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# Former Weapons Inspector Says War With Iraq Inevitable



Former UN Weapons Inspector Scott Ritter. (AP Photo)

**Nov. 14 (AP)** — Former United Nations weapons inspector Scott Ritter says the U.N. resolution to disarm Iraq makes war inevitable.

"We're going to war, and there's not a damn thing the inspectors can do to stop it, and that's a shame. Inspections worked once and they can work again," Ritter said Wednesday night during a speech at the California Institute for Technology.

The wording of the United Nations resolution will allow the United States to attack by mid-December, said Ritter, who was chief weapons inspector for the U.N. Special Commission in Iraq from 1991 to 1998.

He resigned in 1998, in part, because weapons inspectors were being used to justify the Desert Fox bombing campaign against Iraq, Ritter said. Although he's a Republican who voted for President Bush, Ritter spent much of his speech criticizing the administration.

"The U.S. has a policy regarding Iraq of regime removal. The last thing Bush wants is a weapons inspection regime that works. That would mean lifting economic sanctions and Iraq coming back into the fold with Saddam Hussein still at the helm," Ritter said.

The U.N. resolution carries a hidden trigger allowing Bush to attack after the Dec. 8 deadline for a weapons declaration from Iraq, he said, noting there will be four U.S. aircraft carriers in the region in December.

If Iraq does not declare any weapons on Dec. 8, it will constitute the false declaration described in the resolution. This would trigger a Security Council meeting to consider serious consequences, he said.

Under the resolution, however, false statements or omissions alone would not constitute a new "material breach" for the council to consider. During negotiations, France, Russia and others demanded that an Iraqi failure to cooperate also be required for a new "material breach."

The resolution adopted unanimously last Friday says "false statements or omissions in the declarations submitted by Iraq ... and failure by Iraq at any time to comply with, and cooperate fully in, the implementation of this resolution shall constitute a further material breach of Iraq's obligations and will be reported to the council for assessment."

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During his years as a weapons inspector specializing in forensic archaeology, Ritter said the Iraqis lied at every turn, leading inspectors to dig up demolished ballistic missiles and track the serial numbers to their Russian manufacturer for confirmation that all existing missiles were destroyed.

With such detective work, inspectors confirmed at least 95 percent of all weapons were destroyed by 1996.

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