

UNITED STATES POLICY TOWARD IRAQ

HEARING

BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NEAR EASTERN AND
SOUTH ASIAN AFFAIRS
OF THE
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TUESDAY, MARCH 9, 1999

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NEAR EASTERN AND
SOUTH ASIAN AFFAIRS,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:04 p.m. in room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Sam Brownback (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Senators Brownback and Ashcroft.

Senator BROWNBACK. I call the hearing to order.

Ambassador Jones, welcome. We are delighted to have you back here to the committee hearing. We appreciate your ability to be able to make it in the snow. Hopefully, you can make it back, too.

Ambassador JONES. Thank you. I hope so, too. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Senator BROWNBACK. We meet again to confront a rather perennial question any more, and that is what to do about Saddam Hussein. With your patience and indulgence, I would like to outline how I see the problem, and I have been working around this now for some period of time. It has been a problem that we just have not solved and it does not strike me that we are on a path to solving it now.

Our problem is Saddam. In the last several months alone, he and his henchmen have disposed of a prominent Shiite cleric and his sons, they have eliminated some of the top ranks of the military, and have brutally suppressed dissension in the south of Iraq. Although these developments have been faithfully reported, the reaction of much of the international community has been that Saddam's brutality is a regrettable matter, but no real action has been taken.

The second part of our trouble is what to do. There appears to be little disagreement that, once given the opportunity, Saddam will attempt to reconstitute his weapons of mass destruction and that that effort may take as little as 6 months for him to reconstitute these weapons.

Despite this obvious fact, we have almost reached the end of the road in effective long-term monitoring and have almost certainly ended any phase that will permit intrusive challenge inspections. The United Nations Security Council is paralyzed by basic disagreements over how to proceed and the United States and Great Britain are waging a war of attrition against Saddam's air defenses

which, while I hope it will help destabilize Saddam, that appears to be a very long-term project.

Indeed, it has not been pointed out, but the only justification to this war of attrition is Saddam's own continued targeting of United States and British overflights. The moment he chooses to stop, which may well be the moment these bombings really hurt him, we too will be forced to end our attacks under the current strategy. I am concerned that we have not thought through what our actions will be when that does happen.

Which brings me to my final point. I am very troubled that, despite the President's signature on the Iraq Liberation Act, little has been done to implement the act. Opposition groups have been designated because the law forced the President to do so by a date certain. A coordinator for the democratic transition in Iraq has been named, but he has been widely quoted in the Arab press saying that the premise of the Iraq Liberation Act will not work.

The entire U.S. strategy seems to depend upon bombing and, while I support a vigorous and aggressive defense of the no-fly zones, I am concerned that I do not see more action on other fronts which could help bring us closer to the end of this bloody regime.

We apparently are not going to get a successor to UNSCOM that can meet that Commission's high standards. We are not going to get agreement in the Security Council to further constrain Saddam in any way, as I read it, and I hope maybe you could show us a different interpretation.

Unless we are resigned to the reconstitution of his regime of terror, Saddam is going to move ahead, fully armed with weapons of mass destruction. We really must do something. We must do so soon.

My simple question to you is what is the Clinton administration's comprehensive plan for Iraq? What are we going to do? We are now in 1999. We have been at this for 9 years. There have been different strategies followed along the way. I was very hopeful earlier that we were moving toward a comprehensive plan and yet now it does not seem like we are on that track.

So I look forward to your answering some of these questions and challenges in your testimony and some of the questions that we will have.

Senator Ashcroft, thank you for joining us on this subcommittee. If you have an opening statement we would be pleased to hear it.

Senator ASHCROFT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing on United States policy toward Iraq.

I am distressed by the resignation on the part of too many individuals that there is nothing that can be done to address this security threat and that we just have to take whatever happens to us. That is the absence of policy, not the presence of a coherent strategy to advance U.S. national security interests.

The continuing exchanges of fire between United States warplanes and Iraqi air defense forces have made it clear that the threat posed by Saddam Hussein is not going to diminish unless aggressive action is taken to undermine his government. In that respect I agree with you wholeheartedly that he is the problem.

Since December Iraq has violated the no-fly zones at least a hundred times. Its ground forces have fired 20 missiles at U.S. war-

planes. Frankly, I commend the administration for keeping the pressure on Saddam over the last few months, but the outlines of a long-term policy to deal with the root of the problem, Saddam's continued rule, have not yet emerged.

It is precisely the lack of a consistent strategy to encourage a change of government in Baghdad that has cost the United States so dearly in the Persian Gulf. Maintaining a U.S. force in the region to contain Saddam has cost us over \$6 billion in real dollars since 1993, with no end in sight. And because policies have not been followed to address the real threat, there is little prospect that the 20,000 troops we keep in the Persian Gulf will return home any time soon.

Keeping our forces on the front lines in the Persian Gulf without focused and committed political leadership in Washington is a disservice to the soldiers and it undermines American credibility abroad.

Over the last 6 years we have taken the path of least resistance in our policy toward Iraq. We supported the opposition until Saddam attacked them in 1996. We supported firm containment until advocates of appeasement at the United Nations opposed us in the Security Council. We condemned Saddam's brutal repression and used the strongest rhetoric against his weapons of mass destruction, but were more than happy to undermine our own diplomacy to accept new promises of compliance by Saddam last fall.

It is astounding to me that, after more than a year of constant provocation from Saddam and in the midst of almost daily live fire exchanges between Iraqi forces and U.S. warplanes, the administration agreed in January to review sanctions on Iraq and also proposed lifting the caps on the oil for food program.

If it were a real review of sanctions it might even be different, but "reviewing sanctions" for me is a code word for lifting or downgrading sanctions. I wonder if our review of sanctions would ever result in a strengthening of the sanctions regime.

These tactical retreats at critical junctures, coupled with a lack of a long-term policy to encourage a new government in Baghdad, are the reason that Saddam, I think, is stronger today than he was at the end of the Gulf war. I would be pleased to learn that he is not that strong.

Aggressors around the world have taken note of our lack of resolve when it comes to Saddam Hussein. They have taken note that the administration has not spent a single dollar of the \$97 million authorized by the Iraq Liberation Act to train and equip the Iraqi opposition. Supporting the Iraqi opposition certainly has risks, but the alternative is the resurgence of the most dangerous dictator in the Middle East and a severe blow to our credibility abroad.

The administration has compared Saddam to Hitler, but U.S. policy made 1999 the year of Munich in the Persian Gulf. The President's policies are laying the basis for diminished U.S. credibility in the region and the rise of aggressive states hostile to U.S. interests and allies.

The fact that the administration apparently has no immediate plans to equip or train Iraqi opposition forces does not lead me to believe that a genuine commitment to remove Saddam is present. I think we need a commitment to changing the leadership there.

Merely deferring this crisis until the next administration while Saddam works to rebuild weapons of mass destruction and erode international sanctions, that is not the kind of foreign policy legacy that we need to leave to the American people.

So I thank you for having this hearing Mr. Chairman. We need to try and find a way as a Nation to protect our interests far more aggressively and to deal with the root problem we have in Iraq.

Senator BROWNBACK. Thank you, Senator Ashcroft.

Ambassador Jones, as you can tell, we have got some tough questions and we need some answers to them. I think the country needs some answers to these. I am very pleased you are going to join us today and I look forward to your testimony and to the question and answer exchange.

Ambassador Jones.

STATEMENT OF HON. A. ELIZABETH JONES, PRINCIPAL ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NEAR EAST AFFAIRS

Ambassador JONES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate your questions as well as yours, Senator Ashcroft. I look forward to outlining the administration's policy. I think we have a very good, very coordinated, cohesive strategy for dealing with a very difficult problem, a very difficult situation, and one that is as of great concern to us as it is to you.

I would like to go through where we are, I think, in Iraq, starting with the effort that was under way with Desert Fox in December to degrade Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction and, more importantly, his delivery systems. That also had the effect of weakening his regime, which speaks in particular to both parts of our policy, both containment of Saddam Hussein and regime change.

As you outlined, Mr. Chairman, a number of things have occurred which are indications of the extent to which the effort that is under way by the United States has succeeded in weakening Saddam Hussein's regime. In particular we noted this with his Army Day speech in which he called for the overthrow of Arab governments, which backfired very seriously against him. We saw it again when his foreign minister walked out of the Arab League meeting, demonstrating yet again to the Arab governments the weakness of Saddam Hussein's regime.

He has repeated threats to Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey, which just reconfirms them in their resolve to stand with us in confronting Saddam Hussein and his regime. And he has talked repeatedly again of the illegitimacy of the Kuwait border, which reconfirms the coalition in its stand with us starting with the Gulf war.

We also have anecdotal information that we are getting from quite a number of the contacts that we have inside Iraq, those who report to us on what is happening inside. Ever since the December air strikes, the government offices in Baghdad have been dispersed; the government is unable to function with the efficiency that it has in the past. More importantly, the Republican Guard has been dispersed and is unable to take advantage of the relative comforts of Baghdad. They are out in the field, which is not something that they particularly look forward to.

In particular, Saddam Hussein failed in his primary strategy through the fall, which was to get sanctions lifted and to gain control of the money from the sale of oil and from the lifting of sanctions. He has, more importantly, challenged us in the no-fly zones. The no-fly zones, as you know, were established some time ago through the Security Council in order to protect the people of Iraq from him, from the depredations of his regime, both in the south and in parts of the north.

Although the air strikes that we undertake because of the challenges to our forces, to our pilots in the no-fly zones, are meant to protect the pilots and to protect our airplanes, they also have a collateral effect on the regime. The result of that in particular has been increasing reports of trouble in the south. There are some reports that "Chemical Ali," the most infamous of Saddam's generals, may have been assassinated or there may have been an assassination attempt on him yesterday. We do not know the full story yet.

There has been a considerable amount of unrest that resulted from the assassination of one of the senior Shia clerics, as you mentioned, Sadr, and his two sons. The unrest in the south was quelled in part by shelling in Nassiriyah. There were armed clashes in Karbala, and there is some discussion that there will be increased unrest in the south as the 40th day of mourning approaches for Sadr and his two sons. In addition, there are very credible reports that General Jenabi, the second in command in the south, was executed by the regime.

The important thing, though, as you both mention, is what it is that we are doing to influence events in the south and what we are doing in order to fill out the administration's policy of containment and regime change. Frank Ricciardone, who has been named as the Special Coordinator for Transition in Iraq, was in London last week talking with many of the opposition groups, in particular those named, those designated for receipt of equipment under the ILA. He is working to try to put together an executive committee meeting of the leadership to try to get the Iraqi groups to work together in a way that is more credible, in a way that actually can affect a regime change.

All of that needs U.S. support. It has U.S. support, and that is a very intensive effort that he has under way right now, and he will go back to that next week as well. Right now he is in Ankara talking with the Turkish Government and getting ready for the visit of Assistant Secretary Martin Indyk, who is due there in a couple of days to talk to the Turkish Government and to visit Incirlik to work even more intensively on Operation Northern Watch and to seek further Turkish support for our policies of containment and regime change.

We are very pleased with Radio Free Iraq. More importantly, the Iraqis, the Iraqis on the ground, are pleased with the reporting that they are getting from Radio Free Iraq. There is other media outreach that we are working on. That is very important, we heard over and over again when we visited the north, in order to embolden people inside the country on the kinds of things that may be going on to effect regime change.

On the ILA itself, as the act requires, we have designated seven groups that would be eligible to receive assistance under the act.

We are working more intensively with those groups as well as others in order to ensure that we can use the act in an effective and appropriate way with them. We will of course look seriously at proposals that we get from them on how they may use equipment that might be provided to them under the act.

In addition, we have quite a number of other tools that we very fortunately have been given by Congress to shore up the resistance inside Iraq and to broadcast within the international community more broadly the kinds of depredations that the Iraqi regime has perpetrated against its own people. We have been able to move about a half a million dollars to INDICT. They will start their very important work after considerable work with us to develop much more effective financial controls and programming ability in order to carry out their very important work.

We are looking forward to funding Dr. Gosden very soon in field studies to followup on the work that she has already begun in Halabja following the chemical attacks on the Kurdish peoples in Halabja 10 years ago. We are hoping to work further on reconciliation of the Kurdish groups that I worked on when I was last in Iraq 6 weeks ago and as recently as yesterday and today in conversations with the Kurdish leaders. But, going beyond that, to try to use some of the money that we have been given through ESF for election training and election work inside northern Iraq to develop elections for the regional assembly.

We have quite a number of other proposals that have been given to us that could be—that we could fund using the money that Congress has very kindly given us, and those we hope we will be able to fund very soon. One of the anomalies that we are finding is that we have a lot of new organizations, new NGO's, that are working inside Iraq, that would like to work inside Iraq or on Iraqi issues, that are not quite used to working with the U.S. Government and with U.S. Government money. So we have been finding ways to make sure that the money that we disburse to them is accounted for and used in a way that is appropriate and that Congress would support.

I look forward to responding to your specific questions, and I know you have many. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Jones follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF AMBASSADOR A. ELIZABETH JONES

Mr. Chairman: I appreciate this opportunity to update you on events inside Iraq and the steps the Administration is taking to try to influence them.

We believe Operation "Desert Fox" accomplished its goal of degrading Saddam's capacity to develop and deliver weapons of mass destruction and his ability to threaten his neighbors.

It also appears that the regime has been weakened.

Saddam's January Army Day speech calling for the overthrow of Arab governments, the walk-out by his Foreign Minister from the January Arab League meeting, repeated Iraqi threats to Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Turkey and repeated allusions by Iraqi officials to the illegitimacy of the Kuwait border underscore Saddam's weakness and isolation.

Anecdotally, we have heard that over half the civilian government offices in Baghdad were dispersed to residential areas during the December air strikes and have not yet returned to their original locations. Moreover, long-term dispersal of Republican Guard units to the field is reported to be taking a toll on morale among the RG officer corps, which no longer enjoys a privileged lifestyle in Baghdad.

Perhaps just as important, Saddam has been unable to achieve what he announced as his chief goal for 1998: the lifting of sanctions and restoration of his con-

trol over Iraq's billions of dollars in oil revenue. Instead, his defiance of the international community has prolonged sanctions even further and compelled the coalition to respond militarily in December. Sanctions remain in place. The UN controls his oil revenue and provides for the Iraqi people and it is clear that there can be no short cut to lifting sanctions.

Since the end of Desert Fox, Saddam has chosen to challenge the No-Fly zones in both the north and south on an almost daily basis. The coalition response has been to strike at his integrated air defense system. The net effect of his challenges has been to degrade his weapons capability further and frustrate his efforts to achieve even a pyrrhic victory.

One recent strike appears to have affected communication for the oil pipeline to Turkey. Fortunately, repairs were made within 48 hours with no serious effect on oil flow essential to maintaining the humanitarian program. We will continue to make every effort to avoid hitting such dual-use targets.

Internally, there have been signs of strain and unrest since Desert Fox. On February 19, Ayatollah Muhammed al-Sadr, the senior Shia cleric appointed by Saddam, was assassinated. Al-Sadr is the third senior cleric killed in less than a year. Over the past several months, he reportedly had been warned against leading Friday prayers and was interrogated and threatened by security forces. He was shot, along with his two sons, after attending Friday prayers at the shrine of the Imam Ali in Najaf. The Government refused to allow a funeral ceremony.

Al-Sadr's assassination came at a time when Saddam appears to be having increasing difficulty maintaining control over security in southern Iraq. In an effort to repress unrest in the south, Saddam last fall named Ali Hasan al-Majid as Commander for the Southern Regions an appointment that probably was meant to intimidate the local population. Ali Hasan is known as "Chemical Ali" for his use of chemical weapons against Kurdish civilians when he was in charge of security in northern Iraq.

Demonstrations erupted in several of Baghdad's predominantly Shia neighborhoods shortly after news of the killing got out. The regime moved quickly to quell the unrest. All roads leading into Baghdad were reportedly cut off and, according to opposition sources, 25 demonstrators were killed, 50 injured, and 250 arrested, including 15 religious scholars. Others reported even higher numbers.

Similar, short-lived protests reportedly occurred in many other cities. The regime allegedly responded to demonstrators who occupied the town hall in Nassiriyah by shelling the town and killing 18 people. There were light arms clashes in Karbala. The opposition also reported that disturbances took place in areas with a large Sunni population. For example, in predominantly Sunni Ramadi province, nine people, including a former governor, were said to have been executed following unrest.

The situation appears to have calmed for now. However, the traditional 40 days of mourning for the assassinated cleric will end in late March, near the Islamic Feast of the Sacrifice which marks the end of the Pilgrimage. We will be paying particular attention to popular demonstrations that might mark the end of the mourning period and to regime tactics either to forestall or quell them.

In an incident that may have been unrelated to the popular unrest, the second in command in the southern Iraq security district and two staff officers reportedly were executed sometime in late January or February. Staff Lt. General Kamil Sachet al-Janabi, a former Corps commander, Gulf War hero and the senior deputy in the south to Ali Hassan al-Majid was accused of plotting to overthrow the regime. Whatever the real reason for his execution, the regime evidently intends it as a warning to others while at the same time alerting Iraqis to high-level fear of coups and overthrow.

What is the U.S. doing to influence events?

First, we continue to contain Saddam, working with the UN to reestablish disarmament and monitoring activities while at the same time ensuring that the basic needs of the Iraqi people are met. Second we are helping to isolate Saddam diplomatically, where the Arab world, in particular, is incensed by his behavior and threats. Third, we are working with Iraqis who want to see Iraq restored to its rightful place in the region, with Iraqis who, like us, believe such a future is possible only under a new regime.

Frank Ricciardone, the new Special Coordinator for Transition in Iraq, took up his activities full-time on March 1. He was in London last week for another round of meetings with a wide range of Iraqis there. Among other influential Iraqis, he met with Ahmed Chalabi, chairman of the Executive Committee of the Iraqi National Congress. Dr. Chalabi, as you know, has called for a meeting of the INC this spring. We are working with him and other INC leaders to lay the groundwork for a successful meeting, through close consultation with constituent groups and careful planning. Ricciardone is encouraging the INC Executive Committee members to

hold an informal meeting next week and to follow it with a formal meeting of the INC Executive Committee that could pave the way for a productive General Assembly meeting.

This week, Assistant Secretary Martin Indyk will travel to Turkey, Jordan and Syria to continue our consultations with regional governments regarding our policy. After joining Martin in Ankara, Ricciardone, will stop again in London to continue his important consultations with key Iraqi exiles. As soon as he is back in Washington, he will resume his close consultations with members and staff regarding our shared goals and ways to work more closely together to achieve them.

We are also very sensitive to the need to get information to and from Iraqis inside Iraq. We are pleased that Radio Free Iraq, which is an independent station, has been heard inside Iraq since October. We are also stepping up coordination with USIA, looking at ways to make other media outreach more effective.

In early February, the President formally designated seven opposition groups under the Iraq Liberation Act as eligible to receive assistance under the Act. We are intensifying our contacts with Iraqi groups and will consider how we can help them more effectively oppose Saddam's rule and help Iraqis to achieve the kind of government they deserve and desire. We will evaluate carefully the capabilities of these groups, their strengths and their weaknesses, giving due consideration to any proposals they may wish to present regarding possible receipt of assistance under the Act. We will also try to resolve other practical issues, such as securing still more support from neighboring countries, as would be needed in such scenarios.

We have also taken concrete steps to ensure that funding reaches groups and initiatives that meet our common goals. For example, we have worked over the past several months with the chairman and board of the INDICT organization to ensure that INDICT can become a major focal point of Iraqi war crimes accountability activity. The board has agreed to an initial grant of \$500,000, and has welcomed our suggestion that funding be made available also for developing effective management and accounting expertise and for program development. We expect to receive a program plan and follow-on grant requests in the near future.

We are also working with Dr. Christine Gosden to provide a grant for a field study of the effects of Saddam's 1988 attacks on the people of Halabja.

As you know, I am personally involved in our efforts to help reconcile the Kurdish parties in northern Iraq. I traveled to the region in January to encourage them in their efforts to unify the regional government apparatus and to care more equitably for the needs of the people in the region. As part of this process, we are exploring ways for NGO's to provide election process training and assistance prior to elections in northern Iraq that could be held late this year.

We are also looking at ways to provide assistance to:

- leadership confidence building seminars and organizational meetings;
- Iraqis who will make their case before international organizations such as UN agencies;
- and seminars that explore "the day after" and such topics as constitutional modeling, debt restructuring and rebuilding a health care network.

A more detailed report on this activity is in clearance. We look forward to working with Congress as we pursue these efforts at strengthening the ability of Iraqis to work for a better future.

Senator BROWNBACK. Thank you, Ambassador. I appreciate your testimony and I appreciate you coming here to testify.

Let me just start. As I go through and look at this, of the \$97 million that was authorized in drawdown for the Iraq Liberation Act, and I believe there was also appropriated an additional \$13 million to support opposition to Saddam, you funded the Radio Free Iraq, that has been done; you have apparently here half a million that you are funding an initial grant to—

Ambassador JONES. INDICT.

Senator BROWNBACK [continuing]. To INDICT. And that is what has been spent to date?

Ambassador JONES. That is right.

Senator BROWNBACK. So a total of how much money has been spent that was authorized by the Congress to spend under the Iraq Liberation Act?

Ambassador JONES. We have the money that has been transferred to INDICT, although that comes under the ESF rather than the Iraq Liberation Act. And we have spent money on the Halabja conference and November, which was about \$67,000.

Under the ILA itself, we want very much to disburse the equipment that is authorized under the ILA, but we believe we need to do it in a very responsible way, in ways that the groups themselves can use. We do not think that they are in a situation yet to receive that equipment until there is a greater coalition among them as to what they would do and how they would do it.

Senator BROWNBACK. So you have spent \$67,000 and the Radio Free Iraq and to date that is the extent of what you have expended of what was authorized by the Congress?

Ambassador JONES. That is right.

Senator BROWNBACK. You know, one of our concerns here is just that we need to move forward and we need to move forward aggressively, and that this has been signed into law for some period of time and you have been working with these groups for a period of time and it does not seem like much is happening, that it is just not moving forward.

I have had a number of private meetings with you and with Martin Indyk and with Secretary Albright. It just does not seem like it is happening. I hope you have plans to move things forward more aggressively from this point on forward, unless you have a different strategy that you want to put forward than the Iraq Liberation Act implementation.

Ambassador JONES. No, we do look forward to working very aggressively on this. As I say, the effort is very much under way to work with the specific groups to ensure that we can evaluate their abilities to work inside Iraq. The effort at the moment that is under way is to get together an executive committee meeting of the INC, the Iraqi National Congress, to work with them on how they might actually do this kind of thing inside Iraq.

Senator BROWNBACK. It is just my sense and a number of others that time is of the essence and we need to move forward quickly.

I want to direct your attention, if I could, to some questions that I have had people ask me and I have not really been sure how to answer them. The President, when he signed the Iraq Liberation Act, stated the support for a new regime in Iraq. I think this was his actual quote. It is: "to provide support to opposition groups from all sectors of the Iraq community that could lead to a popularly supported government."

I just want to know if that continues to be the case today, because I get different interpretations of what different administration officials are saying, that we are in a containment-plus strategy, we are in a containment plus removal strategy, and then some say, well, I am not sure that we are in for a regime change strategy.

Now, is regime change a passive phrase? Do we mean that we just hope it is going to happen? Or is regime change something that the administration is working actively and aggressively to cause to happen?

Ambassador JONES. It is—regime change is what the administration is working actively and aggressively to cause to happen. That

is absolutely right. We have quite a number of tools that we are employing to do that. The ILA is one. The money that has been given to us under ESF is the other, using the kinds of NGO's, IN-DICT, et cetera, to do that.

We think that there are quite a number of pieces that need to be pulled together in order to accomplish this. It is very important, however, in our view, that this be an Iraqi effort that we very much support. The administration does not feel comfortable, does not think it is appropriate, dictating to the Iraqi people what the regime change would be.

That is the reason that we are working so intensively with the Iraqi exile groups. That is the reason that I am working on Kurdish reconciliation specifically, in order to help them come to agreement on what that regime change would be, in order to put meat on the bones of what we say when we talk about representative government, when we talk about an Iraq whose territorial integrity is maintained, whose sovereignty is maintained, and a government that would adhere to international norms.

Senator BROWBACK. Well, I am glad to hear you say that it is an active phrase, because different of the Secretaries seem to have interpreted it somewhat differently or saying that the containment strategy and a removal strategy are inconsistent with each other when I think that they are perfectly consistent with each other. It is just it is going to take a great deal of push and effort to be able to get those done.

Now, I asserted in my opening statement that the current United States and British bombing in the no-fly zones in Iraq constituted a legal response to Iraqi provocations. Would you agree with that statement?

Ambassador JONES. That it constitutes a legal response to Iraqi provocations?

Senator BROWBACK. A legal response.

Ambassador JONES. Absolutely, yes.

Senator BROWBACK. If that is the case, though, is it also not correct that if Iraq tomorrow stopped targeting allied planes and Saddam ceased all of his provocations that the bombing would by necessity end as well?

Ambassador JONES. The mission that the United States military and the British military have been given is to patrol the no-fly zones, to protect the no-fly zones, and by extension therefore the Iraqi people in the south and the Iraqi people in the north as far down as the no-fly zone extends in the north. But the mission is focused on the no-fly zones.

So if the challenges to the pilots were to cease, that would be the case, yes.

Senator BROWBACK. Where would that leave U.S. policy, then? I mean, if that is one of the major ways that we continue to weaken Saddam Hussein, then we would be without that ability once he stops the provocations; is that correct?

Ambassador JONES. No, I would disagree actually, Mr. Chairman, because all of the other policies that we have in place that we are working very intensively on are also directed at regime change. As you say, I completely agree with you that containment and regime change do work hand in hand.

Containment is something that we are working on maintaining and shoring up in the Security Council and with our allies in the Gulf and in Turkey. Regime change goes beyond containment and it is what we are working on with the kinds of tools that we have been discussing already this afternoon.

Senator BROWNBACK. Let's talk about some of the tools for regime change, because clearly the Iraq Liberation Act is a regime change tool that the Congress has put forward.

Ambassador JONES. That is right.

Senator BROWNBACK. And I believe we need to be more aggressive in moving forward with the implementation of that legislation, when you have only spent \$67,000 plus Iraq Radio. We need to get more aggressive with that.

What other policies does the administration have in place that are targeted at regime change?

Ambassador JONES. The ILA, as you mention. The ESF that we have in the programs that we are working on in order to help the Iraqis, both the exile groups and those who may be inside, particularly in the north, first of all think about the kinds of things that they would like to see in a new government—so some of the money we hope to spend on day-after kinds of seminars to let Iraqis talk about and come to some conclusions about what we mean or what they mean by representative government.

INDICT I think is a very important program in order to publicize for Iraqis and by Iraqis the human rights concerns and the war crime activities that Saddam Hussein and those close to him have undertaken.

All of these, as well as the kinds of election training and development of systems inside northern Iraq for Kurdish reconciliation to occur along the lines that were agreed in the Washington Agreement, all of this we believe seriously emboldens those inside and the exile groups to think that regime change is a genuine possibility. The more that we can demonstrate to Saddam Hussein their coalition and their cohesiveness, the more people inside will believe that a new Iraq is possible for them in the near future.

Senator BROWNBACK. But none of those groups have the military capacity to do anything against Saddam, do they?

Ambassador JONES. Certainly inside they do. We believe they do, absolutely.

Senator BROWNBACK. That would have enough military capacity to be able to challenge Saddam?

Ambassador JONES. They could, they could. However, there are other ways that we can work on to assist them in that, but that is probably not something that we can talk about in this forum.

Senator BROWNBACK. I would like to pursue that with you further, because what I am hearing you say are all good and laudable things, but it does not strike me that any of them can set any date, that we could project any date forward that this regime would be out of power; that these are things that are laudable to do, but we could not say that we would project within 2 years, within 1 year, within 5 years, there will be a new regime that heads the Government of Iraq. Can we?

Ambassador JONES. I would not—I would not want to give you a date, no. But at the same time, I think it is very, very possible

that we can build the kind of, as I said, cohesiveness and common sense of purpose among the Iraqi opposition groups, the Iraqi exile groups, that we are working on now.

One of the difficulties that we have been facing is a very disparate set of groups, whose differences have been more—have been more of a subject than their agreements. It is the agreement among them that we are trying to foster. I think that is the most important, the most important political aspect of this that we can work on.

Once the political aspect of this is more apparent and is more agreed, that makes it much easier for us to use the ILA as the Congress intended and as we intend to implement it.

Senator BROWNBAC. The military bombing that we are doing, the targeting of the bombing is mostly targeted toward sites that fix on our aircraft. There has been some writers that have suggested that we would be better off to respond to more sensitive targets, that our attacks should help facilitate Saddam's overthrow with our targets on our bombing responses when they target us.

How would you respond to that? Do you think that would be a better way for us to target some of our bombings in Iraq?

Ambassador JONES. For now the mission, as I said, is to maintain the no-fly zones and to protect the pilots who are challenged as they undertake this mission. The rules of engagement are defined as allowing the pilots to go after any of the air defense systems in Iraq that might, that might harm or put any of our pilots or planes at risk.

The principals, the administration, has decided to maintain the mission at that level at this point.

Senator BROWNBAC. Why not add additional potential targets as those that are politically sensitive targets as well? If our effort is not only containment of this regime, it is also removal of this regime, why not use probably the greatest force capacity that we have, rather than the \$97 million that Congress has appropriated for the Iraq Liberation Act to work with outside groups or Iraq Radio? Why not use this military force that is in place, that is authorized, that is capable of attacking these politically sensitive targets, that would lead more to the potential overthrow of Saddam?

It seems we are wasting a tremendous opportunity here.

Ambassador JONES. I think probably my colleagues at the Pentagon are better placed to answer that question, but maybe I can put it in a broader regional and political context as well for now.

We are working very hard to maintain several sets of coalitions, several coalitions. One I would describe as being the consensus and coalition in the Security Council that we need in order to maintain the sanctions on Iraq, which we consider to be very important.

The other is to maintain the coalition in the Gulf and the agreements with Turkey that permit us to fly from bases in those countries and permit us to fly to protect the no-fly zones.

There is also what we call the MIF in the Gulf that is another coalition. Our goal at this point is to maintain all of those coalitions in a way that allows us to continue our policy of containment and to go beyond that to the policy of regime change.

Senator BROWNBAC. Well, I have traveled in the region late last year and met with a number of leaders of adjacent countries. What

they sought more than anything was a comprehensive U.S. strategy that would lead to the removal of Saddam Hussein, and not just the potential of his removal or kind of trying to set the circumstances and hope that the removal occurs, but the actual removal of Saddam Hussein from power.

They support a regime change. You noted, I thought well, in your testimony that he made a mistake by calling for regime change in a number of his neighbors, and now they are back and saying, well, we think you ought to go. So that their back is up.

But pardon me, but our strategy in place now, we cannot project any time certain, nor can we convey to any of our allies in the region, any sort of certainty at what point in time Saddam Hussein will not be in power, nor any period of time that he may not be in power, unless maybe a lucky bomb gets him or he eats too much fat, I guess, and has heart problems.

But we just do not have those things in place. And yet we have the opportunity through our military that is there in the region, through allies that want to support us, to remove him. It seems to me that we are hesitating and stopping and doing things that are on the periphery, but will not end up removing Saddam Hussein in and of their own force even if they are gotten up to full speed.

These efforts that you have talked about, even if you got them up to full speed, will not lead to the removal of Saddam Hussein. They seem to be more of a containment strategy than a removal strategy.

Ambassador JONES. Well, the decision that has been taken by the administration is that the way to go about regime change as aggressively as we possibly can is to do it through the tools that have been given us, the ILA, through ESF, through using and shoring up and persuading and convincing Iraqi groups, Iraqi exile groups and Iraqis inside the country, to work for it in the form that they decide for themselves.

Senator BROWNBACK. I think what it needs is it needs aggressive U.S. leadership, with a comprehensive plan, and that we target politically sensitive areas. There have been other experts that have suggested establishing areas within the country where dissident groups could develop and work, that we would provide an overflight protection to them.

I have seen several different plans that are of a much more aggressive nature in dealing with this situation. It looks like what we have got in place today, it may take several years, it may take 10 years. We will wait him out, is kind of the strategy today.

I do not know that the coalition will hold that long. I do not know that the Arab countries will wait in the region. I do not know that the United Nations Security Council will wait, will keep the sanctions on that period of time.

We have really got a moment now where he is weaker, where there is internal dissent starting up, where you have the neighboring countries willing to help remove this regime, and we are kind of standing back saying, well, let us see if something comes forward out of this stew, but not with any sort of comprehensive leadership on the behalf of the United States.

I know it is a complicated situation, but we are not putting forward comprehensive leadership in this region at a time when per-

haps just some could really move us aggressively forward on the removal of this regime.

Ambassador JONES. Well, I actually believe that we are very well placed. We are being very aggressive on the political side. We are in very close touch with our colleagues in the Gulf and in Turkey. They tell us that they are completely with us in the way that this is being pursued.

I cannot tell you—you are right, I cannot tell you by what date a change may take place. But we are very encouraged and more encouraged almost every day by the kind of effect that we see that our actions, the actions of U.S. forces and U.S. political efforts, the effect that they are having inside the country.

Senator BROWNBACK. Do you think the regime change will happen during this administration?

Ambassador JONES. I think it is entirely possible, yes. I hear this—like I say, I hear it myself from my conversations with people in the north that I have had just in the last couple of days.

Senator BROWNBACK. So patience is the watchword?

Ambassador JONES. No, not patience. It is a tremendous amount of talking, cajoling, meetings, traveling around to make sure we get the right people in the meetings, bringing Iraqis together who have not talked to each other for quite a long time, bringing Iraqis together who have not worked together, creating a genuine coalition among the Iraqis, who do not naturally necessarily come together.

We think it is very important, as probably is evident from the groups that we designated in the ILA, for there to be a very broad group of Iraqis, Iraqis in exile and Iraqis inside the country, to work together so that we do not influence events in Iraq in a skewed fashion. We think it is very important for the Kurds to participate, for the Shia to participate, for Sunni groups to participate, for tribal organizations to participate, Turkomen, Assyrians. Any of the groups that one can imagine we are reaching out to to really work extremely hard on them, really put a strong-arm on them, if you will, to get them to work together and to come together in discussions to really come up with a very clear sense of purpose and a very steadfast focus on what is most important, which is regime change, rather than on some of the—on some of the past that has gotten in their way up until now.

Senator BROWNBACK. Well, you are a very able witness on behalf of the administration. I just note some skepticism from here in the Congress on whether we have a comprehensive, aggressive plan and whether that is being implemented and whether the Iraq Liberation Act is being implemented at all or it is just being kind of a slow roll.

I note that it has been reported in several newspapers that Mr. Ken Pollack, that the NSC intended to take on him as their new Iraq specialist, who he has stated very openly in Foreign Affairs magazine his questioning of the Iraq Liberation Act and whether or not that is a plan that will work.

The Congress put that plan forward thinking that it could work. It passed, it was signed by the President. There may be people that dispute it, but it is put into place, and a number of us do not feel like it is being implemented with the aggressiveness, given the opportunity that is present today.

I suppose if one could say, well, we are not getting anywhere at all, we do not have any opportunities in dealing with Saddam, let us just let it ride. But there are real opportunities that are there, and I do hope the administration takes your words to heart about aggressively working with those groups to get them in place.

I would also urge you to use the other available tools that are available to you, militarily and other tools, in a comprehensive plan, sell that to the region, I mean presenting it to the region, which I hope Assistant Secretary Indyk is doing this week and next week, because that is what they want to see from the United States. That is what they are willing to support.

It is not without a lot of difficulties, and you have got to balance on many hands. But we have done it before. We probably will not get this lineup the way we have got it right now again any time soon.

So I do hope you will work on that aggressively.

Ambassador JONES. Absolutely. I appreciate your comments, Mr. Chairman, and we are working on it very hard.

Senator BROWNBACK. We will continue to have discussions with you and continue to watch this issue. If you have other comments that you want to put into the record, we will be happy to receive those over the next several days as per the committee rules.

Ambassador JONES. Thank you.

Senator BROWNBACK. We will keep the record open for 5 days after this if you care to have other things inserted into the record.

Thank you for your very good job, and I hope we can work together. We really have to get this dangerous man out of power.

Ambassador JONES. We completely agree. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Senator BROWNBACK. The subcommittee is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 2:48 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

