

readily be destroyed with conventional explosives.

At the same time, these weapons can be misused in a manner that could cause heavy civilian casualties. In particular, the Protocol prohibits the use of air-delivered incendiary weapons against targets located in a city, town, village, or other concentration of civilians, a practice that caused very heavy civilian casualties in past conflicts.

The executive branch has given very careful study to the Incendiaries Protocol and has developed a reservation that would, in our view, make it acceptable from a broader national security perspective. This proposed reservation, the text of which appears in the report of the Department of State, would reserve the right to use incendiaries against military objectives located in concentrations of civilians where it is judged that such use would cause fewer casualties and less collateral damage than alternative weapons.

The third of these three Protocols—the new Protocol on Blinding Lasers—prohibits the use or transfer of laser weapons specifically designed to cause permanent blindness to unenhanced vision (that is, to the naked eye or to the eye with corrective devices). The Protocol also re-

quires Parties to take all feasible precautions in the employment of other laser systems to avoid the incidence of such blindness.

These blinding lasers are not needed by our military forces. They are potential weapons of the future, and the United States is committed to preventing their emergence and use. The United States supports the adoption of this new Protocol.

I recommend that the Senate give its early and favorable consideration to these Protocols and give its advice and consent to ratification, subject to the conditions described in the accompanying report of the Department of State. The prompt ratification of the amended Mines Protocol is particularly important, so that the United States can continue its position of leadership in the effort to deal with the humanitarian catastrophe of irresponsible landmine use.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
January 7, 1997.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 8.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on Iraq's Compliance With United Nations Security Council Resolutions

January 7, 1997

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Consistent with the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution (Public Law 102-1) and as part of my effort to keep the Congress fully informed, I am reporting on the status of efforts to obtain Iraq's compliance with the resolutions adopted by the U.N. Security Council (UNSC). This report covers the period from November 4 to the present.

Saddam Hussein remains a threat to his people and the region. The United States successfully responded to the increased threat resulting from Saddam's attack on Irbil in late August, but he continues to try to manipulate local rivalries in northern Iraq to his advantage. The United States and our coalition partners continue to enforce the no-fly zone over southern Iraq. Enforcement of the northern no-fly zone

also continues uninterrupted, despite a restructuring of operations. Because of changes in its mission as a result of the closing last fall of the Military Command Center (MCC) in the city of Zakho, Iraq and the shift of humanitarian assistance in the north under UNSCR 986 to international organizations, the designation "Provide Comfort" will no longer be used to describe the operation. The United Kingdom will continue to take part in this mission; however, France has chosen not to continue to participate in this endeavor. None of these changes affect our firm commitment to ensuring that the northern no-fly zone is fully enforced.

Besides our air operations, we will continue to maintain a strong U.S. presence in the region in order to deter Saddam. U.S. force levels have returned to approximate pre-Operation Desert