

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 1998 ★

Sri Lankan to lead inspection of Saddam's presidential sites

Unscm chief hails appointment of disarmament expert

By Betsy Pisik
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

NEW YORK — A veteran diplomat and disarmament expert will coordinate the inspection of Saddam Hussein's eight presidential sites, a previously off-limits collection of more than 1,000 buildings spread over 12 square miles.

The new commissioner, Jayantha Dhanapala of Sri Lanka, is a former diplomat who last month was selected by U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan to head the U.N.'s expanded disarmament division.

He has served as Sri Lankan ambassador to Washington and to the United Nations in Geneva, and was diplomat-in-residence at the Center for Non-Proliferation Studies of the Monterey Institute of International Studies in California.

"I am utterly delighted," said U.N. Special Commission Executive Chairman Richard Butler, who went through diplomatic training with Mr. Dhanapala in the late 1960s. "He is one of the world's best experts on disarmament."

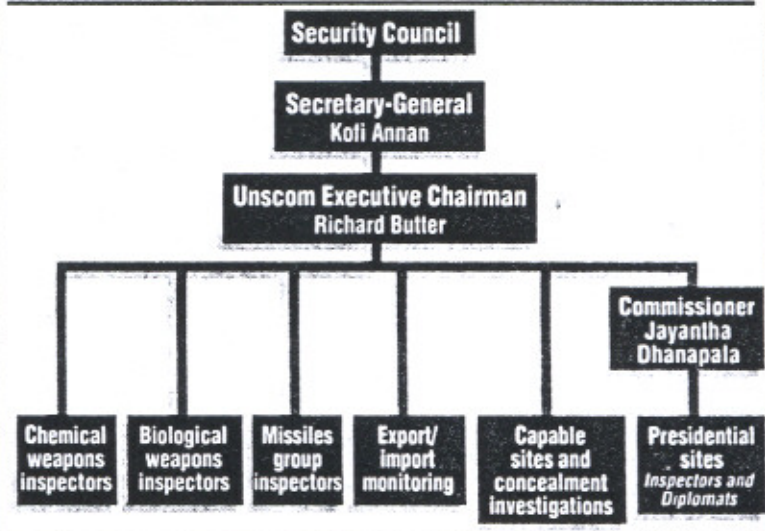
Mr. Annan agreed in a memorandum of understanding with Iraqi officials last week to appoint someone to work with Mr. Butler to inspect the sites.

U.N. officials offered few details about what precisely Mr. Dhanapala would do as a commissioner for presidential sites. However, in response to concerns that the existing inspection regime not be undermined, they were emphatic that he would be subordinate to Mr. Butler. They also said that Unscm's technical experts would continue to analyze the information that inspectors collect.

"The commissioner ... will

MONITORING IRAQ

Sri Lankan diplomat Jayantha Dhanapala was named yesterday to the new post of commissioner overseeing special U.N. teams that will inspect presidential sites in Iraq. This is the reporting structure.



The Washington Times

work with me," Mr. Butler said. "But in formal terms, he will report to me."

Mr. Butler reports to the U.N. Security Council, often through the secretary-general. An international group of 21 technical experts and diplomats, also called commissioners, serve as a kind of board of directors for Unscm.

In addition, there are specialized technical groups to investigate chemical and biological weapons, the importing and exporting of potentially dangerous materials or machine parts, and suspected concealed activities.

Mr. Butler said he expects to work "hand-in-glove" with Mr. Dhanapala, whose appointment was also welcomed by U.S. Ambassador Bill Richardson.



Jayantha Dhanapala