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Moderator

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for standing by, and welcome to the conference call on UN Arms Report from Iraq. At this time all participants are in a listen-only mode. Later there will be a question and answer session. Instructions will be given at that time. As a reminder, today's call is being recorded.

I would now like to turn the conference over to Mr. Martin Indyk. Please go ahead, sir.

M. Indyk

Hi. Good morning, everybody. I'm Martin Indyk, the Director of the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at The Brookings Institution. Joining me for this press briefing is Ken Pollack, the Director of Research at the Saban Center at Brookings.

Both of us will speak for just a few minutes about our take on where we are at the moment and then we'll be glad to take your questions. I will start; Ken will follow. Obviously the 12,000 pages that the Iraqis have provided are there for final and complete declaration have not been released yet, so we obviously can't comment on the content, but what we can comment on is what we now know about Iraq's strategy and what the United States can or should do to counter it. I'm going to talk about the first and Ken will talk about the second question of what are the U.S. options.

My understanding of Saddam's strategy starts from the premise that he still possesses weapons of mass destruction capabilities. If that were not the case he would have long ago completed the disarmament process and had the sanctions lifted and Iraq would have been able to rejoin the international community.

It's important to remember, when trying to assess what exactly he's up to, that when the inspectors left in December of 1998 none of the WMD files had been closed. The nuclear file was the closest, at the time, to being closed and transitioning to long-term monitoring of his ... facilities, but

there were many outstanding and unanswered questions about Saddam's chemical and biological WMD capabilities.

No member of the Security Council at that time, including the Russians, who were Saddam's greatest advocates in the Security Council then, none of them was prepared to accept Saddam's claim then that he had no weapons of mass destruction. That was especially the case since he had been caught lying repeatedly about those programs over the previous years, when inspectors were in the country.

It's therefore, in my mind, impossible to believe that in four years of an inspections-free Iraq, with Saddam's procurement network essentially free to use the billions of dollars of revenues he was accumulating from oil smuggling to use it to import more equipment and materials, that Saddam chose not to do so in the last four years.

Yet, according to General Amir al-Sa'di, the chief person in charge on the Iraqi side for responding to the demands of the Security Council, in the press conference that he gave yesterday, according to General al-Sa'di there is no more documentation in the 12,000 pages on what happened to the biological weapons program. There is simply the straight denial of having anything, any weapons of mass destruction any more.

In the final words of General al-Sa'di's press conference he issued a challenge to the United States to produce the evidence that would prove him wrong.

That is the essence of Saddam's strategy. It is to, first of all, I believe, hide the evidence so thoroughly that it can't be easily found; secondly, to let the inspectors go wherever they please, including into the palaces and anywhere else our intelligence might tell them to go; thirdly, in the process, to create the impression of complete cooperation so there is the immediate acceptance of Resolution 1441, allowing the inspectors to go anywhere they want to and ensuring that the press can follow them so as to document the cooperation, getting this documentation in one day before it's due as a way of underscoring Iraq's cooperation, overwhelming everybody with the sheer volume of it, putting it all out on display so everybody can take pictures of this great effort of cooperation.

And I predict that when we ... should he decide to try to take scientists out of the country to be interviewed that they will go along with that as well, all in the service of an effort to avoid complying with demands of the

Security Council for giving up its weapons of mass destruction by creating the appearance of cooperation. But there is a very important distinction to be made between cooperation with the inspectors and compliance with the demands of the Security Council that Iraq disarm. The whole purpose of the cooperation is to sow doubts in the minds of reasonable people that Iraq, in fact, still has weapons of mass destruction.

Just as an aside here, I was in Israel last week and two people there - one from the government and one from the private sector - both asked me the same question, "Do you think Saddam really does have any weapons of mass destruction?" I think that there are certainly many international community that would be prepared to give Iraq the benefit of the doubt.

The overall approach is to play out the clock through cooperation in order to convince more and more people that he really doesn't have weapons of mass destruction, while putting the onus on the United States to try to prove that he does, by looking for that needle in the haystack or that smoking gun that would somehow prove him wrong.

In the process what he is doing is, in effect, sucking us into the inspections trap, where we claim he has it, but we can't prove it, and the longer that he can play that out, the more doubt that he can sow in people's minds that we are right and that he is wrong. And, of course, the longer the time passes, the more difficult it will be for us to actually win international support for the use of force, and on the ground it will be more difficult, militarily, by the time we get into the late spring or early summer, to actually conduct operations.

Let me leave it there and hand it over to Ken.

K. Pollack

That, of course, is the perfect point of departure for thinking about what the United States should be doing at this point in time. I think that there are essentially three different courses of action available to the United States at this point in time. Actually the first two proceed from the assumption that the Bush administration is serious about going to war with Iraq, and whether that's because they are simply determined to pursue regime change or it's because they believe that it is the only way to secure disarm into Iraq - let's set that aside for the moment; it's actually irrelevant - for the consideration of the various options they have.

If they are determined to go to war with Iraq to remove the regime, to remove its weapons of mass destruction, they basically have two options.

The first one is that they can use the declaration itself as the *casus belli*. The declaration is clearly a material breach of the cease-fire. It's not just that the United States has a full range of intelligence that I think will lead any reasonable person to the conclusion that, in fact, the Iraqis are not coming clean, but as Martin described, there are any number of at least unanswered questions from the previous inspection regime when the inspectors left in 1998 that the Iraqis apparently have not even tried to answer in these documents.

At that point in time there were long lists of items that were unaccounted for: 500 tons of VX chemical precursors, if not produced chemicals, which could have amounted to about 200 tons of VX agent; 4,000 or 5,000 tons of chemical precursors for other chemical agents; a number of scud missiles and so on and so on. There are any number of things that were left hanging out there at the end of the previous inspection regime, which the 12,000 pages of documents apparently don't even begin to address.

On that basis alone, these documents do constitute a material breach that the United States was very careful to build that into Resolution 1441; that Iraq's failure to come clean in the initial declaration would, in and of itself, constitute a material breach, therefore justifying the move to war.

The problem, of course, is that if the United States does that, we're going to need to produce hard evidence to get a very large coalition to come on board with us. I think that to some extent where people are getting hung up is on this question of the coalition. This stems from the problem that we've gotten ourselves into, which is that the Bush administration would like very much to recreate the Gulf War coalition of 1991, when we had 180 nations in consensus saying, "Yes, Saddam Hussein is in the wrong and we must go to war with him."

Unfortunately, given the situation that we find ourselves in today, it's highly unlikely that we are going to be able to rebuild that coalition. I think the Bush administration would very much like to, but if we go ahead and use the declaration as it stands now, as the *casus belli*, we will be able to build some kind of a coalition, but it's not going to be the Gulf coalition of 1991.

The alternative is to keep trying for that big coalition, for that 1991 coalition. The way to do that, at least the way that's been offered up, is to play out the inspections a bit further. You've seen leaks from the White House and other places in the government suggesting that what the United

States might do is, over the course of the next month or two, direct the inspectors to conduct certain inspections of certain sites that the U.S. government suspects have WMD at them or at one point contained WMD or product processes; look to take out certain key personnel and request certain documents and use these as tests in hope that this will trip up the Iraqis and produce the smoking gun, which would recreate that 1991 big coalition.

The problem with doing this, unfortunately, is two-fold. First, what we've seen already is that this inspection regime is going to resist taking direction from the United States. Mr. Blinks has made it very clear that he doesn't work for George Bush; he works for Kofi Annan. He has very different ideas about how to do this and we've already seen him resisting U.S. suggestions, U.S. encouragement, U.S. urging. In particular, he continues to say that he is, at best, reluctant to request Iraqi scientists to leave the country and he does not intend to take advantage of the authority provided in Resolution 1441 to do so. So if you pursue that path, you're relying on a weak read, the new inspection regime, which doesn't look like it's willing to take the kind of aggressive actions that would be needed to succeed.

The second problem is, of course, that you're continuing to play into Saddam Hussein's hands, exactly as Martin described it. The Iraqis are very confident that they can continue to hide their weapons of mass destruction from the rest of the international community, from the inspectors themselves. They did it in the 1990's and they are doing it again and, therefore, continuing to play out this strategy means that you are simply giving the Iraqis more and more opportunities to have successful inspections. This is part of the problem.

The longer that you go down this road, the more it looks like the Iraqis are cooperating with the inspections, chances are the harder it is going to be to build a coalition for war if at some point in time you suddenly decide to do so. Right now, using the declaration, if that is a clear set of lies, we can go; we can build the case. It's a case that we'll probably need to build in private, because that's where we can reveal our information, but nevertheless, there will be a stronger case.

If we wait two months and let that declaration grow cold and allow the Iraqis two months of cooperation and good inspections, it's going to be that much harder to build a coalition for war further down the road.

Finally, the last option that the administration has is that they can try to actually make containment work again. They can try to let the inspections continue to run for a year or two, but of course there are enormous problems there as well. First, as I said, there is no indication that this inspection regime is actually going to find any of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. In fact, all of the evidence, both from the 1990's and from the recent few weeks indicate that it's highly unlikely that these inspections will find any of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.

Beyond that, as Martin has written in one of our Iraq memos, there is another big problem, which is that containment was never really about inspections. Throughout the 1990's the sanctions were always thought to be the biggest part of the containment regime. They were the part of the containment regime that was expected to do the most work.

Now we've revived, in many ways, what was the weakest part of the containment regime and we're going to ask it to do all of the work that once relied on both inspection and containment and, of course, add to that the no-fly zones, limited uses of military force, both of which are weakening as tools to contain Saddam Hussein. So the idea of trying to revive containment and to make it work at this point in time seems even more far-fetched.

Let me stop there.

M. Indyk Can we bring the conference person in to handle the questions, please?

Moderator Certainly. Our first question is from the line of Warren Strobel with *Knight Ridder*. Please go ahead.

W. Strobel Thanks. I'm just wondering, based on Iraqi past behavior and the Iraqi official statements of the last couple of days, whether you believe there is anything worthwhile in the declaration at all? It's sort of difficult for me to imagine that they've put out 12,000 pages without giving up at least, showing a little leg, as it were, about some aspects of their WMD programs.

M. Indyk I would think that as part of the strategy that I've outlined, that it would be clever, at some point, to indicate some WMD that has since been destroyed that they can document in order to give veracity to their cooperation. So I wouldn't rule out the possibility that there is something in there along those lines. Of course, we can't tell, but it would be, again,

consistent with the strategy to show some indication that there was WMD that they destroyed.

Ken, do you want to -?

K. Pollack

Yes. Martin is absolutely right that it is consistent with the strategy and I also wouldn't rule it out. I also don't think it's likely. The initial reports that we're just starting to see from people is that the Iraqis are not showing a little leg. They're not suggesting that there's anything. People have speculated that they'll come up with another one of Hussein Kamel's chicken farms, another location where, yes, it did turn out that they had a little bit of WMD left, but the Iraqi government had nothing to do with it. It was a rogue operation, etc., etc.

All of the signs that we're seeing from the Iraqis though is exactly the opposite. They're sticking to their guns and just saying we've got nothing. They're going to, as Martin suggested, try to make us prove otherwise.

What does seem to be coming out that is of some interest is that the Iraqis are being more forthcoming. They're providing more details in terms of what they're willing to say about the development of their program in the 1980's. For example, the IAEA is reporting that the Iraqis have a fuller explanation of how close they say they were to acquiring a nuclear weapon in 1990. The inspectors have their views about how close the Iraqis were. It obviously will be interesting to at least see what the Iraqis are claiming.

Moderator

Our next question is from the line of Robin Wright with *The LA Times*. Please go ahead.

R. Wright

I'd like to ask about the scientists. There is a lot made now about the importance of getting these folks out to get evidence, but how realistic is it, in light of the fact that in all of the sessions that Saddam's people have there are a lot of people around? How realistic is it to think that one's going to walk up in the middle of all of this and say, "I've got some information I'd like to give you." The logistical process of getting someone to make that connection with the weapons inspectors; it's not likely that they're going to be able to knock on an inspector's door at some point secretly or make a phone call to say, "I'd like to talk with you." Saddam has got to be monitoring these people very tightly.

Secondly, what element might nationalism play in preventing some of these folks from doing what they would like to do, but are kind of afraid to do? It's always the first one.

M. Indyk

I think that's right, Robin. I don't think anybody is going to volunteer, simply out of fear of consequences for himself or his family, but the way in which the Resolution is constructed, the inspectors could actually request or demand that certain scientists be offered up to be taken out of the country for that purpose. That's what I was suggesting that I think Saddam would cooperate with that. Ken will explain how he could go along with this, so I'll leave that to him, but I do think that the combination of, on the one sense, nationalism, as you suggest, in terms of that there is that sense that we are Iraqis first, that they're unlikely to volunteer for that reason or simply out of sheer fear of what would happen to them.

I'll just make one other point here. The defectives that have come out have been the best source, I think, as you know, of information and intelligence, on what Saddam actually has. But those that have come out, at least in my experience when I was handling this, gave us good information then. That was many years ago and Saddam was able to basically seal the gap. Anybody who went out, he knew what that person knew and therefore, essentially cleaned up that area. The question is whether he has already basically prepared the ground for that possibility.

K. Pollack

First, obviously, I agree with everything Martin just said.

M. Indyk

You don't have to, you know?

K. Pollack

I'll say if I don't, but I do.

I think that it's certainly true that getting a defector, if we could get one, would probably be the best source of information, although Martin is right again, that typically Saddam has been able to sanitize facilities. I mean to make this really work you'd have to get a defector and be able to act on the information, probably within 24 or 48 hours, have an inspection team immediately go to the facility before the Iraqis can sanitize wherever the facility is. That's very hard.

It's also possible - it may be the case that our best luck will come from a defector coming out of Iraq, having nothing to do with the UN inspection program. We've had defectors come out of Iraq at various points over the

last 11 years. Usually they come through Kurdistan. That may actually be the best course, because under those circumstances it may take the longest amount of time for Saddam to realize that that person is gone and in our hands, whereas anyone the UN requests, he is immediately going to recognize that that person is in our hands and a potential defector.

Beyond that, as Martin was suggesting, there are all kinds of things that Saddam can do to make it very difficult for the inspectors to exercise this authority, even if they choose to do so. Again, I'd emphasize the fact that Blinks is making it clear that he's not terribly interested in exercising this authority. If we start submitting lists of names of people we'd like to interview, my guess is that the Iraqis will come back and tell us that a number of those people are dead and they'll be glad to show us the gravestones. Others have fled the country and they'll claim that we've got them and we're using this as a provocation.

Others will probably be willing to come out, but the problem is we just don't know what kind of a hold the Iraqis may have on these people. The Resolution states that UNMOVIC can move not only the people, but their entire families out of Iraq. The problem is we probably won't know exactly what their family consists of or what other people are close to them and all it may take is one or two close relatives or very good friends still back in Iraq in the Mu... 's hands to make sure that these guys stick to the party line, even if they are taken outside of Iraq.

My guess is in most cases they're simply going to flat out say, "We don't want to go." I think Saddam will be glad to put these guys on Al-Jazeera or CNN or whoever else is at hand, saying, "We don't want to leave Iraq. We don't want to uproot our whole family and take them to Cyprus or Geneva or wherever, and why should we do so?" It's exactly that kind of a problem that Hans Blinks seems to be responding to, saying we don't want to be in the business of taking people out of their country if they don't want to go.

R. Wright

Thanks.

Moderator

Our next question is from the line of Carol Giacomo with Reuters. Please go ahead.

C. Giacomo

I have two. Are you persuaded that the Americans have evidence of Saddam's weapons of mass destruction that has not been publicized to

date, compelling evidence that goes beyond whatever was in all of that that was in the British report of a couple of months ago?

The other question is what's your read right now on where things stand with the Bush administration? Do you think that they still remain as divided on the way forward or do you sense that the fact that we're getting to a crunch period here has forced them to come together more?

M. Indyk

Maybe I'll take the first and Ken can take the second or add something to the first.

In terms of evidence of WMD, I've been out of the government for almost two years now, so I definitely do not know what it is that they have now, what they may have accumulated. In the time when I was handling the Iraq file, which was several years ago, we had plenty of evidence from defectors of active WMD programs, and we had the evidence that the ... inspections were turning up, or the gaps that they could not reconcile, and the very detailed work that ... was able to do. Those reports are available, of the discrepancies in the Iraqi accounts, and those discrepancies were never resolved, as I said earlier.

So there is plenty of basis upon which I think the administration makes its claim. Whether it's compelling, of course, gets into the whole business of trap here because imagine the scenario where, in fact, we played it out last time with the British white paper in which Tony Blair said, "Here are all of the sites where they're doing things they shouldn't be doing." The Iraqis immediately responded by opening those sites to journalists. That is what I expect they would do again this time. If we came out with the places where we thought they were actually hiding this stuff, I think they have so effectively hidden this stuff by now that they would basically catch us out and say, "You see we've got nothing to hide." When nothing was discovered that would become very problematic.

We used to go to bed at night in the late 1990's convinced that we had intelligence on where Saddam was hiding his stuff, knowing that the inspectors were going to go there early the next morning and we would wake up the next morning only to discover that, in fact, it wasn't there. This is, in part, the nature of the intelligence game, that you get a lot of information you can't know for sure the veracity of all of it, and the cleverness of Saddam's concealment mechanism that he's able to hide this in a way that makes it very difficult to discover.

K. Pollack

Just to add on to that, I certainly hope that the administration has some smoking gun evidence that they are holding back on all of us that will allow them to prove things beyond a shadow of a doubt, but I note that the body language from the administration is suggesting otherwise. What they're saying is effectively what Martin is saying, which is there is a corpus of evidence from the 1990's up through the present, which I think they're saying any reasonable person could look at and say, "This can't be anything other than unmistakable signs of intent to reproduce the weapons of mass destruction programs," but they don't have a smoking gun. At least the body language seems to suggest that they don't have a smoking gun.

As for the second part of your question, Carol, where the administration is, my sense is that they do continue to be deeply divided with the hawks pressing to use the declaration itself as the *casus belli* and to basically move forward as soon as we can, and the doves arguing that we have to give the inspections a chance and we should, as I was suggesting in my second option I laid out, try to structure the inspection process to provide, to establish, the smoking gun. They don't seem to have made a decision just yet.

They seem to be working hard on a bunch of different compromise positions that they might come up with, but I think at the end of the day the real question is President Bush, and I don't think that anyone, at least in my conversations, nobody inside the government seems to know what the President really wants to do at this point in time.

Moderator

Our next question is from the line of William Douglas with *Newsday*. Please go ahead.

W. Douglas

You're saying that you feel it's in the administrative interest to withhold information; that they should not make a show of evidence to convince allies and the American people?

M. Indyk

What I'm saying is that the Adlai Stevenson approach of putting out the evidence in front of the Security Council has a very big down side, which is to say that unless it's provable on its face, that is documentation of some kind, if it's just a matter of pointing to a site where we believe the weapons of mass destruction are hidden or being produced, the very big down side is that the Iraqis will have cleaned that up, sanitized that place and will say, "... , come and visit. Come and have a look." That's exactly what they did after the British declaration.

I think that option is a very dangerous, risky one for the United States to follow, as opposed to what Ken was suggesting, which is to take the intelligence to our allies, people in intelligence channels, and to share it with them in a way that they would find compelling, and then use that as the basis for putting together this coalition of the willing that the President talks about.

Moderator Our next question is from the line of Thomas Omestad with *U.S. News and World Report*. Please go ahead.

T. Omestad Thank you. How can the U.S. avoid being seen as simply browbeating the inspections officials into some sort of a defacto confrontation with the Iraqis and therefore, lose some sense of credibility or legitimacy in their effort to facilitate uncovering some of this cheating, and thereby preserve this sense of legitimacy in a way that's going to be useful for building a broader coalition?

M. Indyk Ken?

K. Pollack Sure, I get the hard one.

M. Indyk All right. I'll take a go and you can add on.

I think the way that the President responded in his radio address this weekend is one answer to that, which is, "Yes, we're going to study it very thoroughly and look at everything that they put out," and basically, to play along with this game of cooperation, while at the same time expressing grave doubts about whether it's real. But at some point - and I think both Ken and I would argue sooner rather than later - we have to say, "Look, this is not compliance." The distinction is critical and he has not given up his weapons of mass destruction. Here are the reasons why we assert that he is not and why we assert that he is lying, why he is in material breach as a result, and why we are going to pursue the serious consequences that the Resolution provides.

The danger with the game of cooperating with his cooperation is that the longer the time goes on the inspectors don't find anything, the more difficult it will be, as Ken suggested, to put together a coalition of the willing. They're going to have to balance those two concerns.

K. Pollack

Just to add to that a little bit, Tom, I think that in terms of assuming we are going to try to get the inspectors to be more aggressive - and this is more along the lines of the second option that I laid out - of trying to get the inspectors to be more aggressive, to exercise their various authorities under the UN Resolution to try to produce that smoking gun, which you've heard Martin and I both say we're deeply skeptical of that approach.

But if you were to try to pursue it, I think that how you handle it, first of all it's very much about tone. It's literally the tone that you're using when you're delivering these messages. I think it's also something that you do in private with Hans Blicks and with Kofi and what you basically say to them is, "Look, we are not at all happy with what the Iraqis have given us on the declaration. We consider it to be a material breach, but we're going to hold off making any kind of a statement because we do agree that it would be much better to go to war only after we have gotten some kind of a smoking gun and we want to give the inspections the chance to make this work. But we're going to be forced to take actions that both we and you would prefer that we don't take unless you guys are willing to act in a more aggressive fashion. Effectively, the conduct of the inspections is going to determine how we do things. Hans Blicks, Kofi Annan, if you want inspections to work and be an alternative to war, you've got to be aggressive. If you want the United States to only go to war with the blessing of the Security Council, again, you've got to be aggressive. All of the solutions here for you acting aggressively, a very strong inspections process is a win/win situation. If you don't act in that kind of an aggressive fashion, if you don't exercise all of your authorities, it's a lose/lose for both of us because we're going to wind up going to war without the same authority that we'd like to have and you're going to wind up looking feckless, weak and like you basically allowed this to happen."

So I think that there is actually some leverage that we can use there.

Moderator

Our next question is from the line of George Wilson with the *National Journal Magazine*. Please go ahead.

G. Wilson

I think everything said up to this point verifies that, like it or not, everybody is in a war for men's minds and also that the egg is out of the chicken. Bush did decide to go to the United Nations and there it is.

My question is if you two gents were sitting in the White House as commander in chief, how would you proceed as far as going to war? In

other words, how has this affected the timetable if you wanted to go to war? Has it not required the administration, like it or not, to at least provide for decent interval and are we not therefore in danger of getting into the hot weather when nobody wants to wear a chemical suit?

M. Indyk

Yes. I think that the ideal timing for a decision to go to war is January/February and therefore, there is time, still, to study the documentation, to try to see if that provides the material breach basis or to get the inspectors, as Ken suggested, to press as hard as possible on the inspections, in the hope that he, Saddam, will make a mistake and that we'll catch him. That's possible.

By the way, that's what I heard in Israel, is their expectation that he will make a mistake in that time frame, in the next two to three months. That is an option that we could pursue.

Thank goodness I'm not the commander in chief, but I could see the advantage of choosing that, given the box that we're in at the moment. As you say, since yours was the chicken coming out of the egg or whatever, but given that situation, it would make sense to go down that road.

What I'm saying is that it's very important for the commander in chief to recognize that in choosing to go down that road, if another two months to three months of giving the inspections a chance, the danger in that is that when we get to the end of that period and spring is starting to turn into summer that we'll find that we still don't have the basis for the material breach claim and that in the process, three months of cooperation has really weakened, dramatically, our ability to bring others along with us at the critical moment when we feel the commander in chief has to make that decision to go to war or not.

K. Pollack

Right. As Martin and I are both suggesting, one of our great concerns with this "wait and see" approach is that it is effectively turning over the trigger for war to Saddam Hussein. You could make the argument that it's turning it over to Hans Blicks, but as we suggested, even if Hans Blicks were as aggressive as he possibly could be, neither of us believes that there is a high likelihood that even in an extraordinarily aggressive inspection regime is likely to turn up the smoking gun. Therefore, you're placing it in the hands of Saddam Hussein. We are relying on the off chance that we are able to get some kind of a defector who provides exactly the kind of information that we need; the inspectors are able to act

on it and find the smoking gun, or else that Saddam Hussein makes some kind of a major error.

That reminds me very much of Colin Powell's remark that "Hope is not a plan." This is a policy based on hope and it is highly unlikely to succeed. The world's only remaining super power shouldn't be making policy based purely on hope.

With regard to the specific military issue, we're still not quite there yet, in terms of being ready to launch military operations. That's not to say we couldn't go if the President said, "Go". It's just that the military would love to have at least, I think, another three, four, maybe even five weeks to prepare its forces and get ready for the operation. During that period of time you can, as Martin was suggesting, continue to study the document and I think, in particular, what you do is you work the diplomacy. You start going bilaterally to all of the different countries and building that coalition of the willing so that when the military is ready to go to war we will have both our military ducks in a row and our diplomatic ducks in a row. At that point in time the administration can come out and say the declaration is itself a material breach, a casus belli, and we're now going to go to war with Iraq, as we indicated that we intended to do so.

I think there is still enough, again, as Martin was suggesting, there is still time in that calculation. We still do have quite a bit of time. Militarily, again, we should always realize that while it's harder to conduct military operations in the Gulf once you start getting into the March/April/May time period, our military forces can do it if the President tells them to do so. It just won't be as clean, won't be as easy. We could have some more casualties as a result of it, but it's certainly something that's feasible.

The bigger problem is, again, as Martin was suggesting, the diplomatic problem of the longer you allow the inspections to go on with one inspection after another finding nothing, getting good Iraqi cooperation, the harder it is going to be to build a coalition that's actually willing to go to war.

Moderator Our next question is from the line of Patricia Keegan with the *Washington International*. Please go ahead.

P. Keegan Thank you. This is about the third option. It seems that we are living in a world where more countries are acquiring nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction. Since it would seem insane to use preemptive strikes

against all of these countries, why not start a strict policy of containment beginning with Iraq?

K. Pollack

I think the basic answer is we've tried. We tried for 11 years to make containment of Iraq work and unfortunately it failed. In fact, when we started out containment in 1991 it was a very unusual containment regime. In many ways it was the strongest that the world had ever seen. It was a multinational containment regime that was authorized by the United Nations itself. It was also a containment regime that had all kinds of levers and controls on it that were never available to us when we were trying to contain the Soviet Union, Cuba, North Korea or any of these other places.

The problem is and what we found was the containment of Iraq failed for those very reasons; because we couldn't sustain the international support, because within a few years after the Gulf War the rest of the international community had basically given up on Iraq, were no longer interested in doing what was necessary to actually contain Iraq until it got to the point, by the second half of the 1990's, where the United States and only a few other countries, the British and a few other of our allies, were the only states that were willing to actually take any action to try to enforce containment of Iraq.

In addition, what we've seen is that Saddam continues to make progress on his weapons of mass destruction and in particular, in progress toward nuclear weapons. The consensus among the Western intelligence communities is that he is probably only about four to six years away from having a nuclear weapon.

What we know about Saddam Hussein is that he is also unique among current rulers in that he seems to believe, as best our information indicates, that he views nuclear weapons as an offensive asset. Most countries, I'm not a Korea expert, but talking to the people who are Korea experts, they all seem to believe that North Korea views nuclear weapons as a defensive asset. It is there to deter other countries from attacking North Korea.

What we know about Saddam Hussein's thinking indicates that he believes that nuclear weapons are helpful to him in an offensive sense because he believes that they will deter the United States from ever intervening, should he choose to attack someone else. That makes Saddam uniquely dangerous. It places him in a category all by himself. It's why I believe that a policy of preemption, while certainly nothing to

be undertaken lightly - it's certainly an extraordinary measure - it is justified in the unique case of Iraq.

Moderator We do have a follow-up from Robin Wright. Please go ahead.

R. Wright I was wondering if either of you know from your past experience in government exactly where this is going to be analyzed, by whom? Is there some place in the CIA where everyone assembles what kind of numbers? Who is going to be involved from different agencies? Can you give us a sense of the process itself?

K. Pollack I think it's going to be a big, ugly process, in the sense that it's not going to be quite as streamlined as I think you're suggesting. My guess is that the document is going to be reproduced. Its various elements are going to be reproduced in any number of venues and it will be sent out to a whole host of different agencies. There are going to be people at the State Department who are looking at it. There are going to be people at the CIA who are going to be looking at it. There are going to be people at all of the national laboratories who are going to be looking at it, people at DIA and in some cases you may have some of the particular Service Intelligence Agencies. The Department of Energy will obviously be looking at the nuclear piece of it. You're going to have people all over the U.S. government looking at this thing.

The more interesting question is where it actually gets fused all together. I can't think of an obvious bureaucratic venue you would use to do that. I think that the government will probably have to either designate a particular body, a particular interagency committee, to do that fusion work or else create one, perhaps setting up a mini-National Intelligence Council just for the purpose of this, to coordinate all of the different inputs that they're going to be getting from all of these different organizations.

Moderator Gentlemen, no further questions in queue.

K. Pollack Thank you all very much.

M. Indyk Thank you.

Moderator Ladies and gentlemen, that does conclude your conference for today. We do thank you for your participation and you may now disconnect.