained evidence that the US collected eavesdropping intelligence through UNSCOM with the UN's permission.
- 7 January US officials confirm their role in the monitoring operation of communications in Iraq. They say that intelligence agents from several countries, including the US, were assigned to work on inspection teams.
- 4 February Richard Butler tells CNN that when his term expires on June 30, 1999, he will resign.

Source: [UNSCOM's official chronology](#), and FRONTLINE's research.

[home](#) + [experts' analyses](#) + [photos](#) + [interviews](#) + [what it took](#) + [join the discussion](#)
[readings & links](#) + [chronology](#) + [synopsis](#) + [tapes & transcripts](#)
[frontline](#) + [pbs online](#) + [wgbh](#)

web site [copyright](#) 1995-2011 WGBH educational foundation