I call the hearing to order.

Ambassador Jones, welcome. We are delighted to have you back

here to the committee hearing. We appreciate your ability to be

able to make it in the snow. Hopefully, you can make it back, too.

We meet again to confront a rather perennial

question any more, and that is what to do about Saddam Hussein.

With your patience and indulgence, I would like to outline

how I see the problem, and I have been working around this now

for some period of time. It has been a problem that we just have

not solved and it does not strike me that we are on a path to solving

it now.

Our problem is Saddam. In the last several months alone, he and

his henchmen have disposed of a prominent Shiite cleric and his

sons, they have eliminated some of the top ranks of the military,

and have brutally suppressed dissension in the south of Iraq. Although

these developments have been faithfully reported, the reaction

of much of the international community has been that

Saddam’s brutality is a regrettable matter, but no real action has

been taken.

The second part of our trouble is what to do. There appears to

be little disagreement that, once given the opportunity, Saddam

will attempt to reconstitute his weapons of mass destruction and

that that effort may take as little as 6 months for him to reconstitute

these weapons.

Despite this obvious fact, we have almost reached the end of the

road in effective long-term monitoring and have almost certainly

ended any phase that will permit intrusive challenge inspections.

The United Nations Security Council is paralyzed by basic disagreements

over how to proceed and the United States and Great

Britain are waging a war of attrition against Saddam’s air defenses

which, while I hope it will help destabilize Saddam, that appears

to be a very long-term project.

Indeed, it has not been pointed out, but the only justification to

this war of attrition is Saddam’s own continued targeting of United

States and British overflights. The moment he chooses to stop,

which may well be the moment these bombings really hurt him, we

too will be forced to end our attacks under the current strategy. I

am concerned that we have not thought through what our actions

will be when that does happen.

Which brings me to my final point. I am very troubled that, despite

the President’s signature on the Iraq Liberation Act, little has

been done to implement the act. Opposition groups have been designated

because the law forced the President to do so by a date certain.

A coordinator for the democratic transition in Iraq has been

named, but he has been widely quoted in the Arab press saying

that the premise of the Iraq Liberation Act will not work.

The entire U.S. strategy seems to depend upon bombing and,

while I support a vigorous and aggressive defense of the no-fly

zones, I am concerned that I do not see more action on other fronts

which could help bring us closer to the end of this bloody regime.

We apparently are not going to get a successor to UNSCOM that

can meet that Commission’s high standards. We are not going to

get agreement in the Security Council to further constrain Saddam

in any way, as I read it, and I hope maybe you could show us a

different interpretation.

Unless we are resigned to the reconstitution of his regime of terror,

Saddam is going to move ahead, fully armed with weapons of

mass destruction. We really must do something. We must do so

soon.

My simple question to you is what is the Clinton administration’s

comprehensive plan for Iraq? What are we going to do? We are now

in 1999. We have been at this for 9 years. There have been different

strategies followed along the way. I was very hopeful earlier

that we were moving toward a comprehensive plan and yet now it

does not seem like we are on that track.

So I look forward to your answering some of these questions and

challenges in your testimony and some of the questions that we

will have.

Senator Ashcroft, thank you for joining us on this subcommittee.

If you have an opening statement we would be pleased to hear it.

Thank you, Senator Ashcroft.

Ambassador Jones, as you can tell, we have got some tough questions

and we need some answers to them. I think the country needs

some answers to these. I am very pleased you are going to join us

today and I look forward to your testimony and to the question and

answer exchange.

Thank you, Ambassador. I appreciate your

testimony and I appreciate you coming here to testify.

Let me just start. As I go through and look at this, of the $97

million that was authorized in drawdown for the Iraq Liberation

Act, and I believe there was also appropriated an additional $13

million to support opposition to Saddam, you funded the Radio

Free Iraq, that has been done; you have apparently here half a million

that you are funding an initial grant to——

To INDICT. And that is what

has been spent to date?

So a total of how much money has been

spent that was authorized by the Congress to spend under the Iraq

Liberation Act?

So you have spent $67,000 and the Radio

Free Iraq and to date that is the extent of what you have expended

of what was authorized by the Congress?

You know, one of our concerns here is just

that we need to move forward and we need to move forward aggressively,

and that this has been signed into law for some period

of time and you have been working with these groups for a period

of time and it does not seem like much is happening, that it is just

not moving forward.

I have had a number of private meetings with you and with Martin

Indyk and with Secretary Albright. It just does not seem like

it is happening. I hope you have plans to move things forward more

aggressively from this point on forward, unless you have a different

strategy that you want to put forward than the Iraq Liberation Act

implementation.

It is just my sense and a number of others

that time is of the essence and we need to move forward quickly.

I want to direct your attention, if I could, to some questions that

I have had people ask me and I have not really been sure how to

answer them. The President, when he signed the Iraq Liberation

Act, stated the support for a new regime in Iraq. I think this was

his actual quote. It is: ‘‘to provide support to opposition groups from

all sectors of the Iraq community that could lead to a popularly

supported government.’’

I just want to know if that continues to be the case today, because

I get different interpretations of what different administration

officials are saying, that we are in a containment-plus strategy,

we are in a containment plus removal strategy, and then some

say, well, I am not sure that we are in for a regime change strategy.

Now, is regime change a passive phrase? Do we mean that we

just hope it is going to happen? Or is regime change something

that the administration is working actively and aggressively to

cause to happen?

Well, I am glad to hear you say that it is

an active phrase, because different of the Secretaries seem to have

interpreted it somewhat differently or saying that the containment

strategy and a removal strategy are inconsistent with each other

when I think that they are perfectly consistent with each other. It

is just it is going to take a great deal of push and effort to be able

to get those done.

Now, I asserted in my opening statement that the current United

States and British bombing in the no-fly zones in Iraq constituted

a legal response to Iraqi provocations. Would you agree with that

statement?

A legal response.

If that is the case, though, is it also not

correct that if Iraq tomorrow stopped targeting allied planes and

Saddam ceased all of his provocations that the bombing would by

necessity end as well?

Where would that leave U.S. policy, then?

I mean, if that is one of the major ways that we continue to weaken

Saddam Hussein, then we would be without that ability once he

stops the provocations; is that correct?

Let’s talk about some of the tools for regime

change, because clearly the Iraq Liberation Act is a regime

change tool that the Congress has put forward.

And I believe we need to be more aggressive

in moving forward with the implementation of that legislation,

when you have only spent $67,000 plus Iraq Radio. We need to get

more aggressive with that.

What other policies does the administration have in place that

are targeted at regime change?

But none of those groups have the military

capacity to do anything against Saddam, do they?

That would have enough military capacity

to be able to challenge Saddam?

I would like to pursue that with you further,

because what I am hearing you say are all good and laudable

things, but it does not strike me that any of them can set any date,

that we could project any date forward that this regime would be

out of power; that these are things that are laudable to do, but we

could not say that we would project within 2 years, within 1 year,

within 5 years, there will be a new regime that heads the Government

of Iraq. Can we?

The military bombing that we are doing,

the targeting of the bombing is mostly targeted toward sites that

fix on our aircraft. There has been some writers that have suggested

that we would be better off to respond to more sensitive targets,

that our attacks should help facilitate Saddam’s overthrow

with our targets on our bombing responses when they target us.

How would you respond to that? Do you think that would be a

better way for us to target some of our bombings in Iraq?

Why not add additional potential targets as

those that are politically sensitive targets as well? If our effort is

not only containment of this regime, it is also removal of this regime,

why not use probably the greatest force capacity that we

have, rather than the $97 million that Congress has appropriated

for the Iraq Liberation Act to work with outside groups or Iraq

Radio? Why not use this military force that is in place, that is authorized,

that is capable of attacking these politically sensitive targets,

that would lead more to the potential overthrow of Saddam?

It seems we are wasting a tremendous opportunity here.

Well, I have traveled in the region late last

year and met with a number of leaders of adjacent countries. What

they sought more than anything was a comprehensive U.S. strategy

that would lead to the removal of Saddam Hussein, and not

just the potential of his removal or kind of trying to set the circumstances

and hope that the removal occurs, but the actual removal

of Saddam Hussein from power.

They support a regime change. You noted, I thought well, in your

testimony that he made a mistake by calling for regime change in

a number of his neighbors, and now they are back and saying, well,

we think you ought to go. So that their back is up.

But pardon me, but our strategy in place now, we cannot project

any time certain, nor can we convey to any of our allies in the region,

any sort of certainty at what point in time Saddam Hussein

will not be in power, nor any period of time that he may not be

in power, unless maybe a lucky bomb gets him or he eats too much

fat, I guess, and has heart problems.

But we just do not have those things in place. And yet we have

the opportunity through our military that is there in the region,

through allies that want to support us, to remove him. It seems to

me that we are hesitating and stopping and doing things that are

on the periphery, but will not end up removing Saddam Hussein

in and of their own force even if they are gotten up to full speed.

These efforts that you have talked about, even if you got them

up to full speed, will not lead to the removal of Saddam Hussein.

They seem to be more of a containment strategy than a removal

strategy.

I think what it needs is it needs aggressive

U.S. leadership, with a comprehensive plan, and that we target politically

sensitive areas. There have been other experts that have

suggested establishing areas within the country where dissident

groups could develop and work, that we would provide an overflight

protection to them.

I have seen several different plans that are of a much more aggressive

nature in dealing with this situation. It looks like what we

have got in place today, it may take several years, it may take 10

years. We will wait him out, is kind of the strategy today.

I do not know that the coalition will hold that long. I do not

know that the Arab countries will wait in the region. I do not know

that the United Nations Security Council will wait, will keep the

sanctions on that period of time.

We have really got a moment now where he is weaker, where

there is internal dissent starting up, where you have the neighboring

countries willing to help remove this regime, and we are kind

of standing back saying, well, let us see if something comes forward

out of this stew, but not with any sort of comprehensive leadership

on the behalf of the United States.

I know it is a complicated situation, but we are not putting forward

comprehensive leadership in this region at a time when per-

haps just some could really move us aggressively forward on the

removal of this regime.

Do you think the regime change will happen

during this administration?

So patience is the watchword?

Well, you are a very able witness on behalf

of the administration. I just note some skepticism from here in the

Congress on whether we have a comprehensive, aggressive plan

and whether that is being implemented and whether the Iraq Liberation

Act is being implemented at all or it is just being kind of

a slow roll.

I note that it has been reported in several newspapers that Mr.

Ken Pollack, that the NSC intended to take on him as their new

Iraq specialist, who he has stated very openly in Foreign Affairs

magazine his questioning of the Iraq Liberation Act and whether

or not that is a plan that will work.

The Congress put that plan forward thinking that it could work.

It passed, it was signed by the President. There may be people that

dispute it, but it is put into place, and a number of us do not feel

like it is being implemented with the aggressiveness, given the opportunity

that is present today.

I suppose if one could say, well, we are not getting anywhere at

all, we do not have any opportunities in dealing with Saddam, let

us just let it ride. But there are real opportunities that are there,

and I do hope the administration takes your words to heart about

aggressively working with those groups to get them in place.

I would also urge you to use the other available tools that are

available to you, militarily and other tools, in a comprehensive

plan, sell that to the region, I mean presenting it to the region,

which I hope Assistant Secretary Indyk is doing this week and next

week, because that is what they want to see from the United

States. That is what they are willing to support.

It is not without a lot of difficulties, and you have got to balance

on many hands. But we have done it before. We probably will not

get this lineup the way we have got it right now again any time

soon.

So I do hope you will work on that aggressively.

We will continue to have discussions with

you and continue to watch this issue. If you have other comments

that you want to put into the record, we will be happy to receive

those over the next several days as per the committee rules.