

Mona Thorning

Fra: Lassen, Christina Markus [chrlas@um.dk]
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Til: UM - Komcenter
Cc: Petersen, Friis Arne; fvm; Faaborg-Andersen, Lars; Hahn, Henrik Bramsen; Hansen, Eva Egesborg; "Hjortsø, Michael Just"; Holm, Klavs A.; Horslund, Jens Otto; "Jørgensen, Vibeke Rovsing (NY)"; Lauridsen, Morten Lykke; Laursen, Erik; Michelsen, Jette; N.SP; N.USA; Naidu Dylander, Dewi; Official Mailbox, Ankara Embassy; Official Mailbox, Athens Embassy; Official Mailbox, Beijing Embassy; Official Mailbox, Cairo Embassy; Official Mailbox, Damascus Embassy; Official Mailbox, Dublin Embassy; Official Mailbox, Geneva FN Mission; Official Mailbox, Haag Embassy; Official Mailbox, Islamabad Embassy; Official Mailbox, London Embassy; Official Mailbox, Madrid Embassy; Official Mailbox, Mexico Embassy; Official Mailbox, Moscow Embassy; Official Mailbox, New York UN Mission; Official Mailbox, Oslo Embassy; Official Mailbox, Ottawa Embassy; Official Mailbox, Paris Embassy; Official Mailbox, Riyadh Embassy; Official Mailbox, Rome Embassy; Official Mailbox, Santiago Embassy; Official Mailbox, Sofia Embassy; Official Mailbox, Stockholm Embassy; Official Mailbox, Tehran Embassy; Official Mailbox, Tel Aviv Embassy; Official Mailbox, Vienna Embassy; Official Mailbox, Warsaw Embassy; Official Mailbox, Berlin Ambassade; Official Mailbox, Bryssel DANATO; "Official Mailbox, EU Repræsentationen"; Petersen, Michael Bach; S.MELA; Sillasen, Grete; stm; Zilmer-Johns, Michael; Agnete Kierkegaard (E-mail); Braad, Michael; Christensen, Jan Top; Christensen, Tomas Anker; Christiansen, Thure; Damsgaard, Anders Carsten; Geelan, Kirsten; Godtfredsen, Jens; Hansen, Peter Lysholt; Knudsen, Ulrik Vestergaard; "Lund-Sørensen, Thomas"; "Løj, Ellen Margrethe"; Moesby, Ole; Mosgaard, Kurt; S.HUM; Shine, Susanne; Stender, Flemming; Svensson, Nikolaj; "Søndergaard, Carsten"; Ullerup, Ove
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Er herfra sendt til Irak-kredsen. Komcenteret bedes remaile Damaskus, Ramallah, Teheran, FE

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Præsident Bush' ultimatum til Irak

Amb.j.nr.: 5.USA.Irak

Præsident Bush holdt her til aften en tale til nationen om Irak. Talen var i ligeså høj grad rettet mod det internationale samfund og den irakiske befolkning. Præsidenten virkede under talen fattet og beslutsom.

Præsidenten gav Saddam Hussein og hans sønner 48 timer til at forlade landet, ellers bliver der krig. Ved helt specifikt at udpege, hvad der skal til for at undgå krig, satte Bush maksimalt pres på kredsen omkring Saddam Hussein, og anviste samtidig en simpel udvej ud af krisen.

Bush gjorde meget klart, hvad konsekvenserne ville være for regimet og de væbnede styrker, såfremt Hussein og hans sønner ikke forlod landet. Bush advarede også om de personlige konsekvenser, såfremt nogen forsøgte at anvende masseødelæggelsesvåben eller ødelagde landets oliefelter.

Talens indhold

I talen fastslog præsident Bush, at det irakiske regime nu i tolv år havde løbet om hjørner med det internationale samfund. På trods af Iraks forsikringer om det modsatte viser efterretningsoplysninger, at regimet fortsat er i besiddelse af masseødelæggelsesvåben. Truslen er klar: Terrorister kan med irakisk hjælp risikere at få adgang til kemiske, biologiske eller på sigt nukleare våben, der kan myrde tusinder af uskyldige mennesker. USA agter at fjerne denne trussel, før det er for sent.

USA har forsøgt gennem Sikkerhedsrådet at opnå en fredelig løsning på problemet - "we believe in the United Nations". Sikkerhedsrådet evnede at handle i 1990'erne med vedtagelsen af UNSCR 678 og 687, der fortsat er i kraft. Med vedtagelsen af UNSCR 1441 var der i Sikkerhedsrådet enighed om at give Irak en sidste chance for øjeblikkelig afvæbning. Ingen hævder, at dette er sket. Og det vil ikke ske, så længe Saddam Hussein sidder ved magten.

I 4½ måned har USA forsøgt at få Sikkerhedsrådet til at håndhæve sine krav. Desværre har nogle medlemmer af Sikkerhedsrådet annonceret at ville nedlægge veto mod en resolution, der gennemtvinger afvæbningen af Irak, på trods af, at de deler USA's vurdering af truslen fra Irak. Når FN's Sikkerhedsråd ikke kan leve op til sit ansvar, må USA leve op til sit.

Bush anerkendte mellemøstlige regerings forsøg på at få Saddam Hussein til at forlade landet. Dette var ikke lykkedes. Saddam Hussein og hans to sønner må nu forlade landet indenfor 48 timer, hvis en militær konflikt skal undgås.

Direkte rettet mod det irakiske folk sagde Bush, at befolkningen intet havde at frygte - USA var kun ude efter regimet. Han opfordrede irakiske soldater til at nægte at adlyde ordrer om destruktion af oliefelter, anvendelse af masseødelæggelsesvåben osv. - deres fremtid afhang af deres handlinger.

Bush advarede den amerikanske befolkning om, at der var en reel trussel for terrorangreb mod USA og dets allierede. Denne terrortrussel ville blive mindsket, når Saddam er afvæbnet. Som beredskab havde USA udvist en række personer af irakisk oprindelse samt styrket sikkerheden ved lufthavne og havne [det nationale trusselsniveau er efter talen hævet til næsthøjeste niveau].

Bush anførte, at det 20. århundredes "appeasement" ikke længere var en brugbar strategi. Fra terrorister kan man ikke forvente advarsler eller formelle krigserklæringer - at vente på angreb er lig med selvmord. Verdens sikkerhed afhænger derfor af, at Saddam afvæbnes nu. Når Saddam er afsat, vil Irak kunne fungere som foregangsland for hele Mellemøsten.

Reaktioner på talen

De efterfølgende kommentarer har i høj grad fokuseret på præsidentens fremtoning, der generelt vurderes som afklaret og fattet. Samme vurdering gives af Kongressens ledere, der forud for talen blev briefet af præsidenten i Det Hvide Hus (House Speaker Hastert, Majority Leader DeLay, Minority Leader Pelosi samt Senate Majority Leader Frist og Minority Leader Daschle).

Selv blandt præsidentens (få) kritikere i Kongressen er kritikken forstummet. Som historien viser, har Kongressen også denne gang valg at slutte op om præsidenten i en krisetid. Nogle få ledende demokratiske medlemmer af Kongressen har i den seneste tid været kritiske overfor præsidenten med forskellige begrundelser - håndteringen og eller selve det, at indlede en militær kampagne. Fremmeste kritiker har været Demokraternes leder i Huset, Nancy Pelosi, mens nummer to i det Demokratiske hierarki, Steny Hoyer, går stærkt ind for militær aktion, stort set med samme argumenter som præsidenten. I Senatet har Demokraternes leder Tom Daschle og medlem af Senatets forsvarsudvalg Carl Levin begge været kritiske over hhv. håndteringen og militær intervention nu, men bl.a. Levin sluttede i aften op bag de amerikanske styrker. Det er karakteristisk, at de fleste demokratiske præsidentkandidater, bortset fra guvernør Dean, i varierende grad støtter præsidenten, om end nogle er kritiske overfor håndteringen.

I et interview den 4. marts 2003 lagde den tidligere demokratiske formand for Senatets udenrigskomité senator Biden afstand til senator Kennedy's forslag om en fornyet senatsdebat om militær intervention i Irak. Senator Biden anfører to grunde til at vælte Saddam Hussein. For det første: hvis USA intet foretager sig vil Saddam Hussein indenfor 3-5 år have udviklet et taktisk atomvåben. For det andet: Saddam Hussein har overtrådt den grundlæggende fredsaftale han underskrev (efter den første Golf-krig), og hvis der er noget rationale for en FN-rolle, må det være at gennemtvinge denne fredsaftale.

I en samtale med ambassadøren forleden udtalte Steny Hoyer, at stort set alle i Kongressen ville bakke op om præsidenten, når først denne havde truffet beslutning om intervention. Dette skete i 1991, selvom Kongressen den gang var splittet næsten lige over. Dette er ikke tilfældet nu, og derfor må opbakningen fortsat være så meget desto større. Som bekendt blev Kongresresolutionen i september 2002 om bemyndigelsen til præsidenten vedtaget med 296-133 i Huset og 77-23 i Senatet.

Flere har også i denne forbindelse peget på, at Kongressen jo i 1998 med Iraq Liberation Act vedtog, at USA burde forsøge at fjerne Saddam fra magten. Denne lov, som præsident Clinton underskrev, gælder stadig.

Allerede inden talen var den amerikanske befolkning – ligeledes i overensstemmelse med historien – begyndt at slutte op om præsidenten. I den seneste uge har opbakningen til en militær operation været støt stigende. En meningsundersøgelse foretaget den 14.-15. ds. viser, at 64 procent af befolkningen støtter en invasion af Irak med henblik på at fjerne Saddam Hussein, mens 33 procent er imod. Dette er en stigning siden 3.-5. marts, hvor 59 procent bakkede op om en invasion.

Washington Post har til stadighed støttet præsidentens politik. New York Times har hidtil været imod, men lederen i morgendagens avis konkluderes efter at have kritiseret Administrationens håndtering, at resultatet nu er en krig for et legitimt internationalt mål mod et forfærdeligt tyranni.

Kommentar

Den endelige beslutning om præsidentens tale blev truffet, efter det tidligere i dag stod klart, at det ikke ville lykkes at opnå tilslutning til en ny Sikkerhedsrådsresolution. Ifølge State Department var det væsentligste argument for ikke at sætte resolutionsforslaget til afstemning, at man herved ville bringe de seks "un-decided countries" i en penibel situation – noget unødvendigt, når Frankrig alligevel agtede at nedlægge veto mod resolutionen.

USA og UK agter dog snarest (kort tid efter en krig indledes) at vende tilbage til Sikkerhedsrådet med to resolutionsforslag. Det ene omhandler videreførelsen af Oil-for-food programmet og genopbygningen af landet. Det andet om modaliteterne for "besættelsen" af Irak. Herved får FN med amerikanske øjne en mulighed for at "komme igen" og vise sin relevans. Man ser således fra amerikansk side meget gerne en aktiv rolle for FN, ikke mindst i forbindelsen med koordinationen af den humanitære bistand.

I State Department anføres om ultimatummet til Saddam Hussein, at der skal være tale om eksil i et "troværdigt" land med en fungerende regering – Somalia og Belarus hører formentlig ikke til i en sådan kategori. De færreste tror dog på, at Saddam frivilligt vil benytte sig af muligheden for eksil – han ved, at hans dage er talte, såfremt han forlader sin magtbase i Irak.

Det er den generelle vurdering i Administrationen, at en evt. militær operation vil blive særdeles kortvarig. Saddam er allerede stærkt svækket, og man håber at kunne overbevise en stor del af militæret om at desertere eller overgive sig hurtigst muligt efter en operation indledes.

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PRESIDENT BUSH ADDRESS TO THE NATION

SUBJECT: IRAQ

STATE FLOOR CROSS HALLWAY, THE WHITE HOUSE
8:01 P.M. EST, MONDAY, MARCH 17, 2003

PRESIDENT BUSH: My fellow citizen. Events in Iraq have now reached the final days of decision. For more than a decade, the United States and other nations have pursued patient and honorable efforts to disarm the Iraqi regime without war. That regime pledged to reveal and destroy all its weapons of mass destruction as a condition for ending the Persian Gulf War in 1991. Since then, the world has engaged in 12 years of diplomacy. We have passed more than a dozen resolutions in the United Nations Security Council. We have sent hundreds of weapons inspectors to oversee the disarmament of Iraq. Our good faith has not been returned.

The Iraqi regime has used diplomacy as a ploy to gain time and advantage. It has uniformly defied Security Council resolutions demanding full disarmament. Over the years, U.N. weapon inspectors have been threatened by Iraqi officials, electronically bugged and systematically deceived. Peaceful efforts to disarm the Iraqi regime have failed again and again because we are not dealing with peaceful men.

Intelligence gathered by this and other governments leaves no doubt that the Iraq regime continues to possess and conceal some of the most lethal weapons ever devised. This regime has already used weapons of mass destruction against Iraq's neighbors and against Iraq's people. The regime has a history of reckless aggression in the Middle East. It has a deep hatred of America and our friends. And it has aided, trained and harbored terrorists, including operatives of al Qaeda.

The danger is clear: using chemical, biological, or one day nuclear weapons, obtained with the help of Iraq, the terrorists could fulfill their stated ambitions and kill thousands or hundreds of thousands of innocent people in our country or any other. The United States and other nations did nothing to deserve or invite this threat. But we will do everything to defeat it.

Instead of drifting along toward tragedy, we will set a course toward safety.

Before the day of horror can come, before it is too late to act, this danger will be removed. The United States of America has the sovereign authority to use force in assuring its own national security. That duty falls to me as commander in chief by the oath I have sworn, by the oath I will keep.

Recognizing the threat to our country, the United States Congress voted overwhelmingly last year to support the use of force against Iraq. America tried to work with the United Nations to address this threat, because we wanted to resolve the issue peacefully. We believe in the mission of the United Nations. One reason the U.N. was founded after the Second World War was to confront aggressive dictators actively and early, before they can attack the innocent and destroy the peace.

In the case of Iraq the Security Council did act in the early 1990s, under Resolutions 678 and 687, both still in effect. The United States and our allies are authorized to use force in ridding Iraq of weapons of mass destruction. This is not a question of authority. It is a question of will.

Last September I went to the U.N. General Assembly and urged the nations of the world to unite and bring an end to this danger. On November 8th, the Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 1441, finding Iraq in material breach of its obligations and vowing serious consequences if Iraq did not fully and immediately disarm. Today no nation can possibly claim that Iraq has disarmed. And it will not disarm as long as Saddam Hussein holds power.

For the last four and a half months, the United States and our allies have worked within the Security Council to enforce that Council's long-standing demands. Yet some permanent members of the Security Council have publicly announced they will veto any resolution that compels the disarmament of Iraq. These governments share our assessment of the danger, but not our resolve to meet it. Many nations, however, do have the resolve and fortitude to act against this threat to peace. And a broad coalition is now gathering to enforce the just demands of the world.

The United Nations Security Council has not lived up to its responsibilities. So we will rise to ours.

In recent days, some governments in the Middle East have been doing their part. They have delivered public and private messages urging the dictator to leave Iraq, so that disarmament can proceed peacefully. He has thus far refused. All the decades of deceit and cruelty have now reached an end. Saddam Hussein and his sons must leave Iraq within 48 hours. Their refusal to do so

will result in military conflict, commenced at a time of our choosing. For their own safety, all foreign nationals, including journalists and inspectors, should leave Iraq immediately.

Many Iraqis can hear me tonight in a translated radio broadcast, and I have a message for them: If we must begin a military campaign, it will be directed against the lawless men who rule your country and not against you.

As our coalition takes away their power, we will deliver the food and medicine you need. We will tear down the apparatus of terror, and we will help you to build a new Iraq that is prosperous and free. In a free Iraq, there will be no more wars of aggression against your neighbors, no more poison factories, no more executions of dissidents, no more torture chambers and rape rooms. The tyrant will soon be gone. The day of your liberation is near.

It is too late for Saddam Hussein to remain in power. It is not too late for the Iraqi military to act with honor and protect your country, by permitting the peaceful entry of coalition forces to eliminate weapons of mass destruction. Our forces will give Iraqi military units clear instructions on actions they can take to avoid being attacked and destroyed. I urge every member of the Iraqi military and intelligence services, if war comes, do not fight for a dying regime that is not worth your own life.

And all Iraqi military and civilian personnel should listen carefully to this warning. In any conflict, your fate will depend on your actions. Do not destroy oil wells, a source of wealth that belongs to the Iraqi people. Do not obey any command to use weapons of mass destruction against anyone, including the Iraqi people. War crimes will be prosecuted. War criminals will be punished. And it will be no defense to say "I was just following orders."

Should Saddam Hussein choose confrontation, the American people can know that every measure has been taken to avoid war, and every measure will be taken to win it. Americans understand the costs of conflict because we have paid them in the past. War has no certainty except the certainty of sacrifice. And yet the only way to reduce the harm and duration of war is to apply the full force and might of our military, and we are prepared to do so. If Saddam Hussein attempts to cling to power, he will remain a deadly foe until the end.

In desperation, he and terrorist groups might try to conduct terrorist operations against the American people and our friends. These attacks are not inevitable. They are, however,

possible. And this very fact underscores the reason we cannot live under the threat of blackmail.

The terrorist threat to America and the world will be diminished the moment that Saddam Hussein is disarmed. Our government is on heightened watch against these dangers. Just as we are preparing to ensure victory in Iraq, we're taking further actions to protect our homeland. In recent days, American authorities have expelled from the country certain individuals with ties to Iraqi intelligence services. Among other measures, I have directed additional security at our airports and increased Coast Guard patrols of major seaports.

The Department of Homeland Security is working closely with the nation's governors to increase the armed security at critical facilities across America. Should the enemy strike our country, they would be attempting to shift our attention with panic and weaken our morale with fear. In this, they would fail. No act of their can alter the course or shake the resolve of this country. We are a peaceful people. Yet we're not a fragile people. And we will not be intimidated by thugs and killers. If our enemies dare to strike us, they and all who have aided them will face fearful consequences.

We are now acting because the risks of inaction would be far greater. In one year or five years, the power of Iraq to inflict harm on all free nations would be multiplied many times over. With these capabilities, Saddam Hussein and his terrorist allies could choose the moment of deadly conflict when they are strongest. We choose to meet that threat now, where it arises, before it can appear suddenly in our skies and cities. The cause of peace requires all free nations to recognize new and undeniable realities.

In the 20th century, some chose to appease murderous dictators whose threats were allowed to grow into genocide and global war. In this century, when evil men plot chemical, biological and nuclear terror, a policy of appeasement could bring destruction of a kind never before seen on this earth. Terrorists and terror states do not reveal these threats with fair notice in formal declarations. And responding to such enemies only after they have struck first is not self-defense, it is suicide. The security of the world requires disarming Saddam Hussein now.

As we enforce the just demands of the world, we will also honor the deepest commitments of our country. Unlike Saddam Hussein, we believe the Iraqi people are deserving and capable of human liberty. And when the dictator has departed, they can set

an example to all the Middle East of a vital and peaceful and self-governing nation.

The United States with other countries will work to advance liberty and peace in that region. Our goal will not be achieved overnight, but it can come over time. The power and appeal of human liberty is felt in every life and every land. And the greatest power of freedom is to overcome hatred and violence, and turn the creative gifts of men and women to the pursuits of peace. That is the future we choose.

Free nations have a duty to defend our people by uniting against the violent. And tonight, as we have done before, America and our allies accept that responsibility. Good night, and may God continue to bless America.

END.