

back to the floor again later this year. Maybe we can try again. Sometimes legislation that is important for the future of the country needs a number of votes before we finally get it through. I think this is an issue whose time has come, and it is an issue that is going to be critical if we are going to erase some of the cynicism and apathy toward Government that abounds too much in this country, particularly among our young people.

That, to me, is the hazard of going on with this. I don't think this Nation of ours is ever going to be taken over by the likes of Russia, China, North Korea or any combination of nations around this world. I do worry about the future of our democracy when we have people, particularly our young people, who are so apathetic toward politics and Government that they don't want any part of it, wouldn't think of running for public office, don't want to get into a dirty thing like political races, wouldn't think of going out and trying to raise money to help our political parties get messages across.

We have to erase that if we are to have the democracy that is our future, because our country can go downhill from that just as fast as it can from other adversaries that might have more military power but would not be able to take this country over.

Mr. President, I hope that we bring this subject up again this year, and I hope that we have a more favorable consideration of it when it comes up again.

I also want to recognize Beth Stein, who is with me here today, who has worked so long and hard on this, who has had a long experience at the FEC and contributed so much to our hearings this year and last year in trying to make sure we have a way to the future that is good for all of our people. I thank her for her efforts, and also all the committee members who worked so hard on this through the year.

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to proceed for 12 minutes as in morning business.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE U.N.-IRAQ AGREEMENT

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I listened with great interest yesterday to the comments of the majority leader on the agreement between the United Nations and Iraq. I did so particularly since I had come to the floor in the past and publicly credited him and complimented him for his forceful assertion the night of the State of the Union indicating we would stand united, Democrats and Republicans, in our opposition to Saddam Hussein. That was badly needed at the time. It was a statesmanlike thing to do, and it was applauded by all of us.

But I must admit I was perplexed yesterday by the majority leader's comments. He seemed, in my view, Mr. President, to rush to judgment to en-

gage in a pessimistic fatalism that I think permeated his remarks and I think are unwarranted.

The majority leader is correct, based on what I heard yesterday, at least in one important respect, and that is the agreement between the United Nations and Iraq should be judged by whether it furthers American interests from our perspective. This is entirely consistent with the position taken by President Clinton. He and his national security team are in the process of making that judgment, which is: Is this agreement consistent with and does it further U.S. interests?

The administration is seeking clarifications to the ambiguities in this very general agreement. It is using our formidable diplomatic muscle, Mr. President, to settle unanswered questions in our favor, as I speak. In contrast to the gloomy assessment presented by the Senate majority leader, things appear to be breaking our way so far, as we seek the proper interpretation of that agreement.

Secretary General Kofi Annan has provided assurances on some of the key questions that have arisen in the accord.

First, the new special team will be an integral part of UNSCOM and not a separate entity, as some worry.

Second, the diplomats to be appointed to the new team will act as observers only. UNSCOM will retain operational control of the entire inspection process.

Third, the head of the new special team within UNSCOM for inspecting Presidential sites will be an arms control expert with a solid track record in arms control. Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, the current Undersecretary General for disarmament, who has recently completed a tour as Sri Lanka's ambassador to the United States, will be that person. He has played a key role in making the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty permanent. He and Ambassador Richard Butler have known each other for nearly 20 years, and they appear to be able to work together and respect one another.

Fourth, UNSCOM and the Secretary General, not Iraq, will develop the procedures for inspecting the Presidential sites.

Fifth, UNSCOM and Chairman Butler will retain their independence.

Sixth, the reporting lines remain intact. The new team leader will report to Ambassador Butler, who, in turn, reports to the Security Council through the Secretary General, as UNSCOM's chairman has done since 1991.

Finally, the new representative of the Secretary General in Baghdad will not have a direct role in the UNSCOM inspections process.

If these assurances pan out, then this agreement will go a long way toward furthering the United States national interests.

I have personally known the Secretary General, Kofi Annan, for many years, and I regard him as a man of his

word. So I have no reason to doubt these assurances that have been made now on the record.

For the sake of argument, let us assume that the Secretary General is attempting to deceive us, which I know he is not. In that case, I don't see that we have given up any of our options, even if that were his intention.

We are not bound by this agreement. If it provides unworkable mechanisms to let UNSCOM do its job, or if it undermines the integrity of UNSCOM, we can and should walk away from it.

The critics would have us believe that we are the "helpless superpower," that we are bound by the terms of an agreement negotiated by an omnipotent United Nations. This simply does not conform with reality or square with the facts.

We have a formidable armada assembled in the Persian Gulf poised to strike at a moment's notice. That armada can be called into service if the agreement falls short or if Saddam Hussein reneges on his commitments. The agreement does not in any way suspend our right to act unilaterally or multilaterally for that matter.

Indeed, should the agreement be violated, the use of force would meet with, in my view, much less international opposition than it would have in the absence of an agreement.

An allegation that I find particularly puzzling is that we have "subcontracted our foreign policy" to the United Nations. Granted, it makes for a crisp sound bite that everybody will pick up, but like most sound bites, it lacks substance.

Those who make this politically motivated charge seem to ignore that the Secretary General is acting according to specific guidelines issued by the Security Council. They seem to forget that the United States is in the Security Council and our Secretary of State, in particular, played a central role in preparing these guidelines.

Would the critics have preferred the Russians and the French coming up with an agreement without our input, or the Secretary General acting on the basis of his own instincts? Or would they rather have him act on the basis of the red lines that we drew in the agreement as a member of the Security Council? Or to avoid subcontracting our foreign policy, would the critics have preferred our diplomats traveling to Baghdad?

The charge also misses the fact that we have maintained support for our policy by acting within the bounds of the U.N. resolutions, which we crafted. We have not subcontracted; we have set the terms for Iraqi compliance.

Throughout this crisis, the same critics have leveled exaggerated charges that we have precious little international support for our policy; yet, in the same breath they call for a course of action, such as toppling the regime, that would guarantee absolutely no international support and without the willingness to supply our military with

the force necessary to do that. It seems to me that this is a glaring contradiction in arguments made by the critics of President Clinton's approach. You can't have it both ways.

I believe that the Presidents resolve in backing diplomacy with force has been vindicated. It has not been easy. He was subjected to criticism from those who wanted to go farther and those who wished he hadn't gone as far as he did. These critics make some valid arguments, but they fail to put any realistic alternatives forward. They also fail to recognize that their suggested course would entail far greater costs than the President's approach.

In their rush to criticize the Clinton administration, the critics have gotten lost in the proverbial weeds. They have conjured up worst-case scenarios and portrayed American options as being much more limited than they actually are.

As the facts come in, the false picture they have painted is gradually being chipped away. The agreement moves us to a far more advantageous position than we were in before the crisis began. If Iraq implements the agreement, we will have access to all suspect weapons sites in Iraq for the first time. If Iraq refuses to comply this time around, then we will be in a much stronger position to justify our use of force, which I am convinced we will exercise.

The bottom line, Mr. President, is that we have given up none of our options, while the agreement has very likely narrowed the options for Saddam Hussein.

I yield the floor.

UNSCOM CHAIRMAN BUTLER'S REMARKS ON AGREEMENT WITH IRAQ

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, yesterday, I came to the floor to discuss the agreement that has been achieved between the UN and Iraq with regard to access to suspect sites in Iraq. At that time, I indicated that clarifications over the course of the last 48 hours had increased our confidence about the degree to which we think the agreement can be successful.

I want to talk a bit more about that agreement now, given the comments just made this morning by UNSCOM Chairman Richard Butler. His statement helps clarify even further the degree to which the agreement may be as successful as we had hoped it would.

As I stated yesterday, what we are seeking could not be more clear. We are simply seeking unconditional, unfettered access to all suspect sites, as called for in prior Security Council resolutions. We also noted yesterday that diplomacy, backed by the threat to use overwhelming force, has brought us closer to that goal.

The comments made over the last 24 hours by UNSCOM Chairman Richard Butler are of immense help in clarifying

the important details of the agreement, some of which we have not had access to until now.

As the process of clarification continues, there is a growing sense of just what we have achieved here. The perspective of UNSCOM Chairman Richard Butler, whose track record of toughness with Iraq is legendary, is especially valuable.

I want to take just a moment to highlight some portions of Chairman Butler's take on UNSCOM's role in the agreement.

I ask unanimous consent that the text of the remarks of Chairman Butler be printed in the RECORD at the end of my remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(See Exhibit 1.)

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, in his statement earlier today, he made a number of comments, and I want to describe them at this point. His first comment on the overall agreement says that the agreement:

... gave expression to a fundamental commitment that is set forth in the resolutions of the Security Council, mainly that UNSCOM must have immediate, unconditional and unrestricted access to all sites in Iraq for the purpose of carrying out its mandate. The memorandum of understanding at high political level reaffirms and reiterates that commitment.

In other words, what Chairman Butler has said is that his highest priority is to assure that we have this unrestricted, unfettered access to all sites in Iraq. Having now examined the details of the memorandum of understanding incorporated within the agreement, Chairman Butler concludes that the commitment is intact. With regard to the UNSCOM role in the context of the agreement, he said:

I view it [the agreement] as strengthening UNSCOM in the conduct of its work in Iraq.

With regard to UNSCOM's access to presidential sites, he noted:

The arrangements that are made for that access, set forth principally in paragraph 4 of the memorandum of understanding, have been the subject of some misunderstanding and, regrettably, some misrepresentation. I want to make clear that those arrangements are entirely satisfactory to me and the organization that I lead.

With regard to the role of diplomats in the inspection effort, Chairman Butler said the following:

With the establishment of a special inspection group within UNSCOM, to be led by a chief inspector of UNSCOM, to which diplomatic observers will be added to insure concerns that Iraq has expressed and the council has acknowledged with respect to the particular dignity of those sites, we will be able to do our work.

Putting it in simple language, Chairman Butler has noted that adding a diplomatic contingent to the inspection effort will not hinder UNSCOM in fulfilling its mission.

With regard to the concern about unclear lines of authority as UNSCOM performs its duties, he said the following:

These lines of authority and reporting are clear, and I find them entirely satisfactory. Going beyond that, quite frankly, I find it a positive additional resource which will now be put at our disposal to enable us to do the work in those designated sites within Iraq.

Chairman Butler also adds a note of caution regarding implementation of this agreement, as have the President, the Secretaries of State and Defense, and many Members of Congress: that the proof will be in the testing.

If Iraq implements the agreement, weapons inspectors will, for the first time, have unrestricted, unconditional access to all suspect sites in Iraq, with no limits on the numbers of visits or deadlines to complete their work. If Iraq does not cooperate and we need to take action, we are in a stronger position internationally than ever. Again, if Iraq fails to comply, our response will be swift, strong and certain.

Chairman Butler concludes that this is a strong agreement. I share his view. This agreement allows us to complete our work. This agreement, backed up by the use or the threat of force, would allow us the access that we did not have before.

Mr. President, I don't know how much clearer one can say it than that. Chairman Butler has concluded that this agreement does the job—as long as the Iraqis comply. Now, the question is, will Saddam Hussein be willing to live by his word? Will he provide the access he committed to in this MOU? If not, it's back to business, it's the use of force, it's a swift response militarily and by whatever other means may be necessary.

So, Mr. President, I think we need to get on with it. Let's take the necessary steps to get the inspection teams to Iraq and inspect these sites. Let's clarify, to whatever extent may be required, whether these sites contain material that needs to be destroyed. Let us continue the overall assessment of compliance on the part of Iraq. We are in a position to do that now. This agreement allows us to pursue our work. I applaud those responsible and will continue to monitor this situation with every expectation that, one way or the other, we will get the job done.

I yield the floor.

EXHIBIT 1

ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN U.N. AND IRAQ FOR INSPECTIONS OF CONTROVERSIAL SITES IN IRAQ
(By Richard Butler, Chairman, U.N. Special Commission)

BUTLER: ... level, it gave expression to a fundamental commitment that is set forth in the resolutions of the Security Council, mainly that UNSCOM must have immediate, unconditional and unrestricted access to all sites in Iraq for the purpose of carrying out its mandate.

The memorandum of understanding at high political level reaffirms and reiterates that commitment.

Thirdly, it follows logically from those two facts that, as far as I am concerned, I welcome it. I view it as strengthening UNSCOM in the conduct of its work in Iraq.

There is some detail in the memorandum of understanding with respect to the specific object that was addressed—namely, access