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REMARKS BY SENATOR EDWARD KENNEDY (D-MA) AT THE JOHNS HOPKINS SCHOOL OF ADVANCED INTERNATIONAL STUDIES TOPIC: IRAQ LOCATION: SAIS, WASHINGTON, D.C.

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(Applause.)

SEN. KENNEDY: Thank you very much. Thank you very much, Dr. Fukuyama, for your kind words and presentation here today. It's an honor to be in this excellent center. I'm honored to be at the School of Advanced International Studies. Many of the most talented individuals in foreign policy have benefitted immensely from your outstanding graduate program, and I welcome the opportunity to meet with you today.

I have come here today to express my view that America should not go to war against Iraq unless and until other reasonable alternatives are exhausted.

But I begin with the strongest possible affirmation that good and decent people of all sides of this debate, who may, in the end, stand on opposing sides of this decision, are equally committed to our national security.

The life-and-death issue of war and peace is too important to left to politics, and I disagree with those who suggest that this fateful issue cannot or should not be contested vigorously, publicly and all across America. When it is the people's sons and daughters who will risk and even lose their lives, then the people should hear and be heard, speak and be listened to.

But there is a difference between honest public dialogue and partisan appeals, and there is **a difference between questioning policy and questioning motives**. There are Republicans and Democrats who support the immediate use of force, and Republicans and Democrats who have raised doubts and dissented.

In this serious time for America and many American families, no one should poison the public square by attacking the patriotism of opponents or by assailing proponents as more interested in the cause of politics than in the merits of their cause. I reject this, as should we all. (Applause.)

Let me say plainly: I not only can see, but I am convinced that President Bush believes genuinely in the course he urges upon us. And let me say with the same plainness, those who agree with that course have an equal obligation to resist any temptation to convert patriotism into politics. It is possible to love America while concluding that it is not now wise to go to war. The standard that should guide us is especially clear when lives are on the line. We must ask what is right for our country and not party. That is the true spirit of September 11th -- not unthinking unanimity but a clear- minded unity in our determine (sic) to defeat terrorism, to defend our values and the values of life itself.

Just a year ago, the American people and the Congress rallied behind the president and our armed forces as we went to war in Afghanistan. Al Qaeda and the Taliban protectors who gave them sanctuary in Afghanistan posed a clear, present and continuing danger. The need to destroy al Qaeda was urgent and undeniable. In the months that followed September 11th, the Bush administration marshaled an international coalition. Today 90 countries are enlisted in the effort for providing troops to providing law enforcement, intelligence and other critical support. But I am concerned that using force against Iraq before other means are tried will sorely test both the integrity and the effectiveness of the coalition.

Just one year into the campaign against al Qaeda, the administration is shifting focus, resources and energy to Iraq. The change in priority is coming before we have fully eliminated the threat from al

Qaeda, before we know whether Osama bin Laden is dead or alive and before we can be assured that the fragile post-Taliban government in Afghanistan will consolidate its authority. No one disputes that America has lasting and important interests in the Persian Gulf or that Iraq poses a significant challenge to U.S. interests.

There is no doubt that Saddam Hussein's regime is a serious danger, that he is a tyrant, and that his pursuit of lethal weapons of mass destruction cannot be tolerated. He must be disarmed. How can we best achieve this objective in a way that minimizes the risk to our own country? How can we ignore the danger to our young men and women in uniform, to our ally, Israel, to regional stability, to the international community, and victory against terrorism. There is clearly a threat from Iraq and there is clearly a danger. But the administration has not made a convincing case that we face such an imminent threat to our national security that a unilateral, preemptive American strike and an immediate war are necessary. (Applause.)

Nor has the administration laid out the cost in blood and treasure of this operation. With all the talk of war, the administration has not explicitly acknowledged, let alone explained to the American people, the immense post-war commitment that will be required to create a stable Iraq.

The president's challenge to the United Nations requires a renewed effort to enforce the will of the international community to disarm Saddam. Resorting to war is not America's only or best course at this juncture. There are realistic alternatives between doing nothing and declaring unilateral or immediate war. War should be a last resort, not the first response. (Applause.)

Let us -- let us follow that course and the world will be with us, even if in the end we have to move to the ultimate sanction of armed conflict. The Bush administration says America can fight a war in Iraq without undermining our most pressing national security priority, the war against al Qaeda. But I believe it is inevitable that a war in Iraq without serious international support will weaken our effort to ensure that al Qaeda terrorists can never, never, never threaten American lives again.

Unfortunately, the threat from al Qaeda is still imminent. The nation's armed forces and law enforcement are on constant high alert. America may have broken up the al Qaeda network in Afghanistan and scattered its operatives across many lands, but we have not broken its will to kill Americans.

As I said earlier, we still don't know the fate, the location or the operational capacity of Osama bin Laden himself, but we do know that al Qaeda is still there and still here in America and will do all it can to strike at America's heart and heartland again. But we don't know when, where or how this may happen.

On March 12th, CIA Director Tenet testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee that al Qaeda remains the most immediate and serious threat to our country despite the progress that we have made in Afghanistan and disrupting the network elsewhere. Even with the Taliban out of power, Afghanistan remains fragile. Security remains tenuous. Warlords still dominate many regions. Our reconstruction effort, which is vital to long-term stability and security, is halting and inadequate.

Some al Qaeda operatives, no one knows how many, have faded in to the general population. Terrorist attacks are on the rise. President Karzai, who has already survived one assassination attempt, is still struggling to solidify his hold on power. And although neighboring Pakistan has been our ally, its stability is far from certain.

We know all this. And we also know that it is an open secret in Washington that the nation's uniformed military leadership is skeptical about the wisdom of war with Iraq. They share the concern that it may adversely affect the ongoing war against al Qaeda and the continuing effort in Afghanistan by draining resources and armed forces already stretched so thin that many Reservists have been called for a second year of duty, and record numbers of service numbers (sic) have been kept on active duty beyond their obligated service.

To succeed in our global war against al Qaeda and terrorism, the United States depends on military, law enforcement, intelligence support from many other nations. We depend on Russia and countries in the former Soviet Union that border on Afghanistan for military cooperation. We depend on countries from Portugal to Pakistan to the Philippines for information about al Qaeda's plans and intentions. And because of these relationships, terrorist plots are being foiled, and al Qaeda operatives are being arrested. It is far from clear that these essential relationships will be able to survive the strain of a war with Iraq that comes before the alternatives are tried or without the support of an international coalition.

A largely unilateral American war that is widely perceived in the Muslim world as untimely or unjust could worsen, not lessen, the threat of terrorism. War with Iraq before a genuine attempt at inspection and disarmament, without genuine international support, could swell the ranks of al Qaeda sympathizers and trigger an escalation in terrorist acts. As General Clark told the Senate Armed Services Committee, it would supercharge recruiting for al Qaeda. General Hoar advised the committee on September 23rd that America's first and primary effort should be to defeat al Qaeda. In a September 10th article, General

Clark wrote, "Unilateral U.S. action today would disrupt the war against al Qaeda." We ignore such wisdom and advice from many of the best of our military at our own peril.

We have known for many years that Saddam Hussein is seeking and developing weapons of mass destruction. Our intelligence community is also deeply concerned about the acquisition of such weapons by Iran, North Korea, Libya, Syria and other nations. But information from the intelligence community over the past six months does not point to Iran as an imminent threat to the United States, or a major proliferator of weapons of mass destruction.

In public hearings before the Senate Armed Services Committee in March, CIA Director George Tenet described Iraq as a threat but not as a proliferator, saying that Saddam Hussein -- and I quote -- "is determined to thwart U.N. sanctions, press ahead with weapons of mass destruction and resurrect the military force he had before the Gulf War."

That's unacceptable. But it is also possible that it could be stopped, short of war.

In recent weeks, in briefings and in hearings in the Senate Armed Services Committee, I have seen no persuasive evidence that Saddam would not be deterred from attacking U.S. interests by America's overwhelming military superiority. I have heard no persuasive evidence that Saddam is on the threshold of acquiring the nuclear weapons he has sought for more than 20 years. And the administration has offered no persuasive evidence that Saddam would transfer chemical or biological weapons of mass destruction to al Qaeda or any other terrorist organization.

As General Joseph Hoar, the former commander of the Central Command, told the members of the Armed Services Committee, "A case has not been made to connect al Qaeda and Iraq. To the contrary, there is no clear and convincing pattern of Iraqi relations with either al Qaeda or the Taliban."

General Wesley Clark, the former supreme allied commander Europe, testified before the Armed Services Committee on September 23rd that Iran has closer ties to terrorism than Iraq. Iran has nuclear weapons development program, and it already has a missile that can reach Israel.

Moreover, in August, former national security adviser Brent Scowcroft wrote that "there is scant evidence linking Saddam Hussein to terrorist organizations, and even less to the September 11th attacks." He concluded that Saddam "would not regard it as in his interest to risk his country or his investment in the weapons of mass destruction by transferring them to terrorists who would use them and leave Baghdad as the return address." (Applause.)

At the present time, we do face a pressing risk of proliferation from Russia's stockpile of weapons of mass destruction. America spends only \$1 billion a year to safeguard those weapons, yet the administration is preparing to spend between \$100 billion and \$200 billion on a war with Iraq. I do not accept the idea that trying other alternatives is either futile or perilous, that the risks of waiting are greater than the risk of war. Indeed, in launching a war against Iraq now, the United States may precipitate the very threat that we are intent on prevent -- weapons of mass destruction in the hands of terrorists.

If Saddam's regime and his very survival are threatened, then his view of his interests may be profoundly altered. He may decide he has nothing to lose by using weapons of mass destruction himself or by sharing them with terrorists.

Some who advocate military action against Iraq, however, assert that airstrikes will do the job quickly and decisively and that the operation will be complete in 72 hours. But there is, again, no persuasive evidence that airstrikes alone over the course of several days will incapacitate Saddam and destroy his weapons of mass destruction. Experts have informed us that we do not have sufficient intelligence against military target in Iraq. Saddam may well hide his most lethal weapons in mosques, schools and hospitals. If our forces attempt to strike such targets, untold numbers of Iraqi civilians could be killed. In the Gulf war, many of Saddam's soldiers quickly retreated because they did not believe the invasion of Kuwait was justified, but when Iraq's survival is at stake, it is more likely that they will fight to the end. Saddam and his military may well abandon the desert, retreat to Baghdad and engage in urban guerrillas warfare. And in our September 23rd hearing, General Clark told the committee that we would need a large military force and plan for urban warfare. General Hoar said that our military would have to be prepared to fight block by block in Baghdad and that we could lose a battalion of soldiers a day in casualties. "Urban fighting would," he said, "look like the last, brutal 15 minutes of the movie 'Saving Private Ryan.'"

Before the Gulf War in 1991, Secretary of State James Baker met with the Iraqis and threatened Hussein with a catastrophe if he employed weapons of mass destruction. In that war, although Saddam launched 39 Scud missiles at Israel, he did not use the chemical or biological weapons that he had at hand. If Saddam's regime and survival are threatened, he will have nothing to lose and may use everything at his disposal. Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has announced that instead of his forbearance in the 1991

Gulf War, this time, Israel will respond if attacked. If weapons of mass destruction land on Israeli soil, killing innocent civilians, the experts that I have consulted believe that Israel will retaliate, and possibly with nuclear weapons.

This escalation, spiraling out of control, could draw the Arab world into a regional war in which our Arab allies side with Iraq against the United States and against Israel. And that would represent a fundamental threat to Israel, to the region, to the world economy and to international order.

Nor can we rule out the possibility that Saddam would assault American forces with chemical and biological weapons. Despite the advances in protecting our troops, we do not yet have the capability to safeguard all of them. Our soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines are serving their country with great distinction. Just under 70,000 Reservists and National Guards have been mobilized for the war against terrorism. If we embark upon a premature or unilateral military campaign against Iraq or a campaign only with Britain, our forces will have to serve in even greater numbers, for longer periods and with graver risks. Our force strength will be stretched even thinner.

And war is the last resort. If, in the end, we have to take that course, the burden should be shared with allies, and that is less likely if war becomes an immediate response. (Applause.)

Even with the major technology gains demonstrated in Afghanistan, the logistics of such a war would be extraordinarily challenging if we could not marshal a real coalition of regional and international allies. President Bush made the right decision on September 12th when he expressed America's willingness to work with the United Nations to prevent Iraq from using chemical, biological or nuclear weapons. The president's address to the General Assembly challenging the United Nations to enforce its long list of Security Council resolutions on Iraq was powerful, and for me, it was persuasive.

But to maintain the credibility built when he went to the United Nations, the president must follow the logic of his argument. Before we go to war, we should give the international community the chance to meet the president's challenge to renew its resolve to disarm Saddam Hussein completely and effectively. This makes the resumption of inspections more imperative and perhaps more likely than any time since they ended in 1998.

So this should be the first aim of our policy, to get U.N. inspectors back into Iraq without conditions.

I hope the Security Council will approve a new resolution requiring the government of Iraq to accept unlimited and unconditional inspections and the destructions of any weapons of mass destruction. The resolution should set a short timetable for the resumption of inspections. I would hope that inspections could resume, at the latest, by the end of October. The resolution should also require that the head of the U.N. inspection team to report to the Security Council every two weeks. No delaying tactics should be tolerated, and if they occur, Saddam should know that he will lose his last chance to avoid conflict.

The Security Council resolution should authorize the use of force if the inspection process is unsatisfactory. And there should be no doubt in Baghdad that the United States Congress would then be prepared to authorize force as well. The return of inspectors with unfettered access and ability to destroy what they find, not only could remove any weapons of mass destruction from Saddam's arsenal, they could also be more effective than an immediate or unilateral war at ensuring that these deadly weapons would not fall into terrorist hands.

The seven years of inspections that took place until 1998 succeeded in virtually eliminating Saddam's ability to develop a nuclear weapon in Iraq during that period. Even with Iraq's obstructions, those inspections resulted in the demolition of large quantities of chemical and biological weapons. And by the time the inspectors were forced out of the country in 1988 (sic), they had accomplished far more disarmament than the Gulf War itself. And before going to war again, we should seek to resume the inspections now and set a non-negotiable demand of no obstruction, no delay, no more weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

What can be gained here is success, and in the event of failure, greater credibility for an armed response, greater international support, and the prospect of victory with less loss of American life.

So what is to be lost by pursuing this policy before Congress authorizes sending young Americans into another, and in this case perhaps unnecessary war?

Even the case against Saddam is, in important respects, a case against immediate or unilateral war. If Prime Minister Blair is correct in saying that Iraq can launch chemical or biological warheads in 45 minutes, what kind of sense does it make to put our soldiers in the path of that danger without exhausting every reasonable means to disarm Iraq through the United Nations?

Clearly, we must halt Saddam Hussein's quest for weapons of mass destruction. Yes, we may reach the point where our only choice is conflict, with like-minded allies at our side, if not in a multilateral action authorized by the Security Council. But we are not there yet. (Applause.)

The evidence does not take us there. Events do not compel us there. And both the war against terrorism and our wider interest in the region and the world summon us to a course that is sensible, graduated and genuinely strong, not because it moves swiftly to battle but because it moves resolutely to the objective of disarming Iraq -- peacefully, if possible, and military, if necessary.

Let me close by recalling the events of an autumn of danger four decades ago, when missiles were discovered in Cuba, missiles more threatening to us than anything Saddam has today. Some in the highest councils of government urged an immediate unilateral strike. Instead the United States took its case to the United Nations, won the endorsement of the Organization of American States and brought along even our most skeptical allies. We imposed a blockade, demanded inspection and insisted on the removal of the missiles.

When an earlier president outlined that choice to the American people and the world, he spoke of it in realistic terms, not with a sense that the first step would necessarily be the final step, but with a resolve that it must be tried. (Applause.)

And he said then, "Action is required, and these actions now may only be the beginning. We will not prematurely or unnecessarily risk the costs of war, but neither will we shrink from that risk at any time that it must be faced."

In 2002, we, too, can and must be both resolute and measured. In that way, the United States prevailed without war in the greatest confrontation of the Cold War. Now on Iraq, let us build international support, try the United Nations, pursue disarmament before we turn to armed conflict. Thank you. (Applause.)

FRANCIS FUKUYAMA (professor, SAIS): Senator Kennedy has agreed to take some questions from the SAIS audience, so I invite you to -- yes.

Q Should we wait for the microphone?

MR. FUKUYAMA: Yes, if you could wait for the microphone, and if you could please state your name.

Q Senator Kennedy, thank you for coming today. We appreciate you coming by.

With your chilling predictions -- the results that may result from the use of force -- I just to make sure I'm clear. Are you or are you not in favor of the use of military force even within the next few months if a new U.N. resolution supports it? And if the answer is yes, then how can you on one hand say that force is necessary to protect America and our allies in this case, but then it would not be necessary if we can't get the U.N. to agree? And to go to your metaphor about the Cuban Missile Crisis, if President Kennedy was not able to get the support of the U.N., do you think he would've been justified in doing the blockade, anyway?

SEN. KENNEDY: Well, first of all, I make a very clear case that by far our national security interest is to go through the United Nations for our battle against the overarching issue of al Qaeda and how we're going to deal with that and also dealing with our security interests, because I believe that -- you went alone, you're clearly going to disrupt your relations with a variety of the different countries now -- the Arab countries, other countries, with a go-alone policy.

With the United Nations, hopefully you would be able to maintain those relations.

But secondly, from a military point of view, you're much more advantaged in working with an allies (sic) than you would otherwise have.

So that is the way that we ought to go, if we have a judgment and a decision. I'm waiting for the final recommendation, I'm waiting for the final recommendation of the Security Council before I'm going to say how I'm going to vote. It doesn't make any sense to say, "Well, today I'm going to go to the United Nations. If they don't do it, I'm for sending the troops tomorrow."

Under the U.N. resolution, as you well know, they follow -- in terms of the declaration of war -- follow the national means, which would mean that the Congress then would make a judgment whether they're going to go to war. I would make a judgment at that particular time. I'm not prepared to make it today. I'm not prepared today -- today. It wouldn't make any sense to say, "Let's go to the U.N., but we're going to" -- that's exactly what the Bush administration wants to do; say, "Well, look, U.N. go, but if you don't, we're going." I think that that is wrong militarily, an attack on Iraq; I think it is wrong in terms of our battle against al Qaeda because it's going to cost you great support; and I think it's insulting to the United Nations because you're going to say, "It doesn't make any difference what you're going to do, we're going to go ahead and do whatever we want to do." It doesn't hold. We've got to be able to put our confidence in the United Nations, say that this is a serious issue, and make a judgment at that time.

Finally, I'd just say there are a variety of different recommendations that the U.N. can come up with at the end. They may go over and have very good cooperation but not complete, not complete. Maybe it's

90, but they can't do it. They may make a recommendation that doesn't mean all-out war, but means other kinds. Why should we exclude ourselves from giving some of these options and flexibility to the Security Council by writing those off? That's all we hear now; it's either war or nothing.

So, you know, that's what I am prepared (sic). Let's see -- let's -- the president, correctly, has gone to the United Nations; we commend him. Now we want him to follow through with the logic of it; stay with the United Nations on it, let's see where this goes, set reasonable guidelines about unfettered inspections, set the time frame for reporting back, get the recommendations on that, and then we will have a chance to make a judgment as to the next step.

Q Thank you, Senator, for coming here today. I'm Katherine Schaefer (sp). And you mentioned a time frame for weapons inspections. You had said you thought they should start the end of October. I was wondering if you could elaborate a little bit on how the weapons inspections should be carried out and what sort of time frame.

SEN. KENNEDY: Well, the best estimate -- I'd be fine if it was sooner. Realistically, in terms of assembling the teams -- and they're already involved in being assembled even while we're here, in case this process goes through. We are very rapidly approaching the 1st of October, so you're talking about a reasonable period of time, the estimates for them to be on the ground.

The real question is, is how long they stay on the ground. You could pass a resolution -- and I think this is open. Secretary Powell wanted flexibility. He said early conclusions, rather than a specific time. That doesn't really -- I'd take whatever the best judgment were of professionals in thinking how long it would take to do the job. I'm not -- I'm atheistic about that. I don't think -- if that's the question, you ought to hear it from professional people and get the best judgment on it.

But in the meantime, what is, I think, important is to have the head of the inspections reporting back every two weeks so this issue never leaves -- never leaves -- the front burner of international debate and discussion. Never leaves it. And they give -- rather than just having them disappear and finally coming on up after a series of months that they were denied certain places, we have to keep this on the international agenda, the full force. The full force.

This is a different time. This is a different time -- and I think President Bush deserves the credit for going to the United Nations -- that it comes in the circumstances after September 11th. People can say, "Well, this is just one more resolution." This is a different time, different circumstance at a different moment, and we should not lose the importance of that moment.

I would certainly hope as we are doing that, we're also keeping focus and attention about what's happening in Iran, that has, certainly, a well-developed system in supporting terrorism, much more extensively in supporting terrorist organizations than Iraq does, as Syria does, and that we are watching very carefully what's happening in terms of their nuclear capabilities; and watching as well what's happening in terms of not only the containment of material in the Soviet Union, but also look at the biomaterial in the Soviet Union -- difficult enough in the storage of fissionable material in the Soviet Union, but the amount of chemicals and bioterrorist material in the Soviet Union is vast, and its security is not nearly as good as the fissionable material.

And most people would tell you that that is getting better but still not what it should be. So -- and yet we as a country are quite prepared to go ahead to try and do something about a war for \$150 billion, and we're not prepared to spend the resources to go into the Soviet Union and work, which they have cooperated with us with? And I think, you know, we have to look at this as well, even while all of this is going on, and continue the battle in terms of the al Qaeda.

MR. FUKUYAMA: Yes?

Q Hi. My name is Kim Olson (sp). As a Democrat from Wisconsin, I'm pleased you've taken the stand that you have today. I believe Bush is acting on the fear, first, and the political apathy, second, of the average person from Wisconsin and elsewhere. I ask you to respond to the following:

I believe a better educated, less arrogant and better traveled America would not acquiesce so quickly to Bush's position. What do you think? (Light applause.)

SEN. KENNEDY: I didn't -- what -- I missed -- I've had some wonderful experience at the University of Wisconsin. (Laughter.) They've got a -- I've been out there on -- let me just divert for a minute. (Laughter continues.)

The first time I went out there was 1967, when I was against the war. But of course they were against the war in 1962. (Laughter.) And I never got a chance to speak. They hung the sheets down there with the pictures of the skeletons, and they -- I always remember there was a fellow that kept after me, and I said, "Well, can you -- I'll let you speak if you let me speak." And he came up and he spoke like no one I'd ever heard before or since. This guy was the most brilliant speaker that I've ever heard, and he's 22

years old. And he was just so eloquent, and the crowd was going crazy on that part. That was my first experience there. (Laughter.)

And the second time -- I was ushered out the back after that, because I still couldn't finish -- the second time I went, when I was running for the president, and we did recodify the criminal code -- it was the -- it was the only time it's been recodified -- once in 200 years. We did it a few years ago. There's no reason in the world why anybody should know it. And it's going to take 200 years before it's recodified again.

One of the provisions in the recodification is, if you have a right to demonstrate -- and there are good lawyers up here, and you can correct me -- but the Supreme Court said you can demonstrate outside a courthouse within 500 feet, but not with -- closer than 500 feet. That's the been the holding of the Supreme Court, because you obviously have the conflict between the right to demonstrate and speech, and the right of a defendant to get a free trial, get a open and objective trial.

And so you have these conflicting, where people could demonstrate, but yet you want it quiet so people can -- the jury won't be influenced. So the Supreme Court said 500 feet. And we codified it. And to this day, every student at the University of Wisconsin thought I took away their First Amendment rights. (Laughter.) And I didn't finish that speech, either! (Laughter.)

But I'm not quite sure I heard the last part of your -- (laughs; laughter, applause.)

Q Okay, let me just restate it. I said I believe Bush is acting on the fear first, the political apathy second, of the average person from Wisconsin, from elsewhere. I believe a better-educated, less arrogant, and better-traveled America would not so quickly acquiesce to Bush's position. Can you respond?

SEN. KENNEDY: Well, I -- I -- as I mentioned at the opening, I believe that President Bush believes in his policy very firmly and deeply. There's nothing in -- in -- that would lead me to another decision. It's one that I differ with, for the reasons that I have outlined here. But I don't question that he doesn't believe that very, very deeply. And I think that that's, you know, to his -- to his credit. There are people who have been, you know, suggesting different kinds of motivations for different people as they take different stands on this issue. But I don't for a moment question that President Bush feels the position that he's taken is in the national interest. I don't agree with it, but I respect it.

Yes, sir? We'll just do a couple more.

Q Senator Kennedy, thank you very much for your comments. My name is John Jewick (sp), I'm a first year here at SAIS. I want to know, is the Democratic Party putting politics over the interests of the American people when it acquiesces with the Bush administration on the war in Iraq and tries to push the debate back to domestic issues?

SEN. KENNEDY: Well, the question, are we putting politics over principle when we are trying to -- trying to get a vote on the Iraqi situation and get back to the other -- ? I don't -- I don't think so. You know, my sense is that people have at least a feel in our Democratic Caucus that people have made up their mind and that this debate is all over. I mean, there's a -- I'd say that that is a feeling among many. I kind of reject it because I don't think people have heard the other side, myself. And I'm not sure how much they are willing to listen. I think they have made up their mind about Saddam has to go and action has to be taken. I think the only place where there's probably some flexibility in their mind is whether going alone or going internationally.

And I think there is difference among the American people. And hopefully, during the time that we're going to be debating this over the next week, we'll be able to bring up at least some of the points that I tried to raise today, and many others that others have thought about, which will change really, perhaps, the thrust of the policy.

I think that's very important to do, for the reasons I've outlined. And I think if anyone's going to do it, it's going to be the Democrats. And I think that that's important in terms of our national interest. People differ with me. But that's where we are on it.

I think you could say could an administration have brought this up after the election. I mean, the question of Saddam Hussein has been on deck for some period of time, and it is something that has increased in terms of the attention of the administration. Could we have said, "Well, I want to really be clear that we don't want this involved in politics at all, and so therefore, we'll put it over till after the election"? I know personally that that was raised with the administration. They rejected it. They wanted to have this debate now. And again, that's the fact, for the reasons which they can outline.

But I think the fact that the Democrats want to talk about the domestic priority makes a lot of sense because a lot of people are hurting. In my state of Massachusetts now, we're up to higher unemployment than we've had in the last 12 years. We've got more foreclosures in homes since the 1930s. Education is getting prohibitively high. Our University of Massachusetts now have increased their tuitions by 26

percent. The prescription drugs, health care costs, all of the other kinds -- employment, the number of those individuals living in poverty, the children living in poverty, are all down. The \$5.6 billion surplus that we had a year and a half ago has vanished. We're facing \$400 billion of deficits. I think it is important that we have a debate on those issues, and I welcome the chance to get to that. But I don't -- we'll have to do the best we can.

I'll just say finally, I don't think probably we're going to have much chance to do it because I think there's going to be -- once the discussion and debate is over, I think there will be a lot of activities that are going to be related to the war that are going to absorb the first page rather than debate and discussion some of these other issues. But I think it's imperative that those of us who feel strongly are involved in those domestic issues, do the best we can to raise them for people to make a judgment on it.

Maybe I'll take a final one and then -- yes, sir?

Q Senator Kennedy, thank you for speaking to us. Thank you for staying to take our questions. My name is David Weissberger (sp). And my question is, you mentioned -- you (rejected ?) war as the last resort. But there have already been inspections.

There have already been sanctions. In fact, there was already a war. Is there a need to wait, then, to act again? And do you see any options to either inspections or war as a way to achieve disarmament in Iraq?

SEN. KENNEDY: Well, the -- it's a good question. In the -- as you well know, the sanctions have effectively deteriorated. And we've done very little, either in the previous administration, this administration, to do much about it. I mean, you've got wholesale -- the movement of oil through Turkey, out in ships, and it goes right by American destroyers, and we just let it go. I mean, everybody knows that no one's going to do anything about it. So we haven't been willing to do much about it, and they -- it's -- Iraq has been opened up in a very substantial way.

With the exception of the obtaining of nuclear materials, I'm convinced that if the inspections -- not only they got rid of some important assets in terms of biologics and chemical, but they also dismantled the nuclear capability -- anybody can make the biochemicals in a bathtub; you don't need much. To do it on a nuclear, you need a building to do this. He can have all the plans, but to construct it and put it together, you need a much different facility.

And I don't -- I think the information that I've had from the military and from intelligence is very powerful in the fact that those inspectors have an important impact in reducing his ability to acquire nuclear weapons. That's not bad, since if we're just concerned about him acquiring it, it's not a very satisfactory situation, and I don't know realistically -- I'm not a professional -- don't know whether that would be as true in the future, but it's certainly something to give some -- you know, some thought about. And maybe there are other alternatives that we haven't kind of considered. We'll just have to wait and see.

Let me thank you all very much for the chance. I'll tell you one quick story before -- I know you're -- and that is about the questions.

I was -- in 1959 I went out to campaign for my brother in Montana, and I spoke to a group of Democrats. They said, "There are some farmers down the road. Why don't you speak to them, because they're going to send some delegates to the national convention." So I said, "Fine."

So I spoke to them. And then I always noticed my brother would always ask whether there were any questions after he spoke, so I thought I'd try the same thing. So I said, "Are there any questions? And a hand went up in the back of the room and said, "Yes, Mr. Kennedy. How does your brother stand on 90 percent of parity for wheat on controlled acreage?" And all the farmers stood up and cheered. (Laughter.) And I had absolutely no idea. (Laughter.) And I want to -- and I still don't know the answer -- (laughter) -- after 40 years in the United States Senate!

I'll talk to Tom Daschle or Tom Harkin -- (laughter) -- and find out what the answer is.

But I remembered a story that happened to my brother in 1941. Before he went out to the Pacific in PT boats, he was in naval intelligence. And he went to a factory in South Carolina and he was talking to the workers about the dangers of espionage and sabotage and about a fire in a factory, and he was telling the workers if they saw a fire in the factory, to determine the origin of the fire in order to extinguish it; make sure -- if the fire's made from wood, put water on it; if it's oil and gas, put CO2 on it; if it's electricity, put foam on it, but never put water on an oil and gas fire, it would spread and have a disastrous result.

So he finished talking, and he asked whether there were any questions. A hand went up in the back of the room and said -- (speaking in a slow, drawn-out accent) -- "Now, Ensign Kennedy, if we see a fire in the back of the hall, how we gonna know just by lookin' at it whether it's made from wood, oil and gas, or electricity, so we'll know exactly what to put on it and what not to put on it so it will spread?"

(Laughter.) My brother thought about it and said, "You know, that's a very good question. There will be someone here next week who will talk on that very subject." (Laughter.)

Thank you. (Applause.)

END

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