

Ambassador Lawrence E. Butler
Institute for Democracy, Solidarity and Civil Society
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5:00 p.m. – Holiday Inn
“Iraq’s Failure To Disarm”

Dr. Ivanov, distinguished colleagues. Thank you very much for the invitation to address the members of the Institute for Democracy, Solidarity and Civil Society and their guests. I applaud Dr. Ivanov’s leadership of the Institute, and for arranging today’s event. The Institute’s analysis of pressing issues of the day through discourse and debate - and through the exchange of ideas and opinions - makes a significant contribution to strengthening Macedonia’s civil society, which is essential for a strong, vibrant democratic Macedonia.

Democracies are not characterized by unitary opinions, but by offering the opportunity for opinions to be heard, challenged and defended. Today’s topic is appropriate, for there is no greater, more critical issue facing each of us than that of Iraq.

We are all up-to-date on the latest developments. President Bush addressed the American people last night, informing them that American and coalition forces started military operations to disarm Iraq, to free its people from Saddam Hussein, and to defend the world from grave danger.

We are only at the beginning of a broad and concerted campaign. Intelligence gathered by the United States and other governments leaves no doubt that the Iraqi regime continues to possess and conceal some of the most lethal weapons ever devised. As the President recently stated, “The danger is clear: using chemical, biological or, one day, nuclear weapons, obtained with the help of Iraq, terrorists could fulfill their stated ambitions and kill thousands or hundreds of thousands of innocent people in our country, or any other.”

The United States and others worked assiduously and earnestly for a peaceful disarmament. Saddam chose to reject a peaceful solution.

Today, we will take a deeper look at Saddam’s failure to disarm and to demonstrate how a brutal tyrant with weapons of mass destruction has the potential to wreak catastrophic havoc in the world. I am going to show you pictures that you are not going to like.

Iraq arms itself with weapons of mass destruction. No one disputes this. These are not weapons of deterrence, as were the nuclear arsenals of the Cold War, but instruments to sustain dictatorship over the Iraqi people and to threaten the peace of the region and the entire world.

Since 1991, by international law, there was no other option for him except disarmament – he rejected a peaceful disarmament and he is now being disarmed through force. Saddam used diplomacy as a ploy to gain time and advantage. He was given a decade of opportunities to submit a full accounting of his weapons and to comply with a host of UN resolutions. He failed, and instead chose a path of lies, manipulation and deception.

Let's begin in April 1991 – almost 12 years ago – when UN Security Council Resolution 687 – which is still in effect - gave Iraq 90 days to disarm. What did Saddam do? He ignored the deadline, and the deadlines of the 16 subsequent UN Security Council resolutions that followed, as well as the best efforts of hundreds of UN inspectors. **4,300 days later**, Saddam still possesses weapons of mass destruction; if he had destroyed them, as required by international law, he certainly would have taken credit for it.

Last September, President Bush addressed the United Nations Security Council on the need to end the danger posed by Iraq. In November, in a unanimous vote, the Council passed Resolution 1441, Saddam's final chance to disarm **"immediately, unconditionally and actively."** Seventeen UN resolutions over 12 years; Saddam brazenly ignored each and every one of them. Drawing on all the practice of the previous decade, he flouted international law, using 1441 as an opportunity to continue his deception by moving weapons and information around the country in order to avoid detection, like some cheap con artist.

His feeble attempt to sacrifice a few illegal weapons to save many other illegal weapons failed to persuade the world. Saddam's game was to comply on small technical issues, but cheat on a larger scale in order to buy time, ease the pressure on his regime, and attempt to split the international community.

The United Nations was founded to confront aggressive dictators. Remember Korea, 53 years ago? UN actions prevented North Korea from conquering the democratic south. My father, a 23-year old lieutenant fresh from the academy, fought in South Korea's defense, and was badly wounded in December 1950. UN troops, largely American, have kept the armistice since then, allowing South Korea to become a modern, prosperous democracy.

The UN action of 1950 was not taken lightly. The world remembered and recoiled from the prospect of more blood being spilled only five years after the end of WWII. But it understood the price of inaction. That's why it acted in 1991. Today, we confront a new kind of challenge, one never even conceived of in 1950, and not fully understood in 1991. Are we capable of responding?

Many governments share our assessment of the danger of Saddam, and over 35 nations – including Macedonia -- have stepped forward to join a coalition to eliminate this world threat to peace. Macedonia is counted among them. And at least a dozen more are cooperating with us. Some have committed military combat and support forces to the coalition, others are providing access, basing and overflight rights. Still others have committed to post-conflict peacekeeping and reconstruction efforts. All are equal and necessary in this common response.

The United States and our allies - through UN Security Council resolutions - are authorized to use force in ridding Iraq of weapons of mass destruction. That was the prime condition of the 1991 ceasefire. Nothing has changed since then. This is not a question of authority; it is a question of will. Last week, we paid tribute to the 7,200 Macedonian Jews who perished in the Holocaust. They paid the price of collective inaction by those intimidated into appeasing fascism. We understand the fear of military force, the repulsion at the sacrifice of our young soldiers, the risk of civilian casualties. While the United Nations Security Council has not lived up to its responsibilities to address the clear and present danger of Iraq, the United States and dozens of other countries have vowed to rise to ours.

The price of liberty is eternal vigilance, not eternal inspections. We are not intimidated, as are others, by the prospect of confronting Saddam Hussein's regime, though we also know the dangers. The costs of appeasement are higher today than they were 65 years ago. Every person in this room knows this to be true.

There have been those who have advocated giving Saddam more time. They say more time was needed for the inspections to continue. But they never quite say how much time or for how long. Does more time mean months, and how many months, and for what purpose, with what additional inspectors? For 4,300 days, American and British airmen and soldiers served as guards along Iraq's borders. How much longer do our young men and women have to patrol the skies and hunker down in the deserts because others are unwilling to face down the Saddam regime, while the Iraqi population suffers?

The UN has sent hundreds of weapons inspectors to oversee the disarmament of Iraq. As Secretary Powell said: "Can anyone commit and guarantee the international community that we will achieve disarmament just with more inspections, without a fundamental change on the part of Iraq?" More time presents an advantage to Saddam. More time to take pressure off his regime. Saddam has been given over a decade to disarm, and the clock ran out. The time for diplomacy ended.

Let me sum up precisely where we are today: Saddam Hussein's Iraq is a threat to peace and security because it is the crossroads of where weapons of mass

destruction, state support for terrorism, international aggression and a sustained assault on human rights converge in a single place, under a single tyrant. Iraq is a rogue state that has egregiously flaunted the will of the international community, and suppressed the will of its own people, for over a decade.

We all know that Al-Qaeda is actively seeking weapons of mass destruction. We know that Iraq has been involved with terrorist groups. We know that Saddam is very capable – and very willing – to provide weapons to terrorists or to help terrorists develop their own weapons.

We also know that on September 11, 2001, the American people – and the world – saw what terrorists could do by turning four airplanes into weapons. It would take just one canister of nerve gas, one vial of anthrax, one crate containing a nuclear weapon to create a horror like none of us has ever known before. The United States will not wait to see what terrorists or terrorist states do with chemical, biological or nuclear weapons.

The price of inaction is too much to contemplate. We have set a course of safety to avoid further tragedy.

Let's look at Iraq's stockpile. Let's review what Iraq has *not* accounted for:

- 26,000 liters of anthrax
- 38,000 liters of botulinum toxin
- 5500 liters of aflatoxin (af-la-tox-in), which attacks vital organs
- 1.5 tons of VX, a powerful nerve agent
- Nearly 30,000 empty munitions that could be loaded with chemical agents
- 550 artillery shells filled with mustard gas.

And Saddam has been absolutely devoted to trying to acquire nuclear weapons.

Saddam Hussein is the first world leader in modern times to have brutally used chemical weapons against his own people. Fifteen years ago he used chemical and biological weapons on the Kurds. Imagine how much progress and how many more weapons he might have accumulated in the past 15 years. Saddam launched chemical attacks against 40 Kurdish villages and thousands of innocent civilians in 1987-1988, using them as testing grounds.

The worst of these attacks devastated the city of Halabja on March 16, 1988. His goals were to systematically terrorize and exterminate the Kurdish population in northern Iraq, to silence his critics and an ethnic minority he didn't like, and to test the effectiveness of his chemical and biological weapons. Here's the devastation of that attack:

- 5,000 civilians, many of them women and children and the elderly, died within hours after the attack.
- 10,000 more were blinded, maimed, disfigured, or otherwise severely and irreversibly debilitated.

- Thousands died of horrific complications, debilitating diseases, and of birth defects in the years after.

Saddam's regime purposefully mixed mustard gas and nerve agents to magnify their initial and long-term effects. I've seen photographs of how Saddam's mustard gas, - a blistering agent that affects the nose, throat and lungs - and his nerve agents - sarin and VX, which attack the eyes and respiratory tracts - created horrible, excruciating deaths. I have yet to forget the vivid horror of those pictures. That's why I am sharing some with you now.

Halabja was a testing ground for Saddam in 1988. Iraq soldiers in their protective gear returned to Halabja to study the effectiveness of their weapons and attacks. They divided the city into sections, determined the number and location of the dead and extent of injury. The attack on Halabja was used by Saddam to gauge the ability of his chemical agents to kill, maim, and terrorize population centers. Why do you think he conducted this analysis, if there was not the intent to use such weapons again?

This is how Saddam Hussein addresses those who belong to a different, minority, ethnic group, and who have a view different than his. Like many of you in this room I have been focused on Iraq for many months now. It's a known fact that since Saddam came to power in 1979 he has attacked his neighbors and ruthlessly oppressed ethnic and minority groups in Iraq – over one million people have died in internal conflicts and wars. Over one million people. Four million Iraqis have chosen exile and two hundred thousand have disappeared from his jails never to be seen again. I was particularly chilled by the following stories in the international and American press, and I would like to share some of these reports with you. Reports that still haunt me.

Recently in the Canadian press there was a comment by a 19-year old Iraqi expatriate, and I quote: **“You will be hard pressed to find a single family in Iraq which has not had a son, father or brother killed, imprisoned, tortured, or disappeared due to Saddam's regime...The majority of Iraqis inside and outside Iraq, support an invasive action because they are the ones who have to live as things are.”**

And from a former interrogator and torturer for the Iraqi regime, Kazim Muhammed Al-Hut, who gave an interview last week to the Boston Globe. Mr. Al-Hut said, and I quote: **“We had a lot of ways to make people speak. There was the cable, electric shock.... We never killed children. If the child was 5 or 6, we would beat them with a steel cable, and that would get the mothers talking.”**

Published reports of Saddam's torture chambers show crucifixions, nailing the tongue to a wooden board, using bees and scorpions to sting naked children in front of their parents, branding with a hot iron, and other unspeakable acts.

Lastly, from Mr. Ahmad Al-Rikaby, a reporter for Radio Free Iraq, based in London. He conducted an interview with a former Iraqi intelligence officer. This is Mr. Al-Rikaby's report: **"The officer told me how the Iraqi special security directorate decided to execute 2,000 people in one day. They wanted to clean the prison, so the day before the executions took place, Qusay, the son of Saddam, gave the orders – and he was part of the team that supervised the executions. He told me how they executed people. They started at 6:00 a.m. and were finished at 9:00 p.m. and I asked him, 'It's awful to witness one execution, how were you able to watch the executions of 2,000 people in one day?' As terrible as this is, it is just one of many stories about people who lost their lives in the seas, under trains, in the cold weather, or while trying to flee."**

The United States wants an Iraq whose people are free from fear and who can look to the future with hope and promise. We are liberating– not occupying – Iraq.

Iraq has the potential to be a great nation. We are committed to maintaining its territorial integrity. Her people are skilled and educated. We are committed to the goal of a unified and democratic Iraq where members of all ethnic and religious groups are treated with dignity and respect. An Iraq that has no weapons of mass destruction, no link to terrorists and that is at peace with its neighbors. Iraq's economic resources belong to Iraq, and its people. In a liberated Iraq, the people will regain control of their own resources to build a prosperous and free Iraq.

I am disappointed when I read commentaries in the press which say that the United States is attacking Iraq because it wants and needs Iraq's oil. A quick look at the facts should dispel this glaring inaccuracy. Iraq's oil represents only a small percentage of world oil production – about 3 percent, according to renowned energy expert Daniel Yergin. This spring Iraq halted oil production for one solid month and the world hardly noticed. If it was only about oil, it is abundantly obvious that it would be easier to deal directly with the Iraqi government than forcing Saddam to disarm. As the United States has consistently said, Iraq's oil belongs to the people of Iraq.

The United States will do its utmost to provide humanitarian and reconstruction support to the Iraqi people both during and after hostilities. The rehabilitation and reconstruction of Iraq will begin at the first possible moment, but our collective, long-term commitment to Iraq will be to help the Iraqi people build a unified Iraq that does not pose a threat to international peace.

The United States deeply appreciates the support to disarm Saddam demonstrated by the Macedonian government. Macedonia's flag flies among the coalition of willing. In fact, on Tuesday, Macedonia's flag was raised alongside

many others as part of the coalition at the United States Central Command at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida. Colonel Zdravko Popovski is there serving as a military support planner where he is working with American and international military officers.

Macedonia's contribution to the global war on terrorism includes a 10-person contingent from the Second Infantry Brigade from Kicevo who are working as part of the German contingent in the International Security Assistance Force-3 in Afghanistan. The United States is continuing its discussions with Macedonia about further support and ways in which we can together join our efforts to combat terrorism. There are many opportunities by which countries can demonstrate their stance in support of the coalition of the willing. The Government of Macedonia has been courageous in its efforts of support. On Monday, my President sent letters to President Trajkovski and Prime Minister Crvenkovski expressing the gratitude and appreciation of the people of the United States of America for Macedonia's commitment.