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U.S. POLICY TOWARD IRAQ

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U.S. POLICY TOWARD IRAQ

Thursday, March 23, 2000

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS,
Washington, D.C.

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10 a.m., in room 2200, Rayburn House Office Building, Benjamin A. Gilman (Chairman of the Committee) presiding.

Chairman GILMAN. The Committee will come to order.

I want to welcome our distinguished witnesses to today's hearing on our nation's policy toward Iraq. Iraq has been a festering foreign policy problem for our nation for a long time. What most distresses us is that our nation stopped making headway on the problem years ago. Now it seems that, pretty much across the board, we are losing ground to Saddam Hussein.

There have been no international weapons inspections in Iraq for 15 months. There is every reason to believe that Saddam has used this time to reconstitute his weapons of mass destruction programs. Three months ago, the U.N. decided to set up a new inspections program, but we all know that threatened vetoes in the U.N. Security Council are likely to prevent that new organization from beginning work in Iraq for many, many months.

Our nation has a policy of containing Saddam militarily. That policy has cost us some $8 billion since the end of the Gulf War in 1991.

It cost over $1.2 billion last year alone.

In December 1998, we launched Operation Desert Fox to punish Saddam for not cooperating with international weapons inspections. The Administration told us at that time that we had degraded Saddam's capabilities and so the operation was declared a success. Since then, Saddam has routinely challenged our aircraft patrolling over the no-fly zones, and we have retaliated each time with air strikes. Again, we are told that this policy is a success because it is degrading Saddam's capabilities.

Maybe we are degrading his capabilities, but he does not seem to mind too much, because he keeps provoking us to degrade him some more. A year and a half ago, a number of us here in the Congress decided to help our President end this problem once and for all by passing the Iraq Liberation Act. That legislation authorized the President to provide $97 million in U.S. military assistance to the democratic opposition to Saddam Hussein.

President Clinton welcomed that authority, and in November 1998 he declared he was going to use it to remove Saddam from power. Since then, there has been precious little follow through on

the President's commitment. Of the $97 million we authorized in military assistance to the opposition, the only assistance that has actually been provided is training for four men in civil affairs.

Of the $18 million we appropriated on three separate occasions for political assistance to the opposition, not one dime has actually been provided to the opposition, and less than $4 million has been expended on their behalf. It is no wonder that our allies in the region, to say nothing of members of the opposition itself, question whether the Administration is really serious about its declared policy of removing Saddam from power. If the Administration is truly serious about supporting the opposition, there are two things it should do right away.

First, it should immediately deliver to the opposition the assistance that currently is being withheld. The funds we have appropriated for the opposition should immediately be transferred to the opposition, and the military drawdown authority should be invoked to begin providing equipment such as radio transmitters, uniforms, boots, and communications gear.

Second, the Administration should immediately establish a cross-border humanitarian aid program into Iraq, run by the Iraqi opposition. Such a program could do a great deal to ameliorate the plight of the Iraqi people, who continue to suffer under Saddam's rule. It also would address the concern that some members have expressed about the effect of U.N. sanctions on the Iraqi people.

I want to urge the Administration today to take these two steps in order to demonstrate that it stands by President Clinton's November 1998 pledge to remove Saddam from power. Before I recognize our witnesses, I would like to recognize our Ranking Member, Mr. Gejdenson, for any opening remarks that he may have. Mr. Gejdenson.

[The prepared statement of Chairman Gilman appears in the appendix.]

Mr. GEJDENSON. Mr. Chairman, might we suspend with the opening remarks? We have our colleague here who wants to make a statement and needs your approval. Could we all hold up and let Mr. Conyers speak, if that is OK?

Chairman Gilman: Without objection, if that is agreeable, we will proceed. I would like to welcome our distinguished colleague, the Honorable John Conyers of Michigan, who has asked to join us today to make a brief statement. I know of his long abiding interest with regard to Iraq. Mr. Conyers.

Mr. CONYERS. Thank you very much, Chairman Gilman; and my dear friend, Mr. Gejdenson; my colleague on Judiciary, Mr. Berman; and, of course, Barbara Lee, who I have worked with for years; and Members of the Committee. I am delighted to be here. You have my prepared statement. I wanted to just take a few minutes to summarize where we are going, because I heard the ending part of the Chairman's opening remarks, with which I agree.

Before I start, I wanted to thank the Chairman and Ranking Member for all they have been doing in trying to get Haiti's elections on the right path. That is a very important issue for me, and I would like to praise you for that. You were going down there before I was, Mr. Chairman, and we enjoy your staff accompanying us and helping us out. Now, the question here is that after we have

had resignations from two Assistant Secretaries General for United Nations Humanitarian Relief, Halliday and Von Sponeck, the pressures are now rising. Today I noticed we have increased the amount of food-for-oil ratios. I think it has been doubled, and I am happy about that.

But there is a fundamental problem, which is that 23 million people cannot recover from a wrecked infrastructure, no matter how much we raise those levels. What I am here to suggest to you is that the UNICEF figure of 5,000 children dying every month has raised us to a point where this is trading our integrity and our belief in human rights. As a matter of fact, we are undermining them by continuing the oil-for-food transaction.

I would like to suggest to you, and maybe I am the first witness you had who would take into account that maybe the time has come for us to abandon this plan. It is too complicated to administer. The U.N. has not been effectively doing it. I think that what we are doing here, Mr. Chairman and Members, is committing war by yet another means.

So it is my hope that we will consider that the main problem with oil-for-food is that it does not generate sufficient funds to begin the process of rehabilitating Iraq's infrastructure, which is now at a very, very low level and condition.

Children are dying from diseases that would otherwise be treated. The long-term danger of economic sanctions goes beyond the crisis of dying children. There are many other problems as well. The point that I have arrived at, thanks to Bishop Thomas Gumbelton and Reverend Ed Rowe of the Methodists, Denis Halliday, whom I have met with, the Institute of Policy Studies staffer Phyllis Dennis, and many others, has led me to suggest to you that we consider doing a couple of things.

As long as there is a temporary program, it is not going to work. If we lift it altogether, the economic sanctions altogether, do away with the oil-for-food restrictions, and replace it instead with monitoring from both the inside and the outside, with the U.N. watching the borders, I think with UNMOVIC we will be able to move much further down the line. The reason that we would be able to move away from the humanitarian problem, of course, is that we would be able to bring in medical supplies and food.

Also, in the dual-use area, I would beg you to look at that in terms of some of the things we can do with chlorine and incubators that could be monitored carefully enough so that we would not run into a problem. So increasing the allocation is not enough. Temporarily lifting the ban is not enough. I think that we would begin to strengthen ourselves, in terms of building up a citizenry for the objective that you and I all are working toward. I think Hussein's burned a lot of bridges behind him with the OPEC countries as well. I think there could be a quid pro quo for lifting these sanctions. I think Tariq Aziz would support monitoring with a new kind of cooperation, if there were a lifting of this ban.

So I think that this ought to move in that direction, because we cannot achieve democracy by undemocratic means. We cannot inspire respect for human rights by undermining them. I beg that you consider the fact that the killing of 500,000 children because we have not been creative enough to create another way to prevent

the possibility of an unknown potential future threat, is simply unacceptable.

I thank you for this time. My detailed remarks are, of course, included in my statement.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Conyers appears in the appendix.]

Chairman GILMAN. Thank you, Mr. Conyers, for taking the time to appear before us.

Are there any questions anyone would like to direct to Mr. Conyers? We appreciate your continued interest in humanitarian efforts, and particularly in Haiti, as well as this issue. Mr. Berman.

Mr. BERMAN. If you accept the premise that the regime in Iraq is totalitarian, in a sense it controls. If you were to get rid of embargoes on trade in food and medicines, it would control distribution and all of that. Why would that make things better than the oil-for-food and medicines program that now exists, and also provides in part for distribution of food and medicines in the North of Iraq? In a sense, the Iraqi oil is being used to pay to help feed and supply the Kurds in the North.

Mr. CONYERS. There are a couple of considerations, Mr. Berman. One is that there is a maldistribution of what is going on between the north and mid-south, a very serious one that has been brought to my attention, in terms of the supplies and equipment.

Mr. BERMAN. Do you mean more is getting to the north?

Mr. CONYERS. To the north; yes, sir. But over and beyond that, what we are doing is that we are becoming the oppressors. Obviously, we are reducing the possibility of the people from ever becoming organized and increasing their resistance because obviously they are blaming us. It is our policy, although I have heard arguments both ways.

By changing this formula drastically, as I have suggested, we would then be allowing Iraq to make major financial investments. There is no way they can do that now, because they cannot develop their oil resources any further and because nobody will invest there at this point.

That is why I think that the foreign minister has agreed to comply stringently with the requirements that we would put on. Most importantly, the food and the medicines would have to be going to the people. That would encourage them.

As a matter of fact, it has been predicted that they would then begin to invest more in their own people themselves than they have been, since they did that after the Iraq-Iran war. We think that would resume again. Right now they are just blaming us. That is why I recommend that there be a departure, a drastic departure, to help the Iraqi people.

Mr. BERMAN. Their investments during the Iraq-Iran war were for weapons, many of them provided by Western countries, to develop their nerve gas potential to use against their own people in Iraq.

Mr. CONYERS. There was some of that. But the people that have told me that they would be able to employ more resources. Whether they would or not, I cannot defend against any arguments.

Mr. BERMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman GILMAN. Mr. Smith.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much.

Mr. Conyers, I share concern, as we all do, about the loss of life for children, and women and men in Iraq, but especially for the children. I am frankly torn about the efficacy of the sanctions.

I have been going back and forth in my own mind about what is being achieved when you have a malevolent dictator like Saddam Hussein, who in my view, and I think you would agree, and maybe you might want to say it for the record, compounds the problem by not allowing, by impeding, the flow of medicines and food so that more children do die so then he can turn around and say, look, see what the sanctions are doing.

I think we have to be very cognizant of that lethal game that he employs. Just a couple of very brief comments: A 1999 UNICEF study found an increase in child mortality since 1991. It noted that Iraq had not allowed implementation of the food-for-oil program until 1996, too late to have a substantial impact on the child mortality statistics measured by the study, which were for the period 1994 to 1999.

Again, if there are ten children who are dying, that is ten too many. If there is one child dying, that is one too many. But the 5,000 figure, just so we know, is that accurate as of today? Every month are 5,000 kids still dying?

Mr. CONYERS. This is a UNICEF figure.

Mr. SMITH. I know that, but in terms of their study, from at least the UNICEF report I read, that dates back a bit. But if you could, just for clarity?

Mr. CONYERS. For clarity, I can repeat that UNICEF still stands by their astounding estimate of about 5,000 children dying every month.

Mr. SMITH. That would be this February and March?

Mr. CONYERS. Yes.

Mr. SMITH. OK. Just so we have that.

Mr. CONYERS. It is an incredible figure; I agree with you. By the way, I want to underline my support for everything you have said about Hussein getting the better end of this deal. We are in a quandary. If this were easily resolved, we would not have to hold a hearing.

I would really like to continue to urge you, Mr. Smith, to think about another mechanism, because the oil for food program does not promote enough, even with the 100 percent improvement in allotments, to make really a serious difference. I think that we have to help the U.N. craft another way.

Mr. SMITH. I appreciate it.

Mr. CONYERS. Thank you.

Chairman GILMAN. Thank you. Ms. Lee.

Ms. LEE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First, let me just say to Mr. Conyers, thank you very much for being here and for your leadership. I have joined you for the last couple of years in signing the letter to the Administration asking for the de-linking of the military and the economic sanctions. Certainly for me, we understand who Saddam Hussein is.

We also understand that there are 5,000 children a month dying. It is a calculated risk because, like you say, who knows what? We can only anticipate that less people would die, less children would

die, if economic sanctions were lifted. I think it is worth the risk, because in no way should our country be even in part allowing these numbers to die before us. It is just an immoral position, I think, to take.

Let me just ask you, in terms of what is going on in Iraq with regard to the military buildup, if we were to lift economic sanctions—let me put it another way. From your point of view, does Saddam Hussein or does the international community bear the responsibility for the deaths of these children in Iraq? Or do you believe that is a question that cannot be answered, that we just have to move forward to try to stop it?

Mr. CONYERS. There are people on both sides of it. Let me just put it to you frankly. It is our approved policy that is doing this. The fact that Hussein is aggravating, manipulating, taking advantage of it, and playing it as a crude political tool at the expense of his own people, should not in any way dissuade us from reconsidering the policy.

What I am suggesting is that the damage that is being done is so great that there is no way within the oil-for-food program that we can ever turn these numbers substantially around. What we are doing, in my judgment, is committing war by another means. It is on the most helpless of a civilian population. I would like to help these people buildup. You know what that is doing, for those of you who have been over there, what this is doing for our relationships with the people themselves, who keep asking, why are they doing this to us?

I think it would give us a new way to go in there. I would be the first to say if for any reason it does not work or they are so duplicitous that it will not ever happen, then I would be willing to withdraw. We have enough creativity to not get hooked on a program that has led two administrators of the program to throw up their hands in disgust.

Chairman Gilman: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Dr. Cooksey.

Mr. COOKSEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Mr. Conyers. I really want to ask a question of you and everyone of the panel in the room. We have had sanctions in Iraq and they have not worked. I, too, am concerned about it from a humanitarian standpoint, particularly the children. But, the weakest in society are the children and the very elderly.

We have done the same thing in Cuba since 1959 or 1960. My question is, is there a model out there that we have used or that has been used elsewhere in the world that has worked to get rid of a dictator?

Mr. CONYERS. Yes, the South African anti-apartheid regime, but that model will not work in this case because, there, the African people were totally united with ANC. There was a coming together, which of course Hussein has skillfully prevented from happening in Iraq. His people are not only not united, but they are seriously divided; thanks to him. So he has made it impossible to follow that model.

With our pursuit of this plan, we are also taking on the angst of the Iraqi people. It is clear to them that they have no allies outside of Iraq. It only aggravates the problem, from my view. That is why I want to reiterate what you said, what Barbara Lee said:

continue the military sanctions. As a matter of fact, we might be able to tighten them. I think we could come around on the other hand and begin to show to the people that we are revising our position on this policy. It is a U.N. policy. It is not American made, but is American supported, and we must be willing to revisit this policy.

Chairman GILMAN. Thank you.

Mr. COOKSEY. Could I yield to Mr. Berman?

Did you have another example? You were about to say something?

Mr. BERMAN. No, I was thinking one can make a case that the sanctions and the prohibitions on new investments in South Africa helped persuade the business community there to lobby, to come down against apartheid and the apartheid government, and played a major role in creating the dynamic by which Nelson Mandela was freed, and they went to free elections.

Mr. CONYERS. Of course, there is not any private sector. It is a different dynamic going on in Iraq. This is the problem.

Chairman GILMAN. Mr. Delahunt?

Mr. DELAHUNT. Yes, thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Conyers, on this side.

Mr. CONYERS. Good morning.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I think the point about the sanctions in South Africa that should be made is that those sanctions were crafted and imposed in consultation with the ANC, with those forces in South Africa that were attempting to overthrow the apartheid system, the apartheid regime. But that, in my opinion, has not occurred, and I do not know if it is feasible, within Iraq nor in Cuba. I have visited Cuba on several occasions. I have spoken with dissidents there. The ones with whom I have discussed the issue of the sanctions, indicate that it does not accrue to their benefit. I think that is important.

In this particular case, if I am clear as to your position, it is that. I would hope that when the Administration witnesses come before us to testify, that they speak first to the issue of the validity of that 5,000-a-month figure. I think that is very important, because it is something that no matter what, if we can do anything to reduce that figure, I think it is a moral obligation on the United States to do.

It would be your position if that figure is accurate, that if we lifted the economic sanctions, then the burden and the onus would then be on Saddam Hussein and the regime to distribute, in a fair and equitable manner, resources to reduce that figure. If it did not, he then would lose support, popular support, and the battle of public opinion within the country. Is that your position?

Mr. CONYERS. Yes. His credibility would then legitimately come under the attack that it has escaped.

Mr. DELAHUNT. It would become very clear to the Iraqi people that it was not the Great Satan, it was, in fact, the regime itself that was responsible for the tragedy that is occurring.

Mr. BERMAN. Would the gentleman yield?

Mr. DELAHUNT. I yield to Mr. Berman.

Mr. BERMAN. Could I just give the opposite side of that view? First of all, these sanctions were imposed to achieve certain things,

first and foremost of which is to help ensure the elimination of a program of weapons of mass destruction. They are not essentially designed to make Saddam fall.

There are other aspects of U.S. policy that are maybe directed toward that. The Chairman has been heavily involved in some of those issues. But this was evolved for the possibility of the lifting of sanctions, and was held out to the Iraqi government, based on their willingness to go along with a serious and intrusive inspection program to ensure that these programs were not going on.

We have no idea what the Iraqi people think, because Saddan uses every means of repression and suppression, up to and including mass executions and murder, to create the demonstrations of support for his regime, the squashing of dissidents and all of that.

Leading up to the Gulf War, the argument of people who opposed the war was, do sanctions. The people who decided to support the war were saying, we do not think sanctions are going to achieve getting them out of Kuwait. But now the sanctions are focused on getting back in a meaningful inspection program, and then, with the possibility then that sanctions would be lifted.

It is possible that if you took away the oil-for-food program and allowed free trade and donations in food, that resources would then go to otherwise better the lives of the Iraqi people for infrastructure. I believe it is just as equal or an even greater possibility that, that program will be used to even more quickly rebuild the military, pursue the weapons of mass destruction program, and free-up those resources from oil sales for that purpose. That is the other side of the debate.

Mr. CONYERS. Yes, sir. That's not an impossible belief. The fact of the matter is, the lifting of the economic sanctions in no way interferes with stopping them from their nuclear and military capabilities, because military sanctions would continue. We will be giving ourselves an advantage that we have never enjoyed before, one of preventing civilian deaths, while also preventing military capabilities.

If anything, Howard, I would be for increasing military sanctions in exchange for lifting of the economic sanctions. We had indications from at least the second in command, if that means anything, that this could be a way out of our dilemma. It would give them the chance that they need to create massive capital to buildup their oil reserves and production capability, which will always be kept down, the way we are doing it. Plus we have this hugely immoral policy, that to me does not square us with our role in the United Nations and around our country.

Chairman GILMAN. The gentleman's time has expired. Mr. Sanford.

Mr. SANFORD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would simply say that I agree with a lot of what you have said. The one component that I would disagree with, and would just be curious to hear your thoughts on, would be the idea of lifting economic but leaving in place military sanctions. It seems to me, as an advocate of our armed forces, right now we have something that is providing a lot of wear and tear on our military forces, something that is providing a lot of expense to the American taxpayer.

That is this enforcement of the no-fly zones, which were originally put in place to uphold U.N. Security Council Resolution 688.

This was basically to help in easing the repression of Iraqi forces. It has not done that. As a result, I think American pilots go around blowing holes in the sky. Every morning, they will leave Turkey at 4 a.m., F–16 pilots out of Turkey, be up at first sunlight there over the northern watch, and roll in to provide enforcement of that, quote, "no -fly zone." It is, in essence, a patchwork that has proved to be, I think, ineffectual in really making that difference that is called for in U.N. Security Council Resolution 688. So I would just be curious as to why the one, but not the other?

Mr. CONYERS. That is why I said that we may have to strengthen our military sanctions, and that would include revisiting them to develop something that might be more effective. So I am not asking that we do anything but continue and maybe even strengthen those. But as to this other part, Mr. Sanford, the humanitarian part, we are losing the war with the people. This compares with South Africa, where they had a feeling that many people in America and its government, finally, and other governments, were in the struggle with them.

That feeling does not exist in Iraq and cannot exist with the tactics that Hussein is using, which may be considered far more vicious than the ones that were applied in South Africa.

So I do not have a strategy for the military sanctions, but I do think they should be continued or tightened. By the way, I do not know how long Mr. Delahunt was sitting over there, but I commended the Chairman and Ranking Member for their participation in our efforts to get free and fair elections in Haiti. I want to include his name in that for the record.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Thank you.

Chairman GILMAN. If there are no further questions of Mr. Conyers, we want to thank Congressman Conyers for taking the time and for sharing his thoughts with us.

Mr. CONYERS. I am honored to be before the Committee. Thank you so much.

Chairman GILMAN. Thank you. We will now proceed with the balance of our hearing. Mr. Gejdenson.

Mr. GEJDENSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will be brief. I am concerned of the erosion of the international consensus on the Iraq policy; especially within the Security Council. It is clear that Saddam Hussein would use any additional resources to rebuild his arsenal of mass destruction and, frankly, try to increase his ballistic missile capability.

I think that we have to recognize that if there is a diminution of support in the Security Council and elsewhere in this country for this policy, it will not be sustained over the long haul. Just because we do not have good options, does not mean that we ought to stick with the policy as it is.

In every conversation that I have had with General Zinni, with Arab leaders from the region, the opposition is not taken seriously. I know this Congress spends a lot of time wanting to arm and in other ways facilitate the opposition. Even the Administration announced today that it will grant $260,000 to the Iraqi National Congress. My sense of a leadership that spends most of its time in

fancy hotels in London is that they are not the ones that are going to lead a revolution on the ground in Iraq.

We do have to build a consensus with Iraq's neighbors, as difficult as that is and as often frustrating as it is. It is clear that Saddam Hussein, with his present resources, is not paying attention to his people's needs. It is hard to believe that even if he has more oil and more resources, that he would use it for his own citizens instead of building billion-dollar palaces and trying to get more weapons. But again, we will not be successful unless we build broad-based support for our policy.

I would like to applaud the president and Secretary Albright for the steps they have taken toward Iran, made easier, obviously, by Iran's own moderate actions and the elections of moderate officials to their parliament. But I do think we need a new approach and a new look at this policy in Iraq, so that we can have a broad-based political response here in the United States and overseas.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Gejdenson appears in the appendix.]

Chairman Gilman: Thank you, Mr. Gejdenson.

I will now ask our witnesses to come forward. Mr. Welch, Ms. Romanowski, Ambassador Jones. Our panel of witnesses today is headed by C. David Welch, Assistant Secretary of International Organization Affairs for our Department of State. Mr. Welch has served in that position since October 1998, after most recently serving as principal Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs. Mr. Welch has had a long career in foreign service prior to this, serving us in a number of posts overseas in the Middle East.

We welcome you, Assistant Secretary Welch. You may put your full statement in the record and abbreviate it, or whatever you deem appropriate.

STATEMENT OF HONORABLE C. DAVID WELCH, ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Mr. WELCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank you and your colleagues for holding this hearing this morning. Mr. Chairman, with your permission, I would like to use my statement this morning in view of the importance of this issue, the gravity of some of the things said, in particular about Administration policy, so that I may give you as comprehensive a look at this issue as I think it merits.

Chairman GILMAN. Please proceed.

Mr. WELCH. I am going to speak on behalf of the State Department and the Administration. I am joined by my colleague Beth Jones, who covers overall policy toward Iraq, and including toward the Iraqi opposition. Ms. Romanowski, from the Department of Defense, can address our military posture and our security presence in the area.

I am going to focus in these introductory remarks on two areas. First, the humanitarian situation in the country, including the balance between the impact of sanctions and the benefits of the oil-for-food program. I would also like to say a few words on disar-

mament, prevention of rearmament, and what we expect from what is called UNMOVIC over the next few months.

Mr. Chairman, the humanitarian situation is a complex subject, and we are concerned about the recent flow of misinformation and biased assertions from several sources that has made it difficult to maintain sight of what our policy really is and what is really happening on the ground in Iraq. We hope to provide some clarification today.

U.S. policy toward Iraq has followed a consistent course since the liberation of Kuwait in January 1991; and whatever you might have read in the papers lately, there is no sea-change in the offing. Our policy is based on the objective judgment that the regime of Saddam Hussein poses a continuing threat to regional peace and security, which must be contained.

Again, despite what you may have seen in the press, containment remains a cost-effective and successful policy. U.N. sanctions are extremely important and must continue until Iraq complies with its obligations under the Security Council resolutions. Let me state for the record that we do not expect Iraq to meet that standard any time soon.

In fact, we doubt that Iraq will take the sensible steps necessary to obtain the lifting or the suspension of sanctions, as long as Saddam Hussein is in power. Those sanctions do not target the civilian population, however, and have in fact never restricted the importation of basic medicines and food.

The United States has focused on addressing humanitarian needs in Iraq since the immediate aftermath of Operation Desert Storm in 1991, when brutal military repression displaced tens of thousands of civilians in northern Iraq. We responded with Operation Provide Comfort, a U.S.-led coalition effort that provided food, shelter, and other forms of disaster assistance on a massive scale.

The coalition also instituted a no-fly zone in the north in 1991, and another one in the south in 1992. That has contained the Iraqi military and prevented any repetition of large scale use of force against civilians. In the Security Council, we have championed the humanitarian interests of the Iraqi people, and we continue to do so as we speak. Let me cite a few examples.

In April 1991, we helped shape Security Council Resolution 688, which demanded an end to Iraqi repression of civilians and provided part of the rationale for the no-fly zones. In August 1991, we played a leading role in drafting Resolution 706, which included the original oil-for-food program, a program Iraq promptly rejected. Let me repeat that date: August 1991. In May 1995, we cosponsored Resolution 986, which expanded and fleshed out the oil-for-food concept. You will recall the tragically slow evolution of that concept. Iraq rejected that resolution outright for at least another year, and then slow-rolled it for six more months, so that the first delivery of humanitarian goods under that resolution did not occur until March 1997; three years ago. Some critics are attempting now to portray oil-for-food as part of the humanitarian problem in Iraq. In fact, it is a solution whose implementation was long delayed by the Iraqi regime and whose full potential is only now being approached.

In February 1998, we supported Resolution 1153, which expanded that oil-for-food program to $5.2 billion in oil export revenues during each six months; over $10 billion a year. In December 1999, we supported Resolution 1284, which removed that ceiling on the value of oil exports authorized to meet humanitarian needs in Iraq. That resolution also included numerous provisions to improve the efficiency of oil-for-food.

I want to emphasize that the need to balance the impact of sanctions and the benefits of the oil-for-food program is not a new challenge for U.S. policy. Sanctions were imposed for valid reasons, have been in place for nine and one-half years, and are likely to continue for some time. Oil-for-food has been in place almost exactly three years, during which oil prices have fluctuated, and the program itself has been constantly reassessed and adjusted. That process of assessment and adjustment is ongoing, as indicated in Resolution 1284, and will certainly continue.

Sanctions are not aimed at the Iraqi people. The bottom line is this. We believe that oil-for-food, properly managed, can effectively mitigate the impact of sanctions on Iraq's civilian population for as long as sanctions on the Iraqi regime remain in effect. Success will require the U.N. to do the best possible job of administering the program.

Similarly, Iraq will have to be pressed to do its part, cooperating with the program, rather than seeking to discredit it, rather than seeking to circumvent it, and rather than attempting to eliminate it. Maintaining the proper balance will never be easy, but we believe it is an achievable result and certainly a result worth the utmost effort over the long haul.

Criticism of sanctions is understandable. But we believe much of the recent criticism has been misplaced. In particular, those who see negative consequences from sanctions and advocating lifting sanctions as the only solution overlook at least three important points.

First, the Saddam Hussein regime is among the most brutal and systematic violators of human rights in modern memory. The most recent report of the U.N. Special Rapporteur For Human Rights noted that the gravity of human rights in Iraq has few parallels since the end of the second World War.

Second, sanctions deprive Saddam Hussein of the financial wherewithal to pursue his manifest goal of acquiring and using weapons of mass destruction. Saddam, deploying WMD, would be the worst imaginable humanitarian outcome for the Iraqi people and for all the peoples of the region.

Third, lifting sanctions would enable Saddam to rebuild his military and put his WMD programs on the fast track, but would not guarantee a better life for the average Iraqi. On the contrary, conditions for many Iraqis, especially in the north, would deteriorate dramatically if oil-for-food and the U.N. presence disappeared.

Let me be crystal clear. Providing resources to Saddam Hussein would not mean relief for the Iraqi people. Conversely, providing relief to the Iraqi people is not the same as helping Saddam. Let me explain that.

First, Saddam Hussein's perennial spending priority is military development and WMD. It is not civilian well-being. Lifting sanc-

tions would simply enrich the regime and enable it to pursue Saddam's spending priorities. Lifting sanctions would not help the Iraqi people.

Second, we also hear criticism from the other side, from those who say that oil-for-food is in fact helping Saddam Hussein. Just as providing more resources to the Iraqi regime, for example by lifting sanctions, would not benefit the Iraqi people, it is our view that oil-for-food resources provided to the people do not benefit the regime. On the contrary, providing humanitarian assistance to the Iraqi people is essential to maintaining international support for sanctions on the regime.

Oil-for-food is having a clear and measurable impact. Nutrition has improved. Per capita intake is up from 1,300 calories per day before the program began to over 2,000 now, thanks to a ration basket, the U.N. ration basket, that is augmented by locally grown foods. Food imports are now at pre-war levels. In the year before the program began Iraq imported about $50 million worth of medicine.

Over the past three years more that $1 billion worth of medicines have been approved. Similarly, over a billion dollars worth of goods for the water, sanitation, electrical and agricultural sectors have been approved. The impact has been the greatest in the northern provinces. The reason for that is simple. The U.N. manages the program there without interference from the regime.

For example, the same UNICEF study others have cited this morning showed that infant mortality in the north has fallen below pre-war levels. Yet in south central Iraq, where the Iraqi government handles distribution of oil-for-food goods, the study has revealed a disturbing rise in child mortality to more than double the pre-war level. These numbers show that oil-for-food can meet the needs of the Iraqi people, if manipulation by the regime can be overcome.

Let me say a few words about how the United States can make this program more effective. We have been accused recently of having too many holds or having the wrong holds on contracts proposed under this program. Of course there are those in Baghdad, and I have to say even in the Security Council, who seem to believe that neither the United States nor any member of the Iraq Sanctions Committee should put any contract on hold for any reason.

Our goal is to help the oil-for-food program succeed. With that in mind, we want to approve every contract we can and do it as quickly as we can. But there is another goal that is equally as important, and that is to deny Saddam Hussein inputs for his weapons of mass destruction and military programs. That goal makes a heavy demand on us, as it can mean the painstaking review of each and every contract. This is a responsibility we take seriously.

Our rigorous and responsible approach has won plaudits from some smaller countries in the Sanctions Committee, countries that lack the resources and the expertise which the U.S. can apply to this process. It has also elicited criticism from some larger Members of the Committee which have the resources and the expertise, but have chosen to turn a politically, or even perhaps commercially, blinded eye to possible dual-use items included in oil-for-food contracts.

Three Security Council Member States have one-third of all oil-for-food contracts. There is an orchestration of complaints about holds, often joined by those who are motivated for commercial gain. Ninety percent of these contracts have been approved, but the number of our holds has mounted over the past year for a variety of reasons. Some of these contracts lack adequate information, and we are unable to act on them until we get details from those who have submitted them.

The program's revenue has grown as oil prices have gone up. There is an accelerating flow of contracts that has crowded our review process. However, it is our view that the holds that we have put on have had minimal impact on the humanitarian bottom line to date. Nonetheless, we agree that while we must be vigilant, we must also strike a balance with legitimate humanitarian concerns.

We are currently examining our contract review procedures to ensure that they appropriately reflect our twin priorities: maximizing assistance to the people while denying the regime access to goods it could use to reconstitute its military and WMD programs. We are also seeking to enhance the U.N.'s capacity to monitor potentially sensitive items, such as electricity generating equipment or water purification plants; to ensure that such items, if approved, are installed in the approved location and used for the approved purpose.

Let me turn briefly to the WMD issue. A major portion of Resolution 1284 deals with the creation of UNMOVIC, the U.N. Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission, as a subsidiary body of the Security Council and a successor to UNSCOM. After consultation with council members, the secretary general has appointed Mr. Hans Blix to serve as the executive chairman of this new body.

My colleague, Robert Einhorn, Assistant Secretary for Non-proliferation, and I had the opportunity to meet with Mr. Blix shortly before he took up his duties on March 1. As former head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Dr. Blix is fully qualified for the sizable task he faces, and he has adopted a serious and methodical approach that seems well-suited to the task. He is currently structuring his organization and assembling his staff and will submit an organizational plan to the Security Council in mid-April.

He will then proceed with lining up potential inspectors with the requisite technical expertise to resume inspection and monitoring activities in Iraq. Baghdad, meanwhile, has publicly rejected Resolution 1284 and ruled out the return of U.N.-mandated weapons inspections teams, but that, I do not think, is the final word. Should Iraq reconsider, as it has on several other resolutions, and allow UNMOVIC in, we expect Dr. Blix and his teams to be robust in carrying out the mission it has inherited from UNSCOM. The United States will provide all possible support for that.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Sorry to go on. I wanted to get all this into the record.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Welch appears in the appendix.]

Chairman GILMAN. Thank you, Mr. Welch.

THE HONORABLE A. ELIZABETH JONES, PRINCIPAL DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU OF NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

I'm pleased to introduce Ambassador Elizabeth Jones, who is a career member of the senior Foreign Service class of career ministers. She took over as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Department's Bureau of Near Eastern affairs in October 1998, after having served as Ambassador to the Republic of Kazakhstan. She has held many other Washington assignments, and her overseas' assignments have been concentrated in the Middle East, South Asia and Germany. We welcome Ambassador Jones for any comments she would like to make.

Ms. JONES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I associate myself with the comments made by Assistant Secretary Welch, and I would like to conserve some of our time and wait for questions.

Chairman GILMAN. Thank you very much.

We now introduce Ms. Alina Romanowski, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs in the office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, serving as the principal adviser to the Secretary of Defense on matters relating to those areas of the world. Her prior service has been both in Washington and in the field, having served as country director for Israel after coming to the Department of Defense from service with the CIA as an intelligence analyst in the Near East and South Asia region.

We welcome Ms. Romanowski.

ALINA ROMANOWSKI, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY, NEAR EASTERN AND SOUTH ASIAN AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Ms. ROMANOWSKI. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I have submitted a written statement for the record. Also, in the interest of time, I will be here to take questions on the military aspects of our policy on Iraq.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Romanowski appears in the appendix.]

Chairman GILMAN. Thank you, Secretary Romanowski.

We'll now turn to questions.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Chairman.

Chairman GILMAN. Yes, Mr. Crowley.

Mr. CROWLEY. Unfortunately, I have to leave. I just want to thank you for holding these hearings.

Chairman GILMAN. Thank you. Do you have a question you want to address to our witnesses?

Mr. CROWLEY. I actually have to leave right now. I have a statement to read into the record.

Chairman GILMAN. Without objection, the statement will be placed in the record.

Mr. Crowley: Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Crowley appears in the appendix.]

Chairman GILMAN. My first question is directed to Secretary Welch. In the more than three months that have passed since the approval of our U.N. Security Council Resolution 1284, it has be-

come obvious that UNMOVIC, the new U.N. weapons inspection agency, is going to have trouble getting its inspectors back into Iraq at any time in the near future. In particular, the requirement for Security Council approval, first of the appointment of the executive chairman of UNMOVIC, then of the executive chairman's organizational plan for UNMOVIC, and then of UNMOVIC's work program, sets up repeated confrontations within the Security Council that are certain to delay the resumption of weapons inspections in Iraq.

Indeed, some analysts have looked closely at the resolution and concluded it must have been structured to make certain that Saddam is not confronted with the request from UNMOVIC to admit inspectors into Iraq until after our Presidential election next November. In order to reassure us that this is not true, can you tell us when you expect UNMOVIC to ask Saddam Hussein to admit inspectors for the agency?

Mr. WELCH. In Resolution 1284, there were a number of questions asked of the new executive chairman, particularly with respect to organization. That is the plan that he will present in, I guess, about three weeks. April 15th is the deadline for that. After that plan is presented, if it is approved by the council, UNMOVIC is up and ready to operate. The only thing inhibiting its operation, then, in the full sense of the word, would be whether it can do it inside Iraq.

What stops that right now is the Iraqi government has not accepted, indeed it has rejected, Resolution 1284. If they were to accept Resolution 1284, and the council has approved the organizational plan, then the monitoring and inspection activity could resume in Iraq just as soon as they were able to get there, which of course could be any time after April 15th and certainly well before November.

Chairman GILMAN. Can you tell us when you expect the council to approve the UNMOVIC plan?

Mr. WELCH. The council has not actually gotten it yet, Mr. Chairman. It is hard to predict how that debate will go. It depends on what is in the plan. The debate for the selection of an executive chairman, which was the other deadline contained for Council action in 1284, was easily met and that deadline was satisfied. I have had some experience with working on the Security Council in these issues. They frequently do cause a lot of debate.

I would imagine that the other council members have the same degree of confidence we do in Dr. Blix. The question of organization is not going to divert attention for that long.

Chairman GILMAN. What would you estimate to be an outside date for final approval of UNMOVIC's organizational plan and work program?

Mr. WELCH. Again, I cannot say. But, typically the council acts reasonably rapidly on these things. As I said, the only example we have under this resolution is the selection of the executive chairman. Most of the debate took place before the nomination. Once the nomination was received, consensus was easily had.

Chairman GILMAN. Conservatively speaking, what are we looking at by way of a timeframe?

Mr. WELCH. I would say within a few business days to look at the organizational plan. I would add, that should be juxtaposed to what is our estimate of the likelihood of Iraqi acceptance of the resolution in any near timeframe. That estimate I cannot give you. That is probably a more important impediment to them restoring their activity in Iraq.

Chairman GILMAN. So it could be at least several months, is that correct?

Mr. WELCH. That is entirely in the hands of the Saddam Hussein regime.

Chairman GILMAN. Ambassador Jones, on March 3rd of this year, the leadership of the Iraqi National Congress sent a letter to Secretary Albright, proposing that our Nation establish a cross-border humanitarian aid program into Iraq that should be run by the Iraqi National Congress. Such a program would resemble the cross-border humanitarian aid program that we used to have in Afghanistan, back when our Nation was helping the Afghans free themselves from Soviet occupation. In general terms, what is the Administration's reaction to that proposal?

Ms. JONES. The Administration would certainly welcome anything that improves the humanitarian situation for the people inside Iraq. That is the primary reason that we worked so hard on the various elements of 1284 that Assistant Secretary Welch has just described. What I cannot say is what kind of cross-border system might work the best. I would not want to equate the situation in Iraq with the situation in Afghanistan, in that respect.

It is certainly a proposal that we have been working on with Mr. Chalabi, have been discussing with him and with some of his colleagues and would welcome discussing further with the Committee.

Chairman GILMAN. Do you expect to have some proposal before us at some reasonable date?

Ms. JONES. We have not gotten as far as drafting a proposal, no.

Chairman GILMAN. Ms. Romanowski, are we in fact accomplishing anything of military significance with our repeated air strikes in response to the Iraqi threats to our aircraft patrolling the no-fly zone?

Ms. ROMANOWSKI. The short answer is yes, Mr. Chairman, I think we are. The monitoring of the no-fly zones is actually accomplishing two important things. One is to ensure that Iraqi aircraft cannot, in fact, fly and be used to repress the civilian populations in the areas where the no-fly zones are.

There is also an added benefit. Because the Iraqis are continuing to challenge our presence there, we are, in our response, degrading the Iraqi air defense capabilities over time. It also allows us to monitor, importantly, the presence of the Iraqi military forces to determine if they are changing their posture and becoming an even greater threat to Iraq's neighbors.

Chairman GILMAN. Are we inflicting any substantial damage on Saddam, particularly if we are dropping bombs filled with cement, as has been reported in the press? Has this been really an effectual program?

Ms. ROMANOWSKI. To my knowledge, we are not dropping bombs with cement. We are responding to Iraqi provocations and threats

to our coalition partners. We are responding to that. We are, in fact, degrading Iraq's air defense capabilities.

Chairman GILMAN. Seventy Members—and this is for the full panel, anyone who cares to respond—70 Members of the House recently sent a letter to the President calling on him to end the economic embargo in Iraq, but to keep in place the military embargo. The U.N. Security Council Resolution 1284, which was adopted last December, eliminates the ceiling on Iraqi oil exports and directs that future Iraqi imports of a list of humanitarian items, like food, medicine, and medical supplies, be exempt from U.N. review.

After that resolution is fully implemented, will there still be, in any meaningful sense, an economic embargo in place against Iraq with regard to trade in items that are of no military significance? Mr. Welch, would you care to respond to that?

Mr. WELCH. Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me also in my answer attempt to address some of the concerns that Representative Conyers raised. First, I think I have a difference with him on what the fundamental problem is. The fundamental problem, in our view, is the noncompliance of the Saddam Hussein regime with its obligations under Security Council resolutions. Because of that extended noncompliance, sanctions have remained on.

Because sanctions are Saddam's primary target, the reason that he has them as his primary target is he wants the money. Because he wants the sanctions lifted and access to his money again, he will exploit anything, including the suffering of his own people to that end. There is a need to address the suffering of the Iraqi people, but lifting the sanctions is not the answer. It is too dangerous. It will not work, and we have a better idea.

It is too dangerous, because the reason you have control of revenues through sanctions is to oblige Iraq to disarm and to prevent its rearmament. If he gets access to the revenues, you are not going to succeed at either. It will not work because he does not have any intention of using these revenues for the benefit of his people. We have a better idea because, yes, in 1284 there is a whole broadening of the humanitarian program laid out that can do that more effectively.

It is meaningful in the sense of maintaining sanctions. Why is that? Because the U.N. controls that program and Iraqi revenues, not the regime. As long as that is the case, we will see an answer which, I will be the first to admit, has been imperfect in the operation of this program so far, but can be better to the situation on the ground. Conversely, if you take the other option of lifting the sanctions, you are not going to succeed in any of those objectives.

Chairman GILMAN. Thank you. Mr. Gejdenson.

Mr. GEJEDSON. Thank you. My assessment of our success rate with insurgences or opposition groups in a military sense, at least in my time here, has not been all that successful. The Contras did not work out all that well. Before that, the Bay of Pigs was not exactly a success. Even if the Afghan guerrillas got the Russians out, I am not sure that at the end of the day we have ended up with a better situation there. So first I would like to ask Ms. Romanowski, and I have talked to General Zinni, is the opposition even potentially a military force?

Ms. ROMANOWSKI. The opposition, I believe, needs a lot of training in the areas that we have identified to make them into an effective, external political opposition and political voice. We are looking at providing them training to make them more effective in those areas. In our discussions with them, it is clear that they also feel that the kind of training that we are offering them will provide them some benefits. We are focusing on that.

Mr. GEJDENSON. What date would you estimate in this plan they would be ready to militarily confront Saddam Hussein? In this millennium or the next?

Ms. ROMANOWSKI. I would not want to put an exact date on that.

Mr. GEJDENSON. Thank you. It was a very good answer. I was getting lost, which is why I have to interrupt you. Ambassador Jones, at this point within Iraq, is there a groundswell of support for the opposition?

Ms. JONES. I think it is probably very difficult to overstate the amount of repression that there is inside Iraq. There is no question that there are people who would like very much, a lot of people would like very much, to come out from under that repression, to come out from under the Saddam Hussein regime. That has been the case for a very long time, certainly since he first took over and from the days that I lived and worked there.

Mr. GEJDENSON. But right now, momentarily, they cannot do anything and politically they cannot do anything, because the repression is very effective.

Ms. JONES. We actually do not know that.

Mr. GEJDENSON. He kills people that look funny.

Ms. JONES. That is exactly right.

Mr. GEJDENSON. All right.

Ms. JONES. He kills anybody before they even have a thought in their head about what they might do.

Mr. GEJDENSON. And anybody near that person, just in case they might have been contagious.

Ms. JONES. That would be correct.

Mr. GEJDENSON. So it seems to me we feel good around here and we say we are going to give all this money to the Iraqi opposition. I am sure they are enjoying their stays in London, where the leaders seem to be for a large part of time. But at the end of the day, I see absolutely no reasonable hope that Iraqi opposition will have any impact on our policy, except to make Congress feel like we are doing something.

Then it seems to me the next place we have to look at is the embargo. Now, we all know what happens in the debating process. If you put up a proposition, and we can demonstrate a few failures, it often undermines the public's confidence in the whole process. It is not right, but that is how it works. When you add to that a recalcitrant Security Council, the reality is, that this 15-Member decisionmaking group, including us, on what goes through to the Iraqis makes us look foolish.

Because the Iraqis are not going to show you the palaces, the billion-dollar palaces that Saddam is building. They are not going to show you the weapons he is trying to smuggle into the country. They are going to show you dying children. They are going to say,

"Country A" in the Security Council held up syringes, water, medicine, whatever it was, and that is why we are dying.

So unless you can come up with a better process of getting stuff through quickly, without these "We don't know some minor detail, so we are going to put a hold on it," that hold then ends up being the whole reason Iraqi children die. Now, people have told me the Iraqis get, the Iraqis who live in the north where we get to distribute or people we trust more get to distribute the food, are doing fine. They are not dying. Saddam Hussein gets a proportionate share and so theoretically his people should not be dying either. But he is beating you on two counts. We have a dumb system for approving products going into Iraq, so it then shows us is that the whole thing looks kind of silly. We have evaporating Security Council support for our policies. Frankly, the same problem is happening in the United States.

So I agree with your fundamental assessment. He is a very dangerous guy. If he gets free access to lots of cash, he is going to spend most of it acquiring weapons of mass destruction; and the next hearing we could have here is about where we were when Saddam Hussein got the missile and the chemical, biological or nuclear weapons that took out some city in the Middle East, children and all.

So we have got to find a way to reshape this policy very rapidly, or you are going to find a Congress, an international community, that isolates the United States, not Iraq. Last, I guess my question is, we have been very good and lucky, but if one of America's planes bumps into one of Saddam Hussein's antiaircraft missiles, we have got a major problem here.

He has got an American he can march around. We are heading for a Presidential campaign. We have got to get through the next six months before some element of rationality will return to the discussion here. You have to be very careful with those resources, because I think he is a threat to the region. I think he is a threat to the Iraqi people. But I do not think the present policy gets us there.

Mr. WELCH. Mr. Gejdenson, thank you for your statement, which I will take as confirming the direction that I indicated that we ought to go.

Mr. GEJDENSON. You are all very good at this.

Mr. WELCH. I have been doing it for some years—considering our adversaries on this issue, you get a bit of training. Mr. Gejdenson, I think at the core of what you said, with respect to the implementation of our sanctions policy, it ought to be that we find a way to redress these humanitarian issues while not losing sight of the responsibility we have not to let this cat out of the bag again.

That is a tough balance to strike. I hear from what you say a recognition that when we strike it we ought to, if we are going to hold on something, do it for a valid and important reason. But also I expect you would agree with me that if we are going to release on something, we do it with having had some real scrutiny.

The United States is, I think, the only member of the council that rigorously applies this scrutiny. If at the end of the day we take some heat internationally for that, frankly, we will have to bear that, because it is also our responsibility to ensure peace and

stability in this region. That is an important part of our National security interests.

Mr. GEJDENSON. I do not want to take up Members' time. I would just say it is not a question of heat. Heat, I am always happy to take. But being able to sustain a policy is the fundamental question here, and not just doing something because we, have had this embargo on Cuba now for 40 years. What a great success. We are fighting whether a boy spends his time with his aunts and uncles or whether he goes back to his father.

It just does not make sense to sustain a policy that is isolating the United States, that is losing support in the American public, because you are not going to achieve your goals at the end of the day. Sometimes you may have to let something through, I would argue. If you have not got a good damn reason to stop it, let it go. I would rather catch him after the fact because we have got to get the international community to support something that makes sense and not continue on something that does not seem to be working.

Chairman GILMAN. The gentleman's time has expired. Mr. Rohrabacher.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

First of all, I would like to compliment you on your presentation here today. It was comprehensive. I learned a lot. The questions that have been asked and the answers here have been answered directly. I appreciate the professionalism that you have all shown. With that said, let me know that we do not have a cat in the bag. What we have got is a rabid dog in the bag. If you let the cat out of the bag, it may or may not hurt you.

Saddam Hussein is an animal that could, not only is hurting his own people, but would hurt Americans if he can get the chance to do so. We cannot afford to let him out of the bag. Let me note that when we keep talking about the effects of our policies and the effects of what is going on, on the children of Iraq, we all sympathize with innocent people.

Mr. Welch, I think you adequately covered the fact that the fault of the suffering of those poor children and the civilians in Iraq is not the fault of the people of the United States, but the fault of Saddam Hussein himself. I think you said it quite well. I think that the statistics that you have shown, shows that we are permitting them to have what is necessary to feed those children. He is choosing instead to spend that money on weapons and to screw his own people. That is terrible.

We should never have a hearing on Iraq unless we recognize, Mr. Chairman, that Saddam Hussein, Saddam insane, Saddam Hussein, is still holding hundreds of Kuwaiti prisoners. There are hundreds of people that have been taken from Kuwait.

As a proportion of their population, it is a monstrous crime against the people of Kuwait. Anything we do to try to stop to change this situation in that part of the world has to take into consideration these prisoners that we believe Saddam Hussein is still holding. I must ask, is there some evidence that Saddam Hussein is still holding many of these Kuwaiti prisoners alive, or has he murdered all of them, too?

Mr. WELCH. Frankly, it is hard to say because the degree of their cooperation with that inquiry process has been so poor.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Which again underscores the nature of this regime; holding Kuwaiti prisoners. He refuses to give any type of humanitarian report to their families. I would call on Saddam Hussein today, and anybody who is advocating that we end this embargo, to make a call on Saddam Hussein before anything happens to make sure we have an accounting of those prisoners.

Second, I agree that supporting the resistance does not seem to have worked. I do not think this Administration has taken seriously the move by Congress to provide resources for Kuwaiti resistance, not as seriously as it should have been taken. However, I would say that before we can be taken seriously, Mr. Chairman, I believe that the Congress, and I would call on Congress, and I may offer this resolution myself, to provide legislation that will end the prohibition on the assassination of foreign leaders in relationship to Saddam Hussein.

Saddam Hussein is a rabid dog who is murdering his own people, who is a threat to millions of other people's lives, and we should repeal that prohibition in relationship to people like Saddam Hussein, and Saddam Hussein specifically. Perhaps if Congress would do that, the $100 million we provided for the overthrow of Saddam Hussein would be taken seriously. After all, what was that $100 million for? It was to replace Saddam Hussein.

We think that they are going to carry him out, let him go to some island, and live a life of luxury for the rest of his life? Is that what the resistance would have done in our view? No. It would have military confrontation, and hopefully Saddam Hussein would have lost it. With that said, I commend again the job that you have been doing. I have been more angry than most.

I backed the Chairman in the Chairman's resolution that passed before the House yesterday, in asking the Administration to use this leverage to bring down oil prices. I believe Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, by being involved in that price fixing conspiracy, have shaken the faith that many of us had in that friendship. I commend the President. I commend the Chairman for the leadership he has provided in that. But we should never forget at the same time that there is a severe challenge in that region, and that is why Saudi Arabia and Kuwait should make sure they keep our friendship and loyalty. Thank you very much.

Chairman GILMAN. Thank you, Mr. Rohrabacher. Mr. Delahunt.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Just one question, that is all. I know we are running out of time. We have a vote. The 5,000 figure that UNICEF claims, if you could respond, is that a fair and accurate figure?

Mr. WELCH. Thank you, Mr. Congressman, for asking this question, because there have been numerous references.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I do not care where it came from. I am just interested in the accuracy of the figure. I do not want an explanation.

Mr. WELCH. If I could just say, though, one thing.

Mr. DELAHUNT. We have got to vote, Mr. Welch. I have great respect for you, but is it a figure that, give or take——

Mr. WELCH. Please permit me just to say one thing. Regardless of the figures, U.S. policy is not based on finding an acceptable number of dead children. Mr. Delahunt. Believe me, Mr. Welch, I

am not questioning the policy. I just want to know, if that is an inaccurate figure, what is the figure? I have an estimate.

Mr. WELCH. We have pursued this...

Mr. DELAHUNT. I am not blaming the United States. I just want to know.

Mr. WELCH. We pursued this question with UNICEF. Frankly, the numbers are hard to know. Causality is hard to prove or to disprove.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I am not even asking for causality. I am just saying——

Mr. WELCH. The data that seems to be relatively well-established in their report is on the number of live births, number of deaths per birth. In the north, that figure is better today than it was before the war. In the south and central Iraq that figure is worse.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Welch, I respect that, but we have less than a moment. Are we talking approximately 5,000 dying?

Mr. WELCH. I do not know. That is a new one to me.

Mr. DELAHUNT. So, you cannot question the validity or the legitimacy. You do not have enough information to challenge the validity of the numbers.

Mr. WELCH. But I do want to establish what connection it has to our policy and to the causality question.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I am not even suggesting that there is a causality. I did not mean to suggest that. But I just wanted to see if there is a disagreement or if there is credible evidence that, that is an inaccurate figure. You do not have any evidence.

Mr. WELCH. Congressman, I would like the opportunity to provide in writing an answer with respect to the 5,000 number.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Sure.

[The information referred to appears as Exhibit A in the appendix.]

Mr. DELAHUNT. We have got to go vote. Thank you.

Chairman GILMAN. Thank you, Mr. Delahunt.

The Committee will stand in recess pending the votes on the Floor. We will continue our discussion as soon as the voting is over with.

The Committee stands in recess.

[Recess.]

Mr. SMITH. [Presiding.] The Committee will resume its sitting. First of all, Secretary Welch, thank you for your patience. We do appreciate your standing by during this series of votes we have on the Floor. Chairman Gilman, unfortunately, has a delegation that he is meeting with from one of the other countries, oh, from New York State. So, again, I thank you for your patience.

I do have a couple of questions I would just like to pose. Back on February 18th, I had sent a letter, as Subcommittee Chairman of International Operations and Human Rights, to Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, asking a number of very specific questions. I mean, as I said in my opening comments, I am like many others very torn by these reports of so many children dying.

While there may be some hyperbole, if there are just some children dying, and any of this is attributable to our sanctions regime, and we are not doing all that can be done to mitigate that outcome, shame on us. So the question that I pose, and I would ask unani-

mous consent that the letter be made a part of the record, and the questions that are asked in that letter be considered by you, Secretary Welch, as questions that we really would like to get on the record as quickly as possible.

[The information referred to appears as Exhibit B in the appendix.]

Mr. SMITH. Just to ask a couple of questions that are of concern, you mentioned that about, I think it was 10 percent of the oil-for-food contracts are held up. As you probably know, on February 7th, the Secretary, or the Director, I should say, Sevan, reiterated his serious concern, and these are his words, "serious concern," at the persistent high level of holds placed on applications for humanitarian supplies. I think the number you gave us is about 10 percent.

He also pointed out that there is currently a backlog of around 800 humanitarian and oil sector applications awaiting review. Is that true? Are there that many that have not been approved? To what do we attribute it? Is there a lack of staffing, an insufficient number of people? What's the holdup?

Mr. WELCH. Mr. Smith, I would also like to add an answer, because I said something while you were not in the room, sir, and it referred back to a point you had raised. I think your words were, in looking at this problem of infant mortality, that one dead child is one too many. I could not agree more with that. What I said to one of your colleagues was, please understand that American policy is not based on the calculation of acceptable numbers of dead children. I feel it is very important as an American official to make that statement. There are no acceptable numbers.

Audience Member: That is not what the Secretary of State said. She said that——

Mr. SMITH. Please, order. This is a hearing. This is not a town meeting. So I would ask you to refrain from any comments. You can make them to the press, if you like, outside the door.

Mr. WELCH. Mr. Smith, I have your letter, and we have been doing a considerable amount of work to get you specific answers to each of the detailed questions you ask, which are very good questions, sir. Normally it is my preference to answer such correspondence before we have hearings on the matter. However, in view of the importance of this subject, we wanted to come up here and have a chance to get all our information out in public. We will answer your letter now very rapidly.

One part of this gets to the high level of holds that you asked about both in the letter and just now. When we received your letter, we were in the midst of an internal review of how we administer the oil-for-food program. Contrary to the headlines in some of the newspapers that this constitutes an easing or changing of sanctions, what it is, is a way to look at a more effective administration of the program. If I could just say a couple of words about that. First, the responsibility for that is shared.

Iraq should do something. The U.N. should do something. The Security Council should do something, and the United States probably should, too. I can only speak and have control over the last of those things. In response to your question, we have undertaken this review of how we run the program. I do not know what it will

produce with respect to the numbers of contract holds. It is my hope, of course, that the numbers go down.

But as I said in my testimony, we feel there is a valid approach that we have to striking a balance between humanitarian concern and non-proliferation risks. We want to strike the right balance in both cases. I think we can make an improvement, frankly. Now, in terms of the numbers, the number is actually today greater than 800. It is probably more than 1,000. But that masks a lot of different kinds of issues.

For example, I would say fully a third of that number, that is, somewhere between 300 and 400, is because when we get a contract, it will say something like spare parts. You cannot make a good judgment about humanitarian concern or non-proliferation risks if the information is incomplete.

Another area is dual-use technology, technology that is specifically barred from entry into Iraq, unless there is adequate monitoring on the other end. Right now, frankly, the monitoring is deficient, because UNMOVIC is not there. That category of holds probably comprises another 300 or so. There is a great deal of difficulty in addressing that. That may be a figure we have a hard time coming to grips with.

Another group of holds would be the ones where, frankly, we sat around and not had the resources or the intensity to focus on them. A large part of that is because this program has grown very rapidly. I was telling one of your colleagues earlier that the full value of the oil-for-food program was actually attained only in the fall of 1999. Thus, the amounts of contracts and the deposits into the bank account, the escrow account, have grown logarithmically, and that has put a strain on our resources.

Secretary Albright has directed that we give more attention to this, and has directed also that more personnel be provided to the effort. They are working through that now.

Mr. SMITH. Personnel are actually deployed in this effort.

Mr. WELCH. It is an interagency system. That includes people from the intelligence community, the Department of Defense, the Department of Energy now. We have gotten them into it because of certain kinds of contracts that ought to be reviewed by DOE, and the State Department. In the State Department, there are personnel from the non-proliferation bureau, which has the main authority for export-import monitoring and export controls. There are a couple of people who work on this in my office, and a couple of people in the Middle East bureau. I cannot give you an exact figure on the aggregate number in the State Department, but I would say no more than, would I be right in saying, about ten or so?

Mr. SMITH. Do you suspect that you will actually increase that, in order to accommodate this explosion of available cash and the need?

Mr. WELCH. I would like to do that. Unfortunately, resources are a real problem in the department today. I am sure you heard this from my boss several times, Mr. Smith. We have a deficit of personnel. What that means, practically speaking, is we have 400 jobs in the State Department right now that cannot be filled because we do not have the people. But, yes, this is a high priority. The Sec-

retary has directed that increased resources be given to it. I believe that will mean that we will do so.

Mr. SMITH. If you could get back to us as to those plans, because it would seem to me that the allocation of scarce resources is urgent, especially given the implications of not doing it and the loss of life, or at least the mitigation of health on the part of these kids.

Mr. WELCH: Yes, sir.

[The information referred to appears as Exhibit C in the appendix.]

Mr. SMITH. The number 5,000, could you shed some light on the veracity of that number? I tried, in questioning Mr. Conyers, and he seemed to indicate that it is current and up to date, and, as of this past February, there were another 5,000 children who have died. Is this accurate? That is not to say that if it is 2,000, it is OK. There is no acceptable number, from my point of view as well. But we really need to have absolute clarity, as much as humanly possible, as to what the real numbers are.

Mr. WELCH. The honest answer is I do not know. The estimates that UNICEF did where we thought there was statistical validity were on infant mortality as a percentage of live births. There, I think I would agree, if I understand the conclusion that Mr. Conyers was drawing, that infant mortality has increased in South and Central Iraq during the decade of the 1990's. It was rightly pointed out that it has gone down by comparison to pre-war levels in the North.

UNICEF itself does not, however, assert causality.

Causality is hard to prove or disprove in this situation.

But they have not asserted that these deaths are specifically the result of sanctions.

We believe that the problem of infant mortality has, however, been aggravated by the deterioration, in particular in the sanitation sector. It is our conviction that some of that can be addressed by better administration of the oil-for-food program, including looking at those areas where potential dual-use items might be needed for that purpose.

Let me mention, for example, chlorine. I have done some work now with UNICEF to check whether their monitoring of chlorine usage would hold up, because chlorine is a precursor, as you know. I think we are reassured that, yes, that system is working reasonably well. But now we need to look at the potential dual-use equipment more carefully.

Mr. SMITH. It terms of medicines, you pointed out that there were, over the past three years, more than $1 billion worth of medicines approved. I assume by "approved" you also mean imported? Because you used the word "imported" before about the 50 million, or are they at some stage of getting into the country?

Mr. WELCH. No, I would expect that some part of that number is in the pipeline.

Mr. SMITH. How does all of that relate to pre-war numbers? I mean, was there an indigenous pharmaceutical industry at all in Iraq? I do not know that. I really would like to know.

Mr. WELCH. I cannot say. I can provide an answer on that, Mr. Smith.

Mr. SMITH. OK, that would be fine.

[The information referred to appears as Exhibit D in the appendix.]

Mr. SMITH. Do you know whether or not they were net or total importers of all of their drug——

Mr. WELCH. I think that one indicator we have, though, broadly speaking, of the requirements in the medical area is provided in the Secretary General's recent report. That report basically says that the availability of medicines is much improved, with 90 percent of the needs being met. I cannot say what the criticality of the remainder would be, and that the more acute needs are now in other sectors.

Mr. SMITH. Let me just ask, are international humanitarian nongovernmental organizations presently afforded full and unfettered access to the areas of Iraq controlled by the government?

Mr. WELCH. No; less than full and fettered access. In the North, there are numerous NGO's and international organizations that operate effectively and easily. In South and Central Iraq, the situation is far poorer by comparison, especially in South Iraq, where the government cites security reasons for not allowing international organizations in. I believe ICRC has finally established a presence in Basra, but I cannot think of any others at the moment that have been able to operate down there.

I am sorry, I forgot this. In 1284, the Security Council imposed an obligation on Iraq to permit that access, because it is cognizant that it obviously would be better if international organizations were in there and had a chance to take a look.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

I would like to ask Mr. Sanford if he could take the Chair. Regrettably, I have to leave myself. But I thank you, Secretary Welch, for your testimony.

Mr. SANFORD. [Presiding.] I would echo Mr. Smith's sentiments in thanking you for your very generous use of time. I will basically have four quick questions.

Mr. WELCH. Yes, sir.

Mr. SANFORD. First of all, in your testimony you had described containment as a factor. Even before I say that, I would make a strong division between economic and military sanctions. I would, for the most part, agree with your thoughts on economic sanctions. I strongly disagree with, in essence, your and Ms. Romanowski's thoughts on the military sanctions and their efficacy.

Toward that end, you said in your testimony that containment was effective, but it did not meet the standards necessary to bring about its end. In other words, Saddam would not do the things in his regime to bring about its end over the course of his life.

Now, I find that really unsettling, because I come from South Carolina. We have got a guy named Strom Thurmond, who is two years away from hitting 100, which is to say that if Saddam had anywhere near the same kind of life expectancy, you could be looking at, let us say, another 40 years of him being around, which is to say if we add up the $1.2 billion that it is now costing the military to impose these, in essence, military sanctions, and we leave off OPTEMPO, which I think wears out troops, we leave off depreciation of assets, that would be about $48 billion in direct cost to

continue to maintain these military sanctions. Do you think this approximately $50 billion expenditure is worthwhile?

Mr. WELCH. If I might answer the last first. The answer, Mr. Sanford, is yes, I do. I am not certain that, that is the exact cost to the United States.

Mr. SANFORD. Probably higher, because of OPTEMPO, again, depreciation of assets, et cetera. But ballpark, we would say in this hypothetical it could be $50 billion worth of expense.

Mr. WELCH. I think every Administration has agreed that the Persian Gulf area is of vital strategic interest to the United States. That since August 1990, the Iraqi regime poses the most significant threat to peace and security in that area. Therefore, successive Administrations have felt that this is a price that's appropriate. I believe that even were Saddam not there, America would have an interest in a security presence in that area. Were those all of your questions?

Mr. SANFORD. No, no. That is the first one. I have four. But we can come back. Do you have a thought? Go ahead.

Mr. WELCH. You asked about whether this is never going to end in effect until Saddam is gone.

Mr. SANFORD. Those were your words.

Mr. WELCH. Right. I said I did not expect him to comply.

Mr. SANFORD. Right.

Mr. WELCH. I do not. That is an objective judgment.

However, if lightning strikes and I am proven wrong, the United States signed up to these Security Council resolutions, and we will implement them. I think the answer that I have tried to give on economic and military sanctions was to draw a distinction here, which I feel is important.

Mr. SANFORD. I agree with the distinction.

Mr. WELCH. Because the sanctions provide control of money. If you lift those and you lose control of those revenues to this regime——

Mr. SANFORD. I am not disagreeing with you. Again, because of what you have said about effectiveness, in other words, I would not dispute at all that this is an area of vital strategic interest. But in terms of effectiveness, in other words, there I think I would have to disagree, because the question you have to ask when spending the hypothetical $50 billion is, are we effectively making a difference on what the air cover is supposed to be doing, which according to U.N. Security Council Resolution 688, is to cease repression of Iraqi civilian populations. To suggest that this is the case, that somehow people in Iraq are unrepressed, I think is just at total odds with the facts on the ground.

Mr. WELCH. Yes, sir. I think perhaps in that particular area, what our presence has done is deter the worst of the depredations but not all of them. So you are absolutely right. In terms of the effectiveness of containment, of course everybody has an opinion on this. Let me offer just the following view. I think that some pretty strong words have been said about this regime here today.

Mr. SANFORD. Sure.

Mr. WELCH. I would make my own contribution in that regard.

Mr. SANFORD. Absolutely.

Mr. WELCH. But we do know the leader of Iraq. He has struck out at his neighbors once every decade with a major war.

Mr. SANFORD. Right.

Mr. WELCH. The sanctions that have been in place have, at a minimum, deterred one in this last decade. That is not an unimportant result.

Mr. SANFORD. I do not know that you could draw that. I do not know that, that is a validate hypothesis. In other words, it may have been that the economic sanctions were partly attributable to him not lashing out over the last ten years. It may have been the fact that he has been rebuilding infrastructure over the last ten years that has kept him from lashing out.

So I want to specifically focus, in my remarks, really on the no-fly zone. That is what I am really getting at here. I do not know how you would say that the no-fly zone is effective, because we can through satellite imagery and otherwise come up with detection as to whether or not he is massing troops, et cetera.

In fact, I would go on to my second point. Your comment in your testimony, then, that we have contained the Iraqi military, which I guess is what you are stressing now. He has not lashed out in the last ten years. But if you look at 1999 numbers, there were 600 breaches of the no-fly zone in 1999.

In essence, to round it, basically two times a day, he is breaching the no-fly zone. I go back again to effective containment. How is that an effective containment of his air forces? Or turned another way, do you see any place within Iraq where an insurrection has been made possible because of the no-fly zone?

Mr. WELCH. They are not there to promote insurrection in the area under their supervision, but to deter the government of Iraq from using air power against the populations in those areas. In the case of the southern no-fly zone, they are associated with the enforcement of Resolution 949, which says that Iraq cannot put additional forces into that area.

Mr. SANFORD. If I were to go back with what you just said, that there was outright repression of the Iraqi people, they would say to me, in other words—it was explained a long time ago—that one of the possible outcomes of having a no-fly zone would be that Saddam would not be able to get his troops to places where Iraqi National Congress or others would gather folks to storm up in arms against him. That did not happen.

You say that is not one of the goals of the current no-fly zone. In fact, it is to make sure there is not repression. So instead they shoot you with a gun, a pistol, as opposed to a gun out of a helicopter.

Mr. WELCH. Yes, I agree that there is that risk that Saddam could do that. We have seen him do it in the past. I am sorry my defense colleague is not here to talk about the numbers of breaches, and their character, and how we respond. Let me say something from my own experience in the past.

I have negotiated several cease-fires with the Kurdish groups in northern Iraq. I have been to northern Iraq several times myself. To a person, the population of northern Iraq would be frightened, dismayed, perhaps to the point of voting with their feet, were an American presence not overhead. This is something that they

strongly desire, fervently desire. Now, with respect to the no-fly zone in the south, there is——

Mr. SANFORD. But that is not to say that they are not repressed.

Mr. WELCH. Actually, in the North, things are a lot better.

Mr. SANFORD. Better, but still repressed.

Mr. WELCH. Wherever Saddam can reach, he generally has a practice of repression.

Mr. SANFORD. Right.

Mr. WELCH. That is certainly the case in the South. In that instance, however, I would argue that the no-fly zones help prevent and deter the worst of the depredations through use of helicopters. I would also argue that Iraq's immediate neighbors are profoundly reassured by the presence of American forces over the skies of southern Iraq. That is not unimportant to us, in terms of our regional security interests.

Mr. SANFORD. Third question: The military have a term called center of gravity, wherein if you hit your enemy, for instance, in the war in Vietnam, we never really impacted North Vietnam's center of gravity. As a result, every night they had on the news nightly body counts, but we were not impacting their center of gravity. As a result, we lost. Could you show me where this air war, if you will, is impacting Saddam's center of gravity?

Mr. WELCH. I do not know that I am competent to answer that question, Mr. Sanford. If you do not mind, I would like to submit an answer or have the Department of Defense submit its answer with respect to that. But as I understand your question, it would be what effect this is having on the Iraqi military.

Mr. SANFORD. Right.

Mr. WELCH. Yes, sir.

[The information referred to appears as Exhibits E and F in the appendix.]

Mr. SANFORD. Last question: Scott Ritter, who himself has been on the ground, as have you, has basically said that the no-fly zone is pretty much a waste of time. Is he incompetent, misinformed; or if wrong, why?

Mr. WELCH. Mr. Ritter has had lots of views. I also understand he has written advocating the lifting of sanctions. I have expressed the Administration's view today on that idea.

Mr. SANFORD. I am not disagreeing with you on that part.

Mr. WELCH. So he pretty much covered a lot of ground in his views.

Mr. SANFORD. Sure.

Mr. WELCH. He did a good job when he was at UNSCOM. I am sorry he quit when he did, because the job was incomplete. With respect to his opinions now, he is entitled to have those. I would have to look at exactly what he said and see whether I agree with it or not. I do not agree with his idea about lifting sanctions. I think he wrote an editorial to the Boston Globe about that.

Mr. SANFORD. I sure appreciate your time. Nobody else is here, so the hearing is adjourned.

Mr. WELCH. Thank you.

[Whereupon, the Committee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

March 23, 2000

STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN BENJAMIN A. GILMAN
HEARING ON U.S. POLICY TOWARD IRAQ
2200 Rayburn House Office Building
March 23, 2000

I want to welcome our distinguished witnesses to today's hearing on U.S. policy toward Iraq.

Iraq has been a festering foreign policy problem for our nation for a long time. What most distresses me is that our nation stopped making headway on the problem years ago. Now it seems that, pretty much across the board, we are losing ground to Saddam Hussein.

There have been no international weapons inspections in Iraq for 15 months. There is every reason to believe that Saddam has used this time to reconstitute his weapons of mass destruction programs. Three months ago, the U.N. decided to set up a new inspections program, but we all know that threatened vetoes in the U.N. Security Council are likely to prevent this new organization from beginning work in Iraq for many, many months.

Our nation has a policy of containing Saddam militarily. This policy has cost us at least $8 billion since the end of the Gulf War in 1991. It cost over $1.2 billion last year alone.

In December of 1998, we launched Operation Desert Fox to punish Saddam for not cooperating with international weapons inspections. The Administration told us at the time that we had "degraded" Saddam's capabilities, and so the operation was declared a success.

Since then, Saddam has routinely challenged our aircraft patrolling the no-fly zones, and we have retaliated each time with airstrikes. Again we are told that this policy is a success because it is "degrading" Saddam's capabilities. Maybe we are degrading his capabilities. But he doesn't seem to mind too much, because he keeps provoking us to degrade him some more.

A year and a half ago, a number of us here in Congress decided to help the President end this problem once and for all by passing the Iraq Liberation Act. This legislation authorized the President to provide $97 million in U.S. military assistance to the democratic opposition to Saddam Hussein. President Clinton welcomed this authority, and in November, 1998, he declared that he was going to use it remove Saddam from power.

Since then, there has been precious little follow-through on the President's commitment. Of the $97 million we authorized in military assistance to the opposition, the only assistance that has actually been provided is training for four men in civil affairs. Of the $18 million we have appropriated on three separate occasions for political assistance to the opposition, not one dime has actually been provided to the opposition, and less than $4 million has been expended on their behalf.

It is no wonder that our allies in the region, to say nothing of members of the opposition itself, question whether the Administration is really serious about its declared policy of removing Saddam from power.

If the Administration really is serious about supporting the opposition, there are two things it should do right away.

First, it should immediately deliver to the opposition the assistance that currently is being withheld. The funds we have appropriated for the opposition should immediately be transferred to the opposition, and the military drawdown authority should be invoked to begin providing things like radio transmitters, uniforms, boots, and communications gear.

Second, the Administration should immediately establish a cross-border humanitarian aid program into Iraq, run by the Iraqi opposition.
Such a program could do a lot to ameliorate the plight of the Iraqi people who continue to suffer under Saddam's rule. It could also address the concern that some Members have expressed about the effect of U.N. sanctions on the Iraqi people.

I want to urge the Administration today to take these two steps in order to demonstrate that it stands by President Clinton's November, 1998 pledge to remove Saddam from power.

Before I recognize our witnesses, I want to recognize our Ranking Democratic Member, Mr. Gejdenson, for any opening remarks he may have.

Mr. Gejdenson.

Before I introduce our distinguished panel of witnesses, I would like to recognize and welcome our friend, The Honorable John Conyers of Michigan, who was asked to join us today and make a brief statement. Mr. Conyers.

Our panel of witnesses today is headed by C. David Welch, Assistant Secretary for International Organization Affairs for the Department of State. Mr. Welch has served in

this position since October, 1998, after most recently serving as the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs. He has had a long career in the foreign service prior to this, serving at a number of posts overseas in the Middle East.

We welcome you, Mr. Welch.

Ambassador A. Elizabeth Jones is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Career Ministers. She took over as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Department's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs in October, 1998 after having served as Ambassador to the Republic of Kazakhstan. She has held many other Washington assignments and her overseas assignments have been concentrated in the Middle East, South Asia and Germany.

We welcome you, Ambassador Jones.

Ms. Alina Romanowski (RO-MAN-OW-SKI) is the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Defense for International Security Affairs. She serves as the principal advisor to the Secretary of Defense on matters relating to these areas of the world.
Her prior service has been both in Washington and in the field, having served as Country Director for Israel after coming to the Department of Defense from service with the Central Intelligence Agency as an intelligence analyst on the Near East and South Asia region.

We welcome you, Ms. Romanowski.

TESTIMONY OF REP. JOHN CONYERS, Jr.
HOUSE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE
"Lifting Economic Sanctions Against Iraq"
March 23, 2000

I would like to thank my good friend, Chairman Gilman, and the ranking member, the gentleman from Connecticut, Mr. Gejdenson, for inviting me to testify today. Additionally, I would like to thank Bishop Thomas Gumbleton and Rev. Ed Rowe for their steadfast and tireless humanitarian efforts on behalf the Iraqi people and for people throughout the world. Also, I would like to express my appreciation for former Food for Oil Administrator Dennis Halliday and IPS staffer Phyllis Bennis for their continued outspoken support that the sanctions be lifted in order to aid the people of Iraq. As you know, I have been following the effects of economic sanctions and the plight of Iraqi people from many years now. Today's hearing provides us with an excellent opportunity to discuss the ineffectualness and inhumaneness of the economic sanctions currently in place against Iraq. It is my belief that the economic sanctions currently in place against Iraq must be removed so that millions of Iraqi people will not continue to be oppressed due the US's no holds barred intent to punish Saddam Hussein at any cost.

IRAQ SANCTIONS

In March, the UN Security Council panel on the humanitarian situation in Iraq reported that "the gravity of the humanitarian situation of the Iraqi people is indisputable and cannot be overstated." UNICEF still stands by their astounding estimate of about 5000 children dying every month. This is despite the Oil-for-Food deal, which allows Iraq to sell oil and through the UN, purchase food.

I have been urging a solution to the Iraqi crisis which does not depend on the suffering of millions of vulnerable and innocent people. To this end I support the lifting of economic sanctions on Iraq while simultaneously tightening the military embargo. The cost of our containment policy does not have to be the death of 5000 children a month, and in fact the American role in the embargo that causes such devastation undermines any containment we hope to achieve.

The "Iraqi experiment" has failed and the comprehensive sanctions regime is both unviable and beyond the administrative capabilities of the UN. The unwieldy,

inefficient and inconsistent bureaucracy of the Oil-for-Food program has ensured that the even the UN can not even fulfill its own acknowledged prerogative to deliver urgent humanitarian aid. The program was intended as a transition, emergency operation, not a sustained effort to feed 23 million people for almost a decade. This program is *in addition* to restrictions placed on "dual use goods" (a label which includes chlorine needed for water purification and incubators need for babies), which the nation needs to rebuild its sanitation, health and agricultural infrastructures. Even after some limited reform, Oil-for-Food is still unable to meet the most basic needs of the people of Iraq. Some in Congress disagree with that, but I ask them where is their evidence? The World Health Organization, the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization, UNICEF, and the Secretary General of the UN have all found otherwise.

The main problem with Oil for Food is that it does not generate sufficient funds to even begin the process of rehabilitating Iraq's once-modern social and economic infrastructure, now at a Third World-level of impoverishment. [Most children die of treatable water-borne diseases from contaminated water, untreated because of lack of medicine, or otherwise treatable cancers or other serious diseases for which chemotherapy or other life-saving drugs are unavailable, inadequate, or available only sporadically or in incorrect sequences.] While few deaths are directly caused by starvation, deaths are more frequent because immune systems, especially children's, are compromised by inadequate food and years of malnutrition. The simple fact is that there is just not enough money to rebuild the water purification, sewage treatment and electricity generating facilities.

The long-term danger of economic sanctions goes beyond the immediate crisis of dying children. The intellectual embargo has isolated an entire generation from the rest of the world: medical education is deteriorating because of no access to medical journals, seminars, international exchanges, etc. Academic life has eroded without contact with journals, literature, and colleagues elsewhere in the world. An example of the devastation of the intellectual embargo is found in the report recently issued by the congressional staffers' delegation that went to Iraq in August and a met 12-year-old girl dying of cancer because she needed a bone marrow transplant. However, the transplant was impossible because doctors lack specialized equipment and drugs.

I'd also like to address the disparities between the administration of the Oil for Food

program between the North and South/Central sections of the country.

The sanctions are not the same in North and Center/South because Iraqi civilians in the North receive a much higher per capita amount of money than those in the Center/South. The reason is the North is guaranteed 15% of total oil for food funds for the 15% of the population who live there. However, the 85% of Iraqis who live in Center/South do not receive an equivalent 85%. The 15% for the North comes off the top of total oil for food money, while in the South/Central areas the Iraqis only receive 51 and a ¼ percent. The reason for this is because 30% is taken off the the top at the same time that the 15% for the North is taken, to pay for reparations to Kuwait, U.S. oil companies, and other claimants of the UN Compensation Commission. Then 4% is taken off the top to cover UN expenses inside Iraq. Other reasons for discrepancies include:

a. Much more traditional agricultural production in the North (in Center/South agriculture was largely mechanized, so it is much more vulnerable to the 1991 destruction of electrical generating capacity for irrigation). There is much more water in the North.
b. The Turkish border in the North is very porous, so active trading is taking place.
c. Some oil for food money can be used as a cash component in the North to pay local laborers, purchase locally produced food, etc; not in Center/South.
d. There are more than 35 of the largest international aid organizations working since 1991 in the North while only eleven, much smaller organizations working in Center/South just in the last few years.
e. Human resources are a serious problem in the Center/South. There are many trained professionals left there still working, but they work for government wages which now average $10 per month.

Next I would like to address the issue that Saddam Hussein is circumventing the Oil for Food program and building palaces in Iraq therefore the sanction need not be lifted--

While it is true that oil smuggling funds amount to something like $400 million a year -- enough for lots of palaces. Not enough, regardless of intentions, to feed,

clothe, provide medical care, or educate 23 million people. Though it is correct that the Iraqi regime should use that money for civilian assistance- we are dealing with a military dictatorship. Moreover this money is not a reachable by the sanctions and are not what we should be concerned with. The fact that Saddam Hussein may be smuggling oil out of Iraq does not relinquish us from our humanitarian responsibility to implement fair, compassionate policies to the people of the world. At the very least not implement policies we know are responsible for the deaths of hundred of thousands of innocents.

I feel it is important that I also address the fear that if the sanctions are lifted, Saddam Hussein would be able to re-build his weapons arsenal--

At one time UNSCOM had achieved some measure of success in disarming Iraq. Long-range missiles, nuclear, and chemical programs are over; some questions remain about biologicals, but agreement that whatever remains are scraps [of U.S.-provided germ stock] insufficient for use in serious weapon systems. Furthermore, the goal of military sanctions should be to prevent FUTURE rearming of Iraq. UN Resolution 687, drafted by U.S. diplomats, imposes sanctions but also calls for Iraq's disarmament to represent a step towards establishing a Middle East region "free from weapons of mass destruction and all missiles for their delivery." Article 14 also calls for a global ban on chemical weapons. The Preamble calls for a nuclear weapons-free zone throughout the Middle East and for the "balanced and comprehensive control of armaments" in the region as a whole. These provisions provide a much better potential for maintaining long-term future stability than sanctions. There seems to be, both in and out of UNSCOM , some agreement that Hussein's ability to re-arm is highly questionable.

Additionally, when economic sanctions are lifted, Iraq's government will face far more pressure from the population than it does currently, because now blame for economic hardships is attributed to the sanctions. Lifting the sanctions will force the Iraqi government to spend more to increase the standard of living of the population (as it did throughout the war with Iran in the 1980s, despite high levels of political repression, in order to maintain stability).

I agree that the dual use items should be monitored by the international arms monitoring agency to insure that chlorine, for example, is used for water purification and not for weapons manufacturing, but should not be excluded from purchase. The

arms monitoring should include components both inside Iraq (monitoring use of dual use items) and outside Iraq's borders (monitoring weapons suppliers to insure they are kept out of the region). Prevention of Iraq's future re-armament must focus on potential suppliers, as well as maintaining a serious monitoring agency inside Iraq. There can be no absolute guarantees. **But accepting the killing of 500,000 children because we don't have the creativity to craft another way to prevent the possibility of some unknown potential future threat, at some unspecified future time, is simply unacceptable.**

Regrettably, our country seems to be increasingly turning to economic sanctions as a "non-violent" alternative to bombing campaigns. We should not allow starvation to become an alternative to diplomacy. In the long term, the implications for the general populace can be devastating. In Iraq, the interior had already been destroyed by nine years of conflict (nineteen, if one counts the Iran-Iraq war). The weak and young have suffered the most while those in power continue to live comfortably.

The supreme aim in Iraq, to remove Saddam Hussein, is itself unviable whilst the dictator remains bolstered by such powerful cadres and the people remain divided and de-politicized. These sanctions can only help achieve political objectives when tangible opposition movements and the apparatus for dissent already exist. This is why sanctions against South Africa were an effective tool for ending Apartheid; the African National Congress was an organized, credible, internal, popular democratic opposition. When such institutions do not exist, sanctions can be counter-productive as they have been in Iraq, perpetuating the state of crisis upon which dictatorships depend and fostering a legacy of bitterness towards the west.

It has often been said that you cannot achieve democracy by undemocratic means. I would add as a corollary that you also cannot inspire respect for human rights by undermining them.

Sam Gejdenson

COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
RANKING DEMOCRATIC MEMBER

U.S. House of Representatives B-360 Rayburn Building Washington, D.C. 20515 (202) 225-6735

Gejdenson Calls for "New Approach" on U.S. Policy Towards Iraq

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE CONTACT: Amos Hochstein, 225-6735

Washington, DC – March 23, 2000. Raising a series of concerns about the efficacy of the United States' policy towards Iraq, U.S. Rep. Sam Gejdenson (D-CT), Ranking Member of the House International Relations Committee, called for a "new approach" towards Iraq based on broad-based support both within the United States and abroad.

"I am concerned about the erosion of the international consensus on Iraq policy – especially within the Security Council," said Gejdenson.

The lawmaker noted that a further diminution of support among the Security Council would cause the policy to be unsustainable.

Gejdenson voiced further concern over press reports which suggest that Saddam Hussein may have started to rebuild his arsenal of weapons of mass destruction.

He emphasized the critical importance of this issue to both the United States and the international community, but declared "Just because we don't have good options, doesn't mean that we ought to stick to the policy as it is."

In particular, Gejdenson acknowledged that despite the Administration's continued support -- including an announced grant today of $260,000 dollars --the Iraqi opposition is neither taken seriously by our Western allies nor by Iraq's neighbors in the region.

"My sense of a leadership that spends most of its time in fancy hotels in London is that they are *not* the ones who are going to lead a revolution on the ground," he said.

In addition, Gejdenson stressed that the United States' challenge is to find a balance between the need to contain Iraq while alleviating the suffering of the civilian population. "It is clear that Saddam Hussein, with his present resources, is not paying attention to the people's needs and it's hard to believe that even if he has more oil and more resources, that he would use it for his own citizens," he said.

Applauding the recent steps taken by the Administration to establish a new approach towards Iran, Gejdenson encouraged the President and Secretary Albright to similarly reevaluate the United States' policy towards Iraq.

"I do think we need a new approach and a new look at this policy in Iraq so that we can have a broad-based political response in the United States and overseas."

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Statement of Joseph Crowley, a Representative from New York
HIRC Hearing: U. S. Policy Toward Iraq
March 23, 2000

Opening Statement:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for calling this important hearing on U.S. policy toward Iraq. The Congress and the American people have heard a great deal of conflicting information about over policy toward Iraq, specifically, U.S. support of the U.N. Security Council sanctions.

U.S. policy has been blamed for contributing to the humanitarian crisis in Iraq. It has been blamed for reducing Iraqi oil production. It has even been blamed for keeping Saddam Hussein in power. That is why I am very happy to be here to participate in today's hearing.

The truth about U.S. policy toward Iraq is that the sanctions, both economic and military, are as needed today as they were at the end of the Gulf War. Saddam Hussein has not ended his attempts to acquire weapons of mass destruction. He has not put aside his desire for warfare, and he has not miraculously developed a love for his people. He is the same tyrant he has always been. Only now, he is accountable to the UN Oil for Food program, which decides how Iraq can spend its money.

This is a good thing. If Saddam Hussein were allowed to spend oil revenues wherever he wanted, the situation in Iraq would be worse, not better.

The only constraint the Iraqi President currently faces is the continuation of the UN-sponsored sanctions regime. That regime directs that seventy percent of the revenue gained by Iraq from the export of its oil be spent on providing food, on satisfying the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people, and on covering the costs of the inspection regime.

Under these sanctions, Iraq last year exported nearly $12 billion in oil. This year's revenues are expected to reach $19 billion – one of the highest levels in Iraq's history. In fact, Iraq is currently exporting over $40 million worth of oil a day.

I sympathize with the humanitarian situation in Iraq. However, all accounts are that the situation is improving, the UN Security Council, with the support of the United States, removed the cap on Iraq's oil exports under the Food for Oil program. Additionally, the UN, with US support, allows food and most medicine to go directly to Iraq and is clearing the way for replacement parts for oil production. However, there is no credible reason to believe that if we remove the watchful eye of the UN, Saddam Hussein will spend more money on the humanitarian needs of his people.

If Saddam Hussein truly cared about the needs of his people, he would comply with UN resolutions and allow weapons inspectors access to Iraqi facilities. In 1999, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1284, which allows the lifting of civilian sanctions if Saddam Hussein cooperates with weapons inspectors.

Mr. Chairman, I have a letter here from the Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS). The men and women working for ISIS have spent time in Iraq and are dedicated to disarmament. In the letter, ISIS points out that the sanctions are "a clear barrier to Iraq reconstituting its nuclear, chemical, biological and long-range missile program." Mr. Chairman, I ask that a copy of the ISIS letter appear in the record.

What ISIS makes clear is that Iraq cannot be allowed to rebuild and strengthen a weapons regime that significantly threatens the United States, our allies in the region, or vital American national interests.

Mr. Chairman let me conclude by once again thanking you for holding this timely and important hearing. I know you share my concerns on this issue and I thank you for your leadership in helping to maintain current sanctions.

Question 1:

A lot of people have been making the argument that the economic sanctions on Iraq should be lifted for humanitarian reasons. It is my understanding that many dual use technology items fall under the broad category of economic sanctions.

Can you give us an example of some of the items that have contract holds on them because of the dual use issue, and tell us what concerns you have over these items being allowed into Iraq without the presence of weapons inspectors?

Questions 2:

I have heard a number of conflicting statements about Saddam Hussein's efforts to acquire weapons of mass destruction. I feel this is a key issue because if Iraq were to acquire nuclear weapons, it would start an arms race in the Middle East and pose the greatest danger to U.S. security since the Cold War.

What evidence can you share publicly with the Committee about his activities to continue acquiring weapons of mass destruction?

ISIS
Institute for Science and
International Security

March 9, 2000

Re: Letter to President Clinton on Maintaining Sanctions on Iraq

Dear Distinguished Member of the House of Representatives,

We would like to call your attention to the letter to President Clinton that is being circulated by Representatives Crowley, Sweeney, Lantos, Bereuter, and Gilman. **We urge you to support their efforts to keep international sanctions on Iraq until it complies with all relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions.**

Opponents of this letter argue that the humanitarian plight of the Iraqi people demands that economic sanctions be lifted. We have no doubt that these sanctions have exacted a toll on Iraqi citizens and that efforts should be undertaken to effectively address their situation.

However, unilaterally lifting the civilian sanctions would make it easier for Saddam Hussein to develop nuclear weapons without detection. Such a development could lead to an arms race in the Persian Gulf region and increase chances of a devastating conflict. We believe that when faced with this moral dilemma, the sanctions should remain in place for now.

There is a way for civilian sanctions to be suspended. The United Nations Security Council recognized that the sanctions on Iraq cannot, and should not, remain in place indefinitely. In December 1999, the Security Council adopted a resolution (UNSC resolution 1284) that lays out the path to the safe suspension of civilian sanctions on Iraq. Saddam Hussein has to cooperate with weapons inspectors in order to suspend the sanctions. In this way, the potential for an undetected buildup of weapons of mass destruction is minimized, and the Iraqi regime will have more resources available for humanitarian relief, pending the suspension of civil sanctions.

Rather than seek the lifting of any sanctions, the United States should urge the immediate resumption of vigorous inspections of Iraq's chemical, biological, nuclear, and long-range missile programs. Saddam Hussein has been without weapons inspectors in his country since December 1998. As long as there are no inspectors in Iraq, we can be confident that Saddam is pursuing his weapons of mass destruction programs to the fullest extent possible. His program is currently restrained only by the lack of available funds, the difficulty in importing critical items, and time. **Without civil sanctions, Saddam has no incentive to allow inspectors back into Iraq as mandated by the Security Council.**

If economic sanctions were lifted unconditionally, Iraq would be fully able to reconstitute its nuclear, biological, chemical, and long-range missile programs, particularly if there are no inspections. Iraq's nuclear weapons program is especially worrisome. If Iraq

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acquires nuclear weapons, it would become the preeminent political and military power in the Persian Gulf.

A nuclear-armed Iraq also would encourage other states in the region to seek nuclear weapons. All states in the region, except Israel, have signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). However, should Iraq acquire nuclear weapons, this situation could change dramatically. Iraq is, after all, a country that has started two wars in the last 20 years. In the case of the Gulf War, Iraq even sought to widen the conflict by attacking Israel, a state known to possess a nuclear weapons capability. In the case of a nuclear arms race in the Middle East, the outcome of a regional conflict would be highly uncertain and tremendously frightening.

Iran, in particular, would be under intense pressure to develop a nuclear arsenal. The impact of both Iraq and Iran having nuclear weapons could be devastating to the region and to US national security interests.

Moreover, we believe that those advocating the immediate end to economic sanctions often exaggerate the impact of the sanctions regime on the suffering of the Iraqi people. In the North, where international agencies are in charge of distributing relief supplies, the population is actually better off than they were before the Persian Gulf war. Infant mortality and starvation rates are lower than they were in 1990. However, in the areas where Saddam Hussein is responsible for aid distribution, the people are suffering in much greater numbers. Additionally, the 1999 UNICEF study on child mortality in Iraq uses unverified information that must be viewed with suspicion. UNICEF has shown far less ability to deal with potential Iraqi deception than weapons inspectors who developed ingenious methods to expose elaborate lies.

The United States faces a complicated moral dilemma with regard to Iraq and sanctions. We believe that the questionable degree of relief that would be brought to Iraqi civilians with the unconditional lifting of economic sanctions, given the proven disregard Saddam has for his own citizens, is overwhelmed by the prospects of an unrestrained Iraqi nuclear weapons program.

We have attached for your information a memorandum laying out some of these issues in a bulleted format. Feel free to use them in any discussion you may have with your colleagues or constituents. Please contact us if you would like to discuss these issues further.

Sincerely,

David Albright,
President

Kevin O'Neill,
Deputy Director

Corey Hinderstein,
Policy Analyst

TESTIMONY
IO Assistant Secretary David Welch
NEA Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Beth Jones
House International Relations Committee
March 23, 2000

Mr. Chairman:

Thank you for inviting us to appear before you today to discuss U.S. policy toward Iraq. I shall open with a brief statement on behalf of us both. As Assistant Secretary for International Organization Affairs, I deal primarily with aspects of Iraq policy that involve the Security Council. This includes the oil-for-food program and UNMOVIC. My colleague, Deputy Assistant Secretary Jones, represents the Near Eastern Affairs Bureau, which manages overall policy toward Iraq. This includes the over-arching policy of containment and our efforts to foster regime change by supporting the Iraqi opposition.

We will be glad to address questions on any aspect of U.S. policy toward Iraq, but I will focus in these introductory remarks primarily on two areas:

First, the humanitarian situation in the country, including the balance between the impact of sanctions and the benefits of the oil-for-food program;

Second, a few words on what we expect from UNMOVIC over the next few months.

The humanitarian situation in Iraq is a complex subject, and we are concerned that the recent flow of misinformation and biased assertions from various sources has made it difficult to maintain sight of what U.S. policy really is and what really is happening on the ground in Iraq. I hope we can provide some clarification today.

U.S. policy toward Iraq has followed a consistent course since the liberation of Kuwait in January 1991; and whatever you might have read in the papers lately, there is no sea-change in the offing. Our policy is based on the objective judgment that the regime of Saddam Hussein poses a continuing threat to regional peace and security which must be contained. And, again, despite what you might have seen in the press, containment remains a cost-effective and successful policy. UN sanctions are extremely important and must continue until Iraq complies with its obligations under the Security Council resolutions.

Let me state, for the record, that we do not expect Iraq to meet that standard anytime soon. In fact, we doubt that Iraq will take the sensible steps necessary to obtain the lifting, or the suspension, of sanctions as long as Saddam Hussein remains in power.

Those sanctions do not target the civilian population, however, and in fact have never restricted the importation of basic medicines and food. Moreover, the United States has focused on addressing humanitarian needs in Iraq since the immediate aftermath of Operation Desert Storm in 1991, when brutal military repression displaced tens of thousands of civilians in northern Iraq. We responded with Operation Provide Comfort, a U.S.-led coalition effort that provided food, shelter and other forms of disaster assistance on a massive scale.

The coalition also instituted a no-fly zone in the north in 1991, and another in southern Iraq in 1992. That policy has contained the Iraqi military and prevented any repetition of large-scale use of force against civilians.

In the Security Council, we have championed the humanitarian interests of the Iraqi people and continue to do so today. Let me cite a few examples:

In April 1991, we helped shape Security Council resolution 688, which demanded an end to Iraqi repression of civilians and provided part of the rationale for the no-fly zones.

In August 1991 we played a leading role in drafting resolution 706, which included the original oil-for-food program -- a program Iraq promptly rejected.

In May 1995 we co-sponsored resolution 986, which expanded and fleshed out the oil-for-food concept. You will recall the tragically slow evolution of that concept: Iraq rejected it outright for four years, and then slow-rolled it for another year and a half, so that the first delivery of humanitarian goods did not occur until March 1997. Some critics are attempting now to portray oil-for-food as part of the humanitarian problem in Iraq. In fact, it is a solution whose implementation was long delayed by the Iraqi regime, and whose full potential is only now being approached.

In February 1998 we supported resolution 1153, which expanded the program to $5.2 billion in oil export revenues during each six-month phase.

In December 1999 we supported resolution 1284, which removed the ceiling on the value of oil exports authorized to meet humanitarian needs in Iraq. That resolution also included numerous provisions to improve the efficiency of oil-for-food.

I want to emphasize that the need to balance the impact of sanctions and the benefits of the oil-for-food program is not a new challenge for U.S. policy. Sanctions were imposed for valid reasons, have been in place for nine and a half years, and are likely to continue for some time. Oil-for-food has been in place almost exactly three years, during which oil prices have fluctuated and the program itself has been constantly reassessed and adjusted. That process of assessment and adjustment is ongoing, as reflected in resolution 1284, and will certainly continue.

Sanctions are not aimed at the Iraqi people, and the bottom line is this: we believe that oil-for-food, properly managed, can effectively mitigate the impact of sanctions on Iraq's civilian population for as long as sanctions on the Iraqi regime remain in effect. Success will require the UN to do the best possible job of administering the program. Similarly, Iraq will have to be pressed to do its part -- cooperating with the program rather than seeking to discredit it, to circumvent it, and eventually to eliminate it. Maintaining the proper balance will never be easy; but we believe it is an achievable result, and certainly a result worth the utmost effort over the long haul.

Criticism of sanctions is understandable, but we believe much of the recent criticism has been misplaced. In particular, those who see negative consequences from sanctions and advocate lifting sanctions as the only solution overlook at least three important points:

First, the regime headed by Saddam Hussein is among the most brutal and systematic violators of human rights on the face of the earth. The most recent report of the UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights noted that the gravity of the human rights situation in Iraq has few parallels since the end of World War II.

Second, sanctions deprive Saddam Hussein of the financial wherewithal to pursue his manifest goal of acquiring, and using, weapons of mass destruction

(WMD). Saddam deploying WMD would be the worst imaginable humanitarian outcome for the Iraqi people and for all the peoples of the region.

Third, lifting sanctions would enable Saddam to rebuild his military and put his WMD programs on the fast-track, but would not guarantee a better life for the average Iraqi. On the contrary, conditions for many Iraqis -- especially in the north -- would deteriorate dramatically if oil-for-food and the UN presence disappeared.

Providing resources to Saddam Hussein would not mean relief for the Iraqi people. Conversely, providing relief to the people is not the same as helping Saddam. Let me explain.

First, Saddam Hussein's perennial spending priority is military development and WMD rather than civilian well-being. Lifting sanctions would simply enrich Saddam and enable him to pursue his spending priorities. Therefore, lifting sanctions would not help the Iraqi people.

Second, we also hear criticism from the other side, from those who say oil-for-food is in fact helping Saddam Hussein. Just as providing more resources to the Iraqi regime -- e.g. by lifting sanctions -- would not benefit the Iraqi people, oil-for-food resources provided to the people do not benefit the Iraqi regime. On the contrary, providing humanitarian assistance to the Iraqi people is essential to maintaining international support for sanctions on the regime.

Oil-for-food is having a clear and measurable impact on the ground in Iraq. Nutrition has improved. Per capita intake is up from 1,300 calories per day before the program began to over 2,000 now, thanks to a UN ration basket which is augmented by locally grown food. Food imports are now at about pre-war levels. In the year before the program began, Iraq imported about $50 million worth of medicines. Over the past three years more than $1 billion worth of medicines have been approved. Similarly, over a billion dollars worth of goods for the water, sanitation, electrical and agricultural sectors have been approved.

The impact has been greatest in the three northern provinces, where the UN manages the program without interference from the regime. For example, a UNICEF study last year showed that infant mortality in the north had fallen below pre-war levels. Yet in south/central Iraq, where the Iraqi government handles distribution of oil-for-

food goods, the study revealed a disturbing rise in child mortality -- to more than double the pre-war level. These numbers show that oil-for-food can meet the needs of the Iraqi people if the regime's cynical manipulation can be overcome.

Finally, let me say a few words about the U.S. approach to making the oil-for-food program more effective. We have been accused recently of having too many holds, or of having the wrong holds, on contracts proposed under this program. Of course there are those in Baghdad, and in the Security Council, who seem to believe that neither the United States nor any other member of the Iraq Sanctions Committee should put any contract on hold for any reason.

Our goal is to help the oil-for-food program succeed. With that in mind, we want to approve every contract we can and do it as quickly as we can.

But there is another goal which is equally important: to deny Saddam Hussein inputs for his WMD programs. That goal makes a heavy demand on us, as it can mean the painstaking review of each and every contract. We take this responsibility seriously.

Our rigorous and responsible approach has won plaudits from some smaller countries in the UN's Iraq Sanctions Committee -- countries which lack the resources and the expertise which the United States can apply to the process. It has also elicited criticism from some larger members of the Committee which have the resources and expertise, but have chosen to turn a politically, or commercially, blinded eye to possible dual-use items included in oil-for-food contracts. Three Security Council member states have about one-third of all oil-for-food contracts. They orchestrate the complaints about holds, often joined by others who are motivated by commercial gain.

Our holds now involve about 10% of all oil-for-food contracts. The number has mounted over the past year for a variety of reasons. Some contracts lack adequate information, and we are unable to act on them until we receive further details from the submitting companies. More broadly, program revenue has grown as oil prices have risen over the past year, and the accelerating flow of incoming contracts and crowded our review pipeline. However, we believe our holds have had a minimal impact on the humanitarian bottom line to date.

Nonetheless, while we must be vigilant, we must also strike a balance with legitimate humanitarian concerns. We are currently examining our contract review procedures to ensure that they appropriately reflect our twin priorities: maximizing assistance to the Iraqi people while denying the Iraqi regime access to goods it could use to reconstitute its WMD programs. We are also seeking to enhance the UN's capacity to monitor potentially sensitive items -- such as electricity generating equipment or water purification plants -- to ensure that such items, once approved, are installed in the approved location and used for the approved purpose.

A major portion of resolution 1284 deals with the creation of UNMOVIC -- the UN Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission -- as a subsidiary body of the Security Council and successor to UNSCOM. After consultation with Council members, the UN Secretary General appointed Hans Blix to serve as Executive Chairman of the new body.

Robert Einhorn, Assistant Secretary for Non-Proliferation, and I had the opportunity to meet with Dr. Blix shortly before he took up his duties on March 1. As former head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Dr. Blix is fully qualified for the sizeable task he faces, and he has adopted a serious and methodical approach which seems well suited to that task.

Dr. Blix is currently structuring the organization and assembling his staff, and will submit an organizational plan to the Security Council in mid-April. He will then proceed with lining up potential inspectors with the requisite technical expertise to resume inspection and monitoring activities on the ground in Iraq. Baghdad has publicly rejected resolution 1284 and ruled out the return of UN-mandated weapons inspection teams, but that is unlikely to be the final word. Should Iraq reconsider -- as it has on several previous resolutions -- and allow UNMOVIC in, we expect Dr. Blix and his teams to be robust in carrying out the mission it has inherited from UNSCOM. The United States will, of course, provide all possible support.

We await your questions on any aspect of U.S. policy toward Iraq.

TESTIMONY OF

ALINA L. ROMANOWSKI
DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR NEAR EASTERN AND SOUTH ASIAN AFFAIRS

BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

23 MARCH 2000

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee, and esteemed colleagues. I am pleased to be here this afternoon to discuss developments on the military side of our Iraq policy.

As my colleagues from the State Department have noted, we have three primary objectives in Iraq: containment, humanitarian relief, and regime change. Of these three areas, the Department of Defense contributes primarily to that of containment, by enforcing the no-fly zones (NFZs) in northern and southern Iraq, enforcing the UN economic sanctions through the operations of the Maritime Interception Force (MIF) in the Gulf, and maintaining a credible force in the region, which can be quickly reinforced if necessary, to deter and if necessary respond militarily to Iraqi aggression or provocations.

The no-fly zones are a necessary measure to contain Saddam Hussein's aggression against the people of Iraq and the region. They were established to support UN Security Council Resolution 688, which required the Iraqi regime to cease repression of Iraqi civilian populations, repression that the Council determined was a threat to international peace and security. Operations Northern and Southern Watch have ensured that Baghdad is unable to use fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters against the populations of northern and southern Iraq, a limitation that sharply reduces the effectiveness of regime operations. In addition, Operation Southern Watch also ensures that Iraq cannot secretly reinforce or strengthen its military forces in southern Iraq in violation of UN Security Council Resolution 949.

For most of the period since the no-fly zones were established, our patrols were carried out without serious Iraqi attempts to interfere. In the past 15 months, however, Iraqi air and air defense forces have begun regularly

challenging the NFZs. Iraq publicly announced its intent to shoot down coalition aircraft, and it violated the no-fly zones over 600 times in 1999, either by sending aircraft into prohibited airspace or firing on coalition aircraft with anti-aircraft artillery or surface-to-air missiles. We have taken prudent steps to ensure the safety of coalition pilots despite these challenges. These steps have included giving operational commanders additional flexibility in responding to Iraqi actions. Coalition pilots may respond to such provocations not only by defending themselves but also by acting to reduce the overall air defense threat, making the area safer for pilots performing future missions. Though Iraq tries to paint the United States as an aggressor, the ongoing conflict in the NFZs is entirely Iraq's doing. We would welcome an end to Saddam's provocations. In fact, we have stated repeatedly that we will stop bombing Iraqi military facilities if Iraq stops threatening coalition aircraft.

Our operations in the no-fly zones also provide other operational military benefits. Coalition responses have caused a significant degradation of Iraqi air defense capabilities in the zones, a development which will minimize the threat to our forces if more sustained military conflict in Iraq is ever necessary. Furthermore, our control of over sixty percent of Iraq's airspace permits us to assess Iraqi military movements and other developments that might threaten Kuwait or Iraq's other neighbors. Enforcement of the no-fly zones thus provides us with critical early warning of any Iraqi aggression toward its neighbors to the north or the south.

A second element of the military contribution to containment is the conduct of maritime interdiction operations in the Persian Gulf. These operations are conducted by a Maritime Interception Force, or MIF, established in 1990 to support UN Security Council Resolution 665. That resolution grants authority to UN member states to halt all inward and outward maritime traffic to Iraq to ensure compliance with the sanctions regime. Though the MIF cannot possibly intercept all illicit goods that go in and out of Iraq, it inspects oil-for-food shipments into and out of Iraq in a search for contraband, seizes a significant amount of unlawful trade, and serves as an important deterrent to other potential smugglers. Its efforts are even more important now, with oil prices rising, as Saddam only has a greater incentive to try to smuggle illicit oil now that the potential financial returns are higher.

The MIF also plays an important role in maintaining international support for the sanctions regime. The MIF's interception of ships smuggling oil and

food out of Iraq—including the re-export of food and medicines that could benefit Iraqi civilians—irrefutably demonstrates that Saddam and his regime are manipulating the welfare of the Iraqi people for their own personal gain. The multinational character of the MIF also tangibly demonstrates the international community's resolve to ensure that the sanctions are maintained. Eight countries (Argentina, Australia, Kuwait, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the UAE, the United Kingdom, and the United States) have participated in the MIF with either ships or boarding parties during the past year. Nine other countries have participated in the past, and several additional countries have expressed an interest in participating in the near future. Kuwait, Oman, and the UAE regularly accept vessels diverted by the MIF, sometimes at the cost of public criticism.

This international support is critical to our larger efforts to deter and respond to Iraqi aggression. We work closely with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states on a wide range of programs designed to promote regional security, and many of these regional partners host U.S. forces. At any given time, the United States has in the region some 17,000-25,000 personnel (most of those afloat), about 30 naval vessels, and some 175 aircraft. We have also taken a number of steps in the past 10 years, including a substantial prepositioning program, that will permit the rapid flow of additional forces to the Gulf region in a crisis. We maintain such a robust capability for a variety of reasons critical to U.S. national security:

- To enforce the limitations—such as the sanctions, the no-fly zones, and the no-reinforcement zone in the south—placed on Iraq pursuant to resolutions of the Security Council.
- To deter and defend against Iraqi threats to coalition forces, Iraq's neighbors, or UN personnel.
- To be able to respond vigorously if Baghdad takes aggressive action against the civilian populations in northern Iraq or seeks to rebuild its WMD programs.

Though Iraqi forces continue to possess the ability to threaten regional security, particularly if US and coalition forces were not involved, Iraq's overall conventional military capabilities have continued to decline since Operation Desert Fox. Desert Fox was conducted in December 1998 after UN Special Commission Chairman Richard Butler reported that Iraq was preventing UNSCOM from carrying out its mandate in violation of Security Council

Resolution 687, the resolution that terminated hostilities in 1991. Desert Fox was accordingly intended to degrade Iraq's WMD programs and related deliver systems, as well as its ability to threaten the region and coalition forces. We focused the strikes on military targets related to WMD and on the military forces, including air defenses, that protected WMD facilities.

Our assessment is that the operation was a success. We believe we set Iraq's ballistic missile programs back by one to two years, degraded the infrastructure that Saddam used to conceal WMD programs from international exposure, and reduced the regime's ability to exercise effective command and control over its forces. Naturally, in the fifteen months since Desert Fox, Saddam has begun to rebuild some of the facilities damaged in Desert Fox, including facilities that were related to Iraq's efforts to acquire weapons of mas destruction. In addition, we also know that Saddam does try to procure WMD-related equipment and materials through a variety of illicit means, including front companies and sham oil-for-food contracts, but, as far as we know, these efforts have produced little or no fruit.

Of course, inspectors on the ground are an important factor in assuring whether Iraq has reconstituted its ability to manufacture or deploy WMD. The establishment of the UN Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and the resumption of weapons inspections is therefore important as it will give us a sense – should Baghdad permit them to return – of what Iraq has done during the absence of international monitors.

That said, we remain convinced that it is preferable to have no inspection at all than to establish a weak, easily manipulated political organization that provides Iraq with propaganda victories by issuing rubber stamp endorsements of Iraq's misleading assertions. That is why it is so important that UNMOVIC be a tough, professional, and competent organization. We are confident that the newly-appointed executive chairman of UNMOVIC, Hans Blix, is committed to developing that kind of UNMOVIC and we look forward to the deployment of UNMOVIC inspectors to Iraq.

Containing Saddam Hussein requires the continued commitment of the United States and others in the region. Our efforts to enforce the sanctions regime and no-fly zones, the maintenance of credible military capabilities to act quickly and effectively when necessary, and our cooperation with our regional partners and allies are all key components of this important international effort.

We will continue to contain Saddam Hussein until a new regime comes to power in Baghdad that will work with the international community to seek a better future for the people of Iraq.

Thank you.

Exhibit A

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Assistant Secretary David Welch
By the House International Relations Committee
March 23, 2000

3/23/2000
p. 58 line 1333

Question:

I am not even suggesting that there is a causality. I did not mean to suggest that. But I just wanted to see if there is a disagreement or if there is credible evidence that, that is an inaccurate figure. And you do not have any evidence.

Answer:

The UNICEF report documents an extremely disturbing increase in child mortality rates in South and Central Iraq. However, it also records that in the Northern provinces, where the UN administers the Oil-for-Food program, child mortality rates are below pre-war levels and continue to drop. In the South and Center, where Baghdad stubbornly refuses to implement programs recommended by the UN to curb child mortality, rates are tragically high. The UNICEF report does not flatly state that 5,000 children die in Iraq every month. Some may have concluded this from the report's data.

Exhibit B

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KATHLEEN BERTELSEN MOAZED
DEMOCRATIC CHIEF OF STAFF

February 18, 2000

The Honorable Madeleine Albright
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Albright:

I am writing to urge the United States government to take immediate steps to ensure that the military and economic sanctions currently in place against Iraq are implemented so as to inflict maximum hardship on the Saddam Hussein government and to minimize the collateral impact on innocent Iraqi civilians.

Although I have strongly supported efforts to weaken Saddam's dictatorship in the belief that such efforts will enhance the prospects for democracy in Iraq and stability in the Gulf region, I am deeply concerned by reports of a continuing humanitarian crisis in Iraq — and particularly by reports that child mortality has increased dramatically since sanctions were first imposed in 1991.

I fully understand that the sanctions are directed not at the Iraqi people but at the brutal dictatorship under which they are currently forced to live. I know the sanctions regime expressly permits the delivery of food, medicine, and other humanitarian assistance. To the extent that hardships are imposed by the sanctions, principal responsibility rests with Saddam himself, who could easily secure their withdrawal simply by keeping his promises to allow international inspections of weapons production sites.

Indeed, the difficulty of achieving both objectives of the sanctions — to cripple the dictatorship without starving the people — is compounded by the certainty that Saddam Hussein will be doing everything he can to ensure that they have exactly the opposite effect. Far from caring about the welfare of his own people, Saddam has murdered many thousands of them. It is in his interest not only to divert resources to military purposes, including the development of biological and chemical weapons, but also to have on hand widespread and visible suffering in order to create international pressure for total withdrawal of all sanctions. It is therefore especially important for the United States to take the lead in making the humanitarian exception to the sanctions work. This

is not only the right thing to do, but also the only way to ensure that the sanctions promote our own objectives and not Saddam's.

In an effort to determine whether we are really doing all we can to ensure that the sanctions do not inadvertently block humanitarian relief for the Iraqi people, I would appreciate a response to the following questions at your earliest possible convenience:

(1) During the past year, the Executive Director of the U.N. Office of the Iraq Program (OIP), Benon Sevan, has expressed concern about the slow distribution of medicine and medical supplies to hospitals and clinics in Iraq. Assuming this assessment is accurate, what are the root causes of these medicine shortages? For instance, is the government of Iraq purchasing sufficient medical goods with the humanitarian funds it derives from the oil sales permitted by the sanctions? What efforts have been made by international organizations, by non-governmental organizations, and by governments including the United States to make up for the shortfall? Are contracts for medical goods being approved promptly by the United Nations sanctions committee? Are approved medicines somehow not getting into Iraq, or are they being improperly or inefficiently distributed? What can be done to improve this situation?

(2) Paragraph 17 of Security Council Resolution 1284 (1999) directed the sanctions committee to develop a list of "pre-approved" humanitarian items (including food, medicine, agricultural equipment, and educational items) that would no longer require contract-by-contract approval by the committee. Has the sanctions committee presented such a list to the Security Council yet? If not, why not, and when will this be done? Do you believe the implementation of this list will eliminate any remaining obstacles to the free flow of food, medicine, and other humanitarian items? If not, what further steps should be taken?

(3) In his February 7 briefing to the Security Council, OIP Director Sevan reiterated his "serious concern at the persistent high level of holds placed on applications for humanitarian supplies." Please provide the Subcommittee with a list of holds for which the United States is responsible, as well as a succinct and informative explanation for the reasons behind each of these holds.

(4) IOP Director Sevan also noted that because of the revenue-generating success of the latest phase of the oil-for-food program, "[t]here is currently a backlog of around 800 humanitarian and oil sector applications" awaiting review. Does the UN have sufficient staff to handle the processing of applications in a timely manner? What can be done to help expedite the processing?

(5) Other than the routine Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) license requirement, are there any restrictions that impede the ability of U.S.-based organizations or individuals to donate humanitarian relief funds or supplies to the Iraqi people?

(6) Are international humanitarian non-governmental organizations presently afforded full and unfettered access to the areas of Iraq controlled by the government in Baghdad?

(7) What is the current stance of the Iraqi Government toward Security Council Resolution 1284? Has it definitively rejected that Resolution? Is Iraq's approval or co-operation necessary for the implementation of some of the key humanitarian aspects of that Resolution, such as the "preapproved items list" and the removal of the revenue cap? If so, can the implementation be restructured so as to avoid the need for such approval or co-operation?

(8) The 1999 UNICEF study that found the increase in child mortality since 1991 noted that Iraq had not allowed implementation of the food-for-oil program until 1996, too late to have a substantial impact on the child mortality statistics measured by the study, which were for the period 1994-99. Do more recent data give any preliminary indication of whether the program has increased availability of food and other humanitarian items sufficiently to cause a decline in deaths and illnesses among Iraqi children? If not, when can we expect to see such data?

I look forward to receiving your responses, and thank you in advance for your prompt attention to these urgent matters.

Sincerely,

Christopher H. Smith
Chairman, Subcommittee on International
Operations and Human Rights

Exhibit C

3/23/2000
p. 65 line 1491

Question:

If you could get back to us as to those plans, because it would seem to me that the allocation of scarce resources, especially given the implications of not doing it and the loss of life, or at least the mitigation of health on the part of these kids.

Answer:

An interagency working group is actively reviewing all contract holds under the Oil-for-Food program. The aim of the vigorous review process is to ensure that we are only holding on contracts which raise significant dual-use concerns, primarily items identified in UN Security Council Resolution 1051 as inputs into weapons of mass destruction. Since March 1, the U.S. has released over 200 contract holds on nearly $300 million worth of goods. We have also had discussions with the UN secretariat about improving its oversight of the distribution of Oil-for-Food goods in Iraq in order to increase our confidence that those goods which are approved will end up in the right hands, and could allow us to approve a broader range of items.

Exhibit D

3/23/2000
p. 68 line 1542

Question:

How does all that relate to pre-war numbers? I mean, was there an indigenous pharmaceutical industry at all in Iraq? I do not know that. I really would like to know.

Answer:

Before the war, Iraq relied heavily on imported pharmaceuticals, importing an average of $13 per person per year. Under Oil-for-Food, Iraq is importing pharmaceuticals worth $10 per person per year; the UN has urged the Government of Iraq to spend more on basic medicines and there are indications that Baghdad is moving in that direction. There is no definitive information on the state of Iraq's domestic pharmaceuticals industry, although scattered local press reports indicate that the regime is putting some resources into domestic pharmaceutical production.

Exhibit E

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KATHLEEN BERTELSEN MOAZED
DEMOCRATIC CHIEF OF STAFF

TO: DEPARTMENT OF STATE DATE: 4-11-00

FROM: REPRESENTATIVE MARSHALL "MARK" SANFORD (SC)

RE: HEARING on U. S. POLICY TOWARD IRAQ, March 23, 2000

QUESTION FOR THE RECORD

Based on testimony from the hearing record, Mr. Sanford would like to submit the following question to the Administration, which, together with your response, will be made a part of the record:

"How have the "No Fly Zones" impacted the Iraqi military's center of gravity in military terms?"

Exhibit F

63

INSERT FOR THE RECORD

Hearing Date:	23 March 2000
Committee:	House Committee on International Relations
Witness:	Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs Alina Romanowski

IRAQ

QUESTION: HOW IS THE AIR CAMPAIGN IMPACTING THE IRAQI "CENTER OF GRAVITY" AND WHAT IS ITS EFFECT ON THE IRAQI MILITARY?

Answer:

The no-fly zones are a necessary measure to contain Saddam Hussein's aggression against the people of Iraq and the region. They were established to support UN Security Council Resolution 688, which required the Iraqi regime to cease its repression of Iraqi civilian populations, which the Council determined was a threat to international peace and security

Operations Northern and Southern Watch have ensured that Baghdad is unable to use fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters against the populations of northern and southern Iraq, a limitation that sharply reduces the effectiveness of regime operations against the civilian population. In addition, Operation Southern Watch also ensures that Iraq cannot secretly reinforce or strengthen its military forces in southern Iraq in violation of UN Security Council Resolution 949. Monitoring of the no-fly zones thus provides us with invaluable early warning of potential Iraqi aggression.

Coalition aircraft respond to Iraqi attacks to defend themselves and to minimize the air defense threat to other forces operating in the no-fly zones. Such responses have, however, led to a significant degradation of Iraqi air defense capabilities in the no-fly zones.

The denial to Iraqi air forces of more than sixty percent of Iraqi airspace, combined with sanctions that prohibit the import into Iraq of key spare parts for military aircraft, have greatly reduced the training and proficiency of Iraqi military pilots.

The decline in Iraq's military capabilities has also affected the morale of Iraqi units, as many soldiers blame Saddam for the poor state of the once highly professional Iraqi armed forces. Low morale contributes further to the deterioration of Iraq's military.