Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a longer written

statement, and I will simply highlight some areas of it.

Thank you.

First of all, of course, I would like to join my voice to all those

who have thank you for starting this national debate on Iraq, and

I would like to take the liberty, Mr. Chairman, to say that I admire

your stamina. I was listening yesterday all day, and I got exhausted,

but you did not. So congratulations.

Now, I think this panel——

Well, it’s very good of you.

Thank you for this particular panel, because, very

sadly, my impression is that not enough thinking has been going

on in Washington, to date, about the issue of the day after. It appears,

from the press, that there’s a great deal of thinking going

on about military operations, but what to do after is not thought

about much. And whether it is a question of lack of interest or lack

of people, I don’t quite know, but I think this situation has to be

remedied, and remedied quickly.

I’m an Iraqi-American, and my ambition is to see my native Iraq

free and that there are good relations between Iraq and the United

States. This is what I fervently hope for.

In the event of a military campaign to remove the regime of Saddam

Hussein, the United States will have a unique opportunity to

influence the political outcome in Iraq in a way that is good for

Iraq, good for the region, and good for the United States. I might

say that the United States will not have had such an opportunity

since the end of World War II. This will be probably the first time

that the United States will really be able to have leverage. I would

like this leverage to be for the good.

I have spoken to Iraqis over the past 10 years. It is my business

to speak to Iraqis every day. And there is a unanimous desire for

pluralism, representation, participation, accountability in government—

in short, all the things that we call democracy. The United

States should seize this opportunity in the event of the removal of

the regime to press for sweeping change of the political system and

a new foundation for democracy in Iraq.

I would like to say, at this point, that the subject of Afghanistan

was mentioned earlier today, and I would not like to see Afghanistan

as a model, by which I mean—and to put it crudely, and you’ll

excuse me—I do not think we should have a hit-and-run operation

in Iraq.

Historically, Iraq has set the tone for the Middle East, and Iraq’s

future political shape will affect the region either in a positive or

a negative direction. Intervention and regime change should not be

the beginning of U.S. commitment to assist and support Iraqis, but

should be the beginning of a commitment toward nation building

in Iraq. And U.S. involvement should be sustained. I do not mean,

necessarily, just a military involvement, but at all levels. The U.S.

commitment to see Iraq through this difficult period should be

made up front and should be held to.

The day following a regime change in Iraq will be largely determined

by the message the United States sends to the Iraqis now,

before military action, about U.S. intentions and about U.S. vision

for Iraq. I have to tell you, Iraqis desperately want to be free of

Saddam Hussein, and they also know that the only country that

can help them with this is the United States. And they are ready

to welcome the United States as liberators.

But equally because of the history of the gulf war and because

of its aftermath and because Iraqis believe that the United States

abandoned them, in 1991 and later, there is, unfortunately, a deficit

of trust among Iraqis of U.S. intentions.

I have spoken to Iraqis who were in Iraq only in the past few

months. They are apprehensive. First of all, they understand that

there is a real likelihood of the United States conducting a military

campaign in Iraq with the purpose of changing the regime. And I

can tell you many Iraqis that I’ve spoken to have said that regime

change is often discussed in Baghdad as a likely possibility. But

they’re apprehensive about the destructiveness of the war that will

come, and they are apprehensive about what the United States will

do after the regime is gone.

We must make clear that the United States comes to Iraq as a

friend and not as an occupier, and that the United States will help

Iraqis rebuild the country from the devastation of 20 years of war.

Mr. Chairman, what is likely to happen on the day after, specifically?

First, we will not have a civil war in Iraq. This is contrary

to Iraqi history, and Iraq has not had history of communal conflict

as there has been in the Balkans or in Afghanistan. Second, I

would agree with Dr. Marr, Iraq will not fall apart and will not be

dismembered. The Kurds have spared no words or effort in explaining

and stressing that they want to remain part of Iraq. The Shia,

far from wishing to secede, see themselves as quintessential Iraqi

patriots. But what both of these groups want is a bigger role in

Iraq, a bigger role in Baghdad and in the center of government, not

separation from Iraq.

Third, provided the United States has put forth a reassuring

message, Iraqis will join U.S. forces in dismantling the regime, and

Iraqi military forces, in particular, will defect and cooperate with

U.S. troops. There will be a measure of confusion, but I do not believe

that there will be chaos. And particularly, there will not be

chaos in those parts of Iraq where there are American troops.

I do believe, by the way, that there is a very likely chance of an

11th-hour military coup. Once military officers and army generals

are aware that the U.S. troops are, in fact, in Iraq and they are

advancing on Baghdad and that the intention is, in fact, to remove

the regime, there is a very strong likelihood that some group of

army officers will stage a coup.

Fourth, the humanitarian situation will deteriorate badly because

of war casualties, population displacement, the disruption of

systems of distribution of food and medical resources.

Fifth, the system of public security will break down because

there will be no functioning police force, no civil service, and no justice

system.

Sixth, there will be a vacuum of political authority and administrative

authority. Surviving senior officials from the old regime will

have fled or will remain in hiding. Meanwhile, military officers who

have cooperated with U.S. forces will be vying for recognition and

privilege from the United States. The United States must be very

cautious about who it gives authority to in this situation of a vacuum.

This is on the very first day after the regime change. But within

a few weeks, there will be other problems that will emerge. One,

there will be a need to eradicate the remnants of the old regime.

There will be a need to develop the administrative structure and

institutions of Iraq. The infrastructure of vital sectors will have to

be restored. An adequate police force must be trained and equipped

as quickly as possible. And the economy will have to be jump-started

from, not only stagnation, but devastation.

In other words, a very large number of U.S. and international civilian

groups will be needed alongside any military troops that are

in Iraq—not only from the United States, but from the European

Union, from the United Nations, from the NGO community. There

will be a great need for expertise and resources to build Iraq, and

this has to happen quickly, not on day one, but perhaps on week

five or week six or week seven. But, no matter how many troops

and civilians there are, there will be a dire need for Iraqi participation

in this effort. I believe an Iraqi partnership is indispensable,

both for political and for practical reasons.

Therefore, who are the likely candidates for an Iraqi partnership

with the United States? And, for a further question, who are the

successors to Saddam’s regime who might emerge from this partnership?

Again, I agree with Dr. Marr, that after 30 years of repression,

there is no political life in Iraq outside Saddam’s leadership and

Saddam’s family. The urban middle class’s professionals and Intelligentsia

have been crushed, and it is unlikely that on day one or

week one a new leadership will emerge from outside this tight circle

of existing power now.

I believe that, in the aftermath, there will be, in fact, two circles

that might emerge as possible—or who will certainly clamor for

partnership with the United States. The first circle, of course, is

the military officers, the defected military officers who will have cooperated

with the United States. And the second circle will be the

Sunni provincial clans of central Iraq.

But, as I explain in my written statement more thoroughly, there

is almost a total overlap between these two circles. The Sunni clans

of central Iraq were the power base that Saddam used. And, in

fact, they supplied the manpower to, not only the military, but the

military and the security apparatus of the states. And so to talk

about a separation between this clan system and the military security

complex is, in a way, a false differentiation.

The military security complex identification with the clan system

of central Iraq was precisely the model that Saddam Hussein used

for his regime. And the question is, if we actually choose our partners

from these two circles, we will be replicating the model that

was used by Saddam Hussein.

I should also mention the Ba’th party, because there is a notion

that perhaps the Ba’th party could come up with potential leadership.

I do not believe there is such a thing as a functioning Ba’th

party in Iraq. It’s been eviscerated. It was never a good institution,

in any case, and it was a chauvinistic ultra-nationalist institution.

But, even so, the regional commander of the Ba’th party really is

a tool and instrument for Saddam Hussein. And without Saddam,

there is no such thing. We are not likely to see a leadership emerge

from that.

In the confusion of the first few weeks, there will be a great deal

of temptation for the United States to rely on military army generals

and perhaps this clan system. And I want to suggest why this

would be a great mistake. To begin with, many of the military officers

who have achieved sufficient seniority in Iraq are probably implicated

in war crimes and crimes against humanity. I am not sure

that we should be partnering with people who have other people’s

blood on their hands.

The clan system has no acknowledged hierarchy, and none of

them can command alliances of all the others. Each clan believes

it should inherit power after Saddam. The competition for power

among these clans will be intense. And if there is a nascent warlord

class in Iraq, it is, in fact, these clans of the center who are

actually much more fractious, have much more rivalry among

them, and, because of their association to the military security

complex, have access to arms.

Next, a military regime will establish the logic of force as an instrument

of gaining power and keeping power in Iraq, and, therefore,

it will start the rationale of cycles of military coups and

counter-coups which will, in fact, return Iraq to the way that the

Middle East functioned in the 1950s and 1960s, and this is hardly

a stable model.

And, finally, and importantly, the Iraqi people will simply reject

a military regime or a regime that is modeled on Saddam’s paradigm

of Sunni clans plus military security complex. They will actively

resist it. They will raise—this will raise the level of dissent

and instability, and it could encourage foreign intervention and

centrifugal forces. I believe it’s essentially to break this pattern of

militarization and regressive government by ensuring that Iraq has

a modernizing civilian government and that the military stays out

of politics.

I’m almost done. In due course, Iraqis will gain confidence that

a new order is taking shape, and candidates for leadership will

emerge within the country, especially from the urban educated

classes. However, I submit that the United States can’t afford to

wait that many months until this happens. It must find an Iraqi

partner sooner rather than later, and it must find an Iraqi partner

before a war is launched.

And I will here make a bold and controversial proposal. For the

past 11 years, the United States has been working with the Iraqi

opposition groups in northern Iraq and in the Diaspora. It is fashionable

to disparage this opposition and say that they are useless

and worth nothing and represent nothing. And yet these groups

have shown tenacity and vibrancy, and they represent a wide spectrum

of political opinion in Iraq. They not only represent Kurds,

Shias, and Sunnis, they actually represent political opinion and political

currents and political beliefs. Without exception, they have

a modernizing, democratizing outlook however imperfect this might

look in Western eyes. Their relations with the United States and

with each other have not always been smooth, I grant that, but I

would say, by the way, that this has not always been exclusively

their fault. In any case, I think it is time to change all that.

I would suggest that the United States take the bold step of

partnering with this opposition and creating at least the nucleus of

a future political structure. This structure should be prepared and

enabled to take charge immediately of administrative and management

needs of the country on the day after a regime change.

I am not, by any means, suggesting that this opposition can be

the whole story of Iraq’s——

I’m saying that this nuclear political structure

should be prepared and enabled to take charge of immediate administrative

and management needs of the country.

Would you like me to explain now or when I’m

done?

If I may at least finish this paragraph?

I am not suggesting, by any means, that this opposition

can be the whole of Iraq’s political structure. Quite the contrary,

it should form no more than an open circle to be augmented

and completed as leaders emerge within Iraq in the months after

regime change. Without such a partnership, and without such a

partnership being built right now or beginning right now, the

United States is likely to find itself with no civilian framework to

rely on in Iraq for a long period of time.

Mr. Chairman, my idea for an administrative and management

structure is that the Iraqi groups in the opposition have to be able

to come into Iraq with U.S. troops and at least put together the

remnants of the civil service in Iraq, come in with perhaps a core

group of people who are trained in policing by the United States

so that this core group can go into Iraq and work with the remnants

of the police force. In other words—and also, by the way, be

in charge, or at least create a sort of an overall structure for managing

humanitarian services, because——

The Iraqi opposition.

Senator, you are putting it rather, and maybe it

should be put that starkly. My idea is that there should be Iraqis

who come in with the United States who are in these functions as

at least the liaison between whatever is left of the civil service in

Iraq and the United States.

And precisely, I’m afraid that in the first few

weeks, certainly, and perhaps even for a few months, that all the

senior people who are in charge of turning the lights on will be in

hiding or will have fled Iraq.

I have one final point, which I’ll make very brief,

because, in fact, my esteemed colleague, Dr. Al-Shabibi will take it

up. My final point, Mr. Chairman, is that the Iraqi economy has

been devastated, and the Iraqi people have lived in deprivation for

at least 12 years. It will be extremely important, both politically

and operationally, to jumpstart the Iraqi economy as quickly as

possible and create opportunities for employment and to raise the

standard of living in Iraq in a visible way. I cannot stress enough

how important it is for Iraqis to see that their lives are better and

not worse in a tangible, material way.

An important message the United States can send now and confirm

the day after a regime change in Iraq is that the United

States is prepared to put together an international Marshall Plan

for Iraq and help Iraq overcome its heavy financial burden and rejuvenate

its economy.

The final message is the United States must stay the course.

This should not be a campaign to change the regime. It should be

a campaign to rebuild Iraq. And unless we understand that and are

prepared for it, then our preparations are really very feeble. It’s not

simply a military operation.

Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, can I answer also some of the Senator’s

questions?

Senator, you raise a whole number of issues, and

I wish I had a long time to address them, but I will try and address

them quickly.

I’ll go back to your seminal question about—the question of—that

the United States is not in the nation-building business and hasn’t

done it well, you know, we had—Somalia was a bad experience,

and so on. My answer to that really is that we have no option but

to do it right in Iraq. If ever there was a country which was of vital

interest to Iraq and a vital security concern to the United States,

sorry—it is Iraq.

I’m not saying that we shouldn’t have done the right thing in Afghanistan

and so on. In fact, I’m a supporter of exactly what went

on this morning in this room. But the sense—in Afghanistan almost—

we almost have the luxury, apart from the security and the

terrorism. In Iraq, we will not.

And the other thing about the region is, yes, there isn’t much of

a tradition in the region for what we’re asking for, for kind of democracy.

But, first of all, at some point this region is going to have

to join the rest of the world. We cannot condemn it forever to the

darkness of the pre-Middle Ages. That’s one thing.

The other thing is—the good point is that Iraq is, in fact a trend

setter in the Middle East. And, therefore, what we do in Iraq,

whether right or wrong, is going to impact the Middle East; and,

therefore, let’s do it right. This is on the issue of, you know, are

we going to do it right? Why should we bother, et cetera, and so

on? And I do think that Iraq is central to U.S. interests in the region.

The question about finding leadership and so on—in fact, I addressed

it very briefly in my oral statement, and it’s addressed

more extensively in my written statement. And that is where I

think I mentioned the question—or the issue of a transitional government

of national unity, a coalition.

What I was arguing earlier this morning is that, first of all, you

do need this coalition that represents a myriad political and social

interests in Iraq, but that, given the fact that there is going to be

a period of time when leadership within Iraq will have to emerge,

we have to start somewhere. And I’m suggesting that the kernel

that we use is the opposition that is now in northern Iraq—in other

words, the Kurds—plus the opposition, which is outside Iraq. And

that is only used as a kernel to be added to—I’ve called it the ‘‘open

circle’’—to be augmented, to be added to—as leadership comes from

within Iraq. And I don’t want to suggest that we do not—we should

not include in that leadership elements from the army, the military,

the Sunni clans. Indeed, we should. All I want to guard

against is that all authority and all the power be given to that old

model.

Also in my written paper, I have talked about the responsibilities

of this transition unity government. And certainly—and we have to

have markers, milestones for this transition government. It must

do the following—this, that, and the other. One of the things that

I mention is that it must prepare the ground for a constituent assembly.

In fact, it should prepare the ground for its own dissolution

by organizing elections for a constituent assembly, by having a referendum,

by, in fact, then overseeing free and fair elections, and

then getting out and allowing a permanent constitution and a permanent

government to take place. All of this needs to happen, and

I would like to see this engagement by the United States and by

the international community throughout this process.

Can I just say very quickly—and I may not be the

most competent person to answer this—a great deal is going to depend

on the conduct of the military campaign. We have a humanitarian

crisis in Iraq right now. But, in a way, it’s sort of stable. It’s

horrible to use these words about what are—the suffering of

human beings, but it is stable.

But when we talk about another military campaign, and we ask

what the humanitarian crisis is going to be, it’s difficult to—it depends

very much on the level of destruction that goes on and

whether the military campaign will target infrastructure that affects

civilians, such as water, electricity, and so on and so forth.

But I guess I will cede the point that—to my colleagues, who

might know much more about this.

Yes, if you could. And, in fact—the point is you

can do this with the opposition which is outside. Good luck on getting

them together, but certainly you can do that.

The problem that we have is that the vast number of people are

inside. It’s not easy to identify them. It’s not easy to get them out,

for—you know, Saddam’s security system is pretty unparalleled.

And at the end of the day, you can try to identify those people, you

can try to have links with them.

I’m a little less optimistic than some of my colleagues on the

platform here, because I think that what you’ve got inside is going

to be more entrenched than we think—the clans, the military with

their own specific interests, this economic mafia, maybe not the

party, and so on. And when you’ve got your Bonn meeting, which

is going to be mainly outsiders, you’re still going to have to bring

them inside, which is one of my suggested scenarios. But you’re

going to have people with entrenched interests and different ideas,

some of whom may want to keep a nuclear weapon in tow and may

not be quite so friendly to the United States and so on.

And whoever it is comes out in Bonn is going to have to deal

with that inside situation.

Senator, can I——

The idea of a Bonn meeting is, of course, an excellent

idea, and I would endorse it. And, in fact, I have discussed it

with a number of people in Washington. The important thing is to

make sure that whoever comes to Bonn—and there are going to be

necessarily only people who are in Iraqi Kurdistan, northern Iraq,

or people who are outside Iraq—that they do not form this sum

total of this transitional authority or government, that there is

room left for people emerging from inside.

Senator, yes. I would suggest that a lot of hard

horse trading go on prior to any military action. And it has surprised

me, actually, that none has been going on. And the advantages

of it can be seen in the smart sanctions issue where, in fact,

we did do some hard bargaining and some horse trading, and we

got the thing through the U.N. Security Council.

And I think your suggestion is perfect, that one should encourage

the administration to go and bargain hard and say, ‘‘We’ll give you

this if you’ll give us that,’’ and so on and so forth.

Now, the other issue is that lifting sanctions on Iraq and getting

oil flowing and getting business in Iraq is actually going to have

an enormously beneficial economic impact in the region, not just

Turkey. We hear about Turkey only. But there are many, many

companies in Jordan, in Syria, in the gulf that can benefit from

this economic opening up in Iraq.

It’s actually going to be a bonanza in the region, to be honest,

and there is plenty of room for everyone to benefit, not just from

developing the infrastructure of the oil industry, but from building

roads and hospitals and so on and so forth. There’s everything to

be done, and Iraqis can’t do it all on their own. So there is that

economic benefit.

But I want to address another issue that the chairman also

raised, and that is the perception of the United States in the region.

And to this extent, I think the colonel was absolutely right.

If we can show that we are diminishing gradually, there will be a

great sense of relief.

However, I don’t want to open a new subject, but we have to be

honest. There are many other reasons—other problems in the Middle

East that we need to be addressing. It is not just U.S. policy

toward Iraq that makes Middle Easterners angry. In fact, this is

very much of a secondary issue, and it’s byproduct of other issues.

And so we should not simply look at U.S. presence in Iraq as

being the one that inflames Arabs and so on. There are many

issues that are older, broader, and more entrenched in the Middle

East that we need to look at.

So after the first gulf war, there was an opportunity to—particularly,

the Madrid Conference on the Middle East, and I wonder

whether, in fact, Iraq will present such another opportunity for a

global look at the Middle East and its problems. Yes.