

**Statement of the Honorable Walter B. Slocombe
Under Secretary of Defense for Policy
To the Senate Armed Services Committee
19 September 2000**

**DEFENSE ASPECTS OF UNITED STATES POLICY TOWARD
IRAQ**

Mr. Chairman, Senator Levin, and other members of the Committee, it is an honor to return here again on behalf of the Department of Defense to discuss DOD's role in implementing our Iraq policy.

Nearly ten years after the defeat of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, Saddam Hussein remains a threat to the region and to our interests. Iraq's recent statements against both Kuwait and Saudi Arabia remind us (and them) of the continuing threat Saddam Hussein poses to his neighbors. Similarly, his pre-emptive refusal to cooperate with the new UN inspection regime or to permit independent UN-sponsored assessment of humanitarian needs re-confirms his complete unwillingness to comply with the requirements imposed by the UN. His efforts to provoke a military confrontation on his terms demonstrate his continuing recklessness and aggressive potential. His efforts to maintain a capability to develop and produce long-range missiles and terror weapons for them to carry make clear that he is a danger to the whole region and indeed the world, not just the immediate neighbors. And, of course, his continued tyranny over the people of Iraq and his exploitation of their needs for propaganda advantage show on a continuing basis, his unfitness to govern.

As a result, the US has, since 1991, joined with our friends and allies to pursue a policy, fully consistent with the relevant UN resolutions, that has as its objective to contain Iraq and prevent renewed aggression, pending the time when a different regime in Iraq is prepared to take the actions necessary for Iraq no longer to be a threat its

neighbors and international security generally. This is a policy that is not without risks and it certainly carries substantial costs; but compared with ignoring the problem and seeking simplistic quick fixes it is both cheap and safe.

The key elements of our efforts to this end are familiar -- and they call on the full range of instruments of international policy, political, economic, diplomatic, intelligence, "informational," and military. They include:

- maintenance of the system of UN-imposed sanctions,**
- our forward military presence in the region,**
- our capacity to reinforce that presence rapidly if need be,**
- the no-fly zone (NFZ) enforcement operations,**
- monitoring Iraq's actions to detect preparations for renewed aggression and reconstitution of Saddam's programs to acquire weapons of mass destruction (WMD),**
- diplomatic efforts and close consultations with friends in the region, other coalition members, and at the UN,**
- efforts to counter smuggling in violation of the sanctions regime,**
- information efforts, through the full range of available channels, to tell the truth about Saddam and his actions,**
- support for meeting the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people,**

-- support for resuming effective UN inspections of potential WMD programs and other steps to bring Iraq into compliance with UN resolutions, and

-- steps to advance the day when Iraq will have a government consistent with stability in the region and justice for its people.

Managing the Iraq problem is not a short-term effort. It requires patience, vigilance, perseverance -- and a sensitivity to the realities in Iraq, in the region, and at the UN. In particular, it requires work with other nations, who, with very few exceptions, share our basic reasons for resisting Saddam's ambitions, but have their own perspectives, interests, and approaches.

So far as our fundamental military policy, we have been clear:

-If Iraq reconstitutes its weapons of mass destruction program,

-threatens its neighbors or US forces,

-or moves against the Kurds,

we maintain a credible force in the region and are prepared to act in an appropriate time and place of our choosing. This warning, the so called "red-lines", serves as a clear signal of our resolve that aggression will not be tolerated. At the same time, we need to recognize that there are no military solutions to many of the problems in dealing with Iraq and that military over-reaction would disserve our interests and needlessly endanger our personnel.

The statements of General Franks and of Ambassador Walker provide an excellent overview of our military posture and operations and our diplomatic/political efforts, respectively. Rather than repeat what they say, let me focus on the Defense Department's role in a few of the key areas of the American policy toward Iraq.

IRAQ'S UNITED NATIONS OBLIGATIONS

Over the course of almost ten years the United Nations has set a clear and unambiguous set of conditions that would allow Iraq to rejoin the world community of nations in good standing. Instead, Saddam has chosen to ignore and defy these multilateral conditions. UNSCR 678, passed in November 1990, was the basis for the use of military force to free Kuwait. In April 1991, UNSCR 687, the cease fire resolution, clearly defined Iraq's post-conflict obligations, especially as they apply to the elimination of WMD programs and continuation of sanctions until compliance is achieved. UNSCR 688, passed two days later, insisted Iraq end its repression of its own citizens and allow humanitarian access to all parts of the country. This resolution, with others, serves as the basis for the no-fly zones and their enforcement. UNSCR 949, passed in 1994, condemned Iraq's military deployments to the south, demanded Iraq withdraw its forces, not threaten its neighbors, and ordered that Iraq take no action to enhance its military capability in the south. That resolution is buttressed by our declaration, supported by key coalition members, that we will take action to stop any such enhancement before it could represent a significant threat.

DETERRENCE

A key part of our military operations in the region is, of course, our maintenance of substantial forces in the region. These forces not only enable us to conduct on-going operations, notably the NFZs and oil embargo enforcement, but also to respond immediately to Iraqi provocations and aggression. Our presence and continuous interaction with the militaries in the region reinforce the coalition's unity of purpose and resolve, and the capacity of local forces to contribute to the defense of the region. The in-place forces are backed up by our capacity and that of our allies to reinforce rapidly as needed, a capacity that depends on preparations, such as pre-positioning of equipment and maintenance of facilities, and on the readiness of regional powers to accept both the in-place units and, as needed, additional forces.

Weapons of Mass Destruction

That Saddam Hussein should be prevented from having a WMD capability is not just a critical interest for the US and our friends in the region; it is a requirement unambiguously approved by the United Nations Security Council.

Today, Iraq refuses to comply with this requirement, and specifically, to abide by UNSCR 1284, adopted in December 1999 to lay out a road map for Iraq's cooperation in meeting its key UN obligations, particularly as regards WMD and for a phased easing of sanctions in parallel with that cooperation. As explained in greater detail in Ambassador Walker's statement, Resolution 1284 created a new disarmament commission (UNMOVIC) to resume inspections and set up a mechanism for Iraqi actions to comply with its WMD obligations.

The essential element in implementing 1284 is for UNMOVIC to be able to operate to verify that Iraq has divested itself of all weapons of mass destruction and that the appropriate monitoring systems for their continued compliance are established. It is critical, of course, that any international monitoring be meaningful. A sham monitoring regime would be a great deal worse than none at all, because it would give a false sense of security and provide a basis for calls to dismantle sanctions without meaningful compliance. UNSCR 1284 provides for a monitoring system that would fully meet the standard. We are pleased that Hans Blix has quickly assembled and trained a professional team for UNMOVIC to begin its task in Iraq and we expect the Iraqi regime to comply with UNSCR 1284. We stand ready to support UNMOVIC when (and if) it is able to carry out its functions, just as we supported its predecessor, UNSCOM.

To date, however, Iraq has rejected the resolution and refused to cooperate with UNMOVIC. So long as inspectors are excluded, we continue to pay special attention to Iraq's potential for rebuilding its WMD program. We are willing, and have demonstrated in the past our ability, to use military force in response to Iraq's failure to meet its obligations regarding the elimination of weapons of mass destruction.

No-Fly Zones

As a result of attacks by the Iraqi regime on its own citizens in defiance of UN Security Council resolutions, no-fly zones have been established by the coalition in the north and south of Iraq. The United States leads operations Northern and Southern Watch to ensure the no-fly zones are maintained.

Following Desert Fox in 1998, we have continued this effort, with more robust procedures. Operations Northern and Southern Watch have the authority to respond to violations of the NFZs and to threats to coalition aircraft.

General Franks' statement explains the important benefits, military and otherwise, that flow from enforcing the NFZs. In summary, the enforced zones prevent Saddam from using aircraft against Iraqi citizens in large segments of the country. The enforcement of the NFZs also reduces the capabilities of the Iraqi military and limits their ability to conduct training. It also provides significant information about Iraqi troop movements in the zones, particularly action to enhance military capability in the south, in violation of UNSCR 949.

Iraqi air defense forces continue to challenge coalition aircraft flying in both NFZs. As the Committee is aware, coalition forces respond to these challenges by strikes at Iraqi military targets, with broad flexibility for the commanders in the field to shape the response. General Frank's statement describes the policies and key facts regarding our NFZ enforcement efforts. Response strikes are directed at military targets, and, if Iraq wishes to stop response strikes, all it need do is stop violating the NFZs and threatening the coalition aircraft that enforce them.

ANTI-SMUGGLING OPERATIONS

In 1989, the last full year before the invasion of Kuwait, Iraq earned \$15 billion from oil exports, and spent \$13 billion on its military. This year, Iraq is projected to earn nearly \$20 billion from its oil exports authorized under the oil-for-food program. This income, however, must be devoted to purposes consistent with UN resolutions. As a result, Iraq cannot use these revenues for military purposes. To provide funds for the regime's priorities, Iraq seeks to circumvent the United Nations sanctions by smuggling.

The US leads a multinational Maritime Interception Force (MIF) in the Gulf to enforce the UN sanctions by intercepting smugglers carrying illicit oil, other illegal exports, and other contraband. These operations are conducted under UNSCR 665, which was passed in 1990 and authorizes the use of force to halt all maritime shipping in order to inspect cargo and destinations and ensure the strict implementation of sanctions. Some eighteen different nations have provided support to the MIF since its inception and today coalition partners Canada, the United Kingdom, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates are participating in MIF operations in the Persian Gulf. The patrols of the MIF are supplemented by extensive diplomatic efforts to disrupt complicity in Iraqi smuggling and secure cooperation with the sanctions and their enforcement.

While not a perfect system, the MIF and the associated diplomatic efforts have been highly successful in serving as a deterrent to large scale illegal export operations and thereby sharply limiting the ability of Iraq to gain hard currency for the regimes priorities, notably to rebuild its military. Iraq's illegal exports are only a tiny fraction of its total oil exports. Without the MIF, there would be little to prevent Saddam from vastly expanding the part of his oil revenues that are under his exclusive control.

HUMANITARIAN RELIEF

We are all sympathetic to the suffering that the Iraqi people have endured and we have supported an increasingly effective oil-for-food program to reduce that suffering. Our quarrel is with the Iraqi regime, not its people. Saddam Hussein is deliberately contributing to the hardship of the Iraqi people in a cynical attempt to manipulate international sympathy and deflect the blame for Iraq's internal problems.

The government of Iraq has no direct access to revenue generated by the UN-monitored oil sales under the oil-for-food program. Funds from these oil sales are deposited directly into a UN escrow account, and purchases are approved by the UN sanctions committee. The Department of Defense assists the State Department in screening contracts for possible dual-use and military applications.

The oil-for-food program allows Iraq to use the proceeds from its oil sales only on humanitarian and other approved items. To date, Iraq refuses to take full advantage of these humanitarian opportunities. Nonetheless, the oil-for-food program has improved the lives of the Iraqi people and will continue to do so. The increase in revenue under the program from \$4 billion the first year to a projected \$20 billion this year means a tremendous amount of money is available for humanitarian goods for the Iraqi people, even after part of the proceeds are set aside for the UN compensation commission to compensate victims of Iraq's aggression against Kuwait and for other UN-approved purposes.

The oil-for-food program has been a particular success in northern Iraq, where the UN implements the program and the overall health of the people, especially children, living there has improved. Even in southern and central Iraq, where the Iraqi government administers the program, there has been a substantial improvement in food supplies. To the degree child mortality and disease rates are higher in central and southern Iraq than in the north, it is due to corruption, smuggling, and the regime's apparent willingness to deliberately increase the suffering of the Iraqi people for propaganda purposes.

Critics of sanctions, who say that they are a hardship on the Iraqi people, should know it doesn't have to be that way. The UN Security Council resolutions have established Iraq's obligations, and it is clear what Iraq has to do to get sanctions suspended and then lifted. The UN Security Council resolutions also permit Iraq to use the assets sitting in its escrow account to provide nourishment and much needed medicine for its people.

COALITION SUPPORT

The key to our efforts in the region is the support of the coalition of nations who share our determination to contain Iraqi aggression, prevent acquisition of WMD capabilities, and to improve the lives of the Iraqi people – and ultimately see a different regime in Baghdad. From a military point of view, cooperation with regional friends is critical because we can conduct operations and remain forward deployed in the Gulf on the necessary scale only at the invitation of and with the willing support of, our coalition friends and partners. Equally, maintenance of sanctions and insistence on compliance with UN standards, notably those regarding WMD, depends on the political support of nations in the region and around the world.

We share with our friends in the Gulf and beyond a broad common interest. Our coalition partners know that Saddam Hussein is a threat to them and their nations and that he is responsible for the hardships and oppression of the Iraqi people. They know the effects of Saddam's aggression and they support both our continued military presence in the region and our overall strategy.

Maintaining the coalition requires constant effort and sensitivity. Without the dedicated work of our diplomats throughout the region and the recurring engagement of the thousands of men and women in uniform assigned to United States Central Command and European Command, we could not maintain the solidarity and support of our coalition partners. DoD plays a key role in sustaining the coalition by

enforcing the NFZs, operating the MIF, and maintaining significant forward deployed troops.

DOD personnel, both military and civilian, also play a key role in the consultation that is essential to sustain the coalition. Secretary Cohen will be visiting the region this fall -- his eighth trip in four years -- and his discussions will continue to reaffirm our strong security partnership with our allies. The regional CINC, General Franks and his predecessors, Generals Zinni, Peay, and Hoar, play, with the whole command, a crucial role in building these relationships. General Franks has just returned from a tour of the region and we have just completed our annual Joint Planning Committee meetings with our Saudi Arabian counterparts and we will do the same in Kuwait early next year. Additionally, our continuing series of exercises throughout the region, including Operation Desert Spring, provide us an excellent opportunity to remain engaged with the region's militaries. We have had open and honest discussions with our coalition partners and we understand the regional pressures they face on a daily basis.

Sustaining the coalition is a demanding job, and sometimes requires that we adjust our actions to take account of our partners' concerns, which we do not entirely share. Working with a coalition requires constant effort and painstaking efforts to do what is necessary to secure coalition support for our policies.

This process can be frustrating, both for those who work on the problem directly and those who watch the process, hoping for quicker results or action more in line with strict American ideas. However, the coalition -- and the compromises maintaining it requires -- is essential. It is hard to build an Iraq policy based on a coalition, but without a coalition it would be simply impossible to carry out any effective Iraq policy.

And we have, overall, been remarkably successful in sustaining the effort for a decade. Sanctions remain in place. Our friends in the region accept unprecedented levels of US military presence, and have been

willing to cooperate as needed to support US operations, both on-going and emergency. The UNSC continues to insist on effective implementation of resolutions as the price of sanctions relief.

REGIME CHANGE

The Department of Defense works closely with the State Department's Special Coordinator for Transition in Iraq with regard to regime change. The Department of Defense has a comprehensive program providing non-lethal aid, under the Iraq Liberation Act (ILA), aimed at improving the opposition's effectiveness as a political force. We are working with the Iraqi National Congress (INC), the main umbrella organization for the opposition, and have developed with the INC a comprehensive training plan based on its requirements. Training focuses across a wide spectrum of over 30 different courses of instruction, including public affairs, international law, health care skills, the management of humanitarian assistance, and the provision of basic services (power, water, etc.). To date, 31 students have received training and 13 are currently enrolled in courses. We have identified courses for the remaining candidates provided by the INC and training will continue through the end of 2001.

Of course, training the members of the INC will not alone bring about the regime change in Baghdad that we all desire. We will continue to work with people and groups both inside and outside Iraq that share our common interests -- a peaceful Iraq that does not threaten its neighbors, is free of weapons of mass destruction; an Iraq that supports the basic human rights of all its citizens, and an Iraq that is prepared to rejoin the community of nations. We stand ready to assist such a new government. At the same time, our efforts in supporting the opposition to the Iraqi regime must be based on a clear-headed assessment of the situation and the need to avoid needlessly putting at risk the lives of those who share our goals.

ENDING MILITARY OPERATIONS

The Committee has asked, in its invitation to this hearing, that I address the consequences of ending our military operations in the area.

Dealing with Saddam Hussein's Iraq is a long term problem. Saddam knows that the only way he can prevail and break out of the "box" in which he has put himself is by outlasting the US and undermining coalition and UN efforts. Our efforts are costly in dollars and in the burden it places on our personnel; the on-going military operations inevitably involve risks and the commitments we have made potentially involve very substantial ones. Nonetheless, if we let impatience or unwillingness to tolerate reasonable current costs and risks drive us to abandon our long term effort, Saddam will have won in the only way he can, and the costs to our interests would be immense.

Accordingly, our military contribution to the overall effort must continue on a long term basis. The operations are conducted as efficiently as we know how. We regularly review our operations and deployments to determine what is needed in the light of changing circumstances and adjust accordingly. We are careful not to be drawn into situations where military over-reaction exposes our personnel to unnecessary risks or compromises our broader strategic interests. But our operations and presence do involve real costs -- in money, in burdens on personnel and equipment, in impact on competing priorities, and in risk of casualties.

However, the consequences of ending our military operations would be severe not only for the people of Iraq and for the region, but for critical US interests. If we reduced our military presence in the region below the levels assessed as needed in prevailing conditions, we would simultaneously encourage Iraqi aggression and cripple our ability to meet it. We would compromise our ability to respond rapidly to aggression or preparations for it. We would be less capable of responding to other violations of our redlines. We would also severely undermine regional confidence in our commitments, with accompanying loss of support, not only for our diplomatic efforts, but also for our arrangements to respond and to reinforce in times of crisis.

This general observation about the effect of withdrawing militarily would also apply were we to cease our NFZ and MIF operations. If we stopped our active enforcement of the NFZs, Saddam would quickly take advantage to augment his forces in the zones, and would be able to use air power effectively in his internal suppression efforts. Ending NFZ operations would also cost us important intelligence, particularly about possible Iraqi preparations for aggression.

Without the MIF operations, Saddam would be free to shift increasing shares of his oil exports from UN-controlled oil-for-food channels into smuggling routes through the Persian Gulf, where he controls the proceeds. His ability to import contraband would be increased drastically. That would increase his resources to rebuild his military, develop WMD, and serve his other priorities.

Moreover, ending or sharply curtailing our deterrent presence, our NFZ enforcement, or our MIF operations would hand Saddam a huge political and strategic victory. That action would say to the regime and to the world that Saddam had been able to outlast the US and break out of key elements of the restraints under which he has been placed. Maintaining our non-military efforts -- notably in the region and through the UN -- would be vastly more difficult. Those who seek to replace Saddam's regime would be discouraged, and his ability to block their actions increased.

CONCLUSION

Our overall policy toward Iraq has been successful in containing Iraqi aggression. It is a policy that the Department of Defense, in cooperation with the State Department and other agencies of government, executes on a daily basis. It is a policy that has required and will continue to require patience, tact, and perseverance. We have developed and are implementing this policy because if left to pursue its objectives unhindered by international sanctions and coalition forces, Iraq would pose an unacceptable threat to our national interests and the

interests of our allies and friends in both the Middle East and around the world.