

U.N. accepts plan to end standoff

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Moving to defuse the latest standoff with Saddam Hussein, the Security Council on Thursday accepted an Iraqi proposal aimed at ending the three-day detention of U.N. weapons inspectors in Baghdad.

The inspectors have been held in a Baghdad parking lot since they uncovered documents describing Iraq's secret nuclear weapons program.

Under the plan, diplomats said the documents, photographs and videotapes will stay in the possession of the inspectors while they and Iraqi authorities prepare a catalog of them.

Iraq had initially demanded that the team relinquish the documents, which the inspectors refused to do.

Later, the council also issued a statement saying that it "deplores Iraq's repeated violations of its obligations" under U.N. resolutions and demanded its cooperation in the destruction of its terror weapons.

The statement said the council reiterated its demand for the inspectors to be released immediately, but didn't object to "a joint inventory of documents and materials in this particular case."

Rolf Ekeus, head of the U.N. Special Commission charged with disposing of Iraq's weap-

Iraq wants list of items taken

ons of mass destruction, estimated it would take less than 24 hours to catalog all the documents, film and videotape, and that not all 44 inspectors would be needed for the task. However, it was not certain when the inspectors might actually be released.

Ekeus said "we are not talking hours" before the team is released because arrangements need to be made with the Iraqis. But he added: "We have worked out very sound arrangements, and we expect Iraq to say 'yes' to that, and then we can work quickly."

Earlier Thursday, Iraqi citizens held government-sanctioned demonstrations across the nation accusing the U.N. arms experts of being spies. "Death to the enemies of Iraq!" chanted the demonstrators, the official Iraqi News Agency said.

Encircled by Iraqi troops, the inspectors have struggled to keep their spirits high, holding lotteries to make calls home and improvising touch football games, the U.N. team's American leader said Thursday.

"Everyone's in very good spirits, good health," David Kay told The Associated Press in a satellite telephone interview from Baghdad.

Before the Security Council decision, Kay said the inspectors had the ability to catalog the documents if U.N. officials decided they should do so.

"All we need to know is what are the guidelines and what is practically required and we'll worry about finding ways to do it once policy is set," he said.

Kay said the documents were secured in one of the cars "in the center of our little circle" in the parking lot.

In Vienna, meanwhile, David Kyd of the International Atomic Energy Agency said Thursday that information from an Iraqi defector, as well as from other sources, had helped the U.N. team locate key documents about the Iraqi nuclear weapons program.

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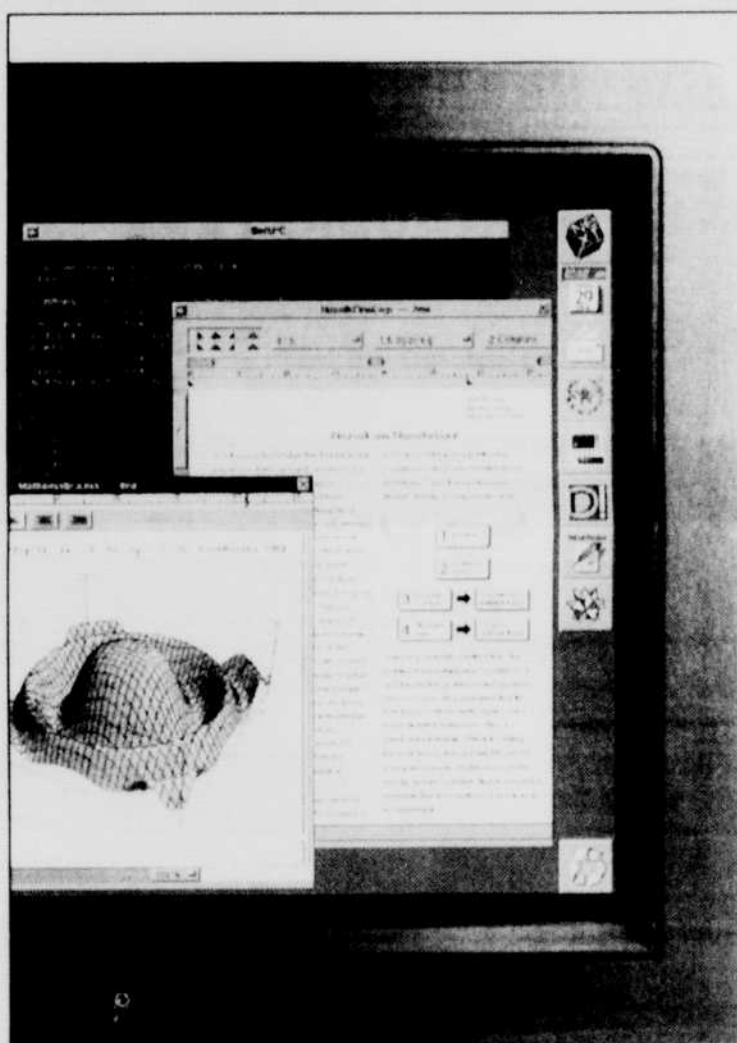
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