

U.N. team still under detention

Bush warns Iraq — cooperate or face consequences

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Iraq on Tuesday detained 44 U.N. inspectors for the second day in a row and accused them of being CIA spies as the crisis over Iraqi compliance with U.N. cease-fire terms appeared to be coming to a climax.

Troops surrounded the inspectors, who parked their cars in a circle to protect themselves and the videotapes of documents said to show details of Iraq's secret nuclear weapons program, its foreign suppliers and top Iraqi directors.

President Bush condemned Baghdad's "unacceptable behavior," and warned Saddam Hussein not to "miscalculate" as he did during the Gulf War.

"We don't want to see any more anguish inflicted on the Iraqi people, but overriding that is the international community's determination that these resolutions be fully complied with," Bush said in New York.

Underlining U.S. displeasure, a senior Pentagon official said 100 Patriot missiles and 1,300 troops would be sent to Saudi Arabia to ease that nation's concern over rising tensions in the Persian Gulf region.

The United States had warned Iraq that its refusal to cooperate with U.N. inspectors could force the council to authorize the use of troops and warplanes to protect the teams inside Iraq.

Late Tuesday, U.N. officials said Iraq had agreed to allow U.N. inspectors to use helicopters for their inspections, a major demand of the Security Council.

British Ambassador David Hannay said Iraq's letter to the Security Council's president, French Ambassador Jean-Bernard Merimee, "appears to be an unconditional acceptance for the right of the United Nations inspection teams to fly their helicopters ... we regard this letter as an unconditional acceptance."

Hannay said the U.N. weapons inspectors will promptly schedule helicopter flights. The inspectors are still trapped on their bus, he said. But Iraq's acceptance of the flights indicated a willingness to resolve the crisis.

Iraq sent another letter to Merimee on Tuesday complaining about the behavior of the inspectors, in particular the American director of the team.

At a news conference in Baghdad, Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz accused the team leader of being "an officer of the U.S. intelligence service," the official Iraqi News Agency reported.

David Kay, who heads the nuclear team in Baghdad, called the charge "completely ridiculous and untrue." Pentagon spokesman Pete Williams called it a "ludicrous allegation."

As for Iraqi charges that they had had "trouble" from his team, Kay said, that if his team had a problem "it is because we are very close to finding out the true scope and nature of the Iraqi program."

On Monday, Kay's U.N. team was detained for 12 hours in a Baghdad building after finding what they said was evidence that Iraq has been trying to develop nuclear weapons. Iraqi troops seized the papers, and although some were returned early Tuesday, U.N. officials said key documents were missing.

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When the inspectors began their work Tuesday, using a video camera at a building of the Iraqi Atomic Energy Commission, they found documents that gave a fuller picture of Iraq's secret nuclear program, detailing the people overseeing the work and the foreign companies that supplied nuclear materials, Kay said.

But Iraqi troops surrounded the U.N. team and refused to let it take away papers and film of documents gathered in the unannounced search. Iraqi officials said the inspectors would not be allowed to leave unless

they surrendered the material.

Kay reported that the inspectors were holed up in six cars and a bus parked in a circle outside the commission. They were blocked from leaving by 60 armed Iraqi security men at midday, and were still surrounded more than 12 hours later.

Kay said the team had "no intention of giving up that film." The inspection teams routinely videotape and photograph the documents they examine.

Kay spoke in several live interviews with Cable News Network from Baghdad, using a portable satellite telephone. The unusual blow-by-blow account of a developing international incident seemed intended to pressure Saddam's government to back off.

"It's essential for the international community's long-term stability that inspectors have the right to freely inspect, to collect data, to remove it for analysis," Kay said.

Iraqi officials claimed the team took personnel records unrelated to Iraq's nuclear research program. On Monday, the Iraqis claimed they objected to not receiving receipts for the material.

Kay said, "We were taking information on the top personnel in the Iraqi nuclear weapons program and clandestine uranium enrichment program as well as the financial data on their procurement abroad of items for their clandestine program."

He said the team also found documents on long-range missile production.

Rolf Ekeus, chairman of the U.N. Special Commission in charge of finding and destroying Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, said Tuesday's search found evidence as to which foreign companies had supplied Saddam's nuclear program. He did not identify any of the companies.

Ekeus said in New York that the conflict demonstrates that "we have a very good system (of finding material) ... it demonstrates also the importance of our findings."

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