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MASS KILLINGS IN IRAQ

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS UNITED STATES SENATE

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CONTENTS

	Page
Karim, Dr. Najmaldin, president, Kurdish National Congress of North America, Silver Spring, MD	24
Lowman, Shep, Migration and Refugee Services, U.S. Catholic Conference, Washington, DC	18
Prepared statement	20
Snow, Dr. Clyde Collins, forensic anthropologist, Norman, OK	15
Stover, Eric, Physicians for Human Rights, Boston, MA	12
Whitley, Andrew, executive director, Middle East Watch, New York, NY	3
Prepared statement	8

APPENDIX

UNICEF Programme Progress Report—Iraq Emergency	39
News From U.S. Senator Al Gore	49

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MASS KILLINGS IN IRAQ

THURSDAY, MARCH 19, 1992

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10 a.m. in room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Claiborne Pell (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Present: Senators Pell, Pressler, and Brown.

The CHAIRMAN. The Committee on Foreign Relations will come to order. It was just 4 years ago that I introduced, and the Senate passed, legislation imposing comprehensive financial and economic sanctions against Iraq.

Our legislation was entitled "The Prevention of Genocide Act of 1988." In the relevant part, the act said the Iraqi army has undertaken a campaign to depopulate the Kurdish regions of Iraq by destroying Kurdish villages in much of northern Iraq and by killing the civilian population.

Iraq's campaign against the Kurdish people appeared to constitute an act of genocide. At the time, both the Reagan administration and the House conferees vehemently objected to characterizing Iraqi conduct in Kurdistan as genocide. We now know that that description was very apt.

In 1987, Iraq initiated a campaign to depopulate Iraqi Kurdistan. The military operation, code named the Al-Anfal campaign, encompassed the systematic destruction of every village in Kurdistan, the massive use of chemical weapons against defenseless villagers, and the deportation and execution of tens of thousands of men, women, and children.

In all, at least 180,000 people died in the Al-Anfal campaign; about 5 percent of the population of Iraqi Kurdistan. Had the gulf war not intervened, it is likely that Iraq's Kurdish population would have been exterminated.

There was, in 1987 and 1988, clear evidence of Iraq's conduct. In 1987, the Foreign Relations Committee published a staff report revealing the systematic destruction of Kurdish villages. In 1988, our committee published another staff report documenting the extent of use of chemical weapons against Kurdish civilians.

That report, which is the only published American Government documentation on the actual use of chemical weapons since World War I, described Iraqi actions as having many of the characteristics of genocide. It also described the machinegun killing of Kurdish civilians and burials in mass graves.

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Because Iraqi Kurdistan is largely under control of the Kurdish rebels, we have, this year, been able to see tangible evidence of the Iraqi genocide campaign against the Kurds. This past September, our own committee staff traveled through Kurdistan discovering mass graves around Kurdish cities and interviewing survivors of the deportations and executions.

Most chilling, our staff discovered that the Iraqi secret police had made and kept extensive records on how they imprisoned, tortured, and executed Kurds and other opponents of the regime. Not content to maintain a paper trail, the secret police videotaped themselves as they engaged in torture and executions and even the gang rape of Kurdish civilians.

This fall, a team from Middle East Watch and Physicians for Human Rights followed up on this report, set out to look systematically at the record of atrocities. This team has examined the captured documents and even more significant, excavated some of the mass graves. Their report, which they will present today, is a horrifying catalog of man's inhumanity to man.

We will also hear from Mr. Shep Lowman of the U.S. Catholic Conference and Dr. Najmaldin Karim of the Kurdish National Congress. Both recently visited Kurdistan to add to our knowledge of past atrocities and conditions.

In the period that led up to the Second World War and during that war, there was ample evidence as to the fate of Europe's Jews. At that time, we chose to do nothing. In 1987 and 1988, this committee documented the genocide overtaking Iraq's Kurds. And in spite of our legislative effort, the U.S. administration did nothing to stop Iraq.

The Kurds are now free of Iraqi control. If the Iraqis are allowed back into Kurdistan, I believe the certain result will be the mass murder of up to 4 million people. The international protection of Iraq's Kurds, now set to expire on June 30, must be extended. And today's testimony, along with the evidence already gathered by our own committee, constitute a warning of what will happen if the mandate is not extended.

Somewhat as in the case of the Holocaust, the sheer size and scope of the horror that is being perpetrated is so large that one might not realize its significance. And sometimes when horrors, when actions are taken on such a broad scale, one does not see the significance as when there are individual instances of it.

But bear in mind what I said, that it could mean the extermination of 4 million people, if the Iraqis are allowed to work their will.

We will start out now with the witnesses. We are having Mr. Andrew Whitley, executive director of the Middle East Watch; Mr. Eric Stover, Physicians for Human Rights; and Dr. Clyde Collins Snow, forensic anthropologist, Norman, OK. If they would come forward, as well as Mr. Lowman of the U.S. Catholic Conference and Dr. Karim.

First, there will be a presentation by the first three witnesses I mentioned, and then if Mr. Lowman and Dr. Karim care to be at the table, they will have a warm welcome.

We will hear first from Mr. Whitley.

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STATEMENT OF MR. ANDREW WHITLEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MIDDLE EAST WATCH, NEW YORK, NY

Mr. WHITLEY. Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to testify before your committee today. I think that calling this particular hearing is of great importance and I hope that the information will become widely available.

The nature of the atrocities committed by the Iraqi regime prior to the gulf war has been known in general terms for some time. I believe that the reports both by the media and by human rights organizations and by your own staff contributed to a general picture which was known of the atrocities that were taking place, not just against the Kurds but against other Iraqi dissidents.

Those atrocities were short often on detail. We knew about allegations and the destruction of large numbers of villages. We knew of allegations of poison gas attacks, notably in the Halabja incident in March 1988. But we did not have the opportunities to be able to visit the area.

That opportunity has now been presented to us by the fact that the allies were able to establish an air shield over northern Iraq under resolution 688 of the U.N. and by the fact that the Kurdish guerrillas themselves were able to recapture much of their traditional territory. They currently control some 80 percent of that traditional homeland.

Over the past year, Mr. Chairman, the evidence has now come forward, both from the documents that the Iraqis captured and also from the survivors themselves, and most recently, from the exhumation of graves that have been discovered in the area throughout northern Iraq. And this evidence points to the conclusion that the killing and destruction which we knew of in general terms took place on a much more systematic basis, on a much larger scale, than we had previously known.

Even those of us who had followed the atrocities in the past have been shocked to discover that the campaign against the Kurds, which we now know as the Anfal campaign, a word that I shall describe in a moment, was one in which there have been few parallels since the Second World War. Whether or not it is genocide is something that I shall come back to at the end of my statement.

The Anfal campaign was a word that was code named by the Iraqi Government for a campaign that took place in the late 1980's. We do not know the precise extent of that, but we believe that it peaked during 1988. We certainly know of activities that were related to it in early 1987, with poison gas attacks on Iraqi villages, a full year, I should say, before the Halabja incident that came to the world's attention.

We know, however though, that the most systematic nature of the killings of the depopulation of large areas of the Kurdish countryside with the destruction of the villages to rubble, the poisoning of their wells, the sealing of those wells, burning of orchards, laying of landmines around the villages to prevent the Kurds returning to their traditional homes, and the deportation on a large scale of many of the inhabitants of those villages, that took place primarily in 1988.

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It should be noted, however, that much of this killing did take place after the end of the Iran-Iraq War. It was not an action that was exclusively related to actions against would-be collaborators or supposed collaborators with the Iranians. However, these extent of the destruction is such that I think the figure that had previously been claimed by Kurdish opposition organizations of some 4,000 destroyed villages and towns, some 75 percent of the communities in northern Iraq, is a reasonable one.

While nobody has done a systematic count of that yet, based on the preliminary evidence that our organization and others have taken from the area, I think it is reasonable to say that at least three-quarters of the communities of northern Iraq have been destroyed. What has happened to their populations is the large historical question that we are still grappling with.

The Anfal campaign, then, took its name from a word that is used in the Koran, and it is a word that has a particularly chilling significance, because it is used to refer to booty or plunder that is taken from infidels. Therefore, by using this word, the Iraqi Government was giving its security forces a religious blessing or sanction to commit actions against people who were deemed as being beyond the pale, as being infidels. And I think that particular component to the campaign describes the racial element in it very aptly.

How long this campaign continued for, we are not too sure yet. We certainly think that it continued into 1989. I have seen documents which refer to large scale killings that took place as late as the middle of 1989 or September 1989, certainly within months of the outbreak of the gulf crisis 1 year later.

The abiding question that I think we have to deal with is what has become to those several hundred thousand Kurds who disappeared. We know by following the trail that many of them were first taken to way stations to switch or scattered across northern Iraq, men, women, and children together. The men would be separated from the women and children, taken away to an unknown destination.

We also know from the evidence that has been abandoned in some parts of the area now controlled by the Kurds that the women and children were later taken away in convoys of trucks. We think that the parallel with the Holocaust in Nazi Germany is an apt one, in that clearly those people were deemed for extermination.

We do know from anecdotal evidence about the existence of secret detention camps in the south. We cannot be precise about these but we know of people who have been taken there, and there is enough anecdotal evidence to suggest that further investigation is fully deserved. It is possible that some of those camps, most of them located west of the area of Suleimaniyya, near the Saudi border, were death camps. That remains to be investigated.

But the possibility that death camps exist along the Saudi-Iraq border in an area that would have been extensively surveyed by the United States and other air forces in the preparations for the gulf war is a deeply alarming one that those camps were ignored or possibly overlooked.

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The opportunities for being able to gather the evidence are quite unique at the moment. It is rare for human rights monitors, whether private organizations like ours or for the U.N., to have the ability to be able to enter a region where one can interview the survivors and the eyewitnesses first-hand, to be able to exhume the graves of the victims and to be able to look at the documents of the perpetrators to see the names of the perpetrators and of the victims themselves, some of whom may be still alive or some of whom may have been recently killed.

And to do all of this, Mr. Chairman, without any interference by the central government concerned while that government is still in power. This is a rare opportunity and one which we certainly hope we will be able to continue beyond the end of June 30, which is the current date for the expiring of the agreement with the United States and Turkey providing for the allied military shield over northern Iraq.

It is also coincidentally the date on which the memorandum of understanding between Iraq and the U.N. also expires, providing for the presence in Iraq of humanitarian organizations.

Beyond this opportunity, though, you rightly pointed out the imminent degree of risk to the populations of this area. We think that the population in northern Iraq is at last 3.5 million people. At least 400,000 of them are displaced persons from elsewhere in Kurdistan. The threat of attacks remains very constant.

We hear almost daily evidence of pressure from the Iraqi forces along the cease-fire line that they maintained across the region to push the Kurdish forces back into the area, maintaining pressure through bomb attacks, which there have been a number of recently, threats to disrupt the regional elections which the Kurds plan to hold on April 24 this year. A number of means which suggest that the allies' resolve is being tested, certainly as far as the region south of the 36th parallel is concerned. That is particularly vulnerable to these forms of pressures. And I think the danger of collapse is a very high one.

I mentioned earlier the existence of poison gas attacks prior to the Halabja incident which has come to the world's attention. I think it was purely coincidental that the Halabja incident happened in a way that came to the world's attention, because of the fact that it was near the Iran-Iraq border and the Iranians were in a position to be able to fly and report this, to be able to witness what had happened.

If it had not been for that, Halabja simply would have been one of the many other instances which have gone ignored by the Western community. I will refer only to one, which took place 1 year earlier. In fact, it was an entire valley, the Balysun Valley east of the town of Shaqluya.

In that area, I have seen video films which show—the Iraqi Government shot video films—which showed the planes coming in and attacking those villages, that showed the refugees fleeing and showing the dead bodies of the children and the women being taken away for burial under guard of the Iraqi soldiers. And it should be said, under the guard also of Kurdish mercenaries, who were working with the Iraqi forces.

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I think that the Kurdish estimate that at least 70 villages were subject to poison gas attacks of this sort is not an unreasonable one. However, we are not yet in a position to be able to determine whether that is the case. And I think it will take some extensive work before we are in a position to make that determination.

Were these legitimate attacks on collaborators with the Iranians? I have already suggested, Mr. Chairman, that they were not. I think the best evidence that I can forward is from the area of the Dohuk Province, which is right across the other side of the country from the Iranian border. It adjoins the Turkish and Syrian borders. And in that particular area, I have a document in my possession which is an original Iraqi army document referring to the attacks that took place in August 1988, after the cease fire with the Iranians, in which the campaign was mapped out in order to be able to destroy at least 70 villages in that area.

The names of the units are there, the names of the villages which they were aiming to destroy. And ycu will hear later from Dr. Clyde Snow about an exhumation that took place in one of those villages that was subject to that particular attack.

We know that at that particular time that many of the Kurdish villages were warned that a so-called Anfal attack was about to take place. They have heard about it on the clandestine Kurdish radio. They knew about other attacks that had taken place in previous months elsewhere in the region. So, forewarned, they tried to flee for the Turkish border.

When they fled toward the border, they found their way sealed by Turkish troops, by our NATO allies in Turkey. They then returned to find their way again blocked by Iraqi forces, who had occupied their village, destroyed the village, and then rounded up the citizens and killed the men above the age of 13. I shall leave Dr. Snow to speak about the details of this particular incident, but it is one graphic example of a case in which there had been a totally unwarranted killing of an innocent village.

I suggested earlier that this may not be genocide. We are not yet in a position to be able to make that determination, whether genocide is there. Certainly, the racial component that I spoke of appears to exist. The degree of intent appears to exist. We can tell that from the documents and the documents exist on a very large scale, which suggest that these attacks were preplanned and were deliberate and were aimed at Kurds, not people who are a particular category of people deemed to be opponents.

What still remains to be proven is the extent of the actions and I think it requires research efforts patiently over the next year, and an ability to be able to examine those documents in safety. And I think the importance of those documents cannot be underestimated before we are in a position to make a determination as to whether or not genocide has taken place.

Suffice to say, I believe that the characterization of Mr. Van der Stoel, the former Dutch foreign minister who is currently the special reporter in Iraq for the United States, that these were genocidal-type actions is an appropriate one. We ourselves at Middle East Watch have no hesitation in describing them as crimes against humanity as defined by the Nuremberg Tribunal.

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With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I shall move on to some of the current issues that are now affecting the region and describe these in terms which will explain the need for various changes in current policy.

There is an economic siege on the Kurdish-held region, which has been in place now for the past 5 months, a siege not imposed by the U.N., but by the Iraqi Government itself in which the entry points to this region of 3.5 million people has been sealed off and food supplies, including Government-supplied rations, have been virtually prevented from entering the region.

We know that in recent months the supply of basic food stuffs has dwindled from 25 percent of normal levels, in the case of some items, down to 10 percent of less, this at a time when the winter has been exceptionally severe in the region. Clearly, this is an action which is a breach of the Geneva Convention Protocol Two of actions that can be taken in terms of internal warfare of an attempt to stop civilians. And I think that actions that could be taken would be appropriate to try to alleviate this situation.

The Kurds are suffering not only from a shortage of food but also of fuel supplies that have been blocked entering into the area. Fuel supplies are currently at a very limited availability and prices are very high indeed, making it almost out of reach both for heating and also for transport. Prices are very high, funds are in very short supply. There are very few people who have the means to be able to afford the goods that are available.

Beyond this issue of the economic siege then, we would suggest that the Iraqi authorities, having withdrawn their services from the area and their officials from the Kurdish region, imposed the blockade on the region, that it is incumbent on the international community to waive the provisions of the U.N. Security Council trade embargo on this particular region.

This would have several advantages, Mr. Chairman. It would demonstrate the flexibility of the international community toward the Iraqi people. It would support a much persecuted people. It would third undo damage that had been wrought by allied bombing of the infrastructure of Iraq; we believe that in some cases notably against electricity generation, the bombing was excessive. And fourth, it would give a clear signal to Baghdad that it cannot get away with starving a section of its own people as a means of warfare.

In practical terms, this would permit the Kurdish regional government that will be established next month to be able to import equipment and spare parts for electricity generators, for the factories to be able to resume some form of production, for telecommunication purposes—there are no phone links in this region at the moment—to be able to import the seeds and fertilizers.

I mentioned that I believe that the allied bombing had been excessive. I think that as far as the destruction of the generating system in the country was concerned, this certainly was the case. And support should perhaps be given for its reconstruction in Kurdistan and maybe the U.S. Government should give consideration to the financing of this reconstruction. After all, the Kurds did not elect Saddam Hussein. They were his principal victims and they

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are currently suffering from the effects of the allied bombing of the region.

An issue that has been largely neglected but is one that the Kurds continue to live with, if you will excuse the phrase, is that of landmines. Landmines are spread across the area, several million of them, many of them in unmarked fields, and pose a constant danger to civilians. The death toll from landmines has not been calculated by any organization, but a not unreasonable estimate is that 10,000 people were mine victims during the course of 1991 alone, in the 9 months after the end of the uprising.

The existence of these large fields of unmarked landmines, again a contravention of international requirements for the rules of war, denies significant areas of countryside to Kurdish villagers, people who would wish to use these lands for farming or for grazing sheep or for collecting firewood and poses a constant threat to children and to women, in particular.

I believe that a campaign for mine education awareness would be appropriate and for a mine field mapping program, support for the Kurds for mine clearance equipment and the institution of a training program for their clearance. Certainly prostheses is needed for the mines' victims and it would be appropriate for the U.S. Government and for Iraq to sign the landmines protocol, which is attempting to severely restrict the use of a weapon of indiscriminate effect, whose main victims are primarily civilians.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Whitley follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ANDREW WHITLEY

Thank you for holding this important hearing, Chairman Pell, and for inviting us to participate. My name is Andrew Whitley, and I am the Executive Director of Middle East Watch. As you know, Middle East Watch is an independent human rights monitoring organization affiliated with Human Rights Watch.

Before proceeding with my remarks about the situation of human rights in Iraq, I would like to say a word about the role of the Congress, and particularly your own role, in attempting to bring Iraqi abuses against their own people to the attention of the world. Human rights in Iraq became the focus of a great deal of attention in the United States and abroad at the time of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990. As you know, of course, Saddam Hussein had more than proved his capacity for extraordinarily abusive policies many years before the invasion. Indeed, the 24-year history of the Baath regime has been characterized by a consistent pattern of gross abuses of internationally recognized human rights, including political imprisonment, torture, political executions, and suppression of all independent civilian institutions.

Iraq's Kurdish population has been for many years the target of particular savagery. The study of the Iraqi regime's use of poison gas against the Kurds in 1988 by Senate Foreign Relations Committee staff members Peter Galbraith and Christopher Van Hollen was critically important in publicizing that atrocity. Mr. Galbraith's return trips to the region last year, visiting northern Iraq at considerable risk to himself, provided in a timely fashion invaluable first-hand evidence of the calamities endured by the Kurds.

It is worth noting today that under your leadership the U.S. Senate responded to that record of abuse and called for a dramatic change in U.S. policy toward Iraq with the passage—over strong objections by the executive branch—in September 1988 of a tough sanctions bill. If that bill had been enacted by the full Congress, it would have prohibited the sale of military equipment of any kind, prohibited the granting of credits or credit guarantees, barred the sale or transfer of any item subject to export controls, and banned U.S. importation of Iraqi petroleum products.[1]

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[1] A weaker version of the sanctions bill was passed by the House of Representatives, but the two bodies failed to reconcile the differences before the Congress adjourned for the year.

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Your constant vigilance on human rights in Iraq has made an extraordinary contribution to the cause of international human rights. We are very grateful to you.

As you know, Middle East Watch has itself been closely monitoring human rights in Iraq since its founding 3 years ago. Our February 1990 study on human rights in Iraq was the first full-length report issued by Middle East Watch.[2] At this morning's hearing, I would like to revisit some of the human rights issues that we reported upon in 1990 in the light of the extensive new information that has become available since the inception in northern Iraq of Operation Provide Comfort, in mid-1991, as well as look at fresh abuses by the Baath regime over the past year, since the end of the Gulf War. I will focus particularly on the situation of the Kurds in northern Iraq, but feel obliged to mention as well the horrific abuses still being perpetrated against Shi'a dissidents in southern Iraq.

ATROCITIES AGAINST THE KURDS DURING THE *ANFAL* CAMPAIGN

Middle East Watch has known of extraordinary abuses against Iraq's Kurdish population in the mid to late 1980's for some time. In our 1990 report, we reported extensively on a virtual extermination campaign against the Kurds by Saddam Hussein which involved the destruction of as many as 4,000 towns and villages, the use of poison gas against Kurdish communities, the forcible relocation of an estimated half a million Kurds from their homes, and the killings of tens of thousands. Our conclusions in that report were, however, necessarily tentative because northern Iraq was under such extreme repression that fact-finding missions to the area were impossible and most of our information was secondary.

The creation of a protected enclave in the north by the U.N. at the end of the war against Iraq has permitted unprecedented access to the area for human rights monitors. Thus we are now in a position to gather extensive, first-hand information about past abuses in Iraq, including the terrible events of the late 1980s known as the Anfal campaign.[3] With the north now under Kurdish control, an extraordinary cache of official documents (including video and audio tapes) have been recovered from secret police buildings. The documents provide detailed documentary evidence of abuses carried out by security forces over the past two decades. Some files contain tape recordings and photographs of torture sessions and executions. Other documents include long, handwritten lists of political prisoners who were executed by firing squads or died under torture. Still others contained high-level directives from Baghdad ordering the forced relocation of tens of thousands of Kurdish villagers.[4]

Our initial inspection of some of these documents confirms our worst fears about the extent of Iraqi atrocities against the Kurds during the Anfal campaign. I have seen government videotapes, for example, of Iraqi planes dropping chemical weapons on Kurdish villages, and have heard a tape recording of the Iraqi official in charge of the Anfal campaign, Ali Hassan al-Majid (now Iraq's defense minister) discuss his plans to wipe out the Kurds, stating: "Yes, I'll certainly look after [the Kurds.] I'll do it by burying them with bulldozers. That's how I'll do it."

Last month, I spent a week travelling across the entire Kurdish rebel-held region of northern Iraq. The scale of the devastation of the countryside wrought by the Iraqi army in recent years was shocking even to someone who thought he was familiar with the details: one after another, large, stone-built villages had been comprehensively reduced to rubble; wells had been sealed with concrete or poisoned; orchards burnt; landmines placed around the destroyed communities, to prevent any return by the villagers. Occasionally, one would see new concrete housing complexes, marking those places where the authorities had brought in Arab farmers from the south, to replace Kurdish communities relocated to unknown destinations. Forbidding fortresses strung in a line across Kurdistan were used, I was repeatedly

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[2] That study was reissued by Yale University Press in 1990 under the title *"Human Rights in Iraq."*

[3] *Anfal*, meaning booty taken from the infidel, is the Koranic term used by the Iraqi authorities for their campaign against the Kurdish population. The term is extremely interesting in that it clearly suggests that the Kurds themselves were targeted because they were Kurds—or "infidel." Considering that the overwhelming majority of Kurds are orthodox Sunni Muslims, the use of the word infidel is indicative of the racial element pervading the government campaign.

[4] The question has been asked as to why the Iraqi police and intelligence officials kept such a damning account of their horrendous abuses; we know of few, if any, other cases in the world where the authorities kept such detailed records of their crimes. Lower-level officials may have recorded their deeds as a means of advancing within the ranks, by proving that orders had been carried out efficiently or to claim the bounty provided by Baghdad for dead *"mukharribin"*—the Arabic term for "saboteurs" used to refer to all those in northern Iraq regarded as opponents of the regime.

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told, as waystations for thousands of deported Kurdish families. Stories are often heard of secret "death camps" in the desert border region adjoining Saudi Arabia. While these remain to be checked out, it is an incontrovertible fact that at least 100,000, and possibly as many as 300,000, Kurdish men, women and children disappeared during the past decade and remain to be accounted for.

In various secure locations, the major Kurdish parties each hold many tons of captured Iraqi secret police documents. I visited one of those locations, controlled by Mr. Jalal Talabani's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, and was able to verify for myself the volume, authenticity and significance of this documentation hoard. Ensuring the safety of this material and making it accessible to researchers concerned with human rights and with the principle of accountability of officials responsible for gross rights abuses should, in my judgment, be a matter of paramount importance.

In addition to the photographs, records, and tapes, human rights monitors have also been able to build a record of Iraqi abuses by investigating actual gravesites. Since taking control of the north, the Kurds themselves have begun unearthing the graves of Anfal victims in towns and villages throughout the region. Relatives have managed to identify some of the deceased from clothing remains. In December 1991, Middle East Watch and Physicians for Human Rights sent a delegation of forensic scientists to northern Iraq to observe and assist in the exhumation, identification, and determination of probable cause and manner of death of individuals interred in mass and single, unmarked graves. The team included the eminent forensic anthropologist Dr. Clyde Snow, who has pioneered the application of forensic anthropology to human rights research. Dr. Snow returned to Iraqi Kurdistan last month and was able to conduct a preliminary exhumation of another newly discovered mass gravesite, at the village of Kereimeh in Dohuk province.

Though in our first forensic mission we necessarily concentrated on a relatively small number of graves, it is clear from our communications with the Kurdish leadership and our visual inspection of the region that there are untold numbers of Saddam Hussein's victims buried clandestinely in northern Iraq. Work on documenting the full record will take many months, possibly years, and should be conducted as much as possible by local people. In addition, the possibility exists of utilizing high altitude or satellite remote-sensing methodology to locate suspected mass graves of Kurds in government-controlled regions of southern Iraq. Techniques previously used for archeological and land resource purposes could in this manner be turned to the cause of human rights, piercing a government's ability to hide abuses against its own citizens behind a thick veil of "national sovereignty", denying access to international observers.

In order to obtain the essential information available from documentary evidence, burial sites, and eyewitnesses, including survivors of massacres and relatives of "disappeared" people, Middle East Watch is sending a human rights legal expert to northern Iraq next month for an extended stay. She will assist newly established local groups with training in human rights documentation, especially with respect to the Anfal campaign, and conduct some of the research herself. Middle East Watch and Physicians for Human Rights are also planning to place an international team of forensic scientists in the field for an extended stay, to systemize the ongoing work of exhuming victims of extrajudicial executions and clandestine burials.

ABUSES IN KURDISTAN AND SOUTHERN IRAQ AFTER THE GULF WAR

In the wake of Iraq's defeat in the 1991 Gulf War, it was as if the Anfal campaign was to be repeated. As you know, residents in the Shi'a areas of the south rose up against the regime beginning on March 1, and the Kurds in the north followed suit on March 5. Police stations and military posts were captured, prisoners released, and thousands participated in an outpouring of popular support for the rebellion.

As you are also aware, the rebellions did not long survive the fury of Iraq's military might. Iraqi troops conducted a ferocious campaign of indiscriminate slaughter, using extensive aerial bombardment of rebel-held cities and dispatching heavily armed soldiers against unarmed men, women, and children. No reliable statistics are available concerning the number of people killed or wounded by either side during the uprising. But senior Arab diplomats told the London-based daily newspaper *Al Hayat* in October 1991 that Iraq leaders were privately acknowledging the death of 250,000 people during the uprisings, with most of the casualties in the south.

Middle East Watch has taken extensive testimony from refugees and displaced people who bear witness to the practices used by Iraqi troops to subdue rebellious cities. In Basra, Najaf, Karbala, and Suleimaniyya, homes were destroyed, shrines and hospitals rocketed, patients rounded up in hospitals and murdered, suspected

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rebels publicly executed by the hundreds, and whole families executed. In the south, Shi'a religious institutions and places of pilgrimage were targeted for destruction.

As government forces closed in on various cities, thousand of civilians began to flee, terrorized by the indiscriminate shelling and fearful of the vengeance that Iraqi troops would wreak. In all, over 1.5 million Iraqis escaped from the strife-torn cities during March and early April, crossing into Turkey and Iran, or fleeing into zones controlled by Kurdish rebels in the north or into the marshes in the south beyond the reach of government forces.

Even after the south was subdued, we received reports of executions as late as May, with Iraqi troops seizing suspected rebels or civilians with suspected rebel links. Over 100 Shi'a clergymen, religious students and others associated with Grand Ayatollah Abu al-Qassem al-Kho'i, the senior Shi'a figure in Iraq and one of the most revered worldwide, were detained and are feared executed.

At this time, it is difficult to know with any degree of accuracy what is happening in the south. By mid-summer the government had reestablished full control in the region, and sealed off most access to the outside world. A Memorandum of Understanding between the U.N. and the Iraqi government provides, *inter alia*, for the deployment in Iraq of a 500-strong force of lightly armed guards. That agreement is due to expire on June 30, 1992, and on present indications its renewal appears to be in considerable doubt.

Though it has been very difficult for human rights monitors to report on developments in the south, some evidence does filter out. The *New York Times* reported on March 15, for example, on the continuing counterinsurgency campaign against the Shi'a, including the use of helicopter gunships. The *Times* article noted that Iraqi soldiers have cut off food and supplies to some 10,000 rebels and 200,000 displaced people living in the northern marshes region of Howeizah and that troops have begun to enter the area to wipe out remaining resistance.[5] Homes full of unarmed civilians, including children, are believed to have been indiscriminately shelled, causing many deaths. Similar, credible reports about the imposition of a military siege on the marshes region, aimed at starving out those who had taken refuge there, circulated last summer.

It is important to note that a hard-hitting U.N. report issued last month on the human rights situation in Iraq by former Dutch Foreign Minister Max van der Stoel warned that if a U.N. presence is not established in the marshes "a new bloodbath" could occur. Given the gravity of the current situation, Mr. Van der Stoel, the special rapporteur on Iraq, advocated the dispatch of human rights monitors to the region, a bold and an innovative step for the U.N.

Middle East Watch strongly endorses the principle involved and regrets that at the recently concluded session at Geneva of the U.N. Human Rights Commission, this recommendation was not incorporated into the final resolution renewing Mr. Van der Stoel's mandate for a further 12 months. When the issue of Iraq's human rights record is taken up again, in the fall, by the U.N. General Assembly, we urge the U.S. government to give full support to this practical measure to monitor observation of human rights by a known abusive government.

In the north, Kurdish fighters were able during June and July last year to establish control over a triangular area from Zakho, on the border with Turkey and Syria, southeast to the Iranian border, near Khaneqin. Up to the 36th parallel, this zone is protected by allied air cover pursuant to U.N. Security Council Resolution 688; but it should be stressed that as much as half the population of the Kurdish-controlled region lives south of the 36th parallel, exposing civilians to constant risk.

In September and October 1991, renewed attacks by government troops using heavy artillery and helicopter gunships against the towns of Kifre and Kalar, along the *de facto* ceasefire line between the two sides' forces, created a new wave of displaced persons. Kurdish officials estimated that about 200,000 people were forced to flee further north into the enclave, adding to the heavy humanitarian burden already being borne by the Iraqi Kurdistan Front—an alliance of eight parties administering the region—and by international relief agencies. In recent weeks, fighting has flared up again in the region east of the government-controlled city of Kirkuk, and fears are growing that government forces will attempt to disrupt next month's planned elections in Iraqi Kurdistan. These elections for a regional parliament are designed to reduce the lack of authority, and legitimacy, vis-a-vis Baghdad and the outside world faced by the Front. The parliament would, in turn, form a local gov-

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[5] "Iraqi Rebels, Deep in Marshes, Struggle to Keep Cause Alive," by Chris Hedges, The *New York Times*, March 15, 1992.

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ernment empowered to administer the region and negotiate the autonomy agreement being sought by the Kurds from Baghdad.

Based on my own observations last month and those of other missions Middle East Watch sent to northern Iraq in September and December 1991, the UNHCR and other private relief agencies based in the rebel-controlled region have been doing an excellent job of feeding and caring for an estimated 400,000 homeless Kurds. The task of rebuilding destroyed villages is also proceeding. But much remains to be done, and the obstacles are formidable.

Not the least of the Kurds' current problems is the economic blockade imposed on the region by Baghdad since last October. Strictly enforced by the Iraqi army, the blockade has halted all fuel and virtually all food supplies entering Kurdistan from the south, producing scarcities, high prices and considerable hardship. The exceptionally severe recent winter in the region has exacerbated the problem. While I did not see any evidence of imminent starvation during my brief visit in February, I believe that the precarious food situation in the rebel enclave is certain to worsen in coming months if the government blockade is maintained.

An additional matter of considerable concern to Middle East Watch and other non-governmental organizations working in Iraq is the presence of millions of landmines in areas utilized by civilians. A study conducted by Middle East Watch notes that between March and September last year over 1,650 landmine victims were treated at one hospital alone: the Suleimaniyya city hospital. Of these victims, nearly 400 suffered traumatic amputations.

The total number of deaths from this indiscriminate weapon is unknown. But the scale of the toll can be judged from the fact that in the district of Mawat, near the Iranian border, a region of about 60 villages, local officials told me last month that over the past year there had been at least 100 mine fatalities. Most of the mines laid in northern Iraq were anti-personnel devices, sold by an Italian firm during the 1980–88 Iran-Iraq War, in apparent contravention of the European Community's embargo on arms sales to the belligerents.

Instituting an effective mines clearance program, educating Kurds in mines awareness, and providing necessary prosthesis support are all essential elements of a program that could permit Kurdish villagers returning to their homes to resume their lives. Without the first two elements of such a program, large parts of the countryside will remain off-limits to farmers and shepherds because of the constant danger from mines, denying villagers the use of much productive land and, thus, exacerbating the shortage of food.

The agreement between the United States and Turkey permitting the operation of the Operation Provide Comfort allied forces protecting the enclave expires on June 28, 1992. The international community must address the likely consequences of the withdrawal of the air cover that has, to date, largely protected the north from the kind of extraordinary reprisals that have decimated Shi'a areas in the south. Currently there are some 3.5 million Kurdish civilians in the north. Almost all have experienced the brutality of the Iraqi forces in northern Iraq, either during the Anfal campaign or more recently in the aftermath of the uprising. Given this past record of extraordinary atrocities, there is not much doubt in our mind about the future of this community if international protection is withdrawn precipitously.

The fact that the Kurdish leadership has captured rooms-full of damning evidence of Iraqi atrocities over the years (complete with the names of the perpetrators and victims) makes it all the more likely that they will be subjected to harsh reprisals if the Baath Party government is permitted to reestablish control in the north, as it has done in the south. This should not be allowed to happen.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Whitley. Mr. Eric Stover, Physicians for Human Rights.

STATEMENT OF MR. ERIC STOVER, PHYSICIANS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, BOSTON, MA

Mr. STOVER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am a consultant to Physicians for Human Rights and Human Rights Watch and I am the author of the report which you referred to earlier.

I am here to testify on behalf of Physicians for Human Rights and would just like to say a word about that organization. It uses

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the knowledge and skills of the medical sciences to investigate violations of human rights, including political killings and torture.

Physicians for Human Rights first sent a team of epidemiologists and doctors to the border of Iraqi Kurdistan in October 1988 to investigate the reports of the use of chemical weapons against the Kurds. Three years later, after the March 1991 uprising, a second team of doctors traveled to the Kurdish refugee camps in Turkey and Iran to examine the medical conditions in the camps.

Last December, as you mentioned earlier, Physicians for Human Rights and Middle East Watch sent a team of forensic scientists to Iraqi Kurdistan. Dr. Snow and I were part of that team. This time we went to work alongside the Kurds in the exhumation of unmarked graves containing the remains of persons who had been killed or reportedly executed by the Iraqi secret police and military in the late 1980's.

I should mention that Dr. Snow and I have worked in several countries organizing the medical and legal investigation of the disappeared, including Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, the Philippines, and Guatemala. Dr. Snow himself has formed three forensic teams comprised of young scientists to carry on this sort of work in Argentina, Guatemala, and Chile.

Why do we investigate the graves of extralegal killings? From a humanitarian perspective, families will finally know the fate of their missing relatives and be able to give them a proper burial. Also, to the extent possible, the identification and determination of the cause and manner of death of even a small portion of the disappeared can provide the international community and the courts with objective and scientific evidence critical to the conviction of those responsible for these crimes. In addition, through forensic documentation and subsequent litigation, the knowledge that governments can be held accountable for their actions may deter such practices in the future, both in Iraq and elsewhere.

By last October, many of the municipal workers and gravediggers in Iraqi Kurdistan had begun taking Kurdish investigators to sites where they claimed that they had buried the bodies of Kurdish political prisoners. Kurdish investigators began exhuming these graves. The exhumations were done very hastily, often losing vital bits of evidence such as teeth or certain bones and particularly bullets. It was understandable because the Kurds wanted to identify the victims and be able to return the remains to family members. They were identifying most of the remains that they had exhumed by their clothes.

We heard of this, and through Middle East Watch and Physicians for Human Rights, went to Kurdistan with two purposes. The first was to investigate if these graves contained the remains of executed prisoners. Second, we wanted to train these Kurdish investigators in the proper scientific techniques for exhuming graves.

We took testimony from gravediggers. We spoke to the families of the disappeared and we interviewed former prisoners. One gravedigger in Sulaymaniyah, a city in the south, told us that he and another worker buried between 75 and 80 bodies in a 4-day period around New Year's Day, 1988, all of those with single gunshot wounds to the head.

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We also collected Iraqi secret police documents, particularly those that dealt with the burial of bodies. We examined morgue records. Some of them mentioned the burial of entire families. We visited cemeteries and former prisons and military bases, where the excavation of gravesites were underway. As we worked at the gravesites, hundreds of people came down from the hills and gathered around the graves. Some were simply curious. Others came with photographs—one woman even came with a lock of hair—in the hope that we might uncover a missing relative or friend.

What we found in most of the graves was the assassin's signature, a single gunshot wound to the head. In this case, based on the testimonies we were able to take and the evidence on the bones, these executions had been carried out by the Iraqi secret police.

For me, the most vivid moment during our visit took place as a gravedigger named Ahmad Saed Akmad took us on a tour of Irbil's municipal cemetery. Today the cemetery is pockmarked with open pits and mounds of tattered clothing. By December, Kurdish investigators had uncovered dozens of single and mass graves in the cemetery. Two weeks earlier, prior to our visit, our host, Ahmad, had even uncovered the grave of his missing brother. There was one case, however, that seemed to horrify Ahmad more than the others. And I would like to read from his testimony.

It was in the autumn of 1986. I was called to the hospital morgue soon after the attempted assassination of the Governor of Irbil. In fact, it was the fourth attempt. An Iraqi officer met me at the morgue entrance and took me to a security police vehicle. Inside were the corpses of about 19 young men. Their bodies were riddled with bullets, their hands were tied behind their backs and they were blindfolded.

The officer said I was to bury these dogs. Later the morgue workers told me that these young men were students who had been randomly rounded up and shot by a firing squad only a few hours earlier. It was nothing more than the retaliation for the botched execution attempt, a way of warning the Kurds.

So I went with the officer and the bodies to the cemetery. Traditionally, we washed the bodies before burial and then wrapped them in a white cloth. But the officer would not allow it. He said it was to be done quickly. So I buried them with their clothes on. However, I did manage to place stones around the bodies and turn their heads toward Mecca.

When we were at this gravesite, Dr. Snow and another forensic anthropologist, Dr. Karen Burns, opened one of the graves.

It contained a skull. It bore two entrance and exit wounds that appeared to have been caused by an automatic weapon put on multiple lock hold. The skull was that of a young male, aged 16 to 17, and a blindfold, a thick red material like a turban, was drawn across the eye sockets and tied at the base of the skull. I mention this because it demonstrates how the physical evidence found in the grave can corroborate eyewitness testimony.

A 7-day visit to Kurdistan could never document the extent of Iraqi human rights abuses over a period of two decades. Even so, if our findings in only one small area of the region hold true for other areas, then substantial evidence exists to support the charge that the Iraqi Government has committed crimes against humanity in Kurdistan.

To give this charge perspective, consider that in Argentina during the last period of military rule, 1 Argentine out of 2,900 disappeared. This was over a 9-year period. If we take the figure of 180,000 disappeared in Kurdistan—and I must say that we cannot verify that figure, but is the figure that the Kurdish political par-

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ties have put forward it means 1 Kurd in 18 disappeared in probably a 4- or 5-year period. And if we even halve that 180,000 figure, if would be 1 Kurd disappeared out of 36.

We believe that the international community has a responsibility to help the Kurds investigate these crimes. We believe that assistance should be aimed at helping them gather testimonial evidence, documentary evidence, and the physical, or medicolegal, evidence which I have referred to today. We also would like to return to Iraqi Kurdistan with a team of forensic scientists, perhaps a larger team this time and with more time. We would like that team to be comprised of Guatemalan, Argentine, and Chilean forensic anthropologists and make it a truly international team, to help the Kurds in the exhumation of these graves. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Stover. We would now like to hear from your associate, Dr. Snow, Dr. Clyde Collins Snow, forensic anthropologist from Norman, OK.

STATEMENT OF DR. CLYDE COLLINS SNOW, FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGIST, NORMAN, OK

Dr. SNOW. As Mr. Stover and Mr. Whitley indicated, we made two trips to Iraqi Kurdistan. First, in late December from around December 20 until about January 2 or 3, and then later on a shorter trip in mid-February. I am going to show you some slides of our findings, some of which both Mr. Whitley and Mr. Stover have already discussed.

In Suleimaniyya, we went to an ex-Iraqi military base where many Kurds and other people had been executed. In the area there was a mass grave, containing not only the skeletons of Kurds, but also the skeletons of Iranian prisoners of war—we were able to identify them from documents found with the bodies—who, according to our informants, were wounded, taken prisoner, and then, after several weeks or several months, were simply executed. They had been killed by a single gunshot wound to the head.

Another area, which is a former security police headquarters, is also in Suleimaniyya. It is now inhabited by Kurdish refugees who live in the abandoned buildings. There we found an execution site. This is very close to the building where the refugees are now living. There was a series of five posts, to which victims were tied. Behind them, was an embankment from which, we were told, the refugee children had been collecting spent bullets by the buckets full.

Our informants indicated that perhaps as many as 40 to 50 people a day were executed in that site for many months. The Kurds had been able to find some Iraqi video film of some of these executions, and here you see a victim tied to a post literally riddled with bullets. And to me, most obscene of all is this frame where a victim, whether Kurdish or a Shi'a, we will never know, is being exhibited like a big game trophy by his executioners.

We went to a large cemetery, also in Suleimaniyya, where many people were buried who died under torture or were executed by Iraqi security forces. With the aid of some of the gravediggers we were able to identify some of these graves and exhumed three.

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We exposed the skeletons of three individuals and took them to the local municipal morgue for examination. And, again, all three exhibited the trademark of the executioner, the single gunshot wound to the back of the head.

Mr. Stover talked about the case of the mass grave of the 19 young men in Irbil. And here is that grave. Here we are in the process of doing an exhumation. We could not exhume all 19 of those boys, but I selected one grave at random and had it uncovered so that we could verify what the informants were telling us that these young men had been executed, that they ranged in age from around 12 up to 17.

In the one grave we exhumed, we found a boy whose age I estimated as around 15 to 17 years. He still had a blindfold around his head. And over on the left side of the skull you can see three closely spaced gunshot wounds of exit. He had been shot on the right side of the head, with the bullets exiting on the left.

In February I went back, along with Mr. Whitley, and we went to a village called Koneme, which is about 30 miles south of the Turkish border in the Province of Dohuk. This area is hard to get into. It is very mountainous, at this time of the year there is heavy snow cover, and the only way it was accessible, for me at any rate, was on mule back. You climb this hill, this low range of mountains and reach this crest, and you overlook a valley which is now desolate but which our informants told us at one time were many villages. All these villages were destroyed in the Operation Anfal that Mr. Whitley mentioned previously.

As you go down into the valley, you approach the former village of Koneme. And there, there was nothing left standing except some utility poles. The bare areas there represent houses, the homes of people. Probably somewhere between 150 to 250 people lived there until 1988. The largest recognizable building was the schoolhouse, which as you can see here, has been totally demolished.

Accompanying us were four survivors of the massacre that occurred at Koneme on August 28, 1988. They told us the following story. Along in early August 1988, word got out in that general area that there would be an Operation Anfal, that the villages would be destroyed and the population would be displaced. The entire village decided to leave and try to get up to the Turkish border and they began walking north, keeping cross country because the Iraqi military forces had control of the roads. Some of the men who had tractors loaded up the elderly and sick, and drove them until they ran out of fuel, when they had to be abandoned.

But before they reached the border they were met by an Iraqi blocking force and told to return home, which they did. They returned to Koneme and were not molested, until August 28, when, at around 7 o'clock in the morning, an Iraqi security force entered the village and rounded up the entire population. They separated out 34 men and boys. The victims ranged from age 13 up to 53. They took them over the hill from the village into a little canyon.

They lined them up in the bottom of the canyon and made them kneel. A detachment of 18 Iraqi soldiers were brought in, facing these 34 villagers kneeling in front of them. And under the orders of a Lt. Abdulsattar, they began firing. Of the 34 victims, 6 were wounded but somehow survived. The bodies were allowed to lay out

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for a few days until the odors became bothersome to the Iraqi soldiers still camped in the village, so they buried them in a mass grave.

It is an area, there, about 8 yards long and about 5 yards wide. It is surrounded by some concrete blocks. I asked where these came from, since obviously the Iraqis would not build a wall around a mass grave, and this gentleman here, Mr. Abdullah Kadar Abdullah, a 56-year-old man who has two sons and two nephews in that mass grave, said that when he was able to return to Koneme last year, he had built the wall himself. He said that was before the massacre. He had been saving those blocks to build himself a home.

We gridded the area out and began digging. One of the first things we found was this wallet containing the documents of one of the 28 victims. As we continued clearing the area, we began to find skeletal remains. Assisting me was one of the survivors, a man named Kahir Kalil Mohammed, who has a father and a brother in that grave and Mr. Abdulla Kadar Abdullah—the man who built the wall and whose two sons are buried there. It is a strange kind of archeology when you have to learn how to exhume bones of your sons and your fathers.

There was no place habitable left in the area, so that evening the only place we could find to stay was a cave. We spent the night there, then we returned the next morning to continue our work.

By the end of the exhumation, we were able to expose the skeletons of 5 of the 28 victims. We found they had died of gunshot wounds, substantiating the story the Kurds, who told us about this atrocity and how it occurred. We covered up the remains as best we could, and I told the people there that I would return some time this year, perhaps with a team of my colleagues from my Argentine, Chilean, and Guatemalan teams, who I have trained to do this kind of work in their own countries. Perhaps, with their help, we can get a Kurdish team organized to do these types of investigation.

Toward the end of the day three women trudged over the mountain and sat silently at the edge of the cold grave. They have husbands and sons in that grave.

Of course, the purpose of our investigation was to gather evidence that could be used in the remote chance that Lt. Abdulsattar or the people who gave him his orders, might someday be taken to trial.

But when I asked the people up there what they wanted and why they wanted us to come back, they expressed a simpler hope. They said they would like for us to return and exhume the skeletons and get them identified so that they could rebury them in the old graveyard where for generations the people of Koneme had buried their dead. This little cemetery is only about 200 yards from the mass graves. It struck me that that is not a large problem on the cosmic scale of things, but you have to remember, Mr. Chairman, that up there in Koneme they have a pretty small cosmos, or what is left of it. And there will not be any left at all unless the mandate to protect the Kurds is extended. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Dr. Snow, for that compelling testimony. We would like to hear now from Mr. Shep Lowman, of the U.S. Catholic Conference. Mr. Lowman.

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STATEMENT OF SHEP LOWMAN, MIGRATION AND REFUGEE SERVICES, U.S. CATHOLIC CONFERENCE, WASHINGTON, DC

Mr. LOWMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am testifying today as a refugee policy analyst at the Migration and Refugee Services of the U.S. Catholic Conference. As you know, USCC is the public policy agency of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops of the United States, and the conference does very much appreciate the opportunity to offer testimony on this vital humanitarian issue this morning before this distinguished committee.

For 8 days this past February I traveled in northern Iraq throughout the Kurdish provinces with Mr. Stephen Corliss, a consultant for Refugees International. And we traveled throughout the region and talked with administrators of government services, businessmen, economists, political and community leaders, and many displaced persons and average citizens in the street.

We did not attempt to document, in a fashion that the previous speakers have documented, violations of human rights. But I would note in the context of their testimony that you cannot travel throughout that region without coming repeatedly upon sites that are simply flat rubble that used to be prosperous agricultural villages of anywhere from several hundred to several thousand persons. Also, you cannot have a conversation with a Kurd for any length of time without the concerns being raised by that individual about the kind of events that have been spoken to this morning. It is in the popular mindset of the citizens of that area, as to what may happen to them if, indeed, Saddam Hussein and Iraqi military and security forces reentered the region.

Now those of us that are engaged in refugee affairs often attempt to develop plans.

The CHAIRMAN. Excuse me, could you move the mike a little bit closer to your mouth?

Mr. LOWMAN. Yes, thank you. Those of us who attempt to develop plans and procedures to try to predict and deal with a refugee crisis in advance find that a very difficult thing to do. But I think the relevance of my testimony this morning, in the context of testimony given on mass killings in the past, is that today we are discussing a situation which we strongly believe has the potential, in a matter of months, to develop into a major refugee crisis if present conditions are allowed to continue unchanged.

One year ago nearly 2 million Kurdish refugees fled northern Iraq to Turkey and Iran. Led by the United States, the international community responded with massive refugee assistance, and arrangements were made for the security of persons that would be returning to Iraq. Security Council resolutions created a security zone. Iraqi air operations were prohibited above the 36th parallel. Arrangements were made for coalition forces, and the Government of Turkey for the monitoring of Iraqi air activity. An agreement was negotiated between the U.N. and Baghdad which authorized the activities of U.N. agencies, including the U.N. guards and the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees to provide security and assistance to the returning refugees in the northern three provinces of Iraq.

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Now all of these arrangements expire this coming June. Most of the refugees, that fled in 1991, returned to Iraq and the problem left the headlines; went off of our television screens. Most of us assumed that it was solved. Unfortunately, however, we now face the serious possibility of a renewed exodus of Kurdish refugees from northern Iraq.

A point, Mr. Chairman, that I would particularly want to emphasize today, is that, in our view, that possibility exists even if the present security and assistance arrangements in the Kurdish provinces are extended past June. There is still a possibility of a serious refugee crisis. In other words vital as it may be, and it is very vital, to extend these arrangements past June, simply extending current arrangements cannot be expected to avert an eventual renewed Kurdish refugee crisis.

And the reason we believe that is that the internal blockade which is being maintained by the Government of Iraq against its own three northern provinces has the capability of breaking down the fabric of the society in that area to such an extent that it would threaten a dissolution of the control of the Kurdish political leadership and the ability of that leadership to effectively resist the reentry into these northern provinces of Iraqi military and security forces without any checks on their actions.

This internal blockade contains the following principal elements. It sharply limits the flow of critically needed basic foodstuffs and fuel from central Iraq to its northern provinces. It totally restricts the flow of all other items from Iraq to the northern provinces, except for very limited humanitarian items brought in by the UNHCR and NGO's. It degrades and will eventually cut off the provision of Government services in the northern provinces, which creates an administrative vacuum in that area. It severely reduces the purchasing power of the area so that it is difficult or impossible to replace what is not coming in from the south by purchasing them from other countries. And finally, it nearly eliminates the creation of new income in the northern provinces through the reconstruction of agriculture or the restarting of state enterprises.

It is hard to put a timeframe to a prediction of when you are going to get a new refugee crisis. It is perfectly clear that we are in a dynamic situation. We are not in a bad situation which is stable, we are in a dynamic situation which is declining. Government services in the Kurdish provinces are already seriously reduced and declining. The health of the population is declining, and some deaths are already attributable to the blockade. Reserves of financial, material, and human resources are being rapidly consumed.

Certainly, the international community needs to reaffirm its commitment to the protection of the Kurdish minority and to consider how to continue the arrangements needed to provide for the security of those refugees who returned under the protection of the Security Council resolutions. In addition, however, if our evaluation is correct, consideration must also be given to how to insure the external provision of at least minimal basic goods and services to the Kurdish provinces.

The Kurds repeatedly raised with us Security Council Resolution 688 which guarantees the human rights of the various ethnic groups in Iraq. The Kurds see the internal blockade as economic

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warfare, as a violation of their human rights, and do not understand why the Security Council has not taken action to insist that it be lifted. We agree. The blockade is causing heavy and growing hardships, and the U.S. Catholic Conference recommends that the United States press the Security Council to require that the internal blockade against the Kurdish provinces be lifted, and civil service salaries and pensions restored.

However, if the Iraqi Government fails to respond to such a request, consideration must be given to what actions can be taken to compensate for the effects of the internal blockade. These could include authorization by the Security Council for U.N. agencies to deal directly with the provincial civil services and the political leadership to be elected on April 24 of this year, on an interim basis while a political agreement between Kurdish leadership and Baghdad is sought. And at least, for emergency assistance and medium-term development.

Considerable ground was broken in providing guarantees for a returning displaced population in the Kurdish refugee crisis of 1991, Mr. Chairman, but if the international community folds its tents and departs the scene too soon, it is nearly certain that we will see yet another Kurdish refugee crisis, with its accompanying tragic loss of life. Thank you very much, sir.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Lowman follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SHEP LOWMAN

Northern Iraq: A New Kurdish Exodus?

Mr. Chairman, I am Shep Lowman, Refugee Policy Analyst for the Office of Migration and Refugee Services of the U.S. Catholic Conference (MRS/USCC). The USCC is the public policy agency of the Catholic Bishops of the United States. The Conference is grateful for the opportunity to provide testimony on this vital humanitarian problem before this distinguished Committee. Those of us engaged in refugee affairs often attempt to develop plans and procedures to predict and deal with refugee crises and, if possible, to prevent them in advance. It is often difficult to predict such a crises. Today, we are discussing a situation which we strongly believe has the potential in a matter of months to develop into a major refugee crisis if present conditions are allowed to continue unchanged.

Along with Mr. Walt Grazer, Deputy Director of the USCC Migration and Refugee Services, I visited Turkey from January 22–29, 1992, where we talked with Iraqi refugees in Turkey, with officials of the Government of Turkey, UNHCR and the U.S. Embassy in Ankara and with NGO and Church officials.[1] From January 29 to February 8, 1992, I traveled in Northern Iraq with Mr. Stephen Corliss, a Washington attorney who was traveling as a consultant for Refugees International. We traveled extensively throughout the Northern three provinces and talked with the administrators of government services, businessmen, economists, political and community leaders and many displaced persons and average citizens.

One year ago, nearly 2 million Kurdish and Iraqi Christian refugees fled from Northern Iraq to Turkey and Iran. At that time the U.S. Catholic Conference stated that:

> *In this emergency situation, we accept the fact that safe zones within Iraq may help save lives and protect innocent refugees. In developing and carrying out this concept, we urge that steps be taken to involve fully the international community and to avoid new armed conflict in the region. Because of the urgency of the present situation, the United States must do everything possible to address the immediate human suffering, even as the world mobilizes to develop effective longer term solutions under international auspices and with the cooperation of all the affected governments, including Iraq, Iran, and Turkey. Recognizing that*

[1] A copy of the report of this visit can be found in committee files.

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the best solution for the Iraqi refugees would be to return in safety and dignity to their homes, we support all efforts toward that end.

The statement recognized the efforts of the governments of Iran and Turkey to respond to the crisis and went on to say, "As religious leaders we continue to urge our nation to do all we can to protect human life and human rights in the Middle East."

Led by the United States, the international community responded with massive refugee assistance. The Security Council resolutions, which created security zones for the returning refugees, prohibited Iraqi air operations above the 36th parallel, and called for humane treatment of Iraqi minorities. Arrangements were made between Coalition forces and the Government of Turkey for the monitoring of Iraqi air activity from Turkey and the stationing of Coalition forces in Turkey. This agreement currently extends only to June, 1992. A Memorandum of Understanding was negotiated between the Office of the Executive Delegate of the Secretary General and the Government of Iraq which provided for the activities of U.N. agencies, especially the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), in providing for the returning refugees in the Northern three provinces of Iraq.

Most of the refugees returned to Iraq. The problem left the headlines and disappeared from our television screens and most of us have assumed that it had been solved. Unfortunately, however, there are significant residual problems in Turkey and a very serious possibility of a renewed exodus from Northern Iraq.

In Turkey we found some 10,000–12,000 Iraqi refugees from the 1991 exodus who fear to return to Iraq. Of these, a disproportionate number, about one-half, are Iraqi Christians. Many of these Christian refugees were from the Northern string of Christian villages which once ran along the Iraq/Turkey border. Most of these villages have been destroyed, and many of the refugees, with whom we spoke, have lost their homes and villages one or more times.

The Government of Turkey has made a major contribution to a humane resolution of the 1991 refugee problem. But it is not willing to provide permanent asylum to these remaining refugees. It wishes their resettlement or return to Iraq to be accomplished soon. About 5,000–6,000 of the Iraqi refugees are living outside the camps on Turkish temporary resident permits which have now expired. These refugees are at the greatest risk. In January, while we were in Turkey, 34 Iraqi Christian refugees were returned to Iraq involuntarily. This was done despite the fact that many of this group had good claims to refugee status; some had relatives in third countries and others had been mandated by the UNHCR.

In discussions with the Ministry of Interior, we were told that such involuntary returns were to be suspended for 3 months but that no guarantees could be made after that time. The implication of this is that their future policy will be influenced by the progress which could be made in third country resettlement. Subsequently, most temporary resident permits for this group have been extended to April 29, 1992. We believe that prompt action must be taken to resettle part of this group in order to avoid further forcible returns.

In addition to the remaining Iraqi refugees from 1988 and 1991, Turkey is threatened by a new exodus of Kurdish refugees. While a safe haven was established and the UNHCR did assist in the return of most of the refugees, no permanent arrangement has been reached which would ensure that a new crisis will not develop. On the contrary, recent developments make such a crisis probable, if present conditions are left unchanged. Those developments arise from the various aspects of the internal blockade being maintained by the Iraqi government on its own three Northern provinces, inhabited primarily by Kurds.

The speed at which such a crisis develops would be greatly accelerated if the protection afforded by the international community and the denial of air operations to Iraqi forces north of the 36th parallel were not extended after June, 1992, or if the UNHCR were to depart or significantly reduce its presence in Northern Iraq without being substantially replaced by other specialized U.N. agencies. It is crucial to realize, however, that even if these activities continue and conditions remain unchanged, the internal blockade has the clear potential to generate a new refugee crisis.

The embargo maintained by the international community on Iraq as a whole is well known. Less well known is a series of actions by the Iraqi government, referred to as the "internal blockade" which:

- Sharply limits the flow of critically needed basic food stuffs and fuel from central Iraq to its Northern provinces;
- Totally restricts the flow of all other items from Iraq to the Northern provinces;
- Degrades and will eventually cut off the provision of government services in the Northern provinces and creates an administrative vacuum in the area;

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- Severely reduces the purchasing power of the area, making it difficult or impossible to replace needed supplies from other countries;
- Nearly eliminates the creation of new income in the Northern provinces; and
- Leads to the rapid consumption of reserves of financial, material and human resources.

LIMITS BASIC FOOD AND FUELS

Following the Gulf War, the Iraqi government adopted a policy of food and fuel rations to the general population at sharply subsidized prices. Rations for food stuffs were set at approximately 50 percent of normal consumption, with the remainder to be purchased on the open market. The government continues to supply such subsidized items to its Kurdish provinces but the amounts delivered have been reduced to only about 20 percent of normal consumption. To this must be added similar food stuffs provided by the UNHCR and NGOs for displaced persons. Government, UNHCR and NGO sources, together, may amount to something under 40 percent of normal consumption for the entire population of the Kurdish provinces. However, no other consumer items are allowed to cross the military line which has developed between the Kurdish and government forces. The blockade is very tight and very effective. People tell of the confiscation of even a new clothing item being worn across the line or a single orange.

Fuel supplies are even more restricted. The government supplies fuel at about 20 percent of normal consumption. Even the gas tanks of cars crossing the military line are drained of excess fuel. The UNHCR did not include fuel in its distribution plan and, thus, does not supplement this limited supply except for fuel for its own use. Also, an expensive but vitally needed source of black market fuel has recently been lost.

OTHER CONSUMER/PRODUCER ITEMS

All other items are subject to a strict prohibition against the internal movement from Iraq, proper, into its Northern provinces. Extensive discussions revealed no indication of any significant smuggling across this line, with the exception of a considerable amount of fuel which was being trucked through the Northern provinces bound for Turkey. This trade has now been stopped, and even this source has been cut off.

CUT OFF GOVERNMENT SERVICES/CREATE AN ADMINISTRATIVE VACUUM

In October, the employees of most government Ministries were ordered to withdraw from the Northern provinces (Health, Trade and the University were excepted). Most of these civil servants were Kurds and all but a very few refused to leave and continued doing their job. The Iraqi government stopped paying salaries after October but, in a remarkable demonstration of loyalty to the idea of a Kurdish presence in Northern Iraq, these civil servants have continued to serve; some with small partial salary payments supplied by the Iraqi Kurdish Front ("Front"), a coalition of the seven Kurdish political parties, some with no salary at all. Those services exempted from the order to withdraw from the North have been given no 1992 budget so that employees of these agencies, including the Health Ministry, have received no pay since December, 1991.

In addition to cutting off salaries, the central government Ministries in Baghdad have provided no supplies, coordination or technical back-up to the Northern provinces since October. Thus, the civil services in the Kurdish provinces are three separate and isolated local services operating on their own and using up critical reserves of financial, material and human resources. There is no overall coordinating mechanism and a vacuum of administrative and political decision making exists. While the Front attempts to fill this, the seven parties take decisions by consensus and find timely decision making very difficult.

REDUCED PURCHASING POWER/ELIMINATES CREATION OF NEW INCOME

In addition to cutting off civil service salaries, the central government stopped paying pensions to some 50,000 retired civil servants. This is creating major hardships and, along with civil service salaries, this represents a loss of 25–30 percent of the pre-blockade purchasing power in the Kurdish provinces. In addition, the blockade has made it impossible to start up most state owned or other manufacturing enterprises since both raw materials and spare parts are prohibited by the blockade. Most agricultural production in the Northern provinces was destroyed in 1988 along with the destruction of some 4,000 Kurdish and Christian agricultural villages by

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the government. While these villages are anxious to get back to their land, the blockade prohibits the flow of essential items to restart agricultural production.

RAPID CONSUMPTION OF RESERVES/SEVERE AND GROWING HARDSHIP

The results of these actions which make up the internal blockade are to prevent the start up of productive enterprise to rapidly use up reserves of financial, material and human resources in the Northern provinces and to create severe and growing hardship. The lack of fuel has been felt especially severely this winter with hospitals operating without adequate heat and power, homes without heat, transportation totally inadequate for public services. Food shortages have been less severe but are growing with signs of malnutrition also growing. For example, the Erbil Health Service has opened 29 supplementary feeding centers for children but do not know how long they can maintain them. Health officials see the basic health of the population declining rapidly, with attendant growth of disease.

Most civil servants still man their posts but frankly concede they are spending growing amounts of time on personal survival. Inventories of supplies and funds in local bank accounts controlled by local civil service officials have been largely exhausted. Health officials predict a paralysis of health service within weeks or a month or two, at most, if conditions continue unchanged. Other services, even longer without salaries, are in similar circumstances. The Front has attempted to provide some salary support but has had very limited funds available and recently lost significant customs duties when barter trade between Turkey and the oil center of Mosul, controlled by the Iraqi government, was stopped by the Government of Turkey.

Kurdish commercial enterprises are rapidly using up reserve inventories. Some supplies are coming from Turkey and Iran but are increasingly expensive due to the decreasing value of the Iraqi dinar and most such items are beyond the reach of the average citizen of the Northern provinces. Reserves of tradable goods for barter with Iran and Turkey are also being used up rapidly and, logistics and political problems aside, there is serious question whether the shortages created by the internal blockade can be remedied through purchases from external sources.

A particularly vulnerable population are the pensioners, most are highly dependent on modest pensions which they have not received for 5 months now. While law and order problems are still minimal, they are widely expected to become increasingly serious. A breakdown of civil services, growing shortages of food and fuel, growing law and order problems and a general disintegration of the fabric of society in the Northern provinces will inevitably create increasing possibilities for the reentry into the region of the central government's military forces and security services.

This is widely seen by Kurds at all parts of the society as unacceptable. They fear the presence of such forces and make it clear that they would be forced to react in some way to such a development. Some speak of resistance or even a preemptive military action. Most often they state that they would have no choice but to flee the country once again.

A fascinating part of travel in the Northern provinces today is the opportunity to observe the dedication with which Kurds at all levels of leadership are dedicating themselves to the preservation of a viable Kurdish society. Kurdish NGOs have been organized to assist in the task of reconstruction. Kurdish professional societies are organizing. The managers of the state enterprises down to the owners of small farms are attempting to restart production. Town councils have been elected and elections for a regional assembly are scheduled for April 24. But nearly all of the actors in these efforts express a fear that they would be at risk if the Iraqi military and security forces re-enter the Northern provinces.

Kurds repeatedly raised with us Security Council Resolution 688 which guarantees the human rights of the various ethnic groups in Iraq. The Kurds see the internal blockade as a violation of their human rights and do not understand why the Security Council has not taken action to insist that it be lifted. We agree the blockade is causing heavy and growing hardships and the U.S. Catholic Conference recommends that the United States press the Security Council to require that the internal blockade against the Kurdish provinces be lifted and civil service salaries and pensions restored.

If the Iraqi government fails to respond to such requests, consideration must be given to what actions can be taken to compensate for the effects of the internal blockade. These could include authorization by the Security Council for U.N. agencies to deal directly with the provincial civil services and the political leadership to be elected on April 24, 1992, for emergency assistance and medium term develop-

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ment on an interim basis while a political agreement between Kurdish leadership and Baghdad is sought.

While a more permanent and stable arrangement is being negotiated, it will also be necessary to maintain the present structure of U.N. Guards and coalition guarantees of the physical safety of the Kurdish population in the Northern provinces and to reaffirm the continuing commitment of the international community to the protection of the Kurdish minority. Considerable ground was broken in providing guarantees for a returning displaced population in the Kurdish refugee crisis of 1991. But, if the international community folds its tents and departs the scene too soon, it is nearly certain that we will see yet another Kurdish refugee crisis, with its accompanying tragic loss of life, in the near future.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much indeed, Mr. Lowman. We will now hear from Dr. Najmaldin Karim, president of the Kurdish National Congress of North America. And we welcome you here very much, sir.

STATEMENT OF DR. NAJMALDIN KARIM, PRESIDENT, KURDISH NATIONAL CONGRESS OF NORTH AMERICA, SILVER SPRING, MD

Dr. KARIM. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, please allow me to thank you personally, and distinguished members of your staff, for all you have done to publicize the plight of the Kurdish people. I would also like to thank members of your staff, especially Peter Galbraith who has been very effective in bringing out the plight of the Kurdish people, especially his last report about the mass graves and the genocide committed by the Iraqi regime. This has been, indeed, very useful to our people and they all appreciate that.

Mr. Chairman, I would also like to let you know that the resolution that you introduced and passed to have Voice of America broadcast in Kurdish, of course, is greatly appreciated. And the radio will start its broadcasting next month, in Kurdish. I wanted you to know that, personally. And, of course, all the Kurds are waiting for that day.

The CHAIRMAN. Delighted to hear that.

Dr. KARIM. Thank you. As the present media attention focuses on the Presidential elections in this country, a real tragedy and calamity is taking place in Kurdistan. March 8 marked the first anniversary of the liberation of Kurdistan that took 3 weeks to complete and collapse. Gone from the television screens and front pages of newspapers are news about Kurdistan, where millions in the mountains clinging to life, more than 1,000 dead daily, babies and small children buried together, their parents helping each other to dig their graves.

These days there are barely any mentions of the Kurds and what is happening to them. We hear that the winterization program is in full gear in Kurdistan and that everyone is housed and well fed. Mr. Chairman, we visited Kurdistan recently and that is not what we found. We spent about 2 weeks there. The Kurdistan we saw is in desperate economical condition.

Following are our observations, thoughts, and suggestions. About 65 percent of the land is under control of the Kurds led by the Iraqi Kurdistan Front, and about 85 percent of the population live in these liberated zones. The law and order situation, contrary to what has been reported by some, is satisfactory. We did not hear of, or see, any single incidence of killing. The people obey even the

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traffic laws. They remain in gasoline lines and natural gas lines for days without any incidents.

We visited hospitals in Suleimaniyya, Irbil, and Dohuk. These are the major cities that are under the control of the Kurds. There is lack of basic medications. No elective surgery is being done. Very few emergency cases are done. Power is interrupted during the operations. Patients are suffering from a bitter cold winter in Kurdistan, the worst in 20 years. Doctors and nurses told us that they do not even have catheters to start intravenous lines on the patients. No tetanus vaccines are available to use for contaminated wounds.

The political situation in Kurdistan is very unstable. There is a great fear and anxiety among the people and their leaders that should Saddam decide to attack, most of the people will flee back to the mountains. They are not sure of the Turkish intentions, or for that matter of the U.S. intentions as far as Saddam's removal from power is concerned, or renewal of the allied presence in the nearby Inchirlik base in Turkey.

The Kurds will be holding an election next April, hoping that it will solve most of their problems. The Kurdish leadership has not broken off the autonomy negotiations with the Government of Iraq, officially, but these negotiations have been frozen since last November. We were told of some incidence in the past as far as their civil order is concerned. However, like I mentioned, the situation is very stable and that is remarkable considering that firearms are abundant, shortages prevail, and past conflicts among people in different political parties exist.

As for the refugees, there are about 850,000 people uprooted from their homes. Most of these are from Kirkuk, Khanaqin, and Sinjar area. These are Kurdish cities and towns that the regime insists on excluding from the so-called autonomous region, of these, 250,000 fled in October 1991 after the Government attacks on the cities of Kirkuk, Khanaqin, and Kifre. In the city of Kirkuk alone, 4,000 Kurdish homes have been blown up after the uprising, this is certainly in violation of Security Council Resolution 688, which calls for the protection of the Kurdish people.

Saddam Hussein has imposed an economic embargo on the Kurdish region which makes the Kurds suffer under a double embargo. No gasoline, heating oil, or natural gas, no food or medicine, is allowed into the Kurdish region. This situation has created significant hardship on the people. The population is running out of cash to pay for whatever is smuggled to Kurdistan from other parts of Iraq at unbelievably high prices, for the most. Whatever food that was stored earlier has been consumed. We concluded from our visit that mass starvation and famine will start if the situation continues like this.

We propose the following action should be taken. One, force the Iraqi regime to comply with 688 resolution with the same vigor that is used to dismantle chemical, biological, and nuclear capabilities, with the eventual return of the refugees to their home and taking control of these areas and their resources, especially the oil from the city of Kirkuk, by the U.N. And to use these resources for humanitarian help and apply the already existing U.N. resolutions in this regard.

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No. 2, extend the area of protection by extending the prohibition of Iraqi helicopter and fixed-wing aircraft flights from parallel 36 to parallel 34, and to renew the allied presence in nearby Turkey and also in the region. These last two points will significantly enhance and speed the downfall of Saddam's Government, and will encourage rebellion and mutiny among Iraq's armed forces. Three, provide massive humanitarian help through Turkey, and perhaps through Iran, if possible, to prevent famine and starvation at the same scale we witnessed a year ago.

And finally, Mr. Chairman, 70 years of association between Kurdistan, which was forcibly and unjustly annexed to what is Iraq today, has not brought but misery and hardship on our people. We have seen chemical weapons used on the Kurdish people. We have seen the Anfal and genocide committed against our people.

Mr. Chairman, during our visit and through our talks with the people, we have come to the conclusion that the present political structure in Iraq will continue to bring the same results to our people. It is time for the international community to accept and go back to the days when President Wilson asked for self-determination for the Kurdish people, and the Seaver Agreement also pointed to the fact that the Kurds should have a homeland of their own. We ask your committee to come out in support of a Kurdish entity, to give the Kurdish people the right of self-determination.

We are being given the pretext that this will cause instability in the region. However, we can see how the world is evolving now. There is an Armenian State next to Turkey which Turkey has recognized officially. There is an Azerbaijan on the northern border with Iran with 25 percent of its population who are Aizeris. Why cannot we have a Kurdish State in Iraqi Kurdistan and have the Kurdish people exercise the right of self-determination like the rest of the people of the world? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much indeed. This was very dramatic and very compelling testimony today on the part of all five of you. I would add here that Senator Robb would be with us, but he is presiding in the Senate. He was in Iraq not so long ago and wanted to thank all of you for being here. And as you pointed out also, the committee staff, Peter Galbraith and Chris Van Hollen, has been to Iraq several times to give us a first-hand knowledge of the situation there. Not as first-hand, maybe, as yours, but pretty close to it.

I was curious, Mr. Whitley. I think you mentioned the possibility that there were Kurdish mercenaries working with the Iraqis. How significant is the number of Kurdish mercenaries?

Mr. WHITLEY. I believe at their peak, Mr. Chairman, there, there were somewhere like 250,000 to 300,000 Kurdish mercenaries. I think that the term needs to be explained a little bit though, because these were people who were dependents of tribal leaders who would receive payments from Government officials in Baghdad whereby their followers could be exempted from military service.

And during the time of the Iran-Iraq war this was a very natural thing for them to do, to avoid joining the regular army and going to the warfront against Iran, and instead to enroll in a government-supported militia financed through local tribal leaders. As I say, these numbers did go up as high as 250,000, and I believe that,

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reluctantly in many cases, they did participate in some of these actions.

The CHAIRMAN. What you are saying here, really, is that there is a holocaust that occurred in World War II and that the world knew about after it occurred. In this case, we are pretty confident there will be a holocaust if we do not take action by June 30, and extend the protection for the Kurds. Would that be a basic thought of yours, too?

Mr. WHITLEY. I believe, Mr. Chairman, that a part of this action has already taken place, that there have been actions which are comparable to those during the Second World War against the persecuted groups, including the Jews, and that we have seen some of that evidenced. The fact that over 100,000 people, possibly as many as 300,000 people have disappeared and are feared dead, is tantamount to a genocidal action, though we cannot yet be certain that that is the appropriate legal term.

I think, though, that your concerns that if the allied protection is withdrawn that there could be a repeat action is totally justified. We have already seen, in the south of Iraq, that actions against the Shi'a in areas which were not protected by the allies have been very savage indeed. We do not have as much evidence for that because we do not have first-hand access to the area, but certainly the atrocities that have taken place against Shi'a dissidents in southern Iraq, and continue to take place today in the marshes area adjoining the Iranian border, I think—suggest that those fears are entirely justified.

Mr. LOWMAN. Mr. Chairman, if I could just add a comment on that particular point. One of the interesting and really almost exciting things about traveling in the Kurdish provinces at this time is the extent to which Kurds at all levels of leadership in the society have stood up and publicly allowed themselves to be counted as standing up for the ideal of a continuing viable Kurdish society. You see young professionals that are working pro bono for new Kurdish NGO's, you see all of the civil servants staying in place despite the fact they have been ordered out, you see Kurdish professional societies organizing.

At every level you see these people publicly pronouncing themselves in favor of attempting to assist the establishment of a viable Kurdish society. And that despite the fact that if you talk to them they will say that they believe that Iraqi security personnel are right in there taking names, dates, and places. And every single one of them knows that he or she is at risk if there is a reinsertion of Iraqi military forces and security forces.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Do all of you agree, or do any of you disagree with the fact that the danger of a holocaust is very real if some kind of action is not taken by June 30? I see nodding of heads, we agree on that.

Dr. KARIM. Yes, we agree.

The CHAIRMAN. This action—are you advocating it be taken by the U.N. or by the United States individually? Dr. Karim.

Dr. KARIM. Mr. Chairman, we believe that, of course, the United States is the power in the world today. And we believe that nothing can be done in that region without the leadership of the United States. So in our opinion, the United States should take the leader-

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ship. To go through the U.N. if they can, but even if that was not possible for some political reasons, the United States should go ahead and do this unilaterally.

And also, I want to add that Prime Minister Major of Great Britain and the French Government have also expressed willingness to continue support for the Kurdish people, so we already have three members of the permanent members of the Security Council who are in favor of continuing this protection.

The CHAIRMAN. What would be the effect on the Kurds if the United States engages in—I read in the press today that there is being discussed the idea of a surgical strike, as they call it, a precision strike on Iraq's nuclear facilities. Would that have a beneficial effect on the Kurds or a harmful effect?

Dr. KARIM. Well, if it is just targeting certain sites, just the biological sites or nuclear sites alone without really aiming at Saddam Hussein or removing him from power, it would not have any significant effect as far as the Kurds are concerned.

But Mr. Chairman, what is really more significant than that is for the administration to pay more attention to the opposition, the people who are opposed to the Government of Iraq. And if this attention was paid to them last year, we would not have to worry about talking about whether it should be a military strike of some sort or another. Because Saddam was there, he was in the grip and he was let go. And here he has become a nuisance, again, to everyone. So paying more attention to the opposition.

Mr. WHITLEY. Excuse me. I agree, Senator, that if a surgical strike were to take place, that it would not have an adverse effect on the area currently controlled by the Kurds provided that the allied military protection were to be continued over that area. Clearly there is a danger that in the area south of the 36th parallel, which is a gray area as far as whether the allied resolve would be tested or not, the Iraqis could attempt some limited scale actions in that part and that would present a test to the administration, to see whether it would go beyond what the current requirements are of the U.N. resolutions.

I would say on that point that I think any action that were to be taken in the area to continue the mandate certainly should be done through the aegis of the U.N., that the United States should not act on its own, so as not to set a bad precedent elsewhere in the world.

The CHAIRMAN. The instances you have cited have been specific, very specific and very shocking, but also localized. Do you believe that, by extension these atrocities cover the whole region, or do you feel these are somewhat individual episodes?

Mr. WHITLEY. Your point is a very good one, Mr. Chairman, and I think that from the documentation that has been captured by the Kurds, and I would estimate the volume of that in many many tons, we do not know the total volume but at least 30 tons or 40 tons, I think that the spread of it across the entire geographic region of northern Iraq suggests that it was not at all localized.

I have one document before me at the moment which refers to a group of people whose existence—we still do not know what their fate is. It was from the Suleimaniyya Province and after listing a number of people who had been executed and families, relatives of

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people who had been executed who were taken away, in its last point it says 2,532 persons and 1,869 families numbering 630 persons were sent to the popular army camp in Tamin Governate in the south of Iraq. These were arrested during the heroic Al-Anfal operation. This is one instance of, I believe, a much larger pattern that is repeated across the entire countryside. That document is dated October 29, 1988.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Dr. KARIM. Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Dr. Karim.

Dr. KARIM. If you will allow me. I have a document here which is the report by Mr. Van der Stoel, who is the special U.N. rapporteur in Iraq and I would like to submit this for the record. It has documents about some of these incidents that Mr. Whitley and others have pointed out. It was given to Mr. Van der Stoel during his visit to Kurdistan.

[The information referred to may be found in committee files.]

The CHAIRMAN. I would appreciate that. In 1988 and 1989 the Senate three times passed legislation that, together with Senator Helms, I authored, to enact stiff sanctions against Iraq for its use of poison gas. That legislation was opposed by the Reagan administration. Subsequent sanctions legislation was opposed by the current administration as late as 1 week prior to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. Do you think that this tragedy, or a portion of it, could have been avoided if my sanctions legislation had become law, or do you think the sanctions would not have had much impact? Mr. Whitley?

Mr. WHITLEY. Mr. Chairman, Middle East Watch campaigned strongly in favor of sanctions. We believed that the evidence was present in a very clear form to suggest that Iraq was guilty of a pattern of gross abuses of human rights, and that the attempts by the administration to block those sanctions were unjustified. We certainly think that the administration should have sent a much clearer signal to the Kurds—excuse me, to the Iraqi Government prior to the outbreak of the gulf crisis in August 1980, and that would have been done effectively through the imposition of trade sanctions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much. Senator Pressler.

Senator PRESSLER. Thank you very much for your testimony. We look forward to reading it and learning more from it. Let me ask you about the specific steps you are recommending. You have presented us with a problem here. You have presented us with evidence. You have presented us with a situation on which we would all like to take some action. Now I believe Mr. Whitley suggested that the U.N. embargo be lifted in Kurdish areas, as I understood it.

Mr. WHITLEY. Correct.

Senator PRESSLER. How would this work in practice, and would it affect the U.N. embargo in the rest of Iraq?

Mr. WHITLEY. I believe that in practice, Senator, this would be an extension of the de facto lifting of restrictions that is going into northern Iraq with the supply of relief material through Turkey. That this could be done in a ready fashion to recognize that this is

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a part of the country that is no longer under the control of the government of President Saddam Hussein.

I believe that the line that has been drawn across the country by the Iraq forces themselves is a very tight one. They are preventing movement of people and goods across that area. And while we can never avoid a small degree of smuggling, I think that in practice it would act as a very substantial support for a region of the country that is effectively self-governing.

Senator PRESSLER. I would like to ask each of you for the specific recommendations you would make if you were the President of the United States or the Secretary General of the U.N., or if you had the authority just to decide what the U.N. or the United States or the rest of the world would do. You have talked a bit about surgical strikes, you have talked about a partial embargo. To deal with this problem what should the U.N. or the United States or the world community do? What specific steps would you like to see taken?

Mr. LOWMAN. Senator, the U.S. Catholic Conference has suggested that the administration—first of all, we would agree with the comments made earlier, that every effort should be made to work through the U.N. system and to make that work. We believe that the administration should press the Security Council to attempt to persuade Saddam Hussein, that is persuade Iraq, to lift the internal blockade that is currently being maintained and which threatens to break down the ability of the Kurds to maintain control of that region.

But if that fails and if they refuse to do that, it is quite true that by the actions of the Iraqi Government they have defined a separate entity, a separate administrative and economic entity. And we believe that the Security Council should consider dealing directly with that entity, at least on an interim basis while it is seen whether it is possible to develop a political agreement between the Kurdish leadership and Baghdad along the lines that would give them some protection within an autonomy arrangement.

And that means, I think, that you would have to have an arrangement that would allow for the entry of goods and moneys and program operations directly into the northern Provinces. It would be almost impossible, I think, to negotiate support agreements through Baghdad that would frustrate Baghdad's own internal blockade if they are not prepared to lift that blockade. So that you would find yourself dealing directly, at least on an interim basis, with the political leadership that is going to be elected or they are planning to elect on April 24.

I would not disagree with the suggestion of a partial lifting of the international embargo on Iraq in favor of Kurdish-controlled areas, but would only point out that that would have a fairly limited effect because the purchasing power of the northern provinces has been so broken down by this whole process that they have very little money to buy anything. Even if you lift the blockade, the exchange rates between the Iraqi dinar and the Turkish and Iranian currencies have shifted so much in their disfavor that it would be very hard for them to survive even if they were allowed to buy freely from Turkey and from Iran or elsewhere.

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Although on the longer term, it would help if they can get their state enterprises working again, and one of the reasons for lifting the embargo would be to permit that, that is going to take time. And even if they get them working, they are going to need—for example the cement factory in Suleimaniyya is going to need large amounts, large quantities of fuel oil on a daily basis to run their operations, and how they get all this stuff in and how they pay for it is going to be very difficult.

So it seems to me, although that is a partial step, that if you really expect the northern provinces to survive viably economically, you are going to have to get some assistance that is going in there directly.

Mr. STOVER. I would simply add, representing a physicians organization made up of health professionals and scientists, our terms of reference are somewhat limited. We go in as a group of forensic scientists to do the exhumations or we may examine torture victims or we may look at the health conditions in a country. So some of these larger questions you ask I think are best answered by others.

But I do believe that anyone who travels now to Iraqi Kurdistan can see, as was referred to earlier, that there is the potential for another exodus. There is potential for famine. And the protection has to remain, first of all. And second, that there is a responsibility, there is an opportunity now, to undertake a large-scale investigation of these human rights abuses and that the U.N. could help in that regard in terms of sending in personnel to begin collecting this information. Otherwise, it is going to be lost. And if there are going to be charges as serious as the ones raised today, then we are going to need that information and that documentation.

Mr. WHITLEY. Senator, I have a number of specific points to make. I had referred in my earlier remarks to the dreadful issue of landmines that are scattered throughout the area, and I will leave my suggestions about how to deal with those landmines to the record, that we have already mentioned. I think it is a major problem.

An issue that has been raised by Mr. Van der Stoel, the special rapporteur on Iraq, is that of the dispatch of U.N. monitors to Iraq to guard against a possible repetition of the killings that have taken place in the past. I think it is a bold and innovative step that he has taken in making this recommendation. Unfortunately, it has met a certain degree of resistance from various governments, including, I regret to say, the Bush administration, over the precedents that this might set, and also over the cost of such an operation.

I think that, however, the case for sending unarmed monitors to the area as a symbolic deterrent against killings and as a witness for the outside world is a very powerful one. And I believe it is regrettable that in the recently concluded U.N. Human Rights Commission session in Geneva, that the Western group did not support that recommendation. The opportunity will come up again, Senator, in the general assembly this fall, and I would like the administration to support that matter with all its vigor; not only itself but to lobby diplomatically for other countries to support it.

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I had referred earlier to the existence of large numbers of documents in Kurdistan. These are clearly in a precarious position. Being able to get those documents out of Iraq and out of the possibility of being recaptured by the Iraq Government so that they can be studied by researchers, is a matter of paramount importance, of huge historical importance, and I would hope that the administration would cooperate in that respect.

Fourth, I would refer to the issue of the protection in the south. While I think that people have concentrated excessively on the north, there has not been the opportunity to be able to work in the south. Perhaps through the Iranian Government which is the one that is closest to the area in the south, and I appreciate that this poses considerable political problems for this Government but not necessarily for the U.N., that there would be attempts to be able to gain greater access to the south, particularly to those vulnerable populations who are trapped in the marshland area. Thank you.

Dr. SNOW. As Eric Stover pointed out, I come here as a forensic scientist and therefore my immediate focus would be on continuing the investigations to document these atrocities scientifically and put them on the historical record. And I know that that has to be seconded to other more pressing concerns that involve the very continued existence of the Kurdish people.

I would point out one thing, that if we do not help them they will be subject to the ministrations of Ali Hassan Al-Majid who is a cousin of President Saddam Hussein and is now the Defense Minister, and his approach to the Kurdish problem will be implemented. And on January 22, 1989, in a tape that is now in Kurdish hands, he is quoted as saying, "yes, I will certainly look after the Kurds, I will do it by burying them with bulldozers, that is how I will do it."

Dr. KARIM. Senator, Kurdistan is a very rich country. We have oil, we have natural resources, which has all been used against our people. There are some specific points that I recommend that the United States or the U.N. takes.

I spoke about 850,000 Kurdish refugees who are internal refugees in Kurdistan with no homes, no shelter, no food, no medicine. That these people should be allowed to return to their homes. These are mainly from the cities of Kirkuk, Raniyar, those places. And there is a Security Council resolution that calls for that, which is the 688 resolution, because this is clearly in violation of that resolution.

And also to extend the protection from parallel 36. Because 36 really excludes about 40 percent of Kurdistan. The two major cities of Kirkuk and Suleimaniyya are excluded from that. This will have a psychological effect, not only for the Kurds but also on the rest of Iraq, and may help get rid of Saddam Hussein.

About 3 years ago in Paris the late Andrei Sakarov, who always professed how things come ahead of many other people, he suggested that the Kurds should have an observer in the U.N. The Kurds are 30 million people and they are the only people who do not have a representative speaking for them in the international body. And Senator Pell was at that meeting, I believe, in 1989 in Paris, when Andrei Sakarov suggested that.

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These are some specific points, but also there is one other fact. Saddam Hussein, by his act of isolating Kurdistan and defining the Kurdish region as a separate region, he is giving a de facto recognition to an area that is really different from the rest of Iraq. There will be an election coming up there. These people need to have someone to run their affairs, pay salaries, find work for the people. And we ask that the U.N. and the United States recognize the body that will be elected in April of this year, so they can run their own affairs. Thank you.

Senator PRESSLER. I see my time has run out. I would submit these questions for the record, as I must leave shortly. Are the relief supplies being delivered to the Kurds via Turkey? Is more help needed and are the Iraqis draining off assistance to the Kurds? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Thank you very much, Senator Pressler. Senator Brown.

Senator BROWN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe the question of the Senator from South Dakota is most appropriate and I, with your permission, would simply ask that perhaps we would have a response at this point for his question.

Mr. LOWMAN. Would you repeat that question, please.

Senator BROWN. I think the Senator is concerned about what is happening to the supplies, the relief supplies. Are they getting through, are they being siphoned off? And I think, particularly, what suggestions you might have?

Mr. LOWMAN. Supplies are going into the northern provinces under the aegis of the UNHCR and some of the NGO's. I do not have any evidence that supplies intended for the Kurdish provinces are not reaching the Kurdish provinces. That is to say, supplies coming through the international system.

One of the problems that we have in terms of what is being supplied to displaced persons is that the UNHCR, U.N. High Commission for Refugees, did not include in their plan for the support of displaced persons, fuel. And the reason they did not include fuel was that it was so extremely cheap in Iraq. But when the internal blockade came along, the price of fuel went up by about six to eight times and the UNHCR still did not include fuel in their plan. And consequently the displaced persons that are still in camps in the Kurdish provinces are not receiving an allocation of fuel from the UNHCR, cannot afford to buy it on the black market, and are doing without and are very cold. They are using twigs and cutting down trees, but they are not being supplied fuel.

But as far as diversion of materiel, I am not aware that that is a problem. The real problem is simply that the larger population, the population as a whole, is simply not receiving supplies that they need to live because of the internal blockade that is being maintained by the Government, preventing just normal traffic of basic foodstuffs and fuel into the northern provinces.

Mr. WHITLEY. Senator, Middle East Watch has not done its own investigations on this subject. But from anecdotal reports I have heard from other relief agencies, there have been some suggestions that relief supplies coming through from Baghdad into the northern region have been interfered with. I cannot speak about that with any detail or accuracy, but I understand that there has been a

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pattern of interference with supplies that have come through from private voluntary organizations.

I would confirm, though, that the UNHCR is operating well, that the supplies are coming in through Turkey as normal and there does not appear to be a particular problem in that respect.

Senator BROWN. I might—if I could prevail on the Senator, well I guess he has left. I think it would be helpful to us if you have suggestions of how we might change the delivery of this assistance.

Dr. KARIM. Senator, I have a suggestion if nobody else does. The relief supplies that go to Kurdistan are not nearly enough to care for the people. There is no question about it. We went to Halabja. We met some of these families who are displaced people from other parts of Kurdistan. For example, they have been given kerosene heaters with no kerosene to use. And these people have no food so some of them went and sold some of these kerosene heaters so they can buy food with it and eat. So it is very difficult situation. They do not have enough.

So the suggestion that I have is there are certain steps that can help in this regard. And that is to help some of the factories to start running in Kurdistan—the U.N. should help. There is a cement factory, there is a cigarette factory, there are other factories that can start operating again. And help, you know, make arrangements with Turkey and all that so they can sell some of these materiel in exchange for food.

The other thing is the oil, the oil from the city of Kirkuk. Kirkuk is part of Kurdistan, it has always been. And if that oil is controlled by the U.N.—I am not even saying give it to the Kurdish Peshmergas. If it is controlled by the U.N. and it is used and the oil is sold, just as some U.N. resolutions, you know, speak about that, it can used for humanitarian help. Not only for the Kurds, it can help with other people also.

The other thing is cultivating the land. The U.N. should help the Kurdish people with seeds and fertilizers so they can cultivate the land, because it is a very fertile land, and this can also help alleviate the situation. Giving help and sending money will not solve the problem, it will just keep coming because how much you can give.

Senator BROWN. You are saying the focus ought to be things that will allow people to become independent and self-supporting.

Dr. KARIM. To sustain themselves, right. And I think those steps probably will help. But we also go back to the basic root of this problem and that is political. There has to be a political solution for the Kurdish problem. The present situation, whether it is with the Government, this present Government in Iraq, or any future government. The autonomy thing is not going to solve the Kurdish problem because we always remain as a minority. They can always veto what we want. And actually, Mr. Van der Stoel goes into details about how this autonomy thing works. So even if it is another government, the Kurds will always be oppressed. They will always be deprived of their rights.

Mr. LOWMAN. Senator, if I could add to that. I think that one of the major problems since it existed has been that the U.N. High Commission for Refugees sees its mandate as a very temporary one. They are actually planning to leave in April. Their memorandum of understanding allows them to stay until June but they are

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actually planning to leave in April. They are under heavy criticism by Kurdish people, NGO's, and others, because they are not doing what Dr. Karim suggests.

That is to say, for example, they are not providing seed. Why? That is development; they do not see their mandate as developmental. This is not entirely the fault of the UNHCR, it may be true that their mandate is not development. And the point they make and I think the point that is very important here, is that a political decision has to be made by the U.N. system to get in there and begin doing some development work.

The Kurds are perfectly able to take care of themselves. They have a very productive land, they are a very hard working people, they are very courageous, they are very persistent. You talk to them for any length of time about developmental and economic assistance matters and the first thing they say is that we do not want to be some kind of an international basket case, "we do not want to be supported forever, we just want some temporary help and then we will take care of ourselves." And they make a good case of that.

But there has to be a political decision within the U.N. system to give them that kind of assistance. Right now the UNHCR has no plans to do that, and will not do it. It is less a problem of relief supplies than it is not getting the sort of assistance that is going to get them back on their feet.

Senator BROWN. You have mentioned the potential of a new national entity incorporating the areas where those of Kurdish descent live. Obviously, that would, of necessity, involve a portion of the land now under the control of Turkey, a long-time ally of the United States and one we have had a close working relationship with. Share with us your thoughts of how you would contemplate the administration of the land that is now under Turkish sovereignty?

Dr. KARIM. Actually, Senator, I am talking about the Iraqi Kurdistan now. The 4 million people who live in Iraqi Kurdistan.

Senator BROWN. So you are not talking about the area of Turkey, you are talking about the portion in Iraq.

Dr. KARIM. We are talking about Iraqi Kurdistan. And certainly the Kurds in Turkey and the Government of Turkey should reach their own conclusion about how to solve the Kurdish problem there. There are about 20—it is the dream of every Kurd to have a united Kurdistan to encompass all Kurdistan, but there are 22 Arab states, they are not in one country.

I brought up Azerbaijan as an example. You have a new Azerbaijan, which was a former Soviet republic, that is free on the border with Iran that has an Azerbaijan Province which is about one-quarter of the population of Iran. And it is recognized by the Government of Iran. It just came into existence. Armenia, we all know the long relationship between the Armenian people and the Government of Turkey. The Government of Turkey has recognized the State of Armenia even though there are claims by Armenia that there are parts in Turkey that is Armenia.

We believe that establishing an independent Kurdish state in what is under Kurdish control now in Iraqi Kurdistan is not contrary to preserving the territory of other states. And I am sure that the Kurdish leadership can give—and can reach an understanding

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with the neighboring countries and give them reassurances that this is for the Kurds in Iraq.

Because we are left with no choice, Senator. There is no government. Even Iraq, even Saddam Hussein does not want the Kurds. He has imposed an embargo and isolated the region, he has gassed us, he has used the Anfal campaign. We are left with no choice and these people have to live, like everybody else.

Senator BROWN. Thank you. Mr. Chairman, my time is up. But I wanted to pay tribute to you, if I could. In this area I know of no Member of Congress that has been more understanding or more vigorous in their efforts to stand up for the Kurdish people, to protect them, to see that justice is done. And I want to express my appreciation for, not only your activities in this area, but this hearing.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Thank you very much indeed, Senator Brown. And if you have any more questions, Senator? Thank you very much. And I would here that the committee as a whole has had a very real interest. Senator Helms has taken a very active role and our own staff member Peter Galbraith has made a half a dozen trips in the last decade to Kurdistan.

One thought here. Looking at the past, in the time since the Treaty of Versailles, when the decision was made not to give Kurdistan its own independence, Kurdistan has suffered a good deal of brutal oppression from Iraq. Do you think that the United States should support the creation of a free Kurdistan? What would be your views? I know yours, Dr. Karim, you would say yes.

Dr. KARIM. Yes, of course, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. Right, exactly. Dr. Snow, would you support this?

Dr. SNOW. Yes, sir.

Mr. WHITLEY. Mr. Chairman, in my personal capacity I could certainly see the value for such a case. On behalf of my organization though, we are straying into a political area that I really could not comment on.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Mr. Stover.

Mr. STOVER. I would have to reflect that same answer. As an organization commenting on such a question is beyond our mandate. But, personally, yes, I would support the creation of a free Kurdistan.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Lowman.

Mr. LOWMAN. I think what I would like to do is express the views that were expressed to me by some of the senior Kurdish leadership in northern Iraq, which was quite careful to define their goals somewhat more modestly and to look for autonomy within the framework of Iraq. I think they had a weather eye out, for instance, to the reactions of Turkey, and concerns for Turkey's sensitivities.

When speaking, for instance, about the elections that are now planned for April 24, the point was made that they would expect that Saddam Hussein would do what he could to frustrate those elections, indeed with force, except that he might fear the reaction of the international community. And therefore, those that we spoke with were careful to define the goals of that election as filling the administrative vacuum within the northern provinces

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while seeking a political agreement between the Kurds and Baghdad.

So that is the way it was put to me. I do not have a specific position of the conference on that point, sir.

Mr. WHITLEY. With permission, Mr. Chairman, I would like to add one final point, which is to relate a brief anecdote that was mentioned to me by a Kurdish leader on my trip last month which I think is pertinent to this matter. He told me that every night he prayed for two things. First his family, and second for the health of Saddam Hussein. What he meant by that was that as long as Saddam Hussein was in power, he believed that the allied military protection over northern Iraq would continue and that clearly the Kurds would then be given the opportunity to build a civil society and the institutions of a nation, even though they do not have that recognition.

I think that this is the reality that we have to face, and that many of the attributes of sovereignty are already there, if not being recognized by the international community. I do think it poses a dreadful policy dilemma for the U.S. Government, though.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. One further question I had, and that is that the Human Rights Watch report in "Unquiet Graves" indicated that they have an effort to catalog the records in this regard, to preserve the documentation of the Iraqi atrocities. What is the status of this effort, and what effort is being made to make sure that if the Iraqis do move in to Kurdistan, that they do not get access to these documents.

Mr. WHITLEY. Senator, there are efforts under way which I think in an open session it would be inappropriate to get into the details of. But I think that both with the Pentagon and with the State Department, there is an awareness of the need to be able to bring these documents out to the West. And we are cooperating with them. I hope that some of the problems which still exist within the bureaucracy can be overcome in the near future, and that we can be successful in bringing them out.

The CHAIRMAN. What is your view about the advisability of having a Nuremberg-type Trial someday of Saddam Hussein for these atrocities?

Mr. WHITLEY. I think not only of Saddam Hussein but of other officials, including Mr. Ali Hassan Al-Majid. We should not overfocus on the one person of the President, although clearly he has set the example. There are many people who would deserve Nuremberg-style trials, and certainly our organization supports very strongly and vigorously the issue of accountability for war crimes or for crimes against humanity of this nature.

Dr. KARIM. Senator, I just want to add one short remark to that. I believe that the U.N. should move to withdraw recognition from the present Iraqi Government. Instead of inviting Tariq Aziz, to talk and attack everybody else, to the U.N. He should not be allowed to come there, and if he did he should be arrested and tried just like a war criminal because he certainly has participated with Saddam in oppressing the whole people of Iraq and the Kurdish people.

The CHAIRMAN. I appreciate your views. Thank you all for being here, and the hearing is adjourned.

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[Whereupon, at 11:47 a.m., the committee adjourned, to reconvene subject to the call of the Chair.]

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APPENDIX

UNICEF PROGRAMME PROGRESS REPORT—IRAQ EMERGENCY

THE HUMAN DIMENSION

A full year of strenuous and concerted relief work to alleviate the sufferings of the Iraqi population has not fully improved the plight of vulnerable children and lactating mothers, as the general situation in Iraq remains to be as critical as it has been in the immediate aftermath of the Gulf War.

Water-borne diseases, such as Gastroenteritis, Cholera and Typhoid which in the summer of 1991 reached epidemic proportions due to the massive destruction of the country's water and sanitation systems, are still persistent with growing fears of a grimmer picture in the coming summer. Continual drastic reductions in agriculture and skyrocketing food prices have compounded the hardships faced by the Iraqi people and caused widespread and clinical forms of severe malnutrition such as Marasmus and Kwashiorkor, virtually unheard of in Iraq a year ago. Disruptions in power and shortages of supplies, essential drugs and personnel had also left the peripheral level primary health care in a state of virtual collapse.

The economic sanctions continue to adversely impact upon all aspects of life in the country, affecting in particular the vulnerable segments of children and women. Thousand of children have so far died and thousands may die this year due to the delayed effects of the crisis, as projected by several International Study Teams which have ascertained an increase in Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) and under-5 Mortality Rate.

In short, the situation in Iraq seems to be as critical in 1992 as it was in 1991.

THE ACHIEVEMENTS

While, as highlighted, enormous challenges remain, the preceding one year has nonetheless witnessed some progress in reducing the magnitude of the suffering of vulnerable children and women. UNICEF, working in close cooperation with the government, UN sister agencies, and a number of international NGOs, has played a constructive and important part in the positive results attained thus far. Among the accomplishments to-date are the following:

- A massive UNICEF supply and logistical operation played a pivotal role in bringing the EPI programme back, from a complete state of collapse, to a situation where immunization activities are functioning in virtually every corner of the country.
- UNICEF supplied water purification reagents, spare parts and equipment for water treatment plants have been instrumental in the improvement of water quality and in preventing the further spread of water-borne disease.
- UNICEF supplied protein food has brought countless children back from the brink of starvation in the southern and northern provinces. An extensive breast-feeding and weaning food promotion has so far served to safeguard innumerable newborns from a dangerous dependency on powder milk and infant formulas.
- UNICEF sponsored training courses for health workers and TBA's on oral rehydration therapy and UNICEF supplied oral rehydration salts have immensely reduced diarrhoeal disease mortality and morbidity. Cold chain training courses have also been of benefit.
- UNICEF's provision of essential drugs and drugs for epidemics have helped make possible a minimum availability of such drugs in all provinces.
- UNICEF's extensive technical and logistical support in virtually all programme areas has been indispensable to the overall relief effort. Almost every village in the north and south of the country has been reached.

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- UNICEF assistance to the country thus far has totalled over US$35.1 million,[1] and includes over 1,200 tons of medical supplies, 4.35 million ORS sachets, 16.09 million doses of polio, measles, BCG, and tetanus vaccines, and 950 tons of chlorine gas, 137 tons of chlorine powder and 3,282 tons of aluminum sulphate. No less significant, but more difficult to quantify, have been the vast amounts of technical and logistical support provided, as well as the extensive efforts exerted in information gathering and knowledge dissemination, and in the coordinating and monitoring of relief efforts. UNICEF and NGO staff working under UNICEF umbrella has grown from a pre-crisis contingent of just 11, of which 9 were general service staff, to a total of 97. UNICEF established sub-offices in Mosul and Basrah and also presence in Missan, Najaf, Kerbala, Muthana, Nasiriya, Samawa, Dohuk, Suleimaniyah and Arbil.

UNICEF PROGRAMME OF EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE: AN OVERVIEW

The overall objective of the UNICEF emergency programme is to provide relief assistance to Iraqi mothers and children suffering as a result of the war and the subsequent civil unrest. The basic framework for the UNICEF response to the Iraqi emergency was set out in the report of the WHO/UNICEF mission which took place during February 1991, while the war was in progress. Based upon the mission's extensive assessment of priority problems facing the country, it was decided that UNICEF should concentrate its scarce resources on sectors where UNICEF is comparatively strong and where the need is greatest, namely water and sanitation, general health, immunization and nutrition. Within each sector, it was decided that UNICEF activities would focus, by and large, on the following:

1. Nutrition

i) The provision of high energy, high protein supplementary food to malnourished children, pregnant and lactating mothers through establishing a nationwide therapeutic feeding programme.
ii) The promotion of breast-feeding.
iii) The promotion and testing of weaning food based on local food items.
iv) Promotion of growth monitoring.

2. Water and Sanitation

i) The purification of drinking water.
ii) The increasing of the quantity of water pumped daily by water treatment stations to meet the minimum emergency requirements.
iii) The repair of damaged distribution networks.
iv) The installation of stationary and mobile sewage pump networks.

3. Health

i) The immunization against six vaccine-preventable killer disease.
ii) The oral rehydration therapy.
iii) The surveillance of communicable disease.
iv) The provision of essential drugs and emergency health kits.

UNICEF emergency assistance to Iraq began with a shipment of vaccines and midwifery kits in December 1990, a time when the country was already suffering as a result of crippling economic sanctions. The February 1991 WHO/UNICEF mission subsequently brought in 54 metric tonnes of critically needed emergency health kits and essential pediatric drugs. Soon after the WHO/UNICEF mission, the UNICEF emergency relief programme became fully operational. Many tones of needed supplies, equipment and foodstuffs began to be urgently shipped in from UNIPAC stores in Copenhagen and were put to immediate use in the field. The UNICEF office grew rapidly to respond to the demands of the emergency operation, and a permanent UNICEF presence was quickly established in population centres throughout the country.

From the outset, the operation was carried out in close cooperation with other United Nations sister agencies (WHO, UNHCR and UNDP) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Operational links were also rapidly extended to private non-governmental organizations such as Save the Children Federation (SCF)-United States; Save the Children Fund (SCF)-United Kingdom; Oxfam-United Kingdom; Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF)-The Netherlands; Medecins Du Monde (MDM); Quaker International; Lower Saxony Children's Relief; and Union Medicale (Algerienne). The fact that UNICEF was on the scene from the earliest stages and

[1] Total Value Called Forward as of 12 January 1992.

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quickly developed a coherent analysis of the situation and the priority needs enabled it to play a central role in coordinating these various private organizations and in challenging their human and material resources in such a way that would be of maximum benefit to the relief operation.

From the earliest stages of the crisis, an attempt has been made to incorporate the country's more long range development needs into UNICEF's emergency response. In water and sanitation, the emphasis has always been placed on rehabilitating and rebuilding existing networks rather than on constructing short term, quick fix parallel systems. In health, an attempt has been put into effect to rebuild the primary health care system, and to promote the importance of preventive approaches over the short term curative ones. Finally, in nutrition, a comprehensive therapeutic feeding programme has been implemented, which hopefully, will do much to help the country in the future to prevent the type of nutrition crisis it is currently experiencing.

1. NUTRITION

1.1 THE CHALLENGE

1.1.1 Malnutrition has emerged as one of the largest threats to children in Iraq in the aftermath of the Gulf war. Drastic reductions in the supply of imported foodstuff, severe disruption in agricultural production and incredibly increased prices for basic foodstuffs, amongst other factors, have led to the large scale reappearance of malnutrition in the country for the first time in at least a decade. Findings of a study conducted by a Harvard International Study Team, reports by Helen Keller International [2] and the Gulf Peace Team [3] all warned of the danger of a rapidly deteriorating situation. Another report, conducted 18–20 June, 1991 in the southern governorate of Basra by a team of experts from Tufts University, found that over one third of the children examined demonstrated growth stunting (i.e. a 9-year-old child would be as tall as a normal 6-year-old), 26% of the children were underweight (i.e. a 3-year-old would weigh the same as a normal 6-month-old) and that 4% of the children were wasted (acute malnutrition). These findings point to an acute deterioration super imposed on an already chronic malnutrition problem. The situation has not improved.

1.1.2 The most dramatic and tragic evidence of the magnitude of the nutrition problem, however, are the alarming number of reported cases of marasmus, typified by shriveled loose skin and thin arms, and kwashiorkor, typified by swollen bellies, skin rashes, and the wasting of muscles. Doctors in Baghdad hospitals are reporting such cases up to 10 a day, whereas before the war they barely saw one case per year. The situation has been made more acute by the typically low incidence of breast-feeding in the country and the resulting high degree of dependency on powdered milk and infant formulas, products which are now either largely unavailable on the market or at astronomical prices. Monthly government rationed infant formula for the estimated 60 per cent of under-ones who are not breastfed is sufficient for two days only.

1.2 UNICEF'S ROLE

Accomplishments

- **Therapeutic feeding programme: The provision of more than 2,000 metric tons of high energy high protein food items to malnourished children and pregnant and lactating mothers in Baghdad, northern and southern governorates.**
- **Promotion of breast-feeding, through the launching of a Baby Friendly Hospital campaign, extensive training of health workers at every level of capacity.**
- **Promotion of weaning food through the testing of locally produced recipes and social mobilization.**
- **Promotion of growth monitoring, by means of health workers training.**

1.2.1 The High Protein Food A comprehensive therapeutic feeding programme was designed after a long discussion with the Ministry of Health. The programme consists of the above 4 components. On the therapeutic side of the programme, it was decided that malnourished children and lactating mothers will be referred to hospitals for therapeutic feeding whereby they are supplied with food to cover about 70% of the Required Daily Allowance (RDA) of the malnourished child and 20% of

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[2] Vitamin A Deficiency and Other Nutritional Problems in Southern Iraq, Helen Keller International, based on study conducted 14–26 May, 1991.

[3] Gulf Peace Team Special Mission to Iraq, Health Assessment Team 10–24 April, 1990.

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the RDA of lactating mothers, for a period of 2 weeks. To this effect, an amount of about 40 tons of different food items is delivered to hospital based nutrition centres. Meanwhile, UNICEF has agreed to support malnourished children in destituted families with food items. Malnourished children are given vitamin A capsules, while iron plus folate tablets will be used for malnourished pregnant and lactating mothers.

1.2.2 Breast-feeding A second UNICEF response has been the promotion of breast-feeding. Due to the typically low incidence of breast-feeding in the country and the continued absence of powdered milk and infant formulas from the local markets, it was regarded essentially vital to launch an immediate breast-feeding promotion campaign to save newborns. The Ministry of Health has agreed on a pilot study for Baby Friendly Hospital in Baghdad for 3 months and upon success, other similar hospitals will be included.

1.2.3 Promotion of Weaning Food Four hospitals in Baghdad had been involved in testing many recipes using UNICEF food items and at the same time, some local food items were supplied to these hospitals. Such recipes were also given to more hospitals for the same purpose. Simultaneously, UNICEF has provided full support to the Nutrition Research Institute to carry out activities related to the promotion of weaning food. This institute was involved in these activities in the past and they have been renewed once more in preparation of a major campaign which is currently underway.

1.2.4 Promotion of Growth Monitoring UNICEF has supplied all 38 hospitals thus far reached by the nutrition programme and their attached health centres with anthropometric equipment—weight and height measuring—growth monitoring charts * * * etc. In addition, supplies have also been made to 15 additional hospitals with paediatric departments to support regular growth monitoring of children under 5.

UNICEF has been the catalyzer of seminars and workshops for the promotion of growth monitoring organized by the Ministry of Health, and has so far supplied the Ministry of Health with necessary technical information.

1.3 COOPERATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Regular weekly meetings are held with Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Quaker International, WFP and the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC), as well as several other organizations active in the nutrition sector like MSF, CARE International and the Swedish Save the Children to coordinate food distribution efforts and other types of nutrition interventions.

1.4 LOOKING AHEAD

While UNICEF has just embarked on a comprehensive therapeutic programme and local staff have been trained in nutrition rehabilitation techniques for short-term objectives, longer term objectives have to be pursued to reinforce local practices in dealing with malnutrition, promote community participation and self-help in preventing the aggravation of the nutrition situation, and, finally, to establish a growth monitoring and promotion system through the existing infrastructure. The feeding project has been targeted to under-5, below 3SD (standard deviation) weight for age and pregnant and lactating mothers. The programme started in Baghdad and in the southern governorates and will be gradually expanded to include the northern governorates.

The nutrition programme has covered 35,000 malnourished children by the end of January in 8 Governorates through 38 hospitals and within 3 months UNICEF expects that the programme will be expanded to reach more hospitals throughout the country.

2. WATER AND SANITATION

2.1 THE CHALLENGE

2.1.1 The destruction of Iraq's power generating capacity during the war brought to a virtual halt the 258 central water treatment stations and 1,145 small compact units that provided pure drinking water to the country. While the gradual restoration of power has enabled some of these plants to re-function, serious water problems continue to persist—both in terms of quantity and quality in much of the country, and in virtually all outlying areas. The situation has been exacerbated by the breakage of pipes by people desperately seeking water at the main level, the critical shortage of treatment agents such as aluminum sulphate and chlorine and also the

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large quantities of equipment and spare parts which had been looted from water treatment plants and stores. Closely connected with water is the issue of sewage disposal and treatment. Ninety percent of the country's drinking water is drawn from rivers and purified in treatment plants, but these same rivers are now choked with the inflow of raw sewage due to the breakdown of treatment plants. In Baghdad, for instance, with one of the two main sewage treatment plants completely destroyed during the war, a significant portion of the capital's raw sewage continues to be directly discharged into the Tigris, polluting the drinking water of densely populated areas of southern Iraq.

2.1.2 While conditions in Baghdad have improved considerably in the months after the war, in other regions the situation remains critical, particularly in the south. The Tufts University Research Team, for instance, reported in late June that in the urban slum of Al-Hayaniya outside Basrah, raw sewage was piled 2 feet high on the streets and in peoples' houses, and that families were forced to sleep on their roofs to escape the stench inside. However, reports from other research teams and from UNICEF field observations found that conditions in Al-Hayaniya were not at all atypical from those in countless other cities and towns across the country. As a result of these conditions, water-borne diseases such as gastroenteritis, typhoid, and cholera had reached epidemic proportions and are still claiming unprecedented toll of Iraqi children.

2.2 UNICEF'S ROLE

Accomplishments

- **UNICEF is the country's sole supplier of aluminum sulphate and, with the exception of the ICRC, of chlorine both in gas and powder forms. These water purification reagents have been critical in preventing the further spread of water-borne disease, while the provision of collars to permit the prompt repair of broken pipes in Baghdad and other cities.**
- **The provision of extensive technical advice and assistance to water department engineers.**
- **Rapidly identifying priority needs, and closely monitoring the progress of water and sanitation systems restoration.**

2.2.1 Early assistance to Baghdad UNICEF responded early and on a massive scale to the critical water and sanitation problems besetting the country in the aftermath of the war. Initial stages of the response centered on Baghdad, but now the operation is on a nationwide level. UNICEF assistance to Baghdad in that critical early period included: 330 tons of aluminum sulphate; 12 one-ton chlorine gas cylinders; two tons of chlorine powder; six incubators; 80,000 liters of diesel fuel; and 1,700 collars. UNICEF also played an important role in promoting restoration of minimal water supplies to the city.

2.2.2 Rapid Assessments At the same time, UNICEF water and sanitation specialists and experts were dispatched to various other regions of the country and made rapid assessments of the water and sanitation needs and identified areas of potential UNICEF assistance. Two UNICEF water engineers seconded from New Delhi were outposted to oversee water and sanitation operations in the northern Governorates, while two OXFAM water engineers operating in conjunction with UNICEF were sent to the south. In all of the country's Governorates, UNICEF worked closely with health officials to identify pockets of particular urgency, such as those with high rates of typhoid, cholera, and gastroenteritis. Special emphasis was also placed on meeting the needs of hospitals and health centres identified as having been damaged or with insufficient water and sanitation systems.

2.2.3 Material Assistance The general approach adopted by UNICEF in the water and sanitation sector was to channel its scarce resources into assisting the country rehabilitate the existing water and sanitation networks, rather than into short term, quick fix solutions. While this approach diverged from that of other concerned groups at the outset subsequently the majority agreed that this strategy was most effective. UNICEF was also a leader in terms of integrating water and sewage issues, and in placing an emphasis on water quality in addition to quantity. To date, total material assistance in the water and sanitation sector to areas outside Baghdad has included: aluminum sulphate 3,282 tons; chlorine gas 950 tons and chlorine powder 137 tons, incubators 6 and collars and clamps to repair damaged water pipes 3,842. UNICEF has been virtually the only supplier of aluminum sulphate since the onset of the crisis and, with the exception of ICRC, also the country's only supplier of chlorine gas. In addition, UNICEF engineers and water and sanitation specialists have provided invaluable and extensive technical advice and assistance to Water Department engineers, and have also been extremely active in carrying out rapid

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assessments and monitoring the progress of water and sanitation systems restoration.

2.2.4 Complementary Programmes Training of health care workers, and the dissemination of information pertaining to safe hygiene practices, sanitary excreta disposal, and the effective treatment of diarrhoeal disease, continue to be important complements to UNICEF material inputs in the water and sanitation sector.

UNICEF has carried out an extensive survey in 300 villages, the inhabitants of which ranged between 100 to 2,000, in the north of the country, on the situation of water and sanitation. Meanwhile, 23 stationary sewage pumps and 8 mobile diesel sewage pumps have been installed and are functioning in the southern Governorate of Basra.

At present, 22 rented sewage tankers are functioning in Basra, Ammara, Muthana and Thiqar Governorates while 20 rented water tankers are supplying safe water to the population in Basrah and Ammara.

2.3 COOPERATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Cooperation with other groups has been excellent from the outset in the water and sanitation sector. Weekly meetings are held with the main concerned organizations namely, ICRC, OXFAM, and UNHCR, to avoid the duplication of services and to identify potential areas of collaboration. ICRC efforts have concentrated in Basra, Nasiriya, and in the northeast of the country, while OXFAM has concentrated their operations in the southern Governorates of Maysan and Al-Muthanna. A major ICRC contribution has been the provision of one litre water bags for use in hospitals and in conjunction with oral rehydration salts in various health centres. OXFAM initially focussed on the building of temporary emergency water tanks, but has recently shifted to identifying and supplying spare parts for the repair of the existing systems. UNHCR has focussed on addressing the water and sanitation needs of refugees and returnees in the north and northeast of the country. SCF-USA has provided UNICEF with two water and sanitation specialists to operate out of the UNICEF sub-office in Basra. SCF-UK has recently provided the consultancy of a water and sanitation engineer to provide supply and equipment to Basra water and sewage network, additional to those already provided by UNICEF.

2.4 LOOKING AHEAD

UNICEF material assistance to the water and sanitation sector is to become even more substantial in the coming months. UNICEF continued to be the country's sole supplier of chlorine and aluminum sulphate until the end of the year. In addition, desperately needed spare parts and equipment for rehabilitating the water and sanitation systems throughout the country, such as: chemical dosing pumps for wells and boreholes; booster pumps for chlorinators; submersible pumps and motors for vertical pumps to enable the drainage of sewage; skid-mounted river-water treatment units to treat raw river water; and pump station equipment; have either arrived from UNIPAC or will arrive soon. A particular focus of future efforts will be repairing and rehabilitating the water and sanitation networks in northern cities and towns which were particularly hard hit by the civil strife in the aftermath of the war.

3. HEALTH

3.1 THE CHALLENGE

3.1.1 The war and the subsequent civil strife left the country's public health system in a state of virtual collapse. Public health centres and hospitals came to almost a complete halt as a result of disruptions in power, shortages of supplies and personnel, and difficulties in transport. In the war's immediate aftermath, more damage was inflicted on the country's health services as a result of the looting of essential drugs, vaccines, and medical equipment. The EPI programme ceased to function due to the breakdown in the electricity-dependent cold chain system, while difficulties in transport made impossible the delivery of desperately needed oral rehydration salts and essential drugs. Tragically, this collapse of course came at a time when the deadly combination of malnutrition and water-borne infectious disease were beginning to take an enormous toll on Iraqi children, making the prompt rehabilitation of the health system of paramount importance.

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3.2 UNICEF'S ROLE

Accomplishments

• The prompt re-activation of immunization activities nationwide through the provision and delivery of vast quantities of vaccines, needles and syringes, and cold chain equipment, as well as through the support of training and social mobilization activities.

• The rapid scaling up of CDD programmes throughout the country through the provision and delivery of ORS and intra-venous rehydration fluids, as well as through the support of training and social mobilization activities.

• The provision of desperately needed essential drugs to help make possible a minimal supply of such drugs in all Governorates.

• Extensive technical assistance in the development and implementation of a nationwide sentinel sites surveillance system for communicable diseases.

3.2.1 EPI Perhaps the most important UNICEF contribution in the health sector was the central role the organization played in the rapid reinstitution of the country's EPI programme. With children weakened by malnutrition and living in highly unsanitary conditions with greatly reduced access to safe drinking water, rapidly re-instituting the EPI programme was deemed absolutely vital if large-scale epidemics and great loss of life were to be avoided. UNICEF immediately launched a massive supply and logistics effort, bringing in and transporting large quantities of cold boxes, kerosene-powered refrigerators, needles and syringes, as well as polio, measles, BCG, and DPT vaccines. EPI activities restarted in 81 centres in Baghdad and soon afterwards restarted nationwide. By the end of May, just 2 short months from the time the programme had been in a state of complete collapse, vaccination activities had recommenced in virtually every region of the country. To date, UNICEF material assistance to EPI comprises the following: DPT 4.7 million doses, polio (5.7 million doses), measles (1.375 million doses), BCG (1.350 million doses), and tetanus (2.960 million doses) vaccines; (10) million needles and (16) million syringes, (729) kerosene powered refrigerators; (200) cold boxes; (63) ice-line refrigerators; and 1.152 vaccine storage thermometers. In addition to material and logistical assistance, UNICEF also supported media spots, poster campaigns, loudspeakers mounted on trucks and other efforts aimed at promoting the re-instituted vaccination activities. Finally, UNICEF supported orientation and training courses for vaccinators in many Governorates.

3.2.2 CDD With the complete breakdown of the country's water and sanitation systems in the aftermath of the war, diarrhoeal disease rapidly reached epidemic proportions, and, acting in combination with severe malnutrition, soon became the number one child killer, Hence, a second critical priority in the health sector was the scaling up of the control of diarrhoeal diseases (CDD) programmes throughout the country. By the middle of April, UNICEF had already delivered and distributed more than 26 tons of oral rehydration salts and 67 tons of intra-venous rehydration fluids. To date, a total of 4.35 million ORS sachets have been provided by UNICEF to health centres and hospitals throughout the country. In addition, workshops and orientation sessions have been conducted in various Governorates for those involved in the CDD programme in order to refresh their knowledge and reinforce the role of TBAs in promoting ORT as part of their ongoing activities. Combined ORT/nutrition "corners," where mothers are able to learn about their child's nutritional needs and how to administer oral rehydration salts, have also been established in many health centres. Finally, poster campaigns, media spots, and loud speaker announcements have been undertaken in many regions in order to promote oral rehydration therapy.

3.2.3 ARI UNICEF's role in reactivating the Government Acute Respiratory Infection (ARI) project has been crucial since the very beginning of the relief programme when several tons of essential drugs—mainly antibiotics and other medical supplies—have been brought in Iraq by the WHO-UNICEF mission in February 1991. Since then more orders for the purchase of medicine and medical supplies have been placed this far and courses to train health workers, at any level of capacity, have been conducted both in Baghdad and other cities in the North and North-East of Iraq.

3.2.4 Essential Drugs As a result of the crippling economic sanctions imposed on Iraq since August 1990, the country's essential drug supply was dangerously depleted even before the war began. In the war's aftermath, with the enormous demands being placed on the health system, the situation rapidly became desperate. Hence, the emergency provision of essential drugs was a third critical initial UNICEF priority in the health sector. By 25 March, plans for essential drug distribution in Baghdad had been finalized, and distribution to the city's hospitals and

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health centres began a few days later. Shortly thereafter the southern Governorates had submitted their lists of needs and additional essential drugs shipments were promptly dispatched. UNICEF's provision of essential drugs helped make possible a minimum quantity of such drugs in all Governorates. As of 31 January, a total medical supplies distributed amounted to over 1,200 metric tons of which 367.85 tons went to central Governorates, 446.65 to northern Governorates and 431.50 tons to the southern Governorates.

3.2.5 Disease Surveillance With the fears of epidemics of communicable and water-borne diseases quickly becoming a reality in the immediate aftermath of the war, the need for a control of communicable diseases programme, involving sentinel sites surveillance system, laboratory testing, and an early warning mechanism against epidemics, was also an urgent initial priority. Responding to this need, UNICEF promptly dispatched a senior CSDR advisor from the MENA Regional Office in Amman to assist health officials in devising such a programme. As a result of the visit, surveillance systems were set up in 11 health centres located in the neediest sectors of Baghdad, and a workshop was held to train concerned health personnel on the use of specially designed reporting forms and maps. Following positive results of the programme established in the 11 Baghdad centres, the system was immediately extended to the southern Governorates and nationwide quickly thereafter.

3.2.6 Rehabilitating PHC Network In the health sector, as in the nutrition and water and sanitation sectors, UNICEF's emergency response has been carried out with an eye towards the country's long term development needs as well as its short-term emergency requirements. Hence, a major effort has been exerted from the earliest stages to work towards rehabilitation of the country's previously excellent primary health care network, and to promote preventive over curative approaches. In Basra, the UNICEF-SCF team has been the catalyst behind the formation of a taskforce to encourage preventive health care in the present system. Based on an outline developed by the taskforce, a 6-day training of trainers course took place in basic primary health care. Participants were a core group of public health nurses who will now serve as trainers for others. The Traditional Birth Attendants (TBA) training project was a successful UNICEF sponsored programme, just before the war, aimed at ensuring all women be screened for any at-risk pregnancy and during labour have a trained worker assistance in the delivery of their baby. Objectives were laid down to train 8,000 TBA's over 5 years, 1990–1995. The first year of project implementation saw the record number of more than 2,000 TBA's trained all around the country. Upon a request of the Iraqi Government, received at the UNICEF Regional office in Amman, Jordan, in September 1991, the already planned purchase of 5,000 TBA kits was carried out in October-November 1990 and then shipped to Iraq with a full pay-load charter plane carrying vaccines, medicines and other medical supplies on 14 December 1990. During the early stages of the Gulf War, January-February 1991, when all health services were paralyzed by the lack of electricity, personnel and means of transportation, the TBAs played an essential role in assuring that deliveries were properly attended at home. In Mosul, workshops and orientation sessions on primary health care and in particular oral rehydration therapy have also began for TBAs and others involved in public health. Six hundred and ninety-two TBAs were trained in the programme in 1990. Similar efforts, often undertaken in conjunction with EPI and ORT promotion, have taken place throughout the country. UNICEF continues its support to TBAs and of 3,000 additional TBA Kits will be requested to cover backlog of untrained TBAs in the country.

3.3 COOPERATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Formal and informal links have been established with a large number of private organizations active in the health sector. Public health specialists and doctors from Save the Children Federation (SCF)-USA, OXFAM-UK, and Union Medicale (Algerienne) are working directly with UNICEF in PHC rehabilitation programmes and health education in Basra and Ammara. A group of nine doctors, nurses, and logisticians from Lower Saxony Children's Relief are working with UNICEF to assist in the restoration of health services in Kalar and Halabja. Close cooperation has also taken place with Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) in meeting the emergency health requirements of returnees and refugees in the northeast of the country, and in essential drugs distribution and PHC promotion in Basra. UNICEF assisted Medecins du Monde (MDM) with logistics and supplies for hospitals in Ranya and Azadi, towns bordering the Iranian border in the north of the country. UNICEF has cooperated very closely with the ICRC in all aspects of the health programme through-

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out the country. More recently Save the Children-UK based Organization has joined UNICEF in assisting in the provision of essential equipment for water and sanitation, medecines and other medical supplies. Quaker International is collaborating with UNICEF by providing chlorine and ORS as well as technical assistance. Finally, UNICEF has worked with the WHO in the provision of essential drugs and supplies, and with the UNHCR in meeting the health needs of refugees and restoring health services to returnees in both the north and south of the country.

3.4 LOOKING AHEAD

While progress has been made in the rehabilitation of the health system, experts agree that health care at present is primarily hospital-based and that primary health care at the peripheral level remains badly affected. Hence, a major focus will be to continue efforts to get the primary health care system fully back into gear. Other important focuses will be the continued provision of essential drugs, communicable disease surveillance, and consolidating and building on the progress already made in rehabilitation the EPI and CDD programmes.

UNICEF has also placed strong emphasis on an Acute Respiratory Infections (ARI) programme currently underway in the northern governorates where severe winter conditions usually leave adverse effects on the health of children and pregnant women.

Another UNICEF programme to be supported through the Ministry of Social Affairs, is a Child Psychological Post-War Trauma Project which will look into the psychological aspects of children in the aftermath of wars.

4. STAFFING, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, LOGISTICS SUPPORT

4.1 STAFFING

4.1.1 Critical to the UNICEF effectiveness during the Iraq emergency has been its ability to rapidly recruit and deploy needed personnel. To cope with the enormous demands of the emergency operation, total staff size has grown over a period of weeks from a pre-crisis contingent of just 11, of which 9 were general service staff, to fully 97. This includes the NGO's staff under UNICEF umbrella. In the operation's earliest stages, a Chief of Field Operations was brought in from the Sudan for overall control and coordination of emergency-related activities, a Logistics Officer was recruited from Zaire to oversee the massive logistical effort, and a Water and Sanitation Field Officer was hired from Jordan to monitor UNICEF inputs in the Water and Sanitation Sector. These postings were followed soon after by the appointment of additional programme officers, water and sanitation engineers, nutritionists, public health specialists, information officers, and a wide range of support staff. Among the new appointees were nine United Nations Volunteers, with positions ranging from Assistant to the Representative and Health Coordinator to Field Nutritionist and Logistics Officer.

4.1.2 UNICEF's rapid deployment of field staff has been of particular importance throughout the country. This large on-the-ground presence has enabled the rapid identification of priority problems and areas and greatly increased the ability of the central office in Baghdad to respond promptly. UNICEF sub-offices have been opened in Dohuk, Mosul, Suleimaniyia, Arbil and Basra. UNICEF has also established a presence in Karbala, Najaf, Ammara, Muthanna and Thiqar. Twenty-eight of total UNICEF staff are permanently in the field while those based in Baghdad make frequent field trips. Personnel from NGOs working directly under the UNICEF umbrella, such as OXFAM-UK SCF-USA, Union Medicale (Algerienne), Quaker International, SCF-UK and Lower Saxony Children's Relief, have further extended UNICEF's on-the-ground presence.

4.2 TECHNICAL SUPPORT

UNICEF has provided technical support in a wide variety of programme areas. In health, UNICEF technical assistance was instrumental to the establishment of a national sentinel site communicable disease surveillance system, as well as to the re-establishment of the EPI and CDD programmes and staff training. In water and sanitation, UNICEF water and sanitation engineers and specialists continue to provide extensive technical expertise and assistance to the Water Department engineers, as well as to the monitoring and evaluation of progress in implementing emergency restoration of the country's water and sanitation systems. Finally, in nutrition technical support has been provided for the assessment of the nutrition situation in the country.

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4.3 LOGISTICS SUPPORT

UNICEF has also provided significant logistical support, particularly in the early stages of the emergency when the Government capacity to respond was limited. UNICEF staff and trucks were mobilized to provide around the clock packing and distribution service for shipments of drugs and medical supplies arriving in Baghdad. A number of lorries were rented, labourers were hired, and overtime for store supervisors was covered. Fuel shortages for the transport were overcome with special deliveries from Jordan. At the peak of the logistics load, 16 trucks were delivering supplies to 18 Governorate stores, and assistance was also often given for the onward movement of supplies to hospitals and health centres. In the first 7 weeks of the operation, 96 overland truck deliveries were made to 19 locations, and by 31 January, total tonnage transported by UNICEF rented trucks had already reached over 1,200 tons.

4.3.1 Extensive logistical support of an administrative nature, such as assistance with visas, transport, accommodation, and office space, has been extended to a number of private relief agencies and special missions. OXFAM-UK, SCF-USA, Union Medicale (Algerienne), MSF, Quaker International, SCF-UK and Lower Saxony Children's Relief, amongst others, have all benefited from UNICEF administrative support. While placing an enormous burden on the UNICEF Baghdad Office, this administrative support has been indispensable to ensuring these organizations ability to function effectively in the country.

5. CONCLUDING NOTE

5.1 It is a sad irony that the humanitarian tragedy in Iraq is taking place just a few months after the brave and hopeful words contained in the Declaration of the World Summit for Children were adopted by over 150 Heads of State:

—We ourselves hereby make a solemn commitment to give high priority to the rights of children, to their survival and to their protection and development. (Art. 19)

—Together, our nations have the means and the knowledge to protect the lives and to diminish enormously the suffering of children (Art. 8)

—We will work carefully to protect children from the scourge of war and to take measures to prevent further armed conflicts, in order to give children everywhere a peaceful and secure future. The needs of children and families must be protected in even in times of war and in violence ridden areas. (Art. 20(8)).

UNICEF, in its massive and rapid response to the Iraq emergency, has sought to uphold these critical tends of the World Summit Declaration, and to ensure that they are not forgotten by the rest of the international community.

5.2 It is regretful to close this report on the same grim note on which it commenced. Despite the efforts of UNICEF and the large number of other groups active in the international relief effort, the emergency is not over, and the suffering of Iraqi women and children has not been substantially alleviated. In fact, as was mentioned at the outset, the situation remains desperate, with countless children continuing to die each day from acute malnutrition and water-borne diseases. The Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) post-war estimates stand today at 91 per thousand, while under-5 Mortality Rate (U5MR) is 151 per thousand and maternal mortality rate is 120 per 100,000.[4] The United Nations Population Division pre-war estimates were respectively 63 and 86 per thousands.[5] The reality is that the international relief effort can ultimately do little to dramatically alter the tragedy unfolding in Iraq. By means of illustration, the total value of food and medical supplies donated to Iraq in 1991 by all international relief agencies is US$245 million—just 5 to 6 percent of the US$3.5 to US$4 billion worth of food and medicine that Iraq normally imports in a year.

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[4] International Study Team In-Depth Assessment, October 1991.
[5] SOWCR 1990.

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NEWS FROM U.S. SENATOR AL GORE

GORE SAYS BUSH MUST MOVE TO STOP SADDAM HUSSEIN

Urges Administration to Take Action to Remove Iraqi Police Records

CALLS FOR WAR CRIMES TRIBUNAL, HELP FOR KURDS UNDER ATTACK

WASHINGTON.—Marking the fourth anniversary of the gassing of the Kurdish city of Halabja, Senator Al Gore (D-TN), today (3/18) strongly criticized the failure of the Bush Administration's policy toward Iraq and the Administration's failure to speed removal from Iraq police records documenting the torturous actions of the Hussein government.

"Saddam Hussein and those who serve him are war criminals. It took a long time—too long—for the Administration to accept that this man is a permanent menace, and to begin to cast about for ways to bring him down," said Gore, in remarks prepared for delivery on the Senate floor today. 'Better late than never, maybe, but more than the Administration's timing is off—the policy is still lagging and haphazard," said Gore.

Gore also criticized the Administration for failing to convene a formal war crimes tribunal to document crimes against humanity committed by Saddam Hussein and his regime.

And, Gore said the Administration is failing to act with the urgency required to remove from the Kurdish region Iraqi police records documenting the torture and terrorism. For months, Gore has been urging Administration officials to secure the records and videotapes and, gained the support of a prominent university to organize and release the information.

"Does our government find it acceptable that this record should be lost, and that these voices of the dead be silenced forever? Does this Administration really endorse a policy of inaction that threatens to erase a brutal record that must be remembered and prosecuted not whispered away and forgotten," said Gore. "Does our government wish to risk becoming Saddam Hussein's accomplice by helping him escape exposure and condemnation? Surely not."

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee tomorrow (3/19) conducts a hearing on mass murder in Iraq.

"In doing this, they perform a sacred duty to the dead, whose blood, as the bible says, cries out from the earth on which it was spilled. But there are the living to remember as well as the dead. Hopefully, during this week of remembrance, our government will reaffirm its support for the living by stating bluntly that we will not stand idle while the Kurds perish by degrees, as Saddam Hussein tightens the noose," Gore said.

The fourth anniversary of the gassing of the Kurdish city of Halabja was Monday, March 16. More than 5,000 men, women, and children died in the attack.

"Today, Saddam Hussein—having survived even his military defeat at our hands—remains in power. He continues a genocidal war against any group that would stand against him: against the Shiites holding out desperately in the southern marshes of Iraq, and especially, against the entire population of the Kurdish region in the north," said Gore. "For months, Saddam Hussein has imposed a land blockade on the Kurdish regions, literally starving to submission or death his own people—simply because he is afraid that if their voices are not silenced, they will overpower his."

"Our country cannot turn its back on this cruel, inhuman, unthinkable repression," Gore said. "We alone can make a difference to millions of human beings—to men, women and children, to parents and grandparents, and the new generations they are struggling to protect and nurture."

* * * * *

ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE GASSING OF THE KURDISH CITY OF HALABJA

Statement of Senator Al Gore, Wednesday, March 18, 1992

Mr. President, Monday, the 16th of March, was the fourth anniversary of the gassing of the Kurdish city of Halabja, at the order of Saddam Hussein. More than 5,000 men, women and children died in that attack. Today, Saddam Hussein—having survived even his military defeat at our hands—remains in power. He continues a genocidal war against any group that would stand against him: against the

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Shiites holding out desperately in the southern marshes of Iraq, and especially, against the entire population of the Kurdish region in the north.

There are no words to adequately or fully explain the nightmare of Saddam Hussein's continuing reign of terror, the suffering of innocent men, women, and children who have been methodically tortured—literally and figuratively—by a government that has them frightened, paralyzed and smothered by despair.

For a description of these events, I especially commend to you and to all members of this body, a staff report issued in November 1991, to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, entitled *Kurdistan in the Time of Saddam Hussein.* When this report was issued, 600,000 Kurds had fled to the Turkish border with Iraq and were facing mass death from exposure, epidemic disease, and hunger. After a belated start, but to its credit, the Bush Administration ultimately acted. Operation Provide Comfort prevented a major calamity from becoming a catastrophe.

Thanks to that effort, the Kurdish people escaped the worst, but they continue to face a deadly threat.

For months, Saddam Hussein has imposed a land blockade on the Kurdish regions, literally starving to submission or death his own people—simply because he is afraid that if their voices are not silenced, they will overpower his. Food, fuel and medicine are in critically short supply. The United Nations, which has taken over responsibility for humanitarian relief, is not—according to my information—responding at a level commensurate to the need.

Meanwhile, Iraqi military forces are reportedly beginning to press in upon the Kurdish regions. It is clear that Saddam Hussein is going to use every means at his disposal to destroy the Kurds. The question is: can he get away with it?

Our country cannot turn its back on this cruel, inhuman, unthinkable repression. We alone can make a difference to millions of human beings—to men, women, and children, to parents and grandparents and the new generations they are struggling to protect and nurture.

We could bring food, fuel and medicine to the Kurdish people—even as we and others must now undertake to help Turkey deal with the effects of the recent earthquake. We have the ability to make Saddam Hussein pay for any military infraction of the cease-fire. And, in my opinion, we have the ability ultimately to dispose of him and his entire wretched system of government.

But President Bush has created an obstacle to action by creating an obstacle in our thinking: the sense that Saddam Hussein is somehow essential to the stability of his region and that we must take care to deal with him only within carefully weighted limits. We must get over it and beyond it. Saddam Hussein and those who serve him are war criminals. The people in the region will not begin to know safety until Saddam and his cohorts have met the fate of all tyrants, as one day they assuredly will.

Long ago, we should have started to prepare for that day of reckoning. Instead, based on the misguided notion that we needed Saddam Hussein's regime, the Administration literally gave him the means to save himself, and to beat down those who rose up against him. It took a long time—too long—for the Administration to accept that this man is a permanent menace, and to begin to cast about for ways to bring him down.

Better late than never, maybe, but more than the Administration's timing is off—the policy is still lagging and haphazard. Once the Administration finally came to appreciate the need to depose Saddam Hussein, you would think that it would grasp any and all tools for that purpose. One of those tools, it seems to me, is to convene a formal war crimes tribunal to document crimes against humanity, committed by Saddam Hussein and his associates. But no tribunal was convened. Why?

This should have been done immediately after the liberation of Kuwait. That it was not done is extremely curious. But perhaps more curious still, is the Administration's slowness to act on another major opportunity to document without question the criminal nature of the Baathist regime. The possibility exists to remove from the Kurdish region, all the necessary, and terrifying documentation to keep a tribunal fully occupied investigating and prosecuting crimes against the Kurds alone.

These are the records kept by the Iraqi police themselves, of torture and death visited upon thousands of men, women and even little children. In some cases there are videotapes of these atrocities—videotapes too brutal even for American television. Recently, there has been some press and television coverage of these matters, but it is only the tip of the iceberg.

Starting in late November, I have appealed privately on more than one occasion for the Administration to act to secure these documents and tapes. I have even provided the Administration with the promised support of one of our greatest universi-

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ties to help speedily organize and release this information. But the Administration delays, and with each day, the risk increases that some portion of this information will be lost.

I understand that there are impediments of one sort or another. But even making allowances for that—generous allowance—it baffles me and disappoints me deeply that so much time has been lost, and still the Administration plods along on a spiral bureaucratic track. Where is the passion for justice that one should find here?

Does our government find it acceptable that this record should be lost, and that these voices of the dead be silenced forever? Does this Administration really endorse a policy of inaction that threatens to erase a brutal record that must be remembered and prosecuted, not whispered away and forgotten? Does it wish to risk becoming Saddam Hussein's accomplice by helping him escape exposure and condemnation? Surely, not. Surely, the Administration will act eventually to make sure that the one imperishable memory of Saddam Hussein will be the precisely documented and catalogued record of his crimes against humanity.

Tomorrow, Mr. President, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will be holding a hearing on the subject of mass murder in Iraq. In doing this, they perform a sacred duty to the dead whose blood, as the Bible says, cries out from the earth on which it was spilled. But there are the living to remember as well as the dead. Hopefully, during this week of remembrance, our government will reaffirm its support for the living: by stating bluntly that we will not stand idle while the Kurds perish by degrees, as Saddam Hussein tightens the noose. Instead, let us provision the Kurds, let us warn Saddam Hussein against violating their sanctuary, and let us take every necessary step to expose to world opinion what has been done to them by the powers that be in Iraq.

In the aftermath of the Gulf War, President Bush decided not to react in the face of the uprising he had encouraged and, as a result, thousands of lives were lost. A brilliant war strategy was dimmed by the disarray of lackluster post-war confusion. We have an urgent opportunity before us. We cannot allow mistakes of policy or a loss of courage. We cannot ignore the voice of conscience for the sake of expediency.

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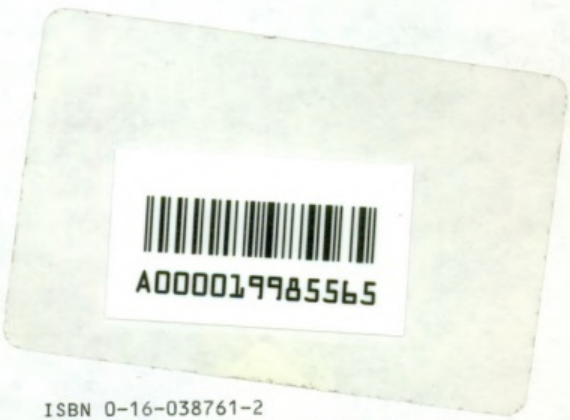

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MASS KILLINGS IN IRAQ

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED SECOND CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

MARCH 19, 1992

Printed for the use of the Committee on Foreign Relations

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