

**CREATING A
POST-SADDAM
IRAQ**

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JINSA SPRING BOARD MEETING
WASHINGTON, D.C.

JUNE 2, 1997

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen of JINSA, I am pleased to be here.

The title of my talk today - *Creating a Post Saddam Iraq* - was suggested to me by your executive director, Tom Neumann. I have spent my life fighting Saddam and I am most grateful to him for the optimism and eventual success implied by the choice. Tom, the JINSA Board, and JINSA generally have been strong supporters of our struggle. As a representative of the oppressed Iraqi people, I offer my heartfelt thanks.

Iraq, despite the efforts of some to ignore its current realities, is a country of enormous strategic importance. Iraq is blessed with a talented and industrious population. She borders on six countries and the Gulf and may fairly be described as the western world's gateway to the non-Arab Muslim East. More importantly, Iraq is the only Middle Eastern country with both water and oil - a lot of oil - in fact, the world's largest oil reserves. As Bruce Riedel, Special Assistant to President Clinton, said last week, "the last barrel of oil produced in the world will almost certainly come from Iraq."

I can only hope that there is an Iraq, a Middle East, and a world so far in the future; certainly this outcome is in doubt as long as Saddam remains in power. For as long as Saddam remains in power, Iraq remains a threat to regional and world security. In 1990, the late, distinguished Professor Albert Wohlstetter strongly advised that the U.S. could not eliminate Iraq's weapons of mass destruction without eliminating Saddam himself. Wohlstetter has been more than vindicated. Saddam Hussein retain significant and dangerous unconventional weapons capabilities - chemical, biological, and, even in the extreme, possibly nuclear. As Ambassador Ekeus, in charge of the UN Commission to disarm Saddam has reported, Saddam has tons of stable nerve gas and an operational missile force with a range easily able to target Jeddah or Tel Aviv. Iraq in the wrong hands is a worldwide threat; a fact well known to the 750,000 U.S. service men and women who fought in the Gulf just over six years ago.

It can be different. The Iraqi National Congress' vision of a future Iraqi government is that of a parliamentary democracy which renounces both external aggression and internal repression and is at peace with its neighbors and with its people. We envision an Iraq free of weapons of mass destruction and with a purely defensive military. We see an Iraq

of free markets and free trade proudly resuming her role as a vital economic power.

Unfortunately, the brutal power struggles within Iraq and in the region over the last half century have greatly complicated this hoped for transition of Iraq into a politically modern and internationally legitimate state. After the Second World War, both Iraq and the region were left in a precarious position. Nationalist ideologies and a social structure slow to adapt to the rising expectations of an educated middle class combined in a politically explosive mixture. Inept military rule led to perpetual internal upheaval culminating in the rise to power of the most brutal and extreme factions.

Of these, the Iraqi Ba'ath party was the most cruel and, through their cruelty, they eventually gained control of the country in 1968. While most of the world was preoccupied, the Ba'ath launched their rule with an orgy of killing and repression.

Not coincidentally, the Ba'ath's first target was the Iraqi Jewish community. Prominent Jews were arrested, tortured and publicly executed in a calculated message to the rest of the Iraqi population. If these prominent Jews, ostensibly protected by a recently victorious Israel, were so easily destroyed

at no cost to the Ba'ath, clearly any other Iraqi could suffer the same fate. And hundreds of thousands did.

The Ba'ath systematically destroyed Iraqi society; eliminating or suborning all independent social structures: schools, unions, mosques, churches, synagogues newspapers, publishers, artists - everything which offered an independent outlet for Iraqi civil society.

Saddam took control of this apparatus of destruction in 1979 and immediately expanded upon it with a bloody purge of the Ba'ath Party itself - arresting, torturing and executing thousands of his former colleagues and allies.

But not content with the slaughter of even more Iraqis, Saddam looked beyond Iraq's borders for victims. Without provocation, Saddam attacked Iran - a nation five times the size and with three times the population of Iraq.

In this homicidal folly, Saddam was aided by the west and the Soviets alike. The cold war powers competed to provide Saddam with conventional weapons and to transfer to him the technologies and means to produce deliverable weapons of mass destruction.

And deliver them he did. Throughout the eight-year war, which left at least a million dead, Saddam indiscriminately slaughtered both the Iranians and his internal opposition with the chemical weapons thus acquired.

Since Saddam assumed absolute power in Iraq there has been no period without internal or external conflict. The eight year carnage against Iran, the war against Kuwait, the suppression of the post-war popular uprising and the ongoing slaughter of the Shi'ite and Kurdish populations are Saddam's continuous legacy of death and destruction.

And those in the wider world have not been immune to this destruction. Since 1979, Saddam has conducted terrorist activities against or within Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the UAE, Bahrain, Iran, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Turkey, Britain, France, Germany, Austria, Pakistan, the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the U.S. to offer just a partial list. Even while specifically prohibited from terrorist activities under UNSC resolution 687 - the Gulf War cease-fire resolution - Saddam has attempted to murder the former President of the United States and may well be behind the bombings of Dhahran and the World Trade Center.

And yet, despite this horrific litany of death and destruction, the Iraqi people have fought against Saddam and the Ba'ath from the first days until today. The Kurdish north revolted in 1968, coups were attempted in 1970 and 1973, the north rebelled again in 1974, and coups failed in 1979. In 1980 Mohammed Baqr Sader was executed for his role in internal dissent. In 1990, the Jibouri coup was suppressed. In 1991, 70% of the population rose in open rebellion. There have been five coup attempts in the last five years. And this fall, Saddam invaded the north to suppress the democratic opposition.

For twenty years, the Iraqi people have resisted Saddam in the only way available to them - through conspiratorial violence. And there can be no doubt that they will continue to do so.

However, in the aftermath of the Gulf War, there arose in the Iraqi body politic a new consensus, a new conviction, that in order to defeat Saddam a more comprehensive political platform was needed. Coups, conspiracies and regional rebellions cannot succeed against Saddam's pitiless and limitless terror. All opposition parties came to see that only a broad-based popular movement committed to representative government and to the protection of the human rights of all Iraqis offers the moral and practical power necessary for Saddam's defeat.

The Iraqi National Congress is the practical expression of this historic consensus.

The Iraqi National Congress unites all elements of the democratic opposition to Saddam in a political platform dedicated to his overthrow and to the replacement of the Ba'ath dictatorship by a democratic parliamentary system which constitutionally guarantees individual human rights. Despite the ethnic and religious complexity of Iraqi society, parties representing all facets are united in this democratic goal.

Now is the time to make it happen.

The steps required are simple. First, we must consider the realities of Saddam's dictatorship. On the most basic level it is important to realize that Saddam enjoys almost no popular support within Iraq. The evidence is overwhelming. In 1991, when then President Bush called upon the Iraqi people to rise up against Saddam, over 70% of them did. 14 out of Iraq's 18 governorates were in open rebellion. The United States government's refusal to support this rebellion - in fact, its complicity in the suppression of this popular movement - is a sad chapter in your nation's moral history. However, despite this

disaster in which hundreds of thousands of Iraqis were slaughtered by Saddam's henchmen within sight of the coalition forces, opposition to Saddam has increased in the past six years. The army will not fight for him and the people remain desperate for an alternative.

For example, in March of 1995, I led an attack on Saddam's forces in northern Iraq. In less than a month, suffering almost no casualties, INC forces were able to defeat two Iraqi divisions and recruit over 1000 Iraqi officers and soldiers to the cause of freedom. Only a lack of funds and the last-minute withdrawal of U.S. political support prevented our capture of several key Iraqi cities.

Even Saddam's invasion of the north this fall with a death-force of 400 tanks and 40,000 soldiers has been unable to suppress our popular support. We are rebuilding our bases, facilities and forces with the strong support of the Iraqi people. Last week, we held a political rally in Suleymania, in northeast Iraq, and attracted over 10,000 Iraqis eager to confront the regime.

Second, it is important to note the physical weakness of the regime. In order to invade the north, Saddam had to cannibalize almost his entire

effective armored force and its supporting infantry. Of those, almost none could be expected to remain loyal in the face of a properly armed resistance. But because the population and democratic opposition based in the north had relied on the United States' categorical assurances - from the highest level, to use the Washington phrase - that the U.S. would protect the north from armored incursion, this resistance was not available. This time, we plan to organize ourselves differently.

The INC plan for Saddam's overthrow is simple. From our base in the north, we intend to confront and attract Saddam's army on several fronts. Our experience has shown that the principal difficulty we will face is the care and feeding of the deserting Iraqi Army. In this effort we will require support from the U.S. but only political and logistical support. Secretary Albright's strong speech in March is a good first step towards the type of political support we need. Her flat refusal to negotiate with Saddam, her embrace of the opposition and her willingness to outline concrete steps which could be taken to rehabilitate a post-Saddam Iraq offer us a strong foundation on which to build.

The next step is an open U.S. commitment to Saddam's overthrow and its practical expression in

serious support of the democratic opposition. We need U.S. support to consolidate and expand our base in the north after last fall's setback. This support must include the maintenance of the no-fly zones, a position already taken by the U.S. and the means to feed, house and otherwise provide for the Iraqi Army as it abandons Saddam. Intelligence, training and limited support equipment such as communication and transport would also be useful.

What we don't need are U.S. troops or high technology weapons. We are prepared to fight for our country and are convinced that only an Iraqi Army can remove Saddam. The weaponry needed is minimal and widely available in the region if U.S. political support for Saddam's overthrow is given. The recent weakening of support for the Gulf War coalition, which has been noted by many commentators, is a consequence of the U.S.'s perceived lack of resolve against Saddam. If this perception is reversed, and Secretary Albright's speech was a good first step in this reversal, the Iraqi opposition can expect and, in fact, has been promised strong regional assistance. With U.S. political backing and regional support for a process of gradual encirclement, Saddam can be driven into hiding in Takrit and eventually removed.

Of course, much of the U.S. concern about this plan in the past has centered on the successor regime. It is difficult to imagine a situation in Iraq less suitable to U.S. interests than a resurgent Saddam but we recognize that there is at least some comfort in confronting the devil you know. For this reason, the INC has been at great pains to develop a program for the transition to a democratic, stable and peaceful government. Key elements of this transition would include a general amnesty to all but the most culpable of Ba'ath officials, a governing transitional council of all religious, political, and ethnic leadership and an explicit commitment to Iraq's unity and territorial integrity.

I am here today to ask for your help. For those interested in more military details, I would be glad to provide them. For those who are interested in other areas, such as our relationship with neighboring countries or our internal Iraqi media campaign, I will describe them to you. We want to fight Saddam. We want to fight Saddam openly with U.S. and international political support. Help us defeat Saddam. A democratic and peaceful Iraq is in the interest of the U.S., the region and the world. Thank you.