

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCAIN. I ask unanimous consent that morning business be extended for 15 minutes and that I be allowed to address the Senate as if in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

IRAQ

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, a decision to send our military personnel into combat is the most serious policy-makers can make. We do not or should not cavalierly discuss military options without losing sight of the human dimension that people, whether our own uniformed personnel or innocent civilians in the country against which we take action, will die.

We were correct to strike Libya in 1986, although we mourned the loss of lives of innocent people whose sole crime was to live in a dictatorship that provoked us to action. We were correct to liberate Grenada and Panama, despite the loss of life that accompanied those conflicts. And we were correct to conduct overwhelming airstrikes against Iraq in order to evict it from Kuwait, but we regret the deaths of civilians cynically placed in harm's way by that country's regime. And we have been correct in the past to launch punitive missile strikes against Iraq in response to its violation of the U.N. resolutions.

We now stand on the precipice of yet another military confrontation with Saddam Hussein and the military security forces that protect him. Iraq has repeatedly, over the span of 7 years, defied U.N. resolutions and agreements, negotiated in exchange for the termination of the Persian Gulf war. The demands made of Iraq are simple and reasonable and, if complied with in good faith, would not have unduly subjected it to violations of its sovereignty. Iraq was to destroy its existing stockpiles of banned weapons of mass destruction and its capability to reconstitute the scientific and industrial infrastructure for their development. It was to repatriate Kuwaiti prisoners after Iraq's brutal invasion and occupation of its smaller neighbor; and it was to compensate the victims of its aggression.

Mr. President, it has not done any of these things. Instead, it has demonstrated for 7 straight years its contempt for the United Nations, for the agreements it has signed, and for the most simple norms of civilized behavior.

Saddam Hussein has repeatedly pushed the international community to the brink and then pulled back just enough to head off military action. He has eluded the scale of punitive measures warranted by calculating the point at which his actions would result

in serious retaliatory measures by the United States. He has gotten away with this because in those few instances when military action was taken against him, it was ineffectual. Nowhere was this more evident than the September 1996 cruise missile strikes against Iraqi targets following the most egregious violation to date: the large-scale military incursion into Kurdish territory and subsequent execution of anti-Saddam activists working with the United States. At that time, the forces involved in the incursion on what was supposed to be protected territory should have been directly and forcefully attacked.

The United Nations Special Commission tasked with verifying Iraq's compliance with U.N. resolutions has been systematically stymied at every point. Saddam Hussein has clearly placed a higher priority on continuing to develop the means to threaten his neighbors than on the welfare of children the fate of which Baghdad purports to decry. Iraq has received every conceivable opportunity to comply with legitimate and lawful demands and to join the community of nations as a member in good standing, and has spurned those opportunities.

The nature of the regime of Saddam Hussein is impervious to any peaceful effort at resolution of the ongoing conflict. There is every reason to believe that Iraq continues to possess chemical and biological weapons and the means to deliver them. There is no indication that it aspires to live in peace with its neighbors; on the contrary, I have no doubt that if the opportunity arose, it would again attempt to retake Kuwait. It certainly aspires to participate in the destruction of Israel.

The time for talk may be over. The chairman of the U.N. Special Commission has thrown up his hands in dismay. The approaching option is the large-scale and protracted use of military force. Diplomacy, certainly the optimal approach, has failed thus far. Withdrawing our forces and lifting the sanctions would enable Iraq to fully rearm and openly threaten to destabilize the region, brandishing the very banned weapons at issue. Not only should sanctions not be lifted, they should in fact be tightened. Existing no-fly zones should continue to be enforced and expanded, perhaps to include no-drive zones targeted against Republican Guard armored units.

The only viable military option is to inflict serious damage on the Iraqi Republican Guard and destroy the compounds and "palaces" Saddam has sought to protect. Ineffectual cruise missile and air strikes such as characterized past punitive actions, particularly in 1996 when 27 cruise missiles were launched against largely insignificant targets, will once again prove counterproductive. Domestic communications links should be targeted as well as military ones, in order to sever Saddam's ability to communicate to the Iraqi people. The expansion of our

own broadcasting into Iraq aimed at influencing public opinion there should have been a higher priority all along.

And we should be prepared to act alone if necessary. While Britain has stood by us and prepared to act with us, for which we should be grateful, it is disconcerting to witness the paucity of public support for enforcing legitimate U.N. resolutions. While some of us were in Germany this past weekend, it was gratifying to hear the German government come out in support of our efforts, but European support is less important right now than attaining the open support of the Middle Eastern governments that will play a vital role in dealing with the political ramifications within that region of any military actions we take against Iraq. In that respect, Saudi Arabia's decision to permit only the use of support aircraft from its territory is deeply disturbing. I understand Saudi, and all Arab, concern for the welfare of the Iraqi populace. And I am aware of the domestic and regional implications for the Saudi government of openly supporting air strikes against Iraq. The threat posed by Saddam Hussein against Saudi Arabia, as well as every other country in the region, however, argues forcefully for the government in Riyadh to be more openly supportive of our measures and to communicate to their people the simple fact that measures against Iraq occur solely because of that country's belligerent and unlawful stance.

The military option, should it be chosen, must be designed to accomplish meaningful military objectives. Restraints on targeting intended to minimize criticism from other nations, whether friends, allies or potential foes, will have the effect of reducing the likelihood that objectives will be accomplished. It is clear that the United States will be widely criticized by many parties should we launch an attack against Iraq. As stated, it is of little comfort that some of those governments that criticize us publicly applaud us privately, as their populations take their cue from the public posture. Iraq has provided every incentive for us to strike, and we must not squander the opportunity to eliminate its weapons of mass destruction from the region by tailoring military actions to minimize the political outcry that will follow. Leadership and responsibility often entail unpopular actions, and the prosecution of actions that lead to deaths of many is a horrible burden to bear. But bear it we must.

The key to a long-term resolution of the Iraq problem lies largely in one man, or, to be more precise given what is known about his sons, one family. The United States should adopt stronger measures aimed at undermining the ruling regime through greater support of dissident elements both within and outside of Iraq. Saddam's internal security apparatus has proven enormously effective at defeating such elements in the past, and I am under no