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Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for inviting me to participate in your deliberations and for the Committee's effort to encourage the executive branch to develop an effective policy for dealing with Iraq. This will not be easy. It is a long time since the administration had any coherent policy toward Saddam Hussein, much less an effective one. And it is also a long time since the administration has been open to suggestions from the Congress about how to fill the policy vacuum the White House has created.

I should begin with a quick summary of the current situation.

The UN inspectors who once scoured Iraq for illegal weapons have been driven out and are unlikely to return. The American policy of containing a belligerent Iraq with intrusive inspections and economic sanctions--punctuated by episodic bombing and the occasional half-hearted *coup* attempt--has failed. It is increasingly clear that the only solution to the danger posed by Saddam Hussein is a sustained, determined plan to remove him from power.

The Security Council coalition once arrayed against Saddam is ever more deeply divided about how to make Iraq comply with the council's own brave, but unconvincing, resolutions prohibiting weapons of mass destruction. Russia and France openly support Saddam when they see opportunities to do so. And while we have several times resorted to bombing to gain access for UN inspectors, Saddam has emerged from each new bombing stronger than before. Support for sanctions, whose most visible effect is the impoverishment of the Iraqi people, is sinking fast. Unless we find a more effective policy, Saddam Hussein--with the chemical weapons he has hidden from inspectors and sheltered from air attacks--will emerge from the ruins of "containment" as the ultimate victor in the "mother of all battles," and a continuing scourge on his own people and the Gulf region.

The dangers of Saddam Hussein as the dominant presence in the Gulf are terrible to contemplate. A man who has executed thousands of his countrymen, who has used nerve gas against whole villages, who has invaded some neighbors and launched missiles at others--and who continues to conceal work on chemical, biological and nuclear weapons--surely demands a more formidable response than leaky trade restrictions, cruise missile pin pricks and appeasement by Kofi Annan.

For at least the last two years, the central issue concerning Iraq has been Saddam's compliance with UN resolutions concerning prohibited weapons programs. But even when UN inspectors were in place, there was no realistic prospect they would unearth all of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. Iraq is too big--and the space necessary to conceal those weapons too small. The intelligence supplied by Saddam's defecting son-in-law in brought us, briefly, closer than we could have hoped. Saddam reacted by halting inspections that might have exploited the late Hussein Kamel's leads, and by moving the illegal material and incriminating documents to new hiding places. Even if UN inspectors were now allowed to return, we would be hunting needles in haystacks. And Saddam's de facto veto over who will inspect him next, which led to the choice of a weak successor to Richard Butler, makes a mockery of the idea of a tough, independent inspection regime.

Even if we managed to locate nerve gas or missiles or biological weapons, there can be no assurance that we could seize or destroy them.

So what should we do? What new policy should we substitute for an illusory containment in which Saddam's weapons programs continue uninspected and western policy drifts toward capitulation and the *coup de grace* of the lifting of sanctions?

The United States, alone if necessary, with our friends if possible, should aggressively support the nascent opposition to Saddam's regime. We should organize, finance, equip, train and protect an Iraqi opposition broadly representative of all the people of Iraq. Such a program would be neither quick nor certain. It would certainly not be easy. But it has a better chance, and is a more worthy contender, than a new round of inconclusive air strikes or yet another abortive effort to organize an anti-Saddam conspiracy among retired Iraqi generals.

A serious program to remove Saddam would begin by challenging disparate opposition groups to coalesce behind a leadership and a concrete plan. Debilitating quarrels would have to be set aside as a condition of western support. In the absence of such support, with a divided opposition languishing in understandable despair, it is hardly surprising that Kurdish factions quarrel over scarce resources or exiled politicians assert rival claims to leadership. The key to their cohesion is the promise of support in confronting Saddam.

To finance an opposition coalition we should disburse some of the billions in blocked Iraqi funds. Then we should announce a readiness to lift the sanctions on any territory not under Saddam's control. As it happens, much of Iraq's oil lies in areas he cannot now control or over which he would quickly lose control if an opposition government were established within them. This would trigger significant economic growth and attract defectors, especially among the military, from within Iraq.

Next, we must be prepared to give logistical support and military equipment to the opposition. It is two years since the United States Congress passed, and President Clinton signed into law, the "Iraq Liberation Act," intended to do just this. Unfortunately, the current administration opposes the action called for under the Iraq Liberation Act and has sabotaged its implementation. The Iraq Liberation Act offers the promise of full support to those Iraqis aligned in opposition to Saddam. The president signed it. But his administration has done nothing to keep the promise. On the contrary, it has maneuvered endlessly to avoid following through on the congressional mandate to help the Iraqi opposition.

Finally, we must stand ready to use air power to defend the opposition in any territory over which it achieves control. Politically, Saddam could not allow opposition administration of significant Iraqi territory to go unchallenged. But to reclaim such territory he would have to mass his armor in the quantities an attacking force typically requires to dislodge a defending one. This would render an army--on much of which he cannot even now rely--vulnerable to withering fire from western air forces.

Opponents of this plan will raise the specter of catastrophe if air power alone proved insufficient to protect the opposition from Saddam's army. But they assume, wrongly, that the opposition would take the offensive in large scale engagements with Iraqi forces, when a defensive posture would be far more effective.

It is true that we can not fight all the world's wars in all the ways they may be fought. But we can help those who share our goals and are willing to fight where they can contribute most. We need not send substantial ground forces into Iraq when patriotic Iraqis are willing to fight to liberate their country, although measured numbers of special forces should not be ruled out.

The principal objection to plan like this is that it cannot succeed because the Iraqi opposition is weak and ineffective. Of course it is. So was the opposition to Ceausescu-- right up to the very day he was brought down. Skeptics too easily discount the empowerment of the opposition that would flow from western support.

The Iraqi National Congress has managed to achieve an impressive degree of cohesion and a serious sense of purpose—and it has done this without the support that the Iraq Liberation Act contemplates. With that support, they will be able to challenge Saddam directly. The Clinton administration and its supporters underestimate the power of a credible challenge to the fundament of Saddam's regime: the sense among Iraqis that he is invincible. Once it is shown that he is not, the fear of the Iraqi people will give way to their desire to be rid of as brutal a dictator as we have seen in modern times.

The United States is sometimes accused of indifference to the suffering of Moslems. The Moslems of Iraq are suffering horribly under Saddam's regime.

Iraq's Moslem neighbors are threatened by him. America can demonstrate its concern for the people of Iraq and the Gulf region by helping Iraqi freedom fighters liberate their land