



Main Rebel Faction In Ivory Coast

New York Times

5 January 2003

BOUAKÉ, Ivory Coast, 4 January — The main rebel faction in Ivory Coast has said it will attend peace talks in Paris, the French foreign minister, Dominique de Villepin, said today.

Mr. Villepin is on a two day visit to Ivory Coast, where France has sent 2,500 troops to protect its citizens in its former colony and to help keep the peace. He met with leaders of the Patriotic Movement of Ivory Coast, the rebel group, known by its French initials M.C.P.I., in Bouaké, their stronghold.

The French foreign minister said Ivoirian political groups planned to meet in Paris on Jan. 15. A meeting involving regional leaders with United Nations and African Union representatives, also in Paris, is scheduled for Jan. 26.

France is concerned that the civil war in Ivory Coast will spiral out of control after weeks of talks have failed to make major progress.

Hundreds of people have been killed since the conflict started with a failed coup on Sept. 19, and tens of thousands have been driven from their homes.

Threats and Responses: Briefly Noted; Terror Penalties

New York Times

16 January 2003

The United Nations Security Council unanimously voted in favor of a resolution strengthening the enforcement of penalties including the freezing of funds, an arms embargo and travel prohibitions against Osama bin Laden, Al Qaeda, the Taliban and their associates. It also called on governments to submit updated reports on their efforts.

U.N. SAYS CONGO REBELS CARRIED OUT CANNIBALISM AND RAPES

Associated Press

New York Times

16 January 2003

KINSHASA, Congo, 15 January — A six-day investigation in a remote region in northeast Congo has confirmed systematic cannibalism, rape, torture and killing by rebels in a campaign of atrocities against civilians, with children among the victims, United Nations officials said today.

Accused rebel groups include the Congolese Liberation Movement of Jean-Pierre Bemba, one of two major insurgent movements now promised a leading role in Congo's government under a hard-won power-sharing agreement to end the central African nation's war.

Rebels called their terror campaign "Operation Clean the Slate," said Patricia Tome, spokeswoman for the United Nations Congo mission in the capital. "The operation was presented to the people almost like a vaccination campaign, envisioning the looting of each home and the rape of each woman," she said.

Chemical Tests on Warheads Crucial to Decision on Breach of UN Resolution

Julian Borger and Richard

Norton-Taylor

The Guardian

13 January 2003

Weapons experts last night agreed that the empty chemical warheads found yesterday in Iraq represented a formal breach in Baghdad's UN agreements but appeared to fall short of the dramatic "smoking gun" Washington is seeking to oust Saddam Hussein.

Much will depend, however, on a battery of tests on the rocket casings to determine whether chemicals were ever poured into them and how long ago.

The Iraqis claim that the Katyusha rockets were remnants of long abandoned weapons programmes, but even so they may still represent a violation of Iraq's UN obligations as they appear not to have been included in Iraq's December declaration on its weapons stockpiles.

David Albright, a former weapons inspector and the current head of the Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS), said that if Iraq knew the warheads existed and they are for chemical weapons, "then that is a violation

The charges are laid out in a preliminary report based on a six-day mission by United Nations investigators last week to the Ituri region. The investigation was prompted by reports from clergy and non-profit groups operating in Ituri. The findings have been given to the Security Council and to the high commissioner for human rights, the Congo mission said.

As word of the allegations emerged, Mr. Bemba announced Tuesday that the rebel group had arrested five of its own members, including its chief of operations in Ituri, Lt. Col. Freddy Ngalimo.

Mr. Bemba said the five would be tried by a rebel military court. The allegations named Mr. Bemba's movement and the allied Congolese Rally for Democracy-National, which are fighting the rival rebel Congolese Rally for Democracy-Liberation for mineral-producing areas of Ituri.

A series of peace deals secured the withdrawal of most foreign troops last year in Congo's four-year war, which split the country,

of the [1991] ceasefire agreement which prohibits Iraq from having chemical weapons or the where-withal to make chemical weapons."

Loren Thompson, a Pentagon consultant at the Lexington Institute in Arlington, Virginia, said that if no traces of chemical weapons are found by UN tests and no chemical agents are found nearby, there would be no conclusive evidence of an active chemical weapons programme.

"This is not the proverbial smoking gun. A real smoking gun would be an armed weapon," Mr. Thompson said. "But these canisters were found in remarkably good condition to be old war mementoes. Their recent origin doesn't draw one to think they are old weapons that were simply overlooked."

He pointed out that the discovery came only a few days after the US began providing intelligence to the weapons inspectors to assist their search. "This will probably be the first of many, many similar finds that cumulatively will provide a picture of non-compliance."

Terence Taylor, a weapons inspector in the 1990s, described

the former Zaire, into rebel- and government-held zones. Despite the peace accords, fighting among the rebel groups intensified at the end of 2001 in the lawless east.

United Nations investigators said the attacks occurred at Mambasa and Mangina, near the northeastern city of Beni. The report cited 117 instances of arbitrary executions between Oct. 24 and 29. It cited 65 cases of rape, including the rape of children, 82 kidnappings and 27 cases of torture in the same period.

"The testimony given by victims and of witnesses was of cannibalism and forced cannibalism," including people made by rebels to eat members of their own families, Ms. Tome said.

United Nations investigators have previously reported that the victims also included Pygmies, whom rebels routinely enlist as hunters to provide food for the insurgents. Investigators said they interviewed Pygmies who had gone into hiding after the rebel campaign.

the find as important. He argued the fact that the warheads were empty was not significant. "They could be quickly filled: the chemicals can be hidden more easily."

In its declarations to the UN, Iraq claimed to have had a stockpile of 6,610 122mm rockets filled with sarin, a lethal gas, and 6,880 unfilled canisters of the same calibre, and almost all were accounted for by the UN and destroyed under UN supervision. Iraq also claimed to have destroyed 26,500 unfilled 122mm rockets unilaterally, but earlier UN inspectors could only account for 11,500 of them.

On 7 December, a UN team in Iraq secured a dozen artillery shells filled with mustard gas that had been listed during earlier inspections in the 1990s. The weapons found yesterday, however, appear not to have been on any earlier inventory.

Another former weapons inspector, Scott Ritter, an opponent of military action, said the key question was whether Iraq had attempted to conceal the warheads or whether it had simply overlooked them.

The World; Infectious Chaos In West Africa

Robert D. Kaplan

New York Times

12 January 2003

Kofi Annan, the United Nations secretary general, warned last week that the Ivory Coast's civil war threatened the recently restored stability of Sierra Leone. It was an indication that West Africa's pockets of chaos could spread.

Since a failed coup last September, rebels have torn the Ivory Coast into pieces. President Laurent Gbagbo controls the south, but the largest rebel group, the Patriotic Movement of Ivory Coast, holds the Muslim north. French officials sent 2,500 troops, but worry that they will be mired there for years.

As the region's economic magnet, the Ivory Coast became a victim of its own success. Immigrants from Burkina Faso, a Muslim country to the north, flooded there in search of jobs, upsetting fragile Muslim-Christian and ethnic-regional balances. President Félix Houphouët-Boigny kept the Ivory Coast unified until his death in 1993, while expatriate Lebanese merchants helped keep the economy afloat. But after the war in Lebanon ended, the Lebanese began returning home.

As the 1990s wore on, political parties devolved into factions for various ethnic and religious groups. In December 1999, there was a military coup, begun after soldiers rioted for back pay. Attempts to restore democracy the following year led to ethnic clashes.

Next door in Sierra Leone, a United Nations force of 17,500 keeps order (to be reduced to 13,000 by May). Yet there is barely a police force, and militias terrorize parts of the country. In Liberia, government and rebel troops are warring in diamond and gold mining towns. Guinea's stability, meanwhile, is threatened by hundreds of thousands of refugees from Sierra Leone, Liberia and the Ivory Coast.

The West has tended to call any African country a success as soon as it holds a successful election ending military misrule. But tyranny is not only a cause, but a symptom of more intractable problems, with tyrannical authority often replaced by a vacuum of authority.

THREATS AND RESPONSES: CALL TO ARMS; ON ANNIVERSARY OF 1991 WAR, HUSSEIN URGES IRAQ TO RESIST

Associated Press

18 January 2003

BAGHDAD, Iraq, 17 January— President Saddam Hussein today called on Iraqis to rise up and defend the nation against a new American-led attack and promised that the country's enemies would face "suicide" at the gates of the capital.

The 40 minute televised address, delivered on the 12th anniversary of the start of the Persian Gulf war, revealed no sign that Mr. Hussein was prepared to step down or meet the demands of the United Nations, which has sent inspectors to determine if Iraq has given up its weapons of mass destruction.

It was not clear when Mr. Hussein recorded the address, but in it he did not mention the discovery on Thursday of 12 warheads, 11 of them empty, in an ammunition storage depot in southern Iraq.

In his speech, Mr. Hussein vowed to beat back any invasion.

"The people of Baghdad have resolved to compel the Mongols of this age to commit suicide on its walls," he said, referring to the United States. Everyone who tries to climb over its walls, he said, will fail in the attempt.

Mr. Hussein said Iraq was fully mobilized against the threat of a new conflict and told President Bush to "keep your evil away from the mother of civilization."

"The whole nation will rise in defense of its right to live," he said. "Their arrows will go astray or backfire, God willing."

"Long live Palestine, free and Arab, from the sea to the river," Mr. Hussein said, referring to the Mediterranean and the Jordan in an appeal for Arab support.

THREATS AND RESPONSES: UNITED NATIONS; ANNAN SAYS TALK OF WAR WITH IRAQ IS PREMATURE, BUT WARNS BAGHDAD IT MUST DISARM

Julia Preston

New York Times

15 January 2003

UNITED NATIONS, 14 January — Secretary General Kofi Annan said today that it was too early for the Security Council to consider military action against Iraq and said he remained "both optimistic and hopeful" that war could be avoided.

At a wide ranging morning news conference here, Mr. Annan called for a patient timetable for United Nations arms inspections in Iraq and said he would "not be surprised" if a diplomatic solution was found to defuse the nuclear crisis with North Korea.

Raising his voice after he had remained quiet for weeks on the two explosive issues, the secretary general warned that if Iraq did not cooperate to give up illegal weapons, he expected that the Council would support war to disarm the country.

Mr. Annan said the United States led military buildup in the Persian Gulf has helped the effort to disarm Iraq by pressuring Baghdad to cooperate with the inspections. "There is no doubt in anyone's mind that the pres-

KILLING OF U.N. AIDE BY ISRAEL BARES RIFT WITH RELIEF AGENCY

Michael Wines

New York Times

4 January 2003

JERUSALEM— The last time Iain Hook called Israeli forces, on a cellphone from a United Nations compound in the West Bank town of Jenin, he was looking for help. Outside the compound walls, a skirmish had flared between Israel's Army and Palestinian militants. Mr. Hook and his staff were trapped.

Palestinian militants had knocked a hole in the wall, he said. "I'm trying to keep them out," he said, according to transcripts of the call published in the Israeli press. "I will just keep my people pinned down in the corner until I hear from you. O.K.?"

It was not O.K. Minutes later, as he stood, cellphone in hand, under a corrugated roof in the compound's small collection of prefab offices, Mr. Hook was shot in the back by an Israeli soldier who, the Israeli Army says, was returning fire from Palestinian militants inside the United Nations building.

When the army detained an ambulance, coworkers evacuated Mr. Hook through the hole in the wall the militants had made. He died before reaching a hospital.

The death of Mr. Hook, a 54 year old British supervisor for

sure has been effective, that it has worked," he said. "Without that pressure I don't think the inspectors would be back in Iraq today."

But on the pace of the inspections, the secretary general's tone was nearly the opposite of remarks by President Bush, who said today that "time is running out" for Saddam Hussein as the Iraqi president.

Mr. Annan said a debate in the Council over war could be set off only by a report from the weapons inspectors of a serious violation by Iraq.

"I don't think we are there yet, so really I don't want to talk about war," Mr. Annan said in his first meeting this year with correspondents here. "I think the inspectors are just getting up to speed."

He said Baghdad's cooperation so far was "not perfect, but it is better than it used to be." He said the report that Hans Blix and Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei, the chief weapons inspectors, will give to the Council on Jan. 27 will help clarify the schedule for the inspections.

The secretary general said he was "extremely worried" about the possible impact of war on the Iraqi people. He acknowledged

that the United Nations had been busy making contingency plans to provide relief aid to civilians and refugees, while also working on "postconflict structures."

"Obviously we are doing some thinking, but we are not assuming anything," he said about whether Mr. Hussein would be toppled from power.

"I am both optimistic and hopeful that if we handle the situation right, and the pressure on the Iraqi leadership is maintained and the inspectors continue to work as aggressively as they are doing, we may be able to disarm Iraq peacefully," Mr. Annan said.

The secretary general insisted that under Resolution 1441, which set up the weapons inspections, the Security Council should decide what "consequences" to impose on Iraq if it commits a grave breach. Bush administration officials argue that the resolution gives the United States the authority to attack Iraq if the Council declines to act.

The British foreign secretary, Jack Straw, echoed Washington's view today, though he added that London would prefer a second Council resolution authorizing the attack.

Israel's explanation rests on Mr. Hook's telephone message saying militants had broken a hole in the wall surrounding the sheds and office where relief workers were hiding. The United Nations insists, however, that in a second phone conversation, Mr. Hook said he had peacefully turned the militants away.

Since Mr. Hook's death, on Nov. 22, furious United Nations workers in the West Bank and Gaza have accused the Israeli Army in an open letter of "senseless" and "wanton" behavior and cataloged what they say are repeated abuses and humiliations at the hands of its troops.

Officially, Israel says it is investigating the death. Its explanation for the killing remains what it was from the outset: that its soldiers were returning gunfire from Palestinian militants who had forced their way into the United Nations compound.

The dispute has spiraled up all the way to the United Nations Security Council, where in December the United States vetoed a resolution condemning Israel for Mr. Hook's death.

Mr. Hook's death was the flash point in a long simmering dispute between Israel's government and military and the Relief and Works Agency. His coworkers were stunned by his shooting inside a compound that by definition was off limits to combat.

Ms. Alwawi, a teacher at a United Nations run school, was huddling in her apartment when a piece of Israeli shrapnel struck and killed her. Mr. Tahrawi was among five Palestinians killed when an Israeli helicopter fired a missile at the street corner where they stood.

Israel maintains that the five were firing weapons at its troops.

BRITAIN CALLS ITS CONFERENCE ON PALESTINIAN REFORM A SUCCESS

Warren Hoge

New York Times

15 January 2003

LONDON, Jan. 14— Foreign Secretary Jack Straw pronounced a British sponsored meeting on Palestinian reform a success tonight despite the absence from London of Palestinian representatives barred by the Israeli prime minister, Ariel Sharon, from coming here.

"This has been a constructive meeting and one which is as much in the interests of the people of Israel as it is in Palestine and the wider community," Mr. Straw said outside 10 Downing Street, where delegates ended the one day conference with a visit to Prime Minister Tony Blair.

Mr. Blair proposed the meeting out of his concern that London and Washington were increasingly seen internationally and in the Muslim world to be practicing what he called "double standards" in paying less attention to reenergizing the Middle East peace effort than to disarming Iraq.

Mr. Sharon barred the Palestinians, who had been chosen by Yasser Arafat, from leaving the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to come to London after suicide bombers killed 22 people in Tel Aviv on Jan. 5. He rebuffed a personal appeal for reconsideration from Mr. Blair, who said he would hold the meeting anyway.

The Palestinian representatives took part today by video link from Gaza and Ramallah to a conference room in the Foreign Office where 15 delegates from the European Union, the United Nations, the United States, Russia, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Egypt were seated.

"We had to find a way around the Israeli decision, and that is what we did today," Mr. Straw explained.

Reporting on the conversations, he said: "There was clear recognition that without

credible Palestinian performance on security, the reform agenda will founder. Participants welcomed a clear and unequivocal Palestinian declaration against violence and terrorism."