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U.S. POLICY TOWARD IRAQ: MOBILIZING THE OPPOSITION

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BEFORE THE

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U.S. POLICY TOWARD IRAQ: MOBILIZING THE OPPOSITION

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 23, 1999

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

The subcommittee met at 11:18 a.m., in room SD–562, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Sam Brownback (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Senators Brownback and Wellstone.

Senator BROWNBACK. I will call the hearing to order. I understand Senator Wellstone will be here shortly, but we will go ahead with the presentations.

I want to apologize to everybody in attendance for being late. We had a markup over at the Commerce Committee and I was unavoidably detained. So, I do apologize for that. I apologize to the witnesses. Hopefully we will still be able to conduct the hearing in a timely fashion.

Deputy Secretary Jones, welcome to the committee. Thank you for being willing to come back and up and to discuss Iraq and the Iraqi opposition. We have some distinguished panel members that will be presenting after you as well.

As you know, the Iraqi National Congress Executive Committee was here in Washington recently. Assistant Secretary Indyk and you met with the group, as did Secretary Albright and Sandy Berger. And you are probably aware that they also had meetings up here on Capitol Hill in the House and the Senate side. I might note to you they were very well received in the meeting I had where a number of Senate leaders were there, including both Senator Lott and Senator Daschle. It was an excellent meeting. It was a good discussion, a frank discussion about what the United States needs to do in moving forward.

I was also encouraged to see the INC folks united with a single message here in Washington, Dr. Chalabi. There were those who told me—I think you might have been one of them, Secretary Jones—that the INC was no longer a viable opposition group to Saddam Hussein. It has always been my position that 10 different groups, all fighting each other, are not going to deal with the Saddam problem. We, the United States, needed to put all of our power and prestige behind one unified group which could then represent a real threat to Saddam on the ground. I now think we are well on our way to having that group.

I would like to commend the administration for announcing that the drawdown under the Iraq Liberation Act is going to begin. These people, all the various Iraqi opposition groups, the Kurds, Sunni, Shiites, and others that have been united under the INC, need to see some tangible support on the ground. They are the fighting force in Iraq that are suffering under Saddam right now. They are the people who risk the most in associating themselves with our policy goal of getting rid of Saddam Hussein.

I notice that some anonymous administration source told the Washington Post 2 weeks ago, though, that the Iraqis who came to Washington are, as they put it, the "day-after people." Aside from the fact that I felt that was an unnecessary insult to people who are risking their lives to oppose a vicious dictator, I also disagree with the characterization. The question is, the day after what? Are we still hoping that some magical being will come down and get rid of Saddam Hussein? Surely 8-plus years of living with the man has proven that we cannot rely on some magic bullet. We need a strategy and we need proven allies on the ground.

I look forward very much to hearing your perspectives on the options available to us for ridding the world of Saddam Hussein's leadership in Iraq. And I am not going to make any secret to you. I am interested in hearing what concrete steps the administration will be taking to help the opposition not simply with just fax machines and printers and conferences, but with tangible, nonlethal and lethal assistance and training. We need to get moving. I do not want Saddam to outlast another American President.

I am appreciative, Secretary Jones, of the efforts that have been made to date. I am going to continue to press you for more efforts. I think now is the time to get moving. I think the last time we had this hearing you were talking of some note and need of patience and we have been patient a long time with Saddam Hussein. And I think it is time we moved very aggressively and I think we have got some people that we can move with.

I look forward to your perspective and I look forward to discussing it with you and some questions as well. Thank you for joining us.

STATEMENT OF A. ELIZABETH JONES, PRINCIPAL DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS, DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Ms. JONES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much for the opportunity to appear before you today.

Assistant Secretary Martin Indyk is very sorry he cannot be here. He is in the Gulf working on some of our broader Gulf issues, including Iraq.

I think that we are moving ahead very rapidly in all of the areas that you have discussed, as well as some other areas, and I would like to go through some of those briefly this morning.

Our policy rests on three pillars. First, as long as he is around, we want to contain Saddam Hussein in order to reduce the threat he poses both to Iraq's neighbors and to the Iraqi people. The second one is that we want to alleviate the humanitarian cost to the Iraqi people of his refusal to comply with U.N. Security Council resolutions. And third, finally, we want to work with forces inside

and outside Iraq, as well as with Iraq's neighbors, to change the regime in Iraq and to help its new government rejoin the community of nations.

The policy of containment with regime change is designed to help protect the citizens of Iraq and its neighbors from an aggressive and hostile regime. Sanctions diminish the ability of Saddam Hussein to reconstitute his military and weapons of mass destruction capabilities. Operations Northern and Southern Watch deter Saddam from using his air force against his civilian populations north of the 36th parallel and south of the 33rd. The United States maintains a robust force in the region which we have made clear we are prepared to use should Saddam cross the well-established redlines. Those redlines include: should he try to rebuild or deploy his weapons of mass destruction; should he threaten his neighbors; should he challenge allied aircraft in the no-fly zones; or should he move against the Kurds in northern Iraq.

I would like to be particularly clear on this point: The United States is concerned for the protection of all Iraqis against the repression of the Baghdad regime. Besides those living in relative safety in parts of northern Iraq, the world should not forget that Iraqi Shiites in the south, tribal Sunni Arabs in the west and center, the Turkomans and Assyrians, and even Tikritis themselves continue to suffer from Baghdad's daily repression.

We are committed to maintaining U.N. Security Council controls on the Iraqi regime while lifting the burden of sanctions off the backs of the Iraqi people through the expansion and streamlining of the oil-for-food program.

The humanitarian relief program, as I said, is the second pillar of our policy. Sanctions were never directed against the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people. Food and medicine are specifically exempt from sanctions. Iraq has always been free to buy and import these goods, but Saddam Hussein has long chosen not to do so in order to manipulate public opinion by deliberately causing the suffering of his own citizens. Despite interference by the regime, the oil-for-food program has ensured that the people of Iraq receive the food and medicine which their government denies them.

There is a fundamental principle at work here. As long as the current Baghdad regime is in defiance of Security Council resolutions, we will never allow it to regain control of Iraq's oil revenues. They will continue to be escrowed by the U.N. and their uses controlled by the U.N. sanctions committee. This same approach underpins the British/Dutch draft Security Council resolution currently under consideration in New York. The draft would allow for the suspension of sanctions on Iraqi exports in return for full compliance by Baghdad with a road map of key disarmament tasks. Imports would continue to be controlled and effective financial controls would remain in place. These provisions are coupled with an effective, intrusive arms control regime that preserves UNSCOM's mandate and prerogatives. Though there are some aspects of the draft which we will seek to improve in the course of Council discussions, we support the British/Dutch draft because it meets our bottom line criteria: real arms control, expansion of the oil-for-food program on the basis of humanitarian need, insistence on a standard of full Iraqi compliance for action on sanctions, and denial of

oil revenues to the regime. This is a tough, credible package that deserves Council support.

On our regime change policy, if it is to be successful, change must come from within, from the Iraqis themselves. In particular, the security forces and the people must stand on the same side. The support of Iraqi exiles, including the politically active opposition, along with neighboring states, is indispensable. The captive Iraqis need a voice. And, in particular, the internal Iraqi resistance needs a voice, through the Iraqi opposition living in freedom, to make clear to all Iraqis and to the world its aims. The Iraqi National Congress has described these resistance aims to us as: first, to bring the security forces to the side of the people in changing the regime; and second, after the current regime passes, to stand with all Iraqis in promoting reconciliation and reconstruction.

Free Iraqis, those in exile and those who live in relative freedom in northern Iraq, bear a special responsibility to develop a coherent vision for a brighter future. They must take the lead in developing and promoting an alternative vision based on the restoration of civil society, the rebuilding of the economy, and the promotion of a new role for Iraq as a force for peace and reconciliation in the region. They can also play an effective role in delegitimizing Saddam Hussein, in helping to build the case for his prosecution as a war criminal, and in getting the truth into and out of Iraq. And, as Iraqis committed to a future vision of Iraq that appeals to Iraqis inside and to Iraq's neighbors, they can best build the case for the support of regional states to channel more material assistance to the Iraqi people and their resistance elements.

Congress has provided the administration with a number of important tools to support Iraqis who are working toward a better future for Iraq. These include earmarks of $8 million in existing economic support funds. We are using these funds to strengthen opposition political unity, to support the Iraq war crimes initiative, to support humanitarian programs and the development of civil society, and for activities inside Iraq.

We have also established and recently stepped up broadcasting hours for Radio Free Iraq, which operates independently and broadcasts daily in Arabic uncensored news and information to the Iraqi people.

Our Special Coordinator for Transition in Iraq, Frank Ricciardone, is managing the overall effort. Mr. Ricciardone has already had considerable success in helping disparate opposition groups work together and elect a new interim leadership that right now is preparing the way for an Iraqi opposition conference aimed at achieving a broader participation and a more effective program of activity. Last month, as you mentioned, Secretary Albright met with an Iraqi delegation, including the INC interim leadership and prominent independents, to underscore the administration's support for their efforts. And we are very grateful that they were very warmly received on the Hill as well, as you mentioned.

Finally, there is the Iraq Liberation Act which provides discretionary authority to the President to direct up to $97 million in Defense Department drawdown and training for designated Iraqi opposition groups. We are in the process now of drawing down this

account for the provision of equipment and training to the opposition.

Many have called on the President to use this authority to arm the Iraqi opposition and support armed insurrection against Saddam Hussein. There are a host of issues that must be resolved before we can have confidence that providing arms to the Iraqi opposition would advance our objectives of promoting a change of regime and not just lead to more Iraqis being killed unnecessarily. One requirement is a credible, broad-based Iraqi political umbrella movement that can authoritatively articulate a future vision for those Iraqis who now lack a voice in their own fate. Such a movement is indispensable to reassure those few Iraqis now supporting Saddam Hussein that there is no future for them or Iraq under his regime while there is a bright future afterwards, even for them. Hence, the first kinds of support which we aim to provide to the Iraqi opposition under the drawdown will be to meet their most basic requirements: equipment for the infrastructure vital to the effectiveness of an international political advocacy movement, broadcasting equipment, and training in civil affairs, including disaster relief operations. Further kinds of material assistance to the Iraqi opposition can be provided when they can best be absorbed and exploited.

I look forward very much to our discussion. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Jones follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF A. ELIZABETH JONES

I am pleased to appear before you this morning to discuss U.S. policy towards Iraq.

Iraq, under Saddam Hussein, remains dangerous, unreconstructed and defiant. We have come to the conclusion, after more than eight years of effort at seeking Saddam's compliance with UN Security Council resolutions, that his regime will never be able to be rehabilitated or reintegrated into the community of nations. This conclusion is based on what Saddam's record makes manifest—that he will never relinquish what remains of his WMD arsenal, and that he will never cease being a threat to the region, U.S. interests, and his own people. It is based on Saddam's policies, not on any predetermined policy of our own. Thus, in November of last year, President Clinton announced a new policy with regard to Iraq: henceforth, we would contain Saddam Hussein while we sought a new regime to govern in Baghdad. The President committed the United States to support those Iraqis—inside and outside Iraq—who seek a new government and a better future for all the people of Iraq.

Eight years after the Gulf War and Saddam's persistent defiance of the international community, we are under no illusions that Iraq under Saddam Hussein will comply with UNSC resolutions on disarmament, human rights, accounting for POW's and the return of stolen property.

In view of this reality, our policy rests on three pillars. First, as long as he is around, we will contain Saddam Hussein in order to reduce the threat he poses both to Iraq's neighbors and to the Iraqi people. Second, we will seek to alleviate the humanitarian cost to the Iraqi people of his refusal to comply with UNSC resolutions. Finally, we will work with forces inside and outside Iraq, as well as Iraq's neighbors, to change the regime in Iraq and help its new government rejoin the community of nations.

Our policy of containment plus regime change is designed to help protect the citizens of Iraq and its neighbors from an aggressive and hostile regime. Sanctions diminish the ability of Saddam Hussein to reconstitute his military and WMD capabilities. Operations Northern md Southern Watch deter Saddam from using his air force against the civilian populations north of the 36th parallel and south of the 33rd. We maintain a robust force in the region, which we have made clear we are prepared to use should Saddam cross our well-established redlines. Those redlines include: should he try to rebuild or deploy his weapons of mass destruction; should he strike out at his neighbors; should he challenge allied aircraft in the no-fly zones;

or should he move against the people living in the Kurdish-controlled areas of Northern Iraq.

Let me be particularly clear on this point: the United States is concerned for the protection of *all* Iraqis against the repression of the Baghdad regime. Besides those now living in relative safety in parts of northern Iraq, the world should not forget that Iraqi Shiites in the south, tribal Sunni Arabs in the west and center, the Turkomans and Assyrians, and even Tikritis themselves continue to suffer Baghdad's daily repression. Hence, we believe that the world community should tolerate no backsliding from Baghdad's obligations under any of the UNSC resolutions intended to protect the people of Iraq and its neighbors from the depredations of the current Baghdad regime. In particular, UNSC resolution 688 twice cited the consequences of Baghdad's repression of the Iraqi civilian population as a threat to international peace and security. It therefore demanded not only that Baghdad "immediately end this repression," but it also insisted that Baghdad give "immediate access by international humanitarian organizations to all those in need of assistance in all parts of Iraq." Baghdad is in flagrant violation of this UNSC resolution, as it is of so many others.

We are committed to maintaining UNSC controls on the Iraqi regime, while lifting the burden of sanctions off the backs of the Iraqi people through the expansion and streamlining of the oil-for-food program

This humanitarian relief program is the second pillar of our policy. Sanctions were never directed against the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people. In fact, food and medicine are specifically exempt from sanctions. Iraq has always been free to buy and import these goods, but Saddam Hussein has long chosen not to do so in order to manipulate public opinion by deliberately causing the suffering of his own citizens. Our response has been first to establish, and then to expand, the oil-for-food program, which provides a mechanism for the United Nations to control the use of revenues from the sale of Iraqi oil for the purchase of humanitarian supplies for the Iraqi people. Despite interference by the regime, the oil-for-food program has ensured that the people of Iraq receive the food and medicine, which their own government denies them.

There is a fundamental principle at work here. As long as the current Baghdad regime is in defiance of the UNSC resolutions, we will never allow it to regain control of Iraq's oil revenues. They will continue to be escrowed by the UN and their uses controlled by the UN sanctions committee. This same approach underpins the British/Dutch draft Security Council resolution currently under consideration in New York. The draft would allow for the suspension of sanctions on Iraqi exports in return for full compliance by Baghdad with a roadmap of key disarmament tasks. Imports would continue to be controlled and effective financial controls would remain in place. These provisions are coupled with an effective, intrusive arms control regime that preserves UNSCOM's mandate and prerogatives. Though there are some aspects of the draft which we will seek to improve in the course of Council discussions, we support the British/Dutch draft because it meets our bottom line criteria: real arms control; expansion of the oil-for-food program on the basis of humanitarian need; insistence on a standard of full Iraqi compliance for action on sanctions; and denial of oil revenues to the regime. This is a tough, credible package that deserves Council support.

Although effective, the containment element of our policy has its costs. As we have seen repeatedly since 1991, even a contained Iraq under its current leadership remains a threat both to the stability of the region and to the welfare of the Iraqi people. Both are paying too high a price for Saddam's continued rule. In our judgment, both urgently deserve better. It is past time for Saddam to go.

For these reasons, President Clinton announced in November that the United States would work with the Iraqi people toward a government in Iraq which is prepared to live in peace with its neighbors and respect the rights of its people. We are fully committed to supporting the Iraqi people in bringing this about. In pursuit of this objective, the United States will adhere to two important principles: one, we will uphold the territorial integrity of Iraq; and two, we will not seek to impose from the outside a particular government or leaders on the people of Iraq. We do support a change of government that will be responsive to the aspirations of the Iraqi people—one that takes meaningful steps toward a democratic future for the country and can represent fairly the concerns of all of Iraq's communities. And we will work with a new Iraqi government, as it pledges to fulfill its international obligations, to lift the sanctions, to deal with the large debt burden, and to reintegrate Iraq into the international community.

If it is to be successful, change must come from within, from the Iraqis themselves. In particular, the security forces and the people must stand on the same side. The support of Iraqi exiles, including the politically active opposition, along

with neighboring states, however, is indispensable: the captive Iraqis need a voice. And, in particular, the internal Iraqi resistance needs a voice, through the Iraqi Opposition living in freedom, to make clear to all Iraqis and to the world its aims. The Iraqi National Congress has described these resistance aims to us as: first, to bring the security forces to the side of the people in changing the regime; and second, after the current regime passes, to stand with all Iraqis in promoting reconciliation and reconstruction. Our approach is to work in an intensive and coordinated way with these Iraqis and other countries that support these aspirations of the Iraqi people.

Free Iraqis—those in exile and those who live in relative freedom in northern Iraq—bear a special responsibility to develop a coherent vision for a brighter future. They must take the lead in developing and promoting an alternative vision based on the restoration of civil society, the rebuilding of the economy, and the promotion of a new role for Iraq as a force for peace and reconciliation in the region. They can also play an effective role in delegitimizing Saddam, in helping to build the case for his prosecution as a war criminal, and in getting the truth into and out of Iraq. And, as Iraqis committed to a future vision of Iraq that appeals to Iraqis inside and to Iraq's neighbors, they can best build the case for the support of regional states to channel more material assistance to the Iraqi people and their resistance elements.

Congress has provided the Administration with a number of important tools to support Iraqis who are working toward a better future for Iraq. These include earmarks of $8 million in existing Economic Support Funds. We are using these funds to strengthen Opposition political unity, to support the Iraq war crimes initiative, to support humanitarian programs and the development of civil society, and for activities inside Iraq.

We also have established and recently stepped up broadcasting hours for Radio Free Iraq, which operates independently and broadcasts daily in Arabic uncensored news and information to the Iraqi people.

We have named a Special Coordinator for Transition in Iraq, Francis Ricciardone, who is managing the overall effort. Mr. Ricciardone has already had considerable success in helping disparate opposition groups work together and elect a new interim leadership that right now is preparing the way for an Iraqi opposition conference aimed at achieving a broader participation and more effective program of activity. Last month, Secretary Albright met with an Iraqi delegation, including the INC interim leadership and prominent independents, to underscore the Administration's support for their efforts. We know they were warmly received on the Hill as well.

Since then Mr. Ricciardone has worked further with the INC on their plans for the opposition conference and has also consulted intensively with regional states on how best to promote our shared interests in the reintegration of Iraq to the world community under a government that will act responsibly both internally and externally.

We have also made progress working with the two major Kurdish factions in the North, the PUK and the KDP, to help them reconcile their differences and better provide for all the people of northern Iraq. Just last week, leading members of both groups came to Washington for talks aimed at strengthening the reconciliation process. The two major Kurdish leaders, the Turkomans, and other groups from Northern Iraq, have played a very positive role in reunifying and reviving the Iraqi National Congress. This portends well for the contribution the Kurds, Turkomans, Assyrians, and Arabs of the North must also make in reunifying and rebuilding Iraq when a new leadership in Baghdad makes this possible.

Finally, there is the Iraq Liberation Act, which provides discretionary authority to the President to direct up to $97 million in Defense Department drawdown and training for designated Iraqi opposition groups. We are in the process of drawing down this account for the provision of equipment and training to the opposition.

Many have called on the President to use this authority to arm the Iraqi opposition and support armed insurrection against Saddam Hussein. We believe such action is premature. There are a host of issues that must be resolved before we can have confidence that providing arms to the Iraqi opposition would advance our objectives of promoting a change of regime and not just lead to more Iraqis being killed unnecessarily. One requirement is a credible, broad-based, Iraqi political umbrella movement that can authoritatively articulate a future vision for those Iraqis who now lack a voice in their own fate. Such a movement is indispensable to reassure those few Iraqis now supporting Saddam Hussein that there is no future for them or Iraq under his regime while there is a bright future afterwards, even for them. Hence, the first kinds of support which we aim to provide to the Iraqi Opposition under the drawdown will be to meet their most urgent requirements: equip-

ment for the infrastructure vital to the effectiveness of an international political advocacy movement; broadcasting equipment; and training in "civil affairs," including disaster relief operations. Further kinds of material assistance to the Iraqi opposition can be provided when they can best be absorbed and exploited.

To channel substantial assistance to those resisting Saddam's oppression inside Iraq, we will need the cooperation of Iraq's neighbors. Although they all share and support the Iraqi people's longing for a change of regime in Baghdad, they have strong views about how we can help the Iraqi people reach this goal. We must take those views into account, and gain their cooperation in promoting the recovery of Iraq as a good neighbor and contributor to regional stability.

Senator BROWNBACK. Thank you, Secretary Jones. Thank you for being here today.

I want to note first, as I noted in my opening statement, support for the administration beginning the drawdown of the Iraqi Liberation Act $100 million that we put forward. That is a good first step. I note with some hesitancy and some displeasure that it is for things like fax machines and file cabinets that I have seen thus far.

When will the administration begin supplying military equipment to the opposition forces or some more aggressive support and use of those funds?

Ms. JONES. The plan now is, Senator, to identify the equipment and the training options that are of most use, as I said in my opening statement, to the Iraqi opposition in developing their political outreach in order to give the Iraqi people a voice, give the Iraqi opposition inside Iraq a voice and some themes around which they can build cohesiveness. The Iraqi opposition plan, the INC plan, is to host a general assembly of as many exiled Iraqis as possible in order to gain even more political coherence and to hear the voice of those Iraqis as well to hear the voice of Iraqis that they are in touch with inside Iraq and to develop a more coherent and more detailed plan of action for how to better effect regime change.

Once they have had that meeting, the idea is that they would then communicate with us in greater detail the kinds of things that they think would be most useful to them as they proceed in their plans.

Senator BROWNBACK. Is the administration opposed to supplying military equipment to the opposition forces?

Ms. JONES. We are not fundamentally opposed to it at this point, but we do not see an effective use of military equipment now. Our goal at the moment is to be sure that we are not doing something that cannot be absorbed by the Iraqi opposition inside the country. In fact, the issue really is not weapons. There are plenty of weapons inside Iraq. The issue is empowering or having the Iraqi people feel empowered to use those weapons to coalesce among themselves and to have the security forces and the Iraqi people on the same side against Saddam Hussein.

Senator BROWNBACK. So, if you can see a rational use for military equipment by the Iraqi opposition forces, the administration will support that.

Ms. JONES. There is the potential for supporting that, yes. It would be hard for us to say now because I do not know what the constellation of groups would be that might be able to receive such military equipment. As I say, our analysis at this point is that there is plenty of equipment already inside, that it is not lack of equipment that is holding back the Iraqi opposition inside now. It

is fear of reprisals and fear for their lives and for the lives of their families that is holding them back at this point.

Senator BROWNBACK. I understand that, but I do not understand your hesitancy to say, yes, if there is rational use for this, we will be rapidly, readily considering military equipment to the Iraqi opposition. If I am getting the press accounts correct and talking with Secretary Indyk, there is virtually daily reports of insurrection, uprisings in various places taking place in Iraq. One would derive from that that there is an active opposition taking place now and that we should be pressing forward aggressively with all means and certainly not excluding any means, that we would support that opposition.

Ms. JONES. Senator, I do not think that we exclude any means, but I do not think the time is right for those to be considered. We would like to be led by the Iraqi opposition themselves, as I say, have them consult with the broader Iraqi body politic, the exiles and the people that they are in touch with inside. They will tell us in a much more considered fashion when it is that they think they need those items.

At the moment what they need most is methods of communication and help in communicating, help in developing what their vision for Iraq after Saddam Hussein is. One of the areas that we have identified that needs work is a fear on the part of the Iraqi people inside of the unknown, the fear that Iraq will be a dangerous place to live, even a more dangerous place to live should Saddam suddenly disappear from the scene.

We do not think that is the case. We think there are very thoughtful people, a tremendous number of thoughtful people, who can put together a vision for how one would govern Iraq after Saddam Hussein. What would be the principles that would govern such a country? For instance, what about reconstruction? What about how to ensure a stable, unified Iraq that can take its rightful place in the region? How can it do that if the international community is insistent on their not developing weapons of mass destruction and not having an arsenal of weapons of mass destruction? We want to articulate and get across the message that we think that Iraq should have a conventional military force in order to protect itself. We are not asking for a completely stripped bare Iraq.

We are asking for the Iraqi opposition, the Iraqi exiles, and their contacts inside Iraq to develop a good sense of the Iraq that will provide for the Iraqi people in terms of their humanitarian needs, in terms of medicine, in terms of education, in terms of books, in terms of security, in terms of good neighbors in a way that is not taking place now.

Senator BROWNBACK. Well, at least hear this Senator's opinion and a number of others that I hope you will consider military support because while books and all the other things that you are noting are important, if they are not secure from Saddam, it is going to be tough to teach kids. And that is just going to have to be a first order. I hope you will hear that opinion from here and from many other sources clearly.

As you know the Iraqi National Congress is planning to hold a national assembly meeting in July. The most logical place for the meeting would be on the ground in northern Iraq. It is certainly

what all the parties would like to have happen. It is what they noted to us when they were here on the Hill meeting with the Senate leadership.

Is the administration prepared to assist the opposition in meeting there where it would really count on the ground in Iraq?

Ms. JONES. I think there is no question that that is a very good option for a place for the general assembly to meet. There are a number of considerations that have to be taken into account, security being the most important one. It may be a wiser course to have the first general assembly meeting elsewhere because the organization of such a meeting is complex in itself without having to take very serious security considerations into account. And it may be a wiser choice to have this general assembly meeting outside northern Iraq and have northern Iraq be an option for a further meeting.

Senator BROWNBACK. So, you are proposing that the initial one not be in Iraq and a second meeting sometime later take place in northern Iraq?

Ms. JONES. Well, frankly, it is really not up to us to propose. We are being guided by the desires of the interim leadership of the INC. That is their contention, as I understand it, at this point.

Senator BROWNBACK. Because we will hear from some of that leadership in the next panel. My understanding was it was their desire to meet in northern Iraq for the clear statement that that is, but they would need United States support for that, that Saddam not move in columns on that meeting taking place in northern Iraq.

Ms. JONES. There is no question that it would make a very dramatic statement. There is no question of that at all. But as I say, the security concerns are legion. I think it is more than just columns moving against them. It is something that, as I say, I think would be a good one to consider down the road.

Senator BROWNBACK. I mentioned in my opening statement that many of us working for a free Iraq were upset by comments that Iraqi opposition figures were suggested by an unnamed administration source as day-after guys. Could you clarify the administration's view on the Iraqi opposition or what that comment meant from an administration source?

Ms. JONES. I assume that was sort of a partial statement along the lines that I just addressed: that the initial effort underway now by the INC, by the interim leadership of the INC, and by the independent Iraqi opposition in exile is to create a voice for the Iraqi people. That has serious implications for encouraging regime change now because, as I say, one of the things that we have identified is a hesitancy, a serious hesitancy, on the part of people inside Iraq who might have already moved against Saddam Hussein because they are so concerned, but fear what would happen after Saddam Hussein.

Saddam, of course, is encouraging this view, and we are trying to counteract that view. The Iraqi opposition is trying to counteract that view with a very concrete vision, very concrete suggestions, proposals, discussions among themselves, as well as with the rest of the international community, as to the kind of Iraq that the Iraqi people could look forward to in very concrete terms on the day after Saddam leaves.

So, their role is to discuss among themselves the kind of Iraq that would begin to take shape on the day after, but the whole goal is to encourage faster regime change now and to dispel the fear of the Iraqi people inside now as to what the day after would look like.

Senator BROWNBACK. Is it your professional opinion that Saddam Hussein will outlast the Clinton presidency, or do you think not?

Ms. JONES. To be very honest, I do not know. I do not know.

Senator BROWNBACK. Is the administration then serious about getting rid of Saddam Hussein?

Ms. JONES. We are very serious about getting rid of Saddam Hussein. The sooner, the better as far as we are concerned. The activities particularly that Frank Ricciardone has undertaken, the intense activity that he has undertaken with the INC, with the interim leadership of the INC, with the Iraqi independents who are very important players, we think is hastening the end of Saddam Hussein, but I am unable to make a prediction as to when this will happen.

Senator BROWNBACK. It just strikes me as odd, and I have a great deal of respect for your and for Secretary Indyk's, Secretary Albright's abilities. But it just seems like there is a great hesitancy here in face of a lot of factors that would seem to encourage one to move forward more rapidly if the reports that we are getting about sporadic fighting internally are taking place, if it is a real consideration that the Iraqi National Congress is now pulling together a number of disparate factors and disparate groups to work together and that they could legitimately consider holding a meeting inside northern Iraq. There are some security questions, but clearly still this is a real consideration that one would think now is the time to move forward and move forward with some aggressive move. And yet, what I am hearing on your part is if it outlasts the Clinton administration, that is fine. We would rather he not, but we are not really going to move with the same dispatch or intensity that we did in Kosovo on Iraq.

Ms. JONES. Well, Mr. Chairman, we certainly do not want it to outlast this administration. We do not want it to outlast even this year. But you ask for a prediction. I cannot actually give a prediction. I do not know when the change will occur.

It is very accurate, as you have noted, that there is an increase in opposition activity in the south, in Baghdad, in the west. There is quite a bit of talk; our very strong effort now—and I think it is an extremely important effort—is to embolden the Iraqis inside to grasp the possibility and act on the possibility that they can actually move for regime change themselves.

Senator BROWNBACK. Well, I think they are going to be reacting to concrete U.S. steps, similar to what the Kosovars did to concrete U.S. steps. I would encourage you to make those bolder than what I am witnessing thus far.

Senator Wellstone, I apologize for taking so long. I had a series of ones that I wanted to ask, and thank you for your patience.

Senator WELLSTONE. No, that is fine. I am sorry to be late. I am in and out today. I think, Mr. Chairman, what I will do is just ask that my complete statement be included in the record.

Senator BROWNBACK. Without objection.

[The prepared statement of Senator Wellstone follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR PAUL WELLSTONE

Thank you for holding this hearing on the Iraqi opposition movement, Senator Brownback. I want to welcome our witnesses, Deputy Assistant Secretary Beth Jones, Mr. Ahmed Chalabi, Ms. Rend Rahim Francke, and Dr. Patrick Clawson.

One of the toughest foreign policy challenges which falls within the subcommittee's purview is Iraq. I think we all agree that under the leadership of Saddam Hussein, Iraq is a threat to our interests, our allies in the region, and to those most directly affected—the Iraqi people themselves.

Having said that, I do not believe that there are any magic strategies to managing Saddam Hussein, parrying his threats against neighboring countries and blocking his efforts to develop weapons of mass destruction. That will take patient containment and vigorous diplomatic efforts. I also believe we must act responsibly and carefully in giving any support to Iraqi opposition groups intent on overthrowing Saddam Hussein. I am deeply concerned about statements made by our military leaders about the lack of support in the region for arming external opposition groups and that arming the Iraqi opposition might just amount to "rolling the dice" in an explosive region.

I'd like to take just a minute to focus on the plight of the Iraqi people. We know that Saddam Hussein is the primary cause of the suffering of ordinary Iraqis. But we also know that the toughest sanctions ever applied to any country are having an unintended, but devastating impact.

While the oil-for-food program has brought badly-needed humanitarian goods into Iraq and improved conditions somewhat, the reports we receive are still very disturbing. As many as 30% of Iraq's children are malnourished; infant mortality rates are soaring; much of the population lacks access to clean water and sanitation. These abysmal conditions are leading to the decimation of Iraq's once vibrant society and culture. Families are breaking apart, crime is rampant, and Iraq's youth are being radicalized.

I know that Saddam doesn't lose any sleep over the suffering of his people. But we should care. We should care not only because of the awful humanitarian situation, but also because depravation in Iraq can harm our long-term interests.

Some day, and I hope that day is soon, Iraq will have a new leadership. If things continue on their present course, that leadership may be as bad or worse than Saddam Hussein. We may inadvertently contribute to such an outcome if we do not take steps to tangibly improve the lives of ordinary Iraqis.

Right now, the Iraqi people don't believe that we are on their side. They feel that they are made to pay for the sins of their leaders. We must change that perception.

I believe the time has come to devise new and creative ways to bring relief to ordinary Iraqis with whom we have no quarrel, and indeed whose cause we support.

Iraq, with its rich history and its talented population, can be a force for positive change in the Middle East. Unfortunately, today its people are denied that chance by a tyrant.

Thank you.

Senator WELLSTONE. I am listening to the flow of discussion and I will just sort of try and build on that.

First of all, to those of you who are part of the courageous opposition, I thank you for your courage.

It does strike me as being that this is a—there is a whole set of difficult questions here, and I am not sure there are any magic strategies. As much as I wish I could kind of will into existence Saddam Hussein's being gone, I am not sure there are any magic strategies or magic bullets. I think it is kind of a matter of patient commitment and also diplomacy and responsible policy.

I came in when, Secretary Jones, you were discussing the British/Dutch proposal, and I thought I might want to talk about that for a moment because I know there was a question as to if Saddam Hussein's gone, what is then the leadership that we are going to be dealing with. I sometimes think—I have been pressing for some time now about the need for us to consider the effect of the sanctions on a lot of innocent people in Iraq and part of the reason that

I have wanted to continue to focus on that question—I think it is a minority position here to keep saying we ought to really think about how we can do this differently. But the reason I have been saying it is in part because while I do not think Saddam Hussein cares, I think we should in terms of our own values. The reports that come out about the effects of the sanctions on innocent children are just devastating.

And then the second point is it is almost to me a self-interest because I sometimes really fear that this turns this civilian population against us. In terms of what follows, I would like to see a very different kind of a leadership.

Thus, my first question. I gather that you have already said today that we are supportive of the British/Dutch proposal. I wanted to just suggest to you and maybe get a quick reaction that if as a part of that we are focusing on getting weapons inspectors back into Iraq, which I think is critically important, I would also like to see an additional component which would be human rights inspectors back to really be able to document and maybe prevent some of the abuses that Saddam Hussein is committing against his own people. I wonder what your reaction would be to that.

Ms. JONES. We certainly are supporting the British/Dutch draft. We think there are a few improvements that can still be made. It has now been tabled in the Security Council, so there will be quite a bit of discussion now and further changes to various aspects of the draft.

One of the key elements of the draft deals with the humanitarian situation in Iraq. That is extremely important to us, Senator, just as it is to you. The goal of the sanctions are to contain Saddam Hussein. We do not want the sanctions to have an effect on the Iraqi people. That is the reason for the oil-for-food program. That is the reason in the draft that we have tried to find ways to increase the amount of money in the oil-for-food program to further reduce the ability of Saddam Hussein to pretend that the sanctions are directed against the Iraqi people. They are not. Saddam is the one who has not ordered the kinds of food and medicine that are allowed to be ordered, very much so, under the sanctions regime, under the oil-for-food program. A lot of the medical equipment and medicines that he has ordered are sitting in warehouses in Baghdad. They have not been distributed.

There is a marked difference between the way that the oil-for-food program is administered in northern Iraq in the areas that are not under Iraqi control, but are under U.N. control, and the way it is being administered in the south. I found this quite remarkable in my trip there where the people in the north express great satisfaction with the oil-for-food program. They would obviously like more in the oil-for-food program, which is exactly what this resolution attempts to do.

I want to quickly add, though, that the effort to get more money into the oil-for-food program is coupled with a very strict escrow account management that does not permit any of Iraq's oil revenues to get into Saddam Hussein's hands. They all would be controlled through U.N. Security Council mechanisms.

In terms of introduction of human rights inspectors, first let me say, yes, the draft does speak very forcefully to get the reinsertion of a disarmament verification regime back into Iraq.

On human rights monitors, I would argue that we are already addressing that as much as we can through provision of finance to INDICT, an organization that is working very hard to compile and collect war crimes information against Saddam Hussein and the cronies in his leadership, and to monitor human rights abuses, of which there are far too many. It is an extremely tragic situation there.

There is also money being provided through the ESF programs to other organizations to document and to try to find ways to resolve the situation in Halabja where the chemical weapons attack was conducted by Saddam 10 years ago. So, there are a variety of things in train that we would be very happy to brief you on in greater detail.

Senator WELLSTONE. I will not followup because a note handed to me by a great staffer was that it is one thing about past abuses, but we would be talking about monitors on the ground to prevent future abuses, which is maybe the distinction.

Rather than following up, because I do not want to run out of time, I want to ask you about a couple of New York Times reports about some of the bombing in northern Iraq. I am trying to figure out what the purpose of the bombing is, and I also want to know a little bit more about the civilian casualties. We are not getting a lot of public information. It is being provided by the Pentagon. I wonder whether you could spell out for us what are the strategic goals in carrying out these attacks, and do you believe that these bombings are having any effect at all on the stability of Saddam's regime. And can you give us any sense as to when this campaign would be concluded?

Ms. JONES. What you are referring to is Operation Northern Watch in particular, but of course, there is also Operation Southern Watch, which were put in place through Security Council resolutions to prevent Saddam Hussein from using his air force to go after the Kurds in the north and the Iraqis in the south, mostly Shi'a. That has had a very good effect and continues to have a very good effect in the sense that it prevents Saddam from further depredations against the people in the north and the south.

The fact of the matter is that the only times that allied aircraft target the anti-aircraft and other Iraqi defense capabilities in the north and the south is when they threaten the aircraft themselves. The goal is to take out the military equipment that is threatening allied aircraft and allied pilots. There is every effort made not to hit anything that could be part of the humanitarian infrastructure of Iraq and certainly to avoid civilian casualties. That is absolutely the goal.

To answer the last part of your question, the protection of the no-fly zones will go on until there is regime change, I presume. There do not need to be attacks against the weapons that are threatening the aircraft if they no longer threaten the aircraft. It is that simple.

Senator WELLSTONE. My last question. I will not do a followup so I can just stay within a reasonable time limit because I may not have a chance to ask this question of others. The administration

has named seven groups that are eligible to receive U.S. assistance under the Iraq Liberation Act. This is just a question from an inquiring Senator so that I can learn more. Do each of these groups follow policies and practices that are consistent with U.S. democratic values and commitments to human rights? And if they were to take power, in your view what would be the prospects for forging a democratic Iraq that respects human rights? Can you give me some sense?

Ms. JONES. Part of the criteria for designating the groups was that they would adhere to those principles. Certainly that is part of the discussion that the leadership of the INC—those groups are mostly represented in the INC and through the independents with whom Frank Ricciardone is working, with whom we are working. They are working on those kinds of principles. The idea that they have already articulated is for a representative government that would respect the human rights of all Iraqis, that would respect the political goals of all Iraqis, and that would be inclusive of all Iraqi groups, all Iraqi citizens, all parts of Iraq.

Senator WELLSTONE. This would be consistent with our past experience with these groups in terms of commitment to democratic values and human rights?

Ms. JONES. Yes, it is.

Senator WELLSTONE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator BROWNBACK. Thank you, Senator Wellstone.

Secretary Jones, regarding northern Iraq, how firm is the U.S. commitment to protect northern Iraq? There appears to be a great deal of loosening of it from Saddam's hands, the possibility that the Iraqi National Congress could actually meet there, although you note maybe not the first time but the second time. How strong is the U.S. commitment to protect the north and its freedoms that it has? Would we put forward a no-drive zone so that if Saddam starts moving columns north, we will stop them? Could you articulate U.S. policy on that?

Ms. JONES. The commitment is a very strong one. This is, as I said in my opening remarks, a redline for the United States. As we have articulated it, if there is an attack against the Kurdish areas in the north, we will respond at a time and place of our choosing. We would like to leave that vague in public. It is a redline, as I say, that we are fully committed to. It is one that has been mentioned very frequently in the last week as we have had delegations from Mr. Barzani and Mr. Talabani, the two main Kurdish parties in the north, in Washington over the past week to discuss further reconciliation measures between the two of them in followup to the Washington Agreement and the Ankara process.

One of the things that we are especially committed to in this whole context is the territorial integrity of Iraq, which is why we do not like to differentiate completely between the north and the south in that respect. The redlines are clear for both areas.

Senator BROWNBACK. I might submit to you that vagueness, if I were one of the Iraqi opposition people on the ground, would be hesitating to me if the U.S. policy is vague, a public policy of vagueness on what our response would be and we would respond at our choosing. I would encourage you to be far more clear with what U.S. policy and what U.S. response would be if we seek to

stimulate that opposition in the north. We did not articulate much vagueness in Kosovo, and it emboldened people regardless of how one felt about that. I think the vagueness would limit me if I were in the opposition, particularly a public vagueness. Even if privately things are said differently, I would say I want to make sure that that is a commitment that I can count on before I am going to put my life, my family on the line.

Ms. JONES. I would argue that Saddam knows very clearly that we are very committed to our redlines. He sees it every day or almost every day in terms of the redline related to the no-fly zones, and he would see it were he to cross any of the other redlines.

Senator BROWNBACK. Well, good.

Secretary Jones, as always, I am impressed with your abilities from first meeting you in Almaty, Kazakhstan. I was impressed with you there and here.

I just got back from the Sudan about 2 weeks ago, and just north of Yei in southern Sudan they have what they call Iraqi Hill where a number of Iraqi troops were killed in Sudan fighting for the northern government, the Khartoum Government, which is a terrorist government seeking expansion. Now, I did not investigate this, but that was what was noted to us, that this was actually Iraqi Hill. And I found it very interesting at that point.

Thank you very much. Thank you for your skill and your diplomacy, and thank you for being here.

Ms. JONES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Senator Wellstone.

Senator BROWNBACK. We will call up the next panel for presentation, and included on that panel will be Mr. Ahmad Chalabi, the member of the Executive Presidency of the Iraqi National Congress; Dr. Patrick Clawson, director for research, Washington Institute for Near East Policy; and Ms. Rend Rahim Francke—I probably mispronounced that—executive director of the Iraq Foundation. They will be the next panel.

Thank you all very much for joining us, and Mr. Chalabi, we look forward to your presentation.

STATEMENT OF AHMAD CHALABI, MEMBER, EXECUTIVE PRESIDENCY, IRAQI NATIONAL CONGRESS, LONDON, ENGLAND

Mr. CHALABI. Thank you, Senator. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am very pleased to be here today. It has been 15 months since I last had the honor to testify before your committee. I am proud to come before you again on behalf of the Iraqi National Congress, the voice of the Iraqi people. The Iraqi National Congress represents free Iraq and we are grateful for the help of the free people of the United States. We are particularly grateful for the assistance of the U.S. Senate and Congress. The Iraq Liberation Act, declaring United States support for removing the Iraqi dictatorship, has been a beacon to the Iraqi people, and we look forward to working with you closely on its implementation.

The Iraqi National Congress calls upon the United States and its allies to recognize what is already fact: the United States and its allies are at war with Saddam's regime.

Last summer it was proven that Saddam had ballistic missile warheads loaded with deadly VX nerve gas, an active biological

weapons program, and the potential for nuclear weapons in less than a year. In August 1998, Saddam ended the last illusion of United Nations inspections as required under United Nations Security Council Resolution 687 (1991). In response, the Congress passed and the President signed Public Law 105–235 declaring that the Government of Iraq is in material and unacceptable breach of its international obligations under the Gulf war cease-fire and empowering the President to take appropriate action in accordance with the Constitution and the relevant laws of the United States to bring Iraq into compliance. In finding that Saddam had broken the cease-fire and directing the President to enforce the terms of the cease-fire, this joint resolution in effect stated that the Gulf war was not over.

Indeed, since Operation Desert Fox over 6 months ago, a virtual state of war has existed between the United States and her allies and Saddam Hussein's regime. The Iraq Liberation Act provides for significant military assistance to the Iraqi National Congress to remove the regime headed by Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq and to promote a democratic government to replace that regime. On the 31st of October, the President signed the Iraq Liberation Act into law. On November 15, President Clinton announced that in response to Saddam's continued defiance of international law, that the United States would make the removal of Saddam's regime the centerpiece of U.S. policy toward Iraq. The Iraqi National Congress strongly welcomed this decision. On December 15, the United States began a military assault on Iraq that continues to this day. Operation Desert Fox and over 80 subsequent allied air attacks, using thousands of precision munitions under broad rules of engagement in the no-fly zones, have severely hurt Saddam's military infrastructure.

Saddam considers this war. On the 5th of this month, Iraqi Foreign Minister Sahaf formally protested to the United Nations on behalf of Saddam that the Iraq Liberation Act was illegal and that relations with the Iraqi National Congress constituted aggression against a sovereign state.

The United States continues to recognize Saddam and Sahaf and the rest of the gang as Iraq's Government. Neither the interests of the American people nor the Iraqi people will be served by the current suggestions in the United Nations Security Council to write one more resolution, to make one more deal with Saddam's gang. We do not need yet another resolution that Saddam will violate. What we need is bold action. We believe that the United States should take the following steps immediately.

Protect the Iraqi people from Saddam's massive repression and ease their suffering through a large-scale program of direct humanitarian assistance that bypasses the regime. Saddam is violating the oil-for-food resolutions. He is twisting them to his advantage, and he will not willingly provide the Iraqi people with food because Saddam uses hunger and disease as weapons against the people of Iraq.

Broaden the rules of engagement for U.S. aircraft enforcing the no-fly zones over much of Iraq to make all Saddam's military forces moving against the civilian Iraqis targets for the aircraft.

Help the Iraqi National Congress to develop an alternative to the regime and assist us, including all the brave Iraqis fighting Saddam inside the country.

The Iraqi people need protection from Saddam's depredations. That is why human rights monitors deployed all over the country under the auspices of the United Nations are very important. It is not sufficient for the campaign of INDICT to be supported for the cessation of human rights violations against the Iraqi people. Human rights monitors must be deployed.

Saddam's behavior, since the passage of the Iraq Liberation Act, has been dictated by his preparations to deal with the consequences of the act. He has increased repression in all parts of the country because of his perception of the threat that he faces and his quest to avert danger. He has divided the country into four parts and appointed close members of his inner circle as military Governors with unlimited powers. He has massed troops against Iraqi Kurdistan in order to threaten the people of the north. Part of the reason for his massing of troops was the fact that the Kurdish parties, the Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, have participated in meetings of the INC Executive Council and have participated in the visit to Washington. They must not be penalized for taking the side against Saddam and being on the side of the United States.

He has massed troops in the south also. He has assigned his son Qusay to lead a campaign of mass arrests and repression in the south while his secret service continues to attack Shi'a religious leaders. This culminated in the recent murder of the highly respected Grand Ayatollah Mohammed Al-Sadr inside Iraq where he was living and working inside Iraq. Hundreds of thousands of people were coming to Friday prayers, led by him, and Saddam considered that to be an unacceptable threat in the face of the existence of the Iraq Liberation Act.

The spontaneous demonstrations that broke out all over Iraq after Ayatollah Sadr's murder were squashed with Saddam's customary brutality with hundreds of deaths in Baghdad and other cities in Iraq. In addition, over 1,000 political prisoners have been executed in the so-called prison cleansing campaign. Iraqis are dying now. It is not useful to say that any further aggressive moves against Saddam would get Iraqis killed because Saddam is killing Iraqis now.

The rules of engagement for allied pilots over Iraq have been significantly broadened in the past year from simply intercepting aircraft in violation of the no-fly zones to targeting air defense and command and control facilities once Saddam threatens allied aircraft. We ask that the rules of engagement be further broadened to include units of Saddam's military that are being deployed against the Iraqi people. The current no-fly zone does not protect the Iraqi people from Saddam's armor and artillery, chemical weapons, and missile forces. This will enhance the protection of the Iraqi people while further diminishing Saddam's apparatus of control.

U.S. officials have said that attacking Iraqi Kurdistan would lead to military action. We ask for this undertaking to be spelled out clearly. Saddam should know in no uncertain terms that he would

be prevented from crossing the line into all liberated areas of Iraq in the north. Specifically, a statement would be made to warn against moving into all areas, including areas below the 36th parallel which are not part of the no-fly zones.

Many brave Iraqis associated with the INC are resisting the dictatorship on the ground inside Iraq, particularly in the south. They are in contact with the Iraqi National Congress and they need support. They are looking to get equipment and training through the INC under the Iraq Liberation Act. Indeed, they need all kinds of support to resist the predatory dictatorship.

With the assistance of the U.S. Government, the Iraqi National Congress has held four meetings of its Executive Council beginning with the meeting in Windsor, England on April 7–8, which was attended by representatives of the Clinton administration and Congress. My colleagues and I were also very pleased to welcome your colleague, Senator Kerrey of Nebraska, who attended the meeting.

At the Windsor meeting, the Executive Council elected a seven-member interim presidency to lead the INC until the expanded Iraqi National Assembly meeting in July elects a new leadership for the future. The Windsor meeting also reaffirmed the unity of the Iraqi opposition and all the members of the INC reaffirmed their commitments to the principles of democracy, pluralism, federalism, and respect for human rights.

The Windsor meeting was followed up by a visit of an INC delegation to the United Nations. We have also been vigorous in reaching out to all Iraqis of all groups opposed to Saddam throughout the world. Also, an expanded delegation of the Iraqi opposition made a successful visit to Washington in May.

With the assistance of the U.S. Government, we have reactivated our campaign to focus attention on the crimes of Saddam and to maintain his international isolation. Frank Ricciardone, the State Department's Special Coordinator for Transition in Iraq, continues to work tirelessly to help us in our quest to push forward the agenda of the united Iraqi opposition, and my colleagues and I commend his efforts. He already has had notable successes, to his credit, among the Iraqi opposition. Also, he has visited several countries in the region to explain U.S. policy.

Unfortunately, the position of some regional States toward Saddam's regime remains ambiguous. We say to our neighbors in the region that we stand for the unity of Iraq while Saddam has effectively divided the country. We urge them to recognize that the suppressed talents and good will of the Iraqi people must be released from the tyranny of Saddam to ensure the peace and prosperity of the region. Most of our Arab neighbors enjoy very special relationships with the United States. They must not begrudge us such relations. We look to the U.S. to help the Iraqi people rid themselves from the scourge of Saddam and establish democracy in Iraq. Our neighbors have nothing to fear from a democratic Iraq.

We have called for a plenary session of the Iraqi National Assembly in July. This body is the ultimate authority of the INC. The July meeting will expand the INC and elect leadership for the future. In the absence of firm security guarantees from the United States and its allies, we unfortunately are not able to hold this meeting in our first choice venue on Iraqi soil as we did in

Salahuddin in 1992. Logistics were much more complicated then. The INC Executive Council has made the request to the Secretary of State to hold the INC National Assembly meeting in Washington. Similar requests have been made to a number of Arab and European governments.

Kurdish reconciliation has been a fundamental step in the efforts to energize and unite the opposition. We commend the U.S. Government's role in brokering the Washington Agreement between the KDP and the PUK. We hope that the Washington Agreement will be implemented fully, and we commend Ambassador Beth Jones' leadership role in the current negotiations between the Kurdish parties.

Mr. Chairman, as I said earlier, it is time for bold action. It is time to call Saddam to account for his war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. We need the United States' support and other friends of the Iraqi people to act in the United Nations to convene a commission of inquiry into the crimes of Saddam's regime. Secretary of State Christopher told an INC delegation in April 1993 that the United States would support the creation of such a commission, and the Iraq Liberation Act addresses at length the indictment of Saddam Hussein and other war criminals in his regime. Perhaps the next session of the United Nations General Assembly in the autumn will be the appropriate place to pursue this. U.S. leadership on this issue is essential.

We are pleased to note the United States' support of INDICT, the leading organization campaigning on this issue. The U.S. Congress appropriated funds for INDICT. To date, INDICT has not received funds, but we are told by the State Department that INDICT will be receiving funds before the end of the month.

INDICT also is not encouraged to look into evidence of war crimes for fear of jeopardizing the future of this evidence in the forthcoming tribunals.

We are encouraged by the statements of National Security Adviser Berger to our delegation in which he said that the United States is determined to help the Iraqi people remove Saddam and is working diligently to achieve this noble aim. We have had initial contacts with U.S. military officials to discuss the commencement of drawdown assistance to the INC under the Iraq Liberation Act. We look forward to the time when this materiel and training can be used by the forces opposing Saddam on the ground in Iraq. We recognize that there is an urgent need for training and we are ready to commence training immediately.

The Iraqi National Congress recognizes that the problems of post-Saddam Iraq will be immense and complicated. But Iraq is a rich country both in oil, water, and talent and can stand on its own feet after the fall of the dictatorship. A significant part of the credibility of the INC lies in our ability to persuade the international community that we have plausible plans for dealing with problems of Iraq in the political, constitutional, economic, administrative, and security fields. We are working with Iraqi and international experts to develop and refine our plans in all these areas. We appreciate the assistance and encouragement that the United States has given us in these areas. However, development of the post-Saddam agenda is no substitute to an active program to replace the

tyranny in Iraq. The Iraqi people are calling upon us to be in the forefront of the effort to liberate our country.

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate this opportunity to testify before you again. I assure the U.S. Congress and the U.S. people of our gratitude for your support in our struggle to end the suffering of our people and to live in peace and freedom. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Chalabi follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF AHMAD CHALABI

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—Broaden the rules of engagement for U.S. aircraft enforcing the no-fly zones over much of Iraq to make all of Saddam's military forces targets.

—Help the Iraqi National Congress to develop an alternative to the regime and assist us, including all the brave Iraqis fighting Saddam inside the country.

The Iraqi people need protection from Saddam's depredations. Saddam's behavior since the passage of the Iraq Liberation Act has been dictated by his preparations to deal with the consequences of the Act. He has increased repression in all parts of the country because of his perception of the threat he faces and his quest to avert danger. He has divided the country into four parts and appointed close members of his inner circle as military governors with unlimited powers. He has massed troops against Iraqi Kurdistan in order to threaten the people of the north. He has assigned his son Qusay to lead a campaign of mass arrests and repression in the south while his secret services continue to attack Shia religious leaders. This culminated in the recent murder of the highly respected Grand Ayatollah Mohammed Al-Sadr. The spontaneous demonstrations that broke out all over Iraq after Ayatollah Sadr's murder were squashed with Saddam's customary brutality with hundreds of deaths in Baghdad and other cities of Iraq. In addition, over a thousand political prisoners have been executed in the so-called "Prison Cleansing Campaign."

The rules of engagement for allied pilots over Iraq have been significantly broadened in the past year from simply intercepting aircraft in violation of the no-fly zones to targeting air defense and command and control facilities. We ask that the rules of engagement be further broadened to include units of Saddam's military that are being deployed against the Iraqi people. This will enhance protection of the Iraqi people while further diminishing Saddam's apparatus of control. U.S. officials have said that attacking Iraqi Kurdistan would lead to military action. We ask for this undertaking to be spelled out clearly. Saddam should know in no uncertain terms that he would be prevented from crossing the line into all liberated areas of Iraq in the north. Specifically, a statement would be made to warn against moving into areas below the 36th parallel which are not part of the no fly zones.

Many brave Iraqis, associated with the INC, are resisting the dictatorship on the ground inside Iraq, particularly in the south. They are in contact with the Iraqi National Congress and they need support. They are looking to get equipment and training through the INC under the Iraq Liberation Act. Indeed they need all kinds of support to resist the predatory dictatorship.

With the assistance of the U.S. Government, the Iraqi National Congress has held four meetings of its Executive Council beginning with the meeting in Windsor, England on April 7–8 which was attended by representatives of the Clinton Administration and the Congress. My colleagues and I were also very pleased to welcome your colleague Senator Kerrey of Nebraska. At the Windsor meeting, the Executive Council elected a seven-member interim presidency to lead the INC until the expanded Iraqi National Assembly meeting in July elects a new leadership. The Windsor meeting also reaffirmed the unity of the Iraqi opposition and all the members of the INC reaffirmed their commitments to the principles of democracy, pluralism, federalism and respect for human rights. The Windsor meeting was followed-up by the visit of an INC delegation to the United Nations. We have been vigorous in reaching out to Iraqis of all groups opposed Saddam throughout the world. Also, an expanded delegation of the Iraqi opposition made a successful visit to Washington in May.

With the assistance of the U.S. Government we have reactivated our campaign to focus attention on the crimes of Saddam and to maintain his international isolation. Frank Ricciardone, the State Department's Special Coordinator for Transition in Iraq, continues to work tirelessly to help us in our quest to push forward the agenda of the united Iraqi opposition and my colleagues and I commend his efforts. He already has notable successes to his credit among the Iraqi opposition. Also, he has visited several countries in the region to explain U.S. policy.

Unfortunately the position of some of the regional states towards Saddam's regime remains ambiguous. We say to our neighbors in the region that we stand for the unity of Iraq while Saddam has divided the country. We urge them to recognize that the suppressed talents and good will of the Iraqi people must be released from the tyranny of Saddam to ensure the peace and prosperity of the region. Most of our Arab neighbors enjoy very special relations with the United States, they must not begrudge us such relations. We look to the U.S. to help the Iraqi people rid themselves from the scourge of Saddam and establish democracy in Iraq. Our neighbors have nothing to fear from a democratic Iraq.

We have called for a plenary session of the Iraqi National Assembly in July. This body is the ultimate authority of the INC. The July meeting will expand the INC and elect leadership for the future. In the absence of firm security guarantees from the United States and its allies, we, unfortunately, are not able to hold this meeting on Iraqi soil as we did in Salahuddin in 1992. The INC Executive Council has made a request to the Secretary of State to hold the meeting in Washington. Similar requests have been made to a number of Arab and European governments.

Kurdish reconciliation has been a fundamental step in the efforts to energize and unite the opposition. We commend the U.S. Government's role in brokering the

Washington Agreement between the KDP and the PUK. We hope that the Washington Agreement will be implemented fully and we commend Ambassador Beth Jones' leadership role in the current negotiations between the Kurdish parties.

Mr. Chairman, as I said earlier it is time for bold action. It is time to call Saddam to account for his war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. We need the support of the United States and other friends of the Iraqi people to act in the United Nations to convene a commission of inquiry into the crimes of Saddam's regime. Secretary of State Christopher told an INC delegation in April 1993 that the United States supports the creation of such a commission and the Iraq Liberation Act addresses at length the indictment of Saddam Hussein and other war criminals in his regime. Perhaps the next session of the UN General Assembly in the autumn will be the appropriate place to pursue this. U.S. leadership on this issue is essential. We are pleased to note the U.S. support of INDICT, the leading organization campaigning on this issue.

We are encouraged by the statements of National Security Advisor Berger to our delegation in which he said that the United Sates is determined to help the Iraqi people remove Saddam and is working diligently to achieve this noble aim. We have had initial contacts with U.S. military officials to discuss the commencement of drawdown assistance to the INC under the Iraq Liberation Act. We look forward to the time when this materiel and training can be used by the forces opposing Saddam on the ground in Iraq. We recognize that there is an urgent need for training and we are ready to commence training immediately.

The Iraqi National Congress recognizes that the problems of post-Saddam Iraq will be immense and complicated. But Iraq is a rich country both in oil, water and talent and can stand on its own feet after the fall of the dictatorship. A significant part of the credibility of the INC lies in our ability to persuade the international community that we have plausible plans for dealing with the problems of Iraq in the political, constitutional, economic, administrative and security fields. We are working with Iraqi and international experts to develop and refine our plans in all those fields. We appreciate the assistance and encouragement that the U.S. has given us in these areas. However, development of the post-Saddam agenda is no substitute to an active program to replace the tyranny in Iraq. The Iraqi people are calling upon us to be in the forefront of the effort to liberate our country.

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate this opportunity to testify before the Foreign Relations Committee again. I assure the U.S. Congress and the U.S. people of our gratitude for your support in our struggle to end the suffering of our people and to live in peace and freedom.

Senator BROWNBACK. Thank you, Mr. Chalabi, and thank you for your courage and your commitment and your hard work. You lay forward an aggressive agenda, and it is a very encouraging one to hear you articulate that agenda. I look forward to discussing some of that with you a bit further.

Dr. Clawson, thank you for joining our committee and the floor is yours.

STATEMENT OF DR. PATRICK CLAWSON, DIRECTOR FOR RESEARCH, THE WASHINGTON INSTITUTE FOR NEAR EAST POLICY, WASHINGTON, DC

Dr. CLAWSON. Thank you. It is an honor to be here with you today. I have submitted a statement for the record and, if you will permit me, I would like just to summarize that briefly.

Senator BROWNBACK. That will be just fine, and we will put your entire statement in the record. You are free to summarize as you see fit.

Dr. CLAWSON. Thank you very much.

After Congress passed the Iraq Liberation Act in 1998, the Clinton administration decided that regime change was a necessary goal rather than just a desirable aim. By publicly identifying regime change as a policy objective, the United States has put its prestige on the line. From now on, the world will use a simple test

to judge the success or failure of U.S. policy toward Iraq, namely, is Saddam still in power?

Therefore, the policy of promoting regime change is not one that should be done halfway. Success in this policy will depend upon the vigor with which the policy is pursued. Regime change is a realistic goal if, and only if, Washington puts itself behind this effort, but it is not realistic if Washington sits back to await others making it happen. The U.S. Government should, therefore, devote vigorous effort to regime change rather than presenting regime change as a long-term aim with the implication that in the short term little will be done to promote it.

It is in this context that we should consider the role for the Iraqi opposition.

Replacing Saddam requires harnessing the potential inherent in all the policy levers that the United States holds. That means that we must coordinate military action, covert operation, reducing Saddam's unsupervised oil income, as well as support for the opposition. No one of these policies by itself is sufficient to achieve the objective of regime change. But taken together, the synergy among them creates the best conditions for the overthrow of Saddam Hussein, as well as reinforcing the containment of Iraq.

U.S. military action can facilitate regime change, especially when it targets the regime's internal security apparatus, because that apparatus is the main obstacle to overthrowing Saddam.

Covert action can diminish Saddam's image in the eyes of his supporters, exacerbate strained relations between Saddam's inner circle and the military, and it can stir up popular discontent against the regime.

Reducing Iraq's unsupervised oil income, which amounts to several hundred million dollars a year, cuts into Saddam's ability to buy loyalty.

But it is support for the opposition which is the clearest expression of America's commitment to regime change. Such support, especially when it is given publicly and endorsed by top officials, fosters the impression that the tide is running against Saddam Hussein. Only when Washington demonstrates its high level support for the opposition can it effectively lobby regional governments to do the same. The more the United States supports the opposition, the more regional governments will be confident that Saddam will, in fact, go, and therefore they can assist the opposition without facing eventual Iraqi retaliation.

Some who would strictly limit U.S. support for the opposition belittle its chances of accomplishing much. To be sure, the opposition is unlikely to defeat Saddam's forces in the field. But that is largely irrelevant. The issue is what must be done to crack the aura of invincibility around Saddam and his repressive apparatus. If Saddam's security organizations are spending their time worrying about the opposition, they will have fewer resources to repress outbreaks of the seething popular discontent, and that will make more likely opposition success either through a coup or through uprisings.

If I may, let me address some specific measures which might be taken to increase support for the opposition.

First, over the last 6 months, the United States has stepped up its support for the opposition, but the support remains low key and a secondary aspect of our Iraq policy. A good indicator of where the opposition fits into overall U.S. Iraq policy is to see how the opposition leaders were treated during their recent visit to Washington, in comparison to their reception 6 years ago in April 1993. Six years ago, the opposition leaders saw the Vice President in the White House. This time, when the opposition had been broadened to include monarchists and prominent Iraqi Sunnis like former Foreign Minister Adnan Pacachi, the opposition leaders saw the Secretary of State, even though the administration had for months been telling the opposition that the more broadly they united, the higher the U.S. officials who would see them. This distinction between seeing the Secretary of State and seeing the Vice President matters to Saddam, to Middle Eastern countries, and to the Arab public. It will be interesting to see whether President Clinton sends greetings to the upcoming meeting of the Iraqi National Assembly, and if so, how warm and how specific those greetings will be.

Second, on the operational front, the opposition has been unsuccessfully asking the United States to publicly commit itself to strict enforcement of the existing U.N. Security Council resolutions, especially U.N. Security Council Resolution 949 which authorizes use of force if Iraq "takes any action to enhance its military capability in southern Iraq." This is the so-called no-drive zone resolution. In fact, the United States has rarely used the authority granted by this resolution to hit at the tanks and other equipment that Saddam has added to his forces in the south for the purpose of hitting the opposition.

Third, the Clinton administration has announced that it will begin using the drawdown authority contained in the Iraq Liberation Act. Throughout the Middle East, not least of all in Iraq, close attention will be paid to what kind of assistance is provided under the drawdown program. Assistant Secretary Indyk has said, "to arm the Iraqi opposition is premature." Let us define a road map to maturity. The administration should approach the opposition to develop a plan that includes specific steps that each side will take to permit U.S. military aid so that the opposition can expand the scope of its ongoing military operations.

Next, there is the issue of what kind of non-lethal equipment to give the opposition, specifically whether the United States will provide what, in essence, are relief supplies or whether the United States will provide equipment designed to make the opposition more dangerous to Saddam. A good barometer here is how much communication equipment and training is included. Better communication equipment will let the opposition report in real time on what is happening in Iraq, and that could allow the opposition to identify when Saddam is moving reinforcements into the no-drive zone or the Kurdish areas, facilitating U.S. retaliation. Furthermore, the ability to communicate and coordinate between different regions and different cities could allow the news of unrest in one city to spread elsewhere, increasing the prospect that the seething discontent will erupt in riots.

In conclusion, President Clinton in his December speech to the Nation said that the United States would support the opposition

"prudently and effectively." Well, what is prudent and effective is to put the full weight of the U.S. Government behind that policy to which we have committed our prestige, namely, regime change. Integrating vigorous support for the opposition with well planned military action, covert operations, and reduction in oil income will increase the prospects for ending Saddam Hussein's rule soon. Plus, it will bolster the containment of Iraq. The support for the opposition should steadily increase as the opposition matures, with the United States always pushing the process forward rather than lagging behind.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Clawson follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DR. PATRICK CLAWSON

WHAT ROLE FOR THE IRAQI OPPOSITION

While NATO aircraft have been bombing Yugoslavia, American combat aircrews have also been engaged in another conflict, namely, a quiet low-intensity war against Iraq. The differences between the two theaters are many, not the least of which is the ultimate American goal. The United States appears ready to live with Slobodan Milosevic, whereas U.S. policy is now that Saddam Husayn must go. It took a long time to come to this determination. Only after Congress passed the Iraq Liberation Act of 1998 did the Clinton administration decide that regime change is necessary, rather than just desirable.

Regime change is no easy goal; the prospects for success are uncertain. However, by publicly identifying regime change as a policy objective, the United States has already put its prestige on the line. From now on, the world will use a simple test to judge the success or failure of U.S. policy towards Iraq, namely, is Saddam still in power? Saddam has already outlasted one U.S. president (George Bush); it would not serve U.S. interests well if he outlasted another. The policy of promoting regime change is not one that should be done half-way: it should either be quietly buried or be put at the center of all U.S. actions towards Iraq. And the simple fact is that success depends upon the vigor with which the policy is pursued: regime change is a realistic goal if Washington puts itself behind the effort, but it is not realistic if Washington sits back to await others making it happen. The U.S. government should therefore devote vigorous effort to regime change, rather than presenting regime change as a long-term aim—with the implication that in the short run, little will be done to promote it.

It is in this context that we should consider the role for the Iraqi opposition. Some see support for the opposition as the only element necessary to achieve success in Iraq. This approach is unrealistic. The opposition is unlikely anytime soon to create a military force capable of defeating Saddam Husayn, even if supported with American air power. Others see support of the opposition primarily as a way to strengthen the containment of Iraq—limiting its ability to threaten its neighbors and to develop weapons of mass destruction. This approach is insufficiently ambitious, and it does not acknowledge the need to take risks to change the regime in Baghdad before Saddam rebuilds his weapons of mass destruction or containment collapses.

SUPPORTING THE OPPOSITION AS PART OF A MULTI-FACETED POLICY

Replacing Saddam requires harnessing the potential inherent in the four principal policy levers the United States holds—military action, covert operations, reducing Saddam's unsupervised oil income, and support for the opposition. No one of these policies by itself is sufficient to achieve the objective of regime change. Taken together, however, synergy among them creates the best conditions for the overthrow of Saddam Husayn, as well as reinforcing the containment of Iraq.

U.S. military action can facilitate regime change, especially when it targets the regime's internal security apparatus. That apparatus is the main obstacle to overthrowing Saddam Husayn; there is no shortage of potential coup plotters or rebels. An air campaign that disrupts the key security organizations communications and forces them to focus on their own survival—and not that of the regime—increases the chances that a coup or uprising will succeed. Moreover, new strikes might cause Saddam to lash out verbally against Arab governments and Turkey (as he did after Desert Fox), deepening his political isolation, while reducing Iraq's ability to militarily threaten its neighbors—thereby bolstering containment.

Covert action (with an emphasis on psychological operations) could diminish Saddam's image in the eyes of his supporters, exacerbate already strained relations between Saddam Husayn's inner circle and the military, and stir up popular discontent against the regime. These could lay the ground-work for a coup or uprising. At the very least, these efforts would keep Saddam on the defensive and force him to divert assets to deal with internal security, leaving fewer resources available for clandestine technology procurement or trouble-making elsewhere. This will also bolster containment.

Reducing Iraq's unsupervised oil income—amounting to several hundred million dollars a year—cuts into Saddam's ability to buy loyalty. Financial hardship could aggravate existing tensions among the various Sunni tribal groups that form the bedrock of Saddam's power base and foment unrest among these elements. The flow of unsupervised income could be cut by renewed efforts to halt illicit Iraqi oil sales via Syria and Turkey, to wean Jordan off Iraqi oil, and to stop kickback schemes under the "oil for food" program. Less unsupervised oil income also means less money for illicit arms purchases, which reinforces containment.

Support for the opposition is the clearest expression of America's commitment to regime change. Such support—especially when given publicly and endorsed by top officials—fosters the impression that the tide is turning against Saddam. It also undercuts the conspiratorial view in parts of the Arab world that the United States really wants a weakened Saddam Husayn to remain in power. Only when Washington demonstrates its high-level support for the opposition can it effectively lobby regional governments to do the same. The more the United States supports the opposition, the more regional governments will be confident that Saddam will in fact go and that therefore they can assist the opposition without facing eventual Iraqi retaliation. Plus, regional governments are more likely to support actions to tighten the containment of Iraq if they need not worry that Saddam will be around to exact revenge.

Some who would strictly limit U.S. support for the opposition belittle its chances of accomplishing much. To be sure, the opposition is unlikely to defeat Saddam's forces in the field. But that is largely irrelevant. The issue is what must be done to crack the aura of invincibility around Saddam and his repressive apparatus. If Saddam's security organizations are spending their time worrying about the opposition, they will have fewer resources to repress outbreaks of the seething popular discontent. If emboldened protestors began to act on a wide scale, an active opposition could catalyze and coordinate an uprising, making what otherwise would be a riot into a regime-threatening rebellion. Similarly, the busier that Saddam's security organizations are chasing the organized opposition and spontaneous protestors, the less they can do to detect and stop coup plotters. Plus containment is strengthened when Saddam diverts time and resources from the regular military to deal with the opposition—either because the opposition is successful or because the loud U.S. support for the opposition makes Saddam afraid.

SPECIFIC MEASURES TO INCREASE SUPPORT FOR THE OPPOSITION

Over the last six months, the United States has stepped up its support for the opposition, but the support remains low key and a secondary aspect of U.S. Iraqi policy. A good indicator of where opposition support fits into overall U.S. Iraqi policy is how the opposition leaders were treated during their recent visit to Washington compared to their reception in April 1993. Six years ago, the opposition leaders saw the Vice-President in the White House. This time, when the opposition had been broadened to include monarchists and prominent Sunnis like ex-Foreign Minister Adnan Pacachi, the opposition leaders saw the Secretary of State—even though the administration had for months been telling the opposition that the more broadly they united, the higher the U.S. officials who would see them. These distinctions matter to Saddam, to Middle East countries, and to the Arab public. It will be interesting to see whether President Clinton sends greetings to the upcoming meeting of the opposition Iraqi National Assembly, and if so how, warm will they be.

Similarly, on the operational front, the opposition has been unsuccessfully asking the United States to publicly commit itself to strict enforcement of the existing UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolutions, especially UNSC Resolution 949 which authorizes use of force if Iraq "takes any action to enhance its military capacity in southern Iraq"—the so-called "no-drive zone" resolution. In fact, the United States has rarely used the authority granted by this resolution to hit at the tanks and other equipment Saddam has added to his forces in the south for the purpose of hitting the opposition.

In the north, the Kurdish groups want to know what President Clinton meant when he said that we "remain ready to use [force] if Saddam moves against the

Kurds." Specifically, the Kurdish groups want a guarantee that America will retaliate if Saddam attacks the Kurds in retaliation for the opposition National Assembly meeting in the north.

The Clinton administration has announced that it will begin using the $97 million in drawdown authority contained in the Iraq Liberation Act. Throughout the Middle East, not least of all in Iraq, close attention will be paid to what kind of assistance is provided under the drawdown program. Assistant Secretary Indyk has said, "to arm the Iraqi opposition . . . is premature." Let us define a roadmap to "maturity." Will the administration approach the opposition to identify what must be done before arms distribution is appropriate—to develop a plan that includes specific steps each side will take to permit U.S. military aid so that the opposition can expand the scope of its ongoing military operations?

And in the meantime, there is the issue of what kind of non-lethal equipment to give the opposition, that is, whether to provide what are in essence relief supplies or instead equipment designed to make the opposition more dangerous to Saddam. A good barometer is how much communication equipment and training is included. Better communications would let the opposition report in real time on about what is happening in Iraq. The opposition could then identify when Saddam is moving reinforcements into the no-drive zone or the Kurdish area, facilitating U.S. retaliation. The ability to communicate and coordinate between different regions and cities could allow the news of unrest in one town to spark unrest elsewhere, increasing the prospect that the seething discontent will erupt in riots.

In sum, what is "prudent and effective"—the words President Clinton used in his December speech to the nation to describe how America will support the opposition—is to put the full weight of the U.S. government behind that policy to which we have committed our prestige, namely, regime change. Integrating vigorous support for the opposition with well planned military action, covert operations, and reductions in illegal oil income will increase the prospects for ending Saddam Husayn's rule soon, plus it will also bolster containment. The support for the opposition should steadily increase as the opposition matures, with the United States always pushing the process forward rather than lagging behind.

Senator BROWNBACK. Thank you, Dr. Clawson. That was an excellent statement and I think, unfortunately, an accurate analysis from my perspective. It seems to me that we need to be far more aggressive and far more specific and we know how to do that. Witness the recent actions in Kosovo. We know how to be aggressive and specific. And I hope that we can move the administration toward that position here because I agree with you as well that our prestige is on the line.

And you have got a regime that is very troubling to a number of neighbors in this area. They do not want to see this regime, and it is threatening to those neighbors far in excess of what we see in some other regions of the world. So, this is an important policy issue for the United States and on a broad basis it is an important policy issue. So, thanks for your testimony.

Ms. FRANCKE. I hope I pronounced that correctly. Thank you very much for joining us. We can take your full statement in the record. If you would like to summarize, we would be happy to receive it that way as well.

STATEMENT OF REND RAHIM FRANCKE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, IRAQ FOUNDATION, WASHINGTON, DC

Ms. FRANCKE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I did, in fact, put a statement for the record, and I will summarize and highlight some points.

I would like to give a statement that gives you my perception of the dynamics of the Iraqi opposition because I believe that that is important in any kind of decisionmaking that we are going to take.

Mr. Chairman, earlier this month, the official Iraqi media offered a startling insight into the situation in Iraq. The media announced

that Saddam Hussein had met with senior Ba'ath Party and security officials in the southern province of Basra to urge them to restore the regime's control of the city. In statements that were made public in the media, Saddam called on his henchmen to "spare no effort in thwarting the plans of our enemies." He exhorted them to "confront the influence of hostile information," which Saddam described as "greater than the influence of bombs." And he also stressed the importance of "psychological preparation before entering the next confrontation."

Saddam was really talking not about an external threat, an external foe. He was talking about the internal opposition in southern Iraq that has made the situation in that region very tenuous for the regime. It was a rare admission by Saddam of the threat posed by the internal opposition and a rare display of his fears. It is my assessment that the situation in Iraq in general is far more explosive and volatile now than it has been since March 1991.

Since the twin blows of the Iraq Liberation Act and Desert Fox, Saddam's behavior has become more desperate and erratic and has manifested in increased internal repression. This internal repression has, in turn, triggered a response from the population that has been steady and persistent since January.

What I have noted is that since the beginning of the year, the resistance to the regime has been consistent, continuous, and striking in its frequency and its tenacity. It is no longer in isolated pockets in the southern marshes, and it is no longer carried out by cross-border operations as it was from 1991 until early this year. I believe there has been a qualitative change in the nature of this opposition in the center and in the south of Iraq.

I am also struck by the geographic spread of the opposition and by its spread through a very broad social spectrum of Iraqi society. I would like to give you a few examples.

Dr. Chalabi commented on the spontaneous eruption of demonstrations when the senior cleric Al-Sadr was assassinated by the regime in February. The demonstrations and the confrontations with the regime in consequence of that assassination really went on for an entire month, and I do not believe abated until late in March.

But in addition, in May a clandestine military group, calling itself the Secret Organization of Iraqi Army Officers-General Command, took responsibility for attacks in Baghdad against buildings belonging to the secret services of the Iraqi regime and took responsibility for the deaths of secret service officers.

On June 14, a car bomb exploded in a Baghdad neighborhood. This in itself is not unusual, but what was unusual was the fact that the bomb exploded in a solidly middle class neighborhood with a diverse population of Sunnis, Shi'a, Christians, and even foreigners.

Back in March, a group of active and retired army officers from some of the largest Sunni tribes in Iraq were plotting a revolt centered in the northern city of Kirkuk. The plot was foiled and the officers were executed.

Thus, it seems to me that the opposition has both spread geographically, it has penetrated into different social segments of Iraqi society, and it has been continuous and has been sustained.

The question is, does this internal opposition mean that a military coup or a popular uprising is about to overturn the regime? Unfortunately, I do not believe so.

I want to take the military coup scenario first and say that I believe the odds are overwhelming against a military coup. Since 1991, there have been at least six verified military plots and rumors of more. In every case, the plot has been uncovered, the officer has been seized, and there have been hundreds of executions as a result of the failure of these plots.

It is virtually impossible to engineer a covert plan in Iraq that can mature, gather momentum, and proceed to a successful coup without being uncovered by Saddam and killed in its early stages. Indeed, I would like to add that I doubt any military faction can seize and hold onto power for more than a few months in Iraq before being challenged by a rival faction because of the fragmentation of the Iraqi army and because of its division into regionalism and clan affiliations.

Coming to a popular uprising, I believe the obstacles facing that were demonstrated in March 1991, and I do not believe very much has changed. The civilian resistance in the south and center of the country is geographically and operationally disconnected. Communications within the region where the resistance operates are difficult and the leadership is dispersed. The resistance lacks a unified command and an overarching political framework. As a result, although we see increased activity, persistent activity, and bolder activity, these activities are tactical rather than strategic. While this type of resistance can debilitate the regime and sap its resources, it lacks the concentrated and directed force to deal a final blow.

In essence, there are three elements to the opposition right now. We have an internal civilian resistance that engages in open confrontation with the regime at great cost, but which lacks organizational resources. We have dissident military groups that repeatedly attempt covert coups, but fail and get executed. And we have an external opposition. And I would like to emphasize that I use this as a short term to imply the opposition which is outside the control of Saddam's regime either in northern Iraq or outside the country altogether. This external opposition has had an uneven progress, but it represents a wide cross section of Iraqi society and has organizational potential.

The unfortunate thing is that these three elements are not currently integrated, and yet they are interdependent and they are complementary. And their integration is essential in my belief to a successful effort against Saddam's regime. We need to devise a strategy and support a strategy that knits these strands together in a syncretic combination. A successful challenge to Saddam requires, first, an opposition movement with organizational capability, a unified strategy, and a political vision. Second, it needs to include military and civilian forces inside Iraq as part of that overall strategy. And third, it requires a program that depends primarily on overt activity and can capitalize overtly on the regime's vulnerabilities and act as a magnet for Iraqis. Mounting such a challenge requires much greater energy and boldness than an over-

night military coup, but I believe it is the only viable strategy for challenging Saddam successfully.

Furthermore, I would add one indispensable element. A unified Iraqi opposition that can act as this magnet, as this organizational force requires a presence and an operation inside Iraq but outside Saddam's control. Again, I believe this is an indispensable component of an integrated strategic solution. It is very well to speak of an external opposition that is the voice of the inside opposition, that reflects the aspirations of the Iraqi people, but I do not think this is enough. I think the external opposition which is currently external has to be internalized because this is the framework that can bring together the disparate forces that are currently working in Iraq but working without any organization and without coordination. This is the opposition that has to provide that coordinational framework.

For example, between 1992 and 1995, the Iraqi National Congress, based in Iraqi Kurdistan, was able to establish contacts with dissidents in government-controlled areas and have the potential to provide such a political framework for the forces actually confronting the regime. That experience, while imperfect and not fully developed, can serve as a useful model for the future.

I believe the ingredients for success in Iraq are there. They need to be assembled. We have made great steps forward. The Iraq Liberation Act is a step forward. The revival of the Iraqi opposition is a step forward, and the efforts of the administration to bring the Kurdish parties together to normal relations is an enormous step forward. It is important that this momentum that has been established be maintained and developed. What concerns me is that we may lose the momentum, and I am further concerned that in spite of these good steps, we still do not have a conception of the process of change in Iraq. We are doing disparate things, all of which are good, but we are not pulling them into a unified whole.

Finally, I want to add that all these steps have addressed the needs of the external opposition and not the needs of the internal opposition, that which is functioning inside Iraq. I will be very brief. The internal opposition itself needs a lot of support because in the end that is the opposition that is going to do the work, and that is the one that needs the assistance.

I am often asked these following questions by people who have contacts with the inside.

Will the United States support the resistance groups inside Iraq?

Will the United States protect territory liberated from Saddam's control in the south and the center of the country?

Why is the United States silent on providing real protection for Iraqis in the south and the center who are themselves being killed by the regime's paramilitary groups every day?

These are important questions. I do not think they are superfluous because the way we address these questions really is going to determine the way we envisage the process of change in Iraq. We have to look at these questions very carefully and answer them squarely because they are going to determine our future actions on Iraq.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Francke follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF REND RAHIM FRANCKE

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to speak about the situation in Iraq. I speak in my personal capacity, and not in my capacity as director of the Iraq Foundation.

1. The situation in Iraq today is closer to a boiling point that ever since March 1991.
2. Classic modes of change, such as a sudden military coup, are unlikely to succeed.
3. The United States can seize the opportunity and help a process of change that can lead democratization in Iraq.

Mr. Chairman, earlier this month, the official Iraqi media offered a startling insight into the situation in Iraq. The media announced that Saddam Hussein had met with senior Ba'th Party and security officials in the southern province of Basra to urge them to restore the regime's control of the city. In statements that were made public, Saddam called on his henchmen to "spare no effort in thwarting the plans of our enemies." He exhorted them to "confront the influence of hostile information," which Saddam described as "greater than the influence of bombs." He also stressed the importance of "psychological preparation before entering the next confrontation."[1]

Rarely before has Saddam admitted the threat posed by the internal opposition, or displayed his fear, or suggested that his regime's control was shaky. It was an unprecedented public admission of weakness from a man who knows he is sinking.

Since the twin blows of the Iraq Liberation Act and Desert Fox, Saddam's behavior has been more desperate and his internal repression even more brutal. Simultaneously, since January this year, Iraq has seen a surge of resistance activity throughout the country, involving increasing numbers of people across the social-political spectrum.

Opposition to Saddam's regime has been going on since the failure of the uprising in March 1991. However, in January this year, and in response to a particularly virulent campaign of terror in the fall, the nature of opposition activity changed. Resistance activity is no longer sporadic, confined to pockets in the southern marshes or carried out by cross-border commandos, as it has been for several years. On the contrary, today it is continuous and sustained, and striking in its frequency, tenacity and boldness. Moreover, it has spread geographically and across the social spectrum. This is an entirely new development, and needs to be noted and evaluated.

In February this year, Saddam made the mistake of assassinating a prominent Shi'a cleric. Cities in southern Iraq, as well as neighborhoods in Baghdad, erupted into massive protests and armed confrontations with Saddam's paramilitary. Since then, resistance fighters have fought government troops daily, dissidents have attacked government buildings, and there have been widespread incidents of civil defiance.

The dissent is not confined to the south or to the Shi'a population. In March, a group of active and retired army officers from some of the largest Sunni tribes in Iraq were plotting a revolt centered in the northern city of Kirkuk. The plot was foiled and the officers were executed.

In May, a clandestine military group calling itself "the Secret Organization of Iraqi Army officers-General Command" took responsibility for attacks in Baghdad against buildings belonging to the secret services.

On June 14, a car bomb exploded in a Baghdad neighborhood—not itself an unusual event. What was unusual was the fact that the bomb exploded in a solidly middle class neighborhood with a diverse population of Sunnis, Shi'a, Christians and foreigners. There are reports that the bomb exploded near a Republican Guard command post.

The situation in Iraq is more volatile now that it has been since March 1991. The Iraqi people are resisting Saddam's rule everyday throughout the country, without external help and at enormous cost to their lives and the lives of their families. Thousands of men and women have died fighting or have been executed. The regime has razed villages, deported communities, and confiscated property.

Does this widespread and sustained dissent mean that a military coup or a popular uprising is about to overturn the regime? I don't believe so.

The odds are overwhelming against a military coup. Since 1991, there have been at least six verified military plots, and rumors of many more. In every case, the plot was uncovered in its embryonic stage through a ubiquitous system of intelligence and security organs, or through sheer fear. Hundreds of officers are known to have

[1] From Al-Hayat, June 18, 1999. See translation on www.iraqfoundation.org

been executed as a result—officers from the army, the Republican Guard, the air force, and even the Special Republican Guard closest to the presidency.

It is virtually impossible to engineer a covert plan that can mature, gather momentum and proceed to a successful coup without being uncovered by Saddam and killed in its early stages. In any case, the Iraqi military is no longer a cohesive institutions with an acknowledged hierarchy, but is riddled with factionalism. Indeed, it is doubtful that any military faction can seize and hold on to power for more than a few months before being challenged by a rival faction.

The obstacles facing a popular uprising were demonstrated in March 1991. The civilian resistance in the south and center of the country is geographically and operationally disconnected. Communications within the region are difficult and the leadership is dispersed. The resistance lacks a unified command and an overarching political framework. As a result, its activities are tactical rather than strategic. While this type of resistance can debilitate the regime and sap its resources, it lacks the concentrated and directed force to deal a final blow. Thus Saddam's regime survives in Iraq not because of its inherent strength but because of the organizational weakness of the opposition.

There are three elements to the opposition:

1. An internal civilian resistance that engages in open confrontation with the regime at great cost, but lacks organization.
2. Dissident military groups that repeatedly attempt covert coups, but fail and get executed.
3. An "external opposition," which is outside the regime's control in Kurdistan or in a foreign country, that has had an uneven progress but represents a wide cross-section of Iraqi society and has organizational potential.

At present these elements are not integrated, and yet they are interdependent and complementary, and their integration is essential to a successful effort against Saddam's regime. We need to devise a strategy to knit these three strands together in a syncretic combination. A successful challenge to Saddam Hussein requires, first, an opposition movement with organizational capability and a unified strategy; second, inclusion of military and civilian forces inside Iraq as part of this strategy; third, an overt program that can capitalize on the regime's vulnerabilities and act as a magnet for Iraqis. Mounting such a challenge demands greater energy and boldness than an overnight military coup, but I believe it is the only viable strategy for effecting change in Iraq.

A unified Iraqi opposition that operates inside Iraq but outside Saddam's control is an indispensable component of an integrated strategic solution because it can serve as the political and organizational framework for confronting the regime of Saddam Hussein. To be effective, such an opposition needs a credible presence inside Iraq, whether in Iraqi Kurdistan or other region of the country. For example, between 1992 and 1995, the Iraqi National Congress, based in Iraqi Kurdistan, was able to establish contacts with dissidents in government controlled areas and had the potential to provide such a political framework for the forces confronting the regime. That experience, while imperfect and not fully developed, can serve as a useful model. Clearly, the closer the organizational base is to the forces on the ground, the more effective it will be.

The ingredients for change are gathered in Iraq but they need to be assembled. It is in the interest of the United States to help in that process by strengthening and supporting the Iraqi opposition inside and outside Iraq. The Iraqi situation was essentially frozen from 1996 to 1998, but there have been several welcome advances in the past twelve months.

The Iraq Liberation Act has had a strong impact on the Iraqi situation, signaling to Iraqis an explicit American backing for an end to Saddam's dictatorship and open support for the Iraqi democracy movement. The Iraqi opposition, stagnant since Saddam's invasion of Iraqi Kurdistan in August 1996, has revived and is beginning to coalesce for future action. There is still some way to go in re-structuring and expanding the opposition umbrella, but I believe this process can be successful. Finally, the Kurdish parties are being encouraged by the U.S. Administration to restore normal relations and conditions to the northern region under their control and participate as full-fledged partners in the Iraqi opposition.

But the momentum established by these steps has to be maintained and developed with more political, diplomatic and logistical support from the U.S. If the momentum slackens, there will be renewed disappointment and a return to stagnation, precisely at a time when the internal situation in Iraq is critical and requires resolute movement.

Moreover, these steps have only targeted the "external opposition." Support is also needed by those daily fighting the regime inside Iraq, and some linkage has to be

established between work outside and work within Iraq. Judging from the evidence, the United States has so far neglected the forces inside Iraqi territory. I recognize that supporting the resistance within Iraq is more complicated and entails more risks than supporting the external opposition, but ultimately it is this domestic resistance, both civilian and military, which carries the responsibility for confronting the regime and also bears the consequences its repression and terror.

Iraqis involved with the resistance often ask these questions:

—Will the United States support the resistance groups inside Iraq?

—Will the U.S. protect territory liberated from Saddam's control in the south and center of the country?

—Why is the United States silent on providing protection for Iraqis in the south and the center, who are being killed by the regime's paramilitary troops and executed in its jails?

These questions are germane to the issue of how we want to confront Saddam Hussein. I believe the United States should address these questions squarely because the answers will be inseparable from the way we envisage the process of change in Iraq.

Finally, I would like to stress that for thirty years the Iraqi people have suffered under Saddam's brutality, compounded for the past nine years by the deprivations of stringent international sanctions. They feel that their dual suffering has received only lip-service from the world, which has abandoned them and let them down. Helping Iraqis is not only in the geo-political interest of the United States, but also a moral imperative.

Senator BROWNBACK. Thank you very much, Ms. Francke. That is a very thoughtful analysis of key questions.

What, Ms. Francke, do you think would be the most important thing that the U.S. Government could do near term, now to support the opposition and that would help to galvanize these three parts that you were saying that are apart? What are the things that we need to do right now?

Ms. FRANCKE. Mr. Chairman, I think a very important step is for the opposition to create a unified and broad platform for itself and articulate its message clearly.

But as far as the United States is concerned, apart from encouraging such unity, I think the most important step is to find a way by which the Iraqi opposition, the INC or anything that emerges from it, can have a base of operations in Iraq. I think this is crucial. I personally saw what the INC could do from Iraqi Kurdistan. It was impressive. It was not perfect but it was very impressive. And I think this is an essential way forward.

Senator BROWNBACK. So, the first thing that we need to do is to help establish a beachhead for the INC or whatever comes out of the July meeting to operate inside Iraq.

Ms. FRANCKE. Indeed, sir. I think so, yes.

Senator BROWNBACK. And then have that link the three parts together that you identified of the internal opposition, the military coups that have been attempted, having them operate internally.

Ms. FRANCKE. I believe that if the opposition has a beachhead inside Iraq, it can provide the organizational and political framework. The political framework is to provide a concept of what the political vision is for Iraq. How are we going to operate politically? Organizationally the problem in Iraq is that you have groups that are operating independently, and there has to be some kind of unified command. I do not think that can be done from outside the country. The unified command has to be from within.

Senator BROWNBACK. Is it more important that the INC, or whatever comes out of the July meeting, operate inside of Iraq? Is that

more important than their meeting inside northern Iraq in July, or would you put those as steps along the same progression?

Ms. FRANCKE. I would put those as steps along the same progression. I think a meeting inside Iraq in July is very desirable. However, it does not only depend on the Iraqi opposition. It rather depends also on the U.S. administration. So, there are two parties that have to agree to the prerequisites for a meeting inside Iraq. I think it would be a very good idea if it can be done, yes, sir.

Senator BROWNBACK. And it strikes me that it would be as well, that this is a very bold statement and it is a statement of clear support. It is not a vague, private statement. It is a bold statement of United States support. It is a bold statement on the part of the INC, Mr. Chalabi. A meeting and an organizational set within Iraq strikes me as some very important things to do.

Mr. Chalabi, how do you react to the analysis of Ms. Francke, what she puts forward of the steps that need to take place? You articulated a number of things that you would suggest for U.S. policy, many of which I took mental note that I think sound very good. How do you react to her analysis?

Mr. CHALABI. I agree with her analysis of the opposition in Iraq altogether, and I agree that these groups, these three strands that she talked about, ought to be brought into focus and work under a common leadership.

She referred to the experience that we were working with in Iraq in the period she mentioned for about 4 years. That is in fact what we were doing. We were integrating all the opposition that existed in Iraq and linking it to the opposition that was outside and enhancing communication between the two sides. We were reporting in almost real time on the events that were going on in Iraq, bringing the message of the Iraqi people to the outside world and bringing the message of the outside world to the Iraqi people. And we extended all this and we had significant contacts with all the groups, military groups, tribal groups opposing Saddam and we were working to get everything into focus to move finally against Saddam.

That is what we need to do now. Let us not go back why this did not work earlier, but that is in fact the consensus of almost everybody on how to move forward. We need to move forward and we have a vehicle for United States support and that is the Iraq Liberation Act. It is now very important for us to bring into focus all these groups and make use of the Iraq Liberation Act.

Senator BROWNBACK. Anybody on the panel. If the United States took an aggressive position at this point and said we are going to support a no-drive zone in southern, central, we are going to protect from military movement opposition groups that develop in those regions, we want to see the INC establish itself within Iraq on Iraqi territory, is the fall of Saddam imminent then with what you see? I realize that is a tough question to predict, but several of you, a number of people, have noted key factors that appear to indicate a weakness that has not been there previously.

Dr. CLAWSON. Sir, if I may, there is the risk that we would make this announcement and then Saddam would hit back to test us as to how sincere we were and how committed we were. But frankly, I think that risk is one that we should run because we have put

our prestige on the line to get rid of Saddam and because, as the other speakers have noted, there is a lot of evidence that Saddam is at the weakest state that he has been at since 1991. The very fact that Saddam did not take advantage of the war in Kosovo to try and strike back at us was really rather surprising. That is really his wont. The fact that the United States has hit Iraq more than 80 times during the course of this year without Saddam provoking some international crisis is something that is really quite unprecedented. He likes to be on the front pages of the news and to strike back, and he has been very quiet recently. It seems that he is quite weak.

If the United States were to make the kind of statements that you spoke about, take the kind of actions you spoke about, that would have a catalytic effect throughout the region and many governments in the region would decide that the United States is pretty serious about this and they might well do things which are now rather unthinkable to help provide that beachhead inside the country that Ms. Francke was speaking about.

And there are many Iraqis who might take many more risks if they felt that there was a powerful friend ready to help them. So, I think the catalytic effect of the kinds of statements that you are taking would suggest that we might well achieve success, and the risk is with taking.

Ms. FRANCKE. Mr. Chairman, I believe very strongly that Saddam has remained in power not because of his strength, but because of weaknesses in the opposition that confronts him, not weaknesses in their will to confront him, but in their resources and in their ability to get together and move against him. The focus has been missing. He is not strong. He is very weak. But there has not been anybody there to give a firm kick to his rotting seat. I think that the process of change will actually be rather rapid if all the resources are marshalled including substantial and overt U.S. support.

Mr. CHALABI. Mr. Chairman, I would say to you clearly, without equivocation, that if the United States announces no-drive zones in the south, in the north, and west of the country, in very short order Saddam would lose control over those areas. We are in a situation which is very different from Kosovo in one sense. The Iraqi military, unlike the Serb military, do not support Saddam. We have been in touch with, continue to be in touch with military commanders. They fear a reprisal from Saddam, but if the United States announces a no-drive zone in the south and in the north and in the west, the situation will be very different. Saddam already has lost control in the north, and this will embolden the Kurdish leaders to take further overt steps to confront Saddam. And in the south, I believe he would lose control very rapidly, and that is very important because he would lose most of Iraq's oil and Iraq's only access to the sea. With that, he cannot stay in power.

Senator BROWNBACK. Well, thank you all very much. It has been an excellent panel, very thoughtful, very specific on its suggestions, and good at articulating.

This is a very important issue for the United States and it is very important issue for the world, and it is obviously a very important issue for the Iraqi people and for their freedom. Our objec-

tive is to support the people of Iraq so that they can join that league of nations and so that they can have the same vital human rights that everybody else around the world enjoys. And I look forward to that day when that occurs, and I hope it occurs sooner—much sooner—rather than later.

Thank you for joining us, for attending the hearing.

The hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:50 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

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