



Security Council

Distr.
GENERALS/1997/851
5 November 1997

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 5 NOVEMBER 1997 FROM THE EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN OF THE
SPECIAL COMMISSION ESTABLISHED BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL PURSUANT
TO PARAGRAPH 9 (b) (i) OF SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 687 (1991)
ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Further to my letter of 4 November 1997 (S/1997/843), I should inform you, and through you the members of the Security Council, that on 5 November 1997, on my instructions as Executive Chairman, teams of the Special Commission attempted to conduct their inspection work in Iraq and were again blocked. The events on the ground followed a similar pattern to those of the previous day.

I should also like to draw to the attention of the Security Council the fact that the monitoring inspections of the Special Commission have now not taken place for one week. An obvious consequence is that the Commission is unable to verify that dual-capable facilities and equipment in Iraq have not been engaged in the production of weapons of mass destruction or components thereof.

The potential gravity of the current situation is further underlined by a recent development, which has serious implications for the ability of the Special Commission to carry out its work as called for by the Security Council.

Significant pieces of dual-capable equipment, subject to monitoring by the Special Commission's remote camera monitoring system, have been moved out of view of the cameras. The equipment includes, for example, gyroscope rotor balancing equipment, which could be used to balance prohibited missile gyroscopes.

The movement of such equipment, without prior notification, is prohibited under the Special Commission's monitoring plan and the equipment concerned is subject to continuous camera monitoring, precisely because of its easy adaptation to prohibited activities. For example, it would take only a matter of hours to adapt fermenters to produce seed stocks of biological warfare agents. Furthermore, it appears that cameras may have been intentionally tampered with, lenses covered and lighting turned off in the facilities under monitoring. The Commission is currently conducting an immediate and thorough review of the images from all the cameras. The Commission also intends to inspect two of the relevant facilities on 6 November 1997, to try to establish the whereabouts of the dual-capable equipment that has been moved.

I would be grateful if you would bring the present letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Richard BUTLER
