

Showdown With Iraq: International Town Meeting

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At Ohio State University in Columbus, the senior foreign policy advisers to the president of the United States, Secretary of State Madeleine **Albright**, Secretary of Defense William Cohen, and National Security Adviser Sandy Berger, host an international town meeting on the showdown with Iraq.

JUDY WOODRUFF, CNN ANCHOR: Hello. I'm Judy Woodruff here at St. John's Arena at Ohio State University in Columbus. Normally, this is a place where the Buckeyes play basketball, but today we are convened here because of extraordinary events in a place almost 10,000 miles away -- Iraq.

It's a country that the United States went to war with just about exactly six years ago and it is possible that very soon, we may be engaged in a military confrontation with Iraq again.

It's a subject that ordinary Americans have a vital interest in and so it's very appropriate that we have gathered here today ordinary citizens from the Columbus area -- a cross-section of people -- interested in this subject.

BERNARD SHAW, CNN ANCHOR: Our panelists -- the senior foreign policy advisers to the president of the United States -- Secretary of State Madeleine **Albright**, Secretary of Defense William Cohen, National Security Adviser Sandy Berger.

WOODRUFF: We do want to remind you that this is not only being televised on CNN in the United States and internationally, it is being simulcast on CNN radio and our audience in the United States and around the world can call in with questions.

And I'm going to read out those phone numbers and I understand that we're going to be showing the audience those numbers throughout the program.

If you're in the United States, you can call 1-800-310-4266. International calls, the number is 1-404-827-3300.

SHAW: And now, ladies and gentlemen, some opening remarks, beginning first with the secretary of state, Madeleine **Albright**.

(APPLAUSE)

MADELEINE **ALBRIGHT**, SECRETARY OF STATE: Thank you. Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

Good afternoon.

On behalf of my colleagues and myself, thank you very much for coming. During the next hour and a half, we plan to discuss with you why the confrontation between Iraq and the world matters to

us as Americans, how it developed, and what our strategy is for settling it in a way that leaves us, our friends in the region and the entire world safer.

Iraq is a long way from Ohio, but what **happens there matters a great deal** here. For the risk that the leaders of a rogue state will use nuclear, chemical or biological weapons against us or our allies is the greatest security threat we face. And it is a threat against which we must and will stand firm.

In discussing Iraq, we begin by knowing that Saddam Hussein, unlike any other leader, has used weapons of mass destruction even against his own people.

In fact, he is a repeat offender, having used them both in the battle and against his people.

When the Gulf War ended seven years ago, Iraq was required to destroy such arms, and a special United Nations commission called UNSCOM was created to verify that and to see that weapons would

not be replaced.

Despite repeated Iraqi obstruction, UNSCOM has uncovered and destroyed more of those deadly weapons than were demolished during the entire Gulf War. But the evidence is strong that Iraq continues to hide prohibited weapons and materials. There remains a critical gap between the number of weapons we know Iraq produced and the amount we can confirm were destroyed.

There is only one way to learn the truth. UNSCOM's inspectors must have free, unfettered and unconditional access to people, documents and facilities in Iraq.

That is what we're demanding, and that demand has been echoed repeatedly by the UN Security Council and by the world. Unfortunately, Saddam continues to deny UNSCOM access to dozens of suspect sites. He's also trying to discredit UNSCOM and to change its character so that it will no longer be independent and its inspections no longer credible.

As President Clinton made clear in his strong speech yesterday at the Pentagon, the United States will not allow this to happen. Iraq must permit UN inspectors to do their jobs as the Security Council has directed. If this does not occur, we must be and we are prepared to use military force.

We support UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's plan to visit Baghdad this weekend to gain Iraq's full compliance with Security Council resolutions. A peaceful solution remains our preferred option, but it must be a true, not a phony, solution.

Make no mistake, if we use military force it will be because Saddam Hussein has refused to accept a peaceful solution. If we do not use force, it will be because Iraq has finally agreed to give UN inspectors the access they need to do their job.

PROTESTERS: One, two, three, four, we don't want your racist war. One, two, three, four, we don't want your racist war.

ALBRIGHT: The United States...

PROTESTERS: One, two, three, four, we don't want your racist war! One, two, three, four, we don't want your racist war!

SHAW: Mrs. Secretary, excuse me. Ladies and gentlemen...

PROTESTERS: One, two, three, four, we don't want your racist war! One, two, three, four, we don't want your racist war!

ALBRIGHT: I would very much like to finish -- I would very much like to finish my statement.

PROTESTERS: One, two, three, four, we don't want your racist war!

SHAW: Ladies and gentlemen...

(SHOUTS)

SHAW: Ladies and gentlemen, can we please have order in the hall please?

(SHOUTS)

SHAW: There are about 12 of you who are shouting. There are about 12 of you who are shouting. But most people would like to hear the secretary of state.

(APPLAUSE)

(CHEERS)

(APPLAUSE)

ALBRIGHT: Thank you very much. Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

SHAW: Thank you very much. Thank you very much.

(APPLAUSE)

ALBRIGHT: Thank you very much. I would like to finish my statement.

(SHOUTS)

ALBRIGHT: The United States does not challenge...

(SHOUTS)

SHAW: If you feel that strongly about it, why don't you come down here and write out your questions so that you can put them to the officials here?

(APPLAUSE)

SHAW: Madam Secretary.

ALBRIGHT: Can I finish my statement, and then we'll be -- can I -- can I just...

SHAW: That will come in time. There are prepared statements. No...

Your questions will come in about a few minutes.

(SHOUTS)

(UNKNOWN): ... make a statement?

SHAW: A question, not a statement.

(SHOUTS)

ALBRIGHT: I do believe that...

(UNKNOWN): (OFF-MIKE) to participate?

ALBRIGHT: Of course you will.

(UNKNOWN): ... do believe that...

(SHOUTS)

ALBRIGHT: ... Of course you will -- Of course you will participate.

(UNKNOWN): Not right now. No, not right now.

ALBRIGHT: Of course we will. Of course we will.

(APPLAUSE)

I would -- We came here to listen and we will, but I would appreciate the opportunity of making our statement, and then we'll have a lot of time.

(APPLAUSE)

First of all, I'd like to repeat and say that the United States does not challenge Iraq's territorial integrity, nor do we want to see the Iraqi people suffer any further. Our problem and the world's problem is with Iraq's leaders. And today those leaders have a choice.

They can allow UN inspections to proceed on the world's terms or they can invite serious military strikes on ours.

Now I'd like to turn this over to Defense Secretary Cohen, who can discuss further...

(APPLAUSE)

Thank you. Thank you for your attention.

WILLIAM COHEN, DEFENSE SECRETARY: Thank you very much, Madam Secretary. And let me say that for the past 24 years I've had an opportunity to represent the great state of Maine in the United States Congress, and I've attended many town meetings, none nearly as loud as this, nor as large. And I want to thank CNN for giving all of us an opportunity to appear here before you.

Walt Whitman said he heard America singing. I hope we can hear America sing and not shout during the course of today's hour-and-a-half discussion.

And it is the finest tradition of the...

(APPLAUSE)

... the finest tradition of the university is to promote open speech and debate. And hopefully, we will have that opportunity in the very near future.

Let me take a few moments to explain why Iraq poses such a large threat and why we're considering military action in order to contain it.

Saddam Hussein, as Secretary **Albright** has indicated, has developed an arsenal of deadly chemical and biological weapons. He has used these weapons repeatedly against his own people as well as Iran.

I have a picture which I believe CNN can show on its cameras, but here's a picture taken of an Iraqi mother and child killed by Iraqi nerve gas. This is what I would call Madonna and child Saddam Hussein-style.

Now the United Nations believes that he still has very large quantities of VX. VX is a substance, a nerve agent, which is so deadly that a single drop can kill you within a couple of minutes.

Anthrax is a biological agent that kills people within five to seven hours -- seven days rather after they breathe an amount the size of a single dust particle. If you were to take a 5-pound bag of Anthrax, properly disbursed, it would kill half the population of Columbus, Ohio.

Now at the time of 1991, at the end of the Gulf War, he had also loaded chemical and biological weapons into artillery shells, missile warheads as well. He was working on a missile that would have a range of nearly 2,000 miles. That means it could travel all the way from Baghdad to as far as Paris and perhaps other capitals in Europe and one day even perhaps to the United States.

He has fired these missiles against four of his neighbors -- Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Iran and Israel.

Because of the threats posed by Saddam and his deadly arsenal, the United Nations insisted that he eliminate all of these weapons of mass destruction following the Gulf War.

And as Secretary **Albright** has indicated, he agreed. He agreed to declare all of us his nuclear, chemical and biological weapons in 1991, and the UN set up the special commission in order to destroy all of the weapons and the capacity to produce more.

But Saddam has delayed. He has duped. He has deceived the inspectors from the very first day on the job.

I have another chart, which shows exactly what I'm talking about.

From the very beginning, he declared he had no offensive biological weapons programs. Then, when confronted with evidence following the defection of his son-in-law, he admitted they had produced more than 2,100 gallons of anthrax.

The UN inspectors fear that he may have produced as much as three times that amount.

Despite Iraq's deception program, let me say, the UN inspectors have done a remarkable job. They have destroyed the following: 38,000 chemical weapons; more than 100,000 gallons of deadly chemical agents; 48 operational missiles; and six missile launchers; along with a biological warfare factory.

But the UN inspectors believe that Saddam Hussein still has his weapons of mass destruction capability -- enough ingredients to make 200 tons of VX nerve gas; 31,000 artillery shells and rockets filled with nerve and mustard gas; 17 tons of media to grow biological agents; large quantities of anthrax and other biological agents.

These inspectors, again, they've done a good job, but their work isn't over, and that's why we need them back on the ground searching for these deadly weapons that Saddam has used in the past and could use again in the future.

We hope that Iraq will agree to let the inspectors do their work. But if Saddam refuses, we're prepared to use military force to achieve that which he will not allow the inspectors to do.

Our military goal would be to deliver a serious blow that would significantly diminish Saddam's weapons of mass destruction -- the threat -- and reduce his ability to threaten his neighbors.

Saddam holds the keys to ending this crisis, he holds the keys in his hands, he simply has to let the inspectors back in to do their job. And that's precisely why we're here today to explain why it's important. Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

SHAW: And now, National Security Adviser Sandy Berger.

SANDY BERGER, NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER: Dealing with the threat that Secretaries **Albright** and Cohen have described, the threat from Saddam Hussein, demands constant resolve by the United States and by the international community, and, at times, action.

As long as he remains in power, we must be prepared to respond firmly to reckless actions that threaten the region and our interests.

And we've done that successfully over this decade. President Bush led the Gulf War coalition that ejected Iraq from Kuwait and imposed tough conditions for a cease-fire, including that he destroy his weapons of mass destruction. President Clinton struck hard at Iraqi intelligence headquarters after its agents plotted and sought to carry out the assassination of President Bush in 1993. And when Saddam threatened to walk over Kuwait again in 1994, massing his troops on the border, once again we immediately deployed our troops, ships and planes to the region and Saddam backed down.

And when the Iraqi army forcibly seized Irbil in northern Iraq, we extended the no-fly zone over Iraq, taking control of the skies over Iraq from the southern suburbs of Baghdad to the Kuwaiti border. Now we need to summon that will again.

What are the alternatives to this approach? Clearly, as Secretary **Albright** has said, we want a peaceful solution. That is the best option.

(APPLAUSE)

But it must be a peaceful solution that establishes the right of the UN inspectors to go in the country wherever they believe they have to do go to get rid of his weapons of mass destruction.

Now the alternatives -- some have suggested that we should basically turn away. We should close our eyes to this effort to create a safe haven for weapons of mass destruction. But imagine the consequences if Saddam fails to comply and we fail to act.

Saddam will be emboldened believing the international community has lost its will. He will rebuild his arsenal of weapons of mass destruction, and someday, some way, I am certain, he will use that arsenal again as he has 10 times since 1983.

Now others suggest that, since Saddam is the problem, the only effective solution is a ground invasion that would remove him from power.

(APPLAUSE)

(BOOS)

BERGER: We have a divided house, I think.

The costs and risks of that course of action, in our judgment, are too high and not essential to achieving our strategic interests as a nation: containing the threat Iraq now poses. It would require a major land campaign and risk large losses of our soldiers.

We do not support that option.

There is no question that the Iraqi people and the world would be better off without Saddam and we would gladly work with its -- a successor regime that is ready to live in peace with its neighbors and resume its place in the family of nations. We've worked with Iraqi opposition groups in the past and we will continue to do so in the future.

But let me just conclude with this thought, one that President Clinton raised yesterday.

In order to understand why this is so important, we must remember the past and imagine the future.

The 20th century -- the lesson of the 20th century is -- and we've learned through harsh experience -- that the only answer to aggression and to outlaw behavior is firmness, determination, and, when necessary, action.

In the 21st century, the community of nations may see more and more of this very kind of threat that Iraq poses now, a rogue state with biological and chemical weapons.

If we fail to respond, Saddam and all those who follow will believe that they can threaten the security of a vital region with impunity. But if we act now as one, we will send a clear message to would-be tyrants and terrorists that we will do what it takes to protect our security and our freedom in this new era.

Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

(SHOUTS)

WOODRUFF: The adviser to the president for national security, Sandy Berger. We're going to take a break now. And when we come back in just a moment, you can see we've got a big audience here. They have a lot of questions. We want to try to get as many of those questions in as we can here in Columbus and in our phone calls from around the United States and the world.

We'll be right back.

(APPLAUSE)

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

SHAW: You have the floor, sir.

QUESTION: My name is Baha Abok (ph). I am assistant professor in the Ohio State University. My question to secretary of defense, Mr. Cohen.

*** Elapsed Time 00:23, Eastern Time 14:25 ***

The American administration has the might and the means to attack the Iraqi state. But does it have the moral right to attack the Iraqi nation?

(APPLAUSE)

COHEN: The question is also does Saddam Hussein have the moral right to use weapons of mass destruction, chemicals and biologicals, against his own people? The United Nations has determined that he should not possess chemical or biological or nuclear weapons, and what we have is the obligation to carry out the UN declaration to make sure he doesn't pose a threat of an immoral magnitude to his neighbors, as he's done in the past.

(APPLAUSE)

SHAW: Sir, your question?

QUESTION: My name is John Tashabeck (ph). I'm an ER physician here in Columbus.

My question is, this administration has raised concerns about Iraq's threats to its neighbors. Yet none of these neighbors seem to be threatened. They haven't asked for help, and in fact, have come out publicly against the bombings.

(APPLAUSE)

Furthermore, the international community has been opposed to the bombings. If nobody is asking us for their help, how can you justify further U.S. aggression in the region?

(APPLAUSE)

ALBRIGHT: It is very clear that the problem here is one to the region. Saddam Hussein has invaded another country before. He continues to try to develop weapons of mass destruction.

And I have been to the region. I have talked to the neighbors. They are concerned about what is going on there. They have made it very clear that they are worried about what Saddam Hussein is doing. And we are going to be a part of a coalition helping them to resolve this problem.

I think we have to understand the following thing: The United States did not create this problem. Saddam Hussein created the problem.

(APPLAUSE)

QUESTION: I want to preface it just a little bit. No speeches, Bernard. I spent 20 years in the military; my oldest son spent 25. My youngest son died in Vietnam. Six months later, his first cousin died in Vietnam. We stood in the gap.

If push comes to shove and Saddam will not back down, will not allow or keep his word, are we ready and willing to send the troops

in? You see, I have no problem with asking anyone of these guys in the armed forces to stand in the gap for me now -- we stood in the gap for them back then.

And I want to know -- that's the question. I think all of Congress wants to know.

QUESTION: Are we willing to send troops in and finish the job or are we going to do it half-assed...

(APPLAUSE)

... and then men at that time will come back and ask my grandson and some of these other grandsons to put their lives on the line if we're going to do it half-assed the way we did before?

(APPLAUSE)

COHEN: If I could respond to a fellow Mainer. Let me be as direct as I can.

I just returned from visiting our troops on the U.S.S. George Washington. I visited our troops on the U.S.S. Independence. Each and every one of those young men and women who are out there are prepared to do whatever is necessary in order to contain the threat.

What we are seeking to do is not to topple Saddam Hussein, not to destroy his country, but to do what the United Nations has said in its declarations -- and we want to insist that not only words, but deeds. We want the enforcement of the UN declarations and these young men and women are prepared to carry out that mission.

We do not see the need to carry out a large land campaign in order to try to topple Saddam Hussein. Our mission is to get the inspectors back; if they can't get back to make sure he can't constitute or reconstitute this threat.

Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

WOODRUFF: We have -- we have a telephone call from someone in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. If you're on the line, go ahead, please.

QUESTION: Hi. My name is Tyler from Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Briefly, I've seen footage of where the U.S. is expecting low casualties of the people in Saddam's country.

But I've also seen footage where he is placing basically women and children as human shields around the locations the UN cannot search. And I was wondering sort of what the outlook is on that. Really don't know what to think as far as, I mean, basically I've heard one thing saying that we're not planning on killing too many innocent people, yet Saddam is trying to place a bunch of women and children around these sites. So, I really don't know who to ask the question to, but does anybody have a response as far as that goes?

WOODRUFF: Why don't we address that to Mr. Berger.

BERGER: It's a very, very good question.

We have, in our planning for this, have taken every precaution that we can to minimize civilian casualties.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: What?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: What are they?

BERGER: Because the -- because our -- The reason for that is because our quarrel is not with the Iraqi people. One cannot be -- one cannot guarantee that there will not be civilian casualties or that Saddam Hussein will seek to, in a sense, create his own casualties before the fact.

But I think that once the United States says that it is intimidated by someone who has the brutality of killing his own people to protect his own misdeeds, then we are -- we've rendered ourselves absolutely helpless as a nation.

So, we will do all that we can to minimize this civilian casualties, but in all honesty we can't entirely eliminate them completely.

WOODRUFF: If I may follow, President Jimmy Carter, former President Carter, was quoted yesterday as saying that up to a hundred thousand innocent Iraqi civilians could be killed. Is that something, Secretary **Albright** that you think is a...

ALBRIGHT: First of all...

WOODRUFF: ... is a realistic possibility?

ALBRIGHT: ... let me just say the following thing: I am willing to make a bet to anyone here that we care more about the Iraqi people than Saddam Hussein does.

(APPLAUSE)

ALBRIGHT: He has...

(APPLAUSE)

For the last seven years, since the Gulf War, he has starved his people. We have provided food. There is no limit on the amount of humanitarian assistance that can go in. And I personally wrote the resolution that allows there to be oil sold for food.

So the point here is that he does not care a fig about his people. And if he does the totally uncivilized thing of putting women and children to guard his regime, then the fault is his and not the United States that is defending the United Nations.

(APPLAUSE)

WOODRUFF: We said -- we said at the beginning of this session -- you all have a right to speak. You certainly have a right to speak. But the time you take to react is taking time from other -- is taking time from other people...

(UNKNOWN): (OFF-MIKE)

(APPLAUSE)

WOODRUFF: A call from where? A call from where?

We are going to take a break, and we'll be back in just a moment.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

WOODRUFF: Back now in Columbus, Ohio, at Ohio State University at a town hall, and we have a question. Yes, sir. Go ahead.

QUESTION: Secretary **Albright**, my question is why do you think the other members of the Security Council have been reluctant to support the military action other than Great Britain?

(APPLAUSE)

ALBRIGHT: Let me, first of all, say that what is very important to know is that every Security Council resolution has been supported by members of the Security Council, which is to get full implementation of these resolutions that call on Saddam Hussein to allow the inspection and verification to make sure that these weapons of mass destruction are gone.

We have great support from members of the United Nations and the Security Council. They, as we, would prefer a peaceful solution to this, as we have said. And we are supporting, and we've said that we agree that Kofi Annan should go on this trip to Baghdad. And I believe that we do have the support for what we need to do, because we are fulfilling the Security Council resolutions.

QUESTION: Thank you, ma'am.

ALBRIGHT: Thank you.

WOODRUFF: Did you have a follow-up question?

Madam Secretary, I would just -- just a brief follow up. These are countries, though, that were with the United States during the Gulf War six years ago. They are not with us now. Does that not make a difference?

ALBRIGHT: Judy, I think the situation is really quite different than it was...

(SHOUTS)

Could you please tell these people I'd be very happy to talk to them when this is over?

WOODRUFF: Did you all hear? Secretary **Albright** said she'll be glad to talk with you after the program. We only have about 45 minutes left. We'd like to use that time to ask questions. I think most people

here want us to continue.

(APPLAUSE)

Do you want to finish your answer? And then we have a call.

ALBRIGHT: I think that the situation's quite different because that was when Saddam Hussein invaded another country. And there was a situation whereby others -- there was a large coalition. But the truth is that the coalition that we have now is also very large. I think people do not realize that we have many countries that have been talking to all three of us about their desire to support us.

The situation is different. It's not a cross-border attack. But the threat is great, because as Secretary Cohen said, these weapons of mass destruction are the biggest threat that we face in the future.

SHAW: Overseas telephone call from Tel Aviv. Caller, please go ahead.

QUESTION: Hello, everyone. Good evening and shalom. This is Tel Aviv, Israel. My name is Elaine.

I have a question for the secretary of defense. I would like to ask, Mr. Secretary, if he thinks that the ultimate goal of this particular action, which the United States may or may not take, should be the ultimate removal of Saddam Hussein from government, because it is obvious that, as Secretary **Albright** has mentioned, he is a repeat offender. So does the secretary feel that this would be the only way to ensure the implementation and the compliance with UN resolutions by removing the problem which starts this (ph) every few years?

COHEN: Thank you for the question. I think the difference is there exists between what is desirable and what is doable. I think everyone in that region, as well as the world community, would welcome Saddam Hussein's removal from power. We would welcome the opportunity, as Secretary **Albright** has said, to deal with another regime and hopefully have a much more positive and productive relationship.

But what is doable remains another question altogether, as Mr. Berger pointed out. This would require, in our judgment, a rather massive force of land forces, and we don't think that it's necessary in order to contain him.

We think that we can contain him, as we have for the past seven years, and allow the Iraqi people at some point in time to determine for themselves whether they want another seven years of deprivation. He has starved the Iraqi people of about \$100 billion worth of revenues, and he has used whatever revenues he has to build as many as 80 palaces.

Now, we have one White House and one Camp David. I don't know any need for 80 palaces, which are of monumental size, which are starving the Iraqi people of what they need for their own subsistence. So we think that we can contain him, and hopefully we'll see sometime in the future another regime we can deal with on a much more productive basis.

SHAW: Mr. Secretary, a housekeeping question. How much does it cost the American taxpayer each day to keep task forces in position as regard to this crisis?

COHEN: Well, there is -- the basic requirement that we have in any event -- we have our forces as they currently exist. There are some marginal costs, additional costs that we would have as far as some of the fuel. But basically, we are paying for the armed forces that we have. We're using all of the forces necessary in order to prepare for a military option, if necessary. The marginal costs are not monumental. I could get you an exact figure.

But basically, our ships are being paid for as we speak.

This is in the annual budget for our aircraft carriers -- the annual budget for our fighter aircraft and so forth. All of the military personnel are paid for on an annual basis. So the marginal costs would have to do with some additional transportation and some additional fuel.

SHAW: We have a question over here about a possible mission?

QUESTION: Hi, thank you very much. My question is for all three of you.

Saddam Hussein has made promises in the past to allow UN inspectors in, and he has reneged upon those promises. I don't understand how a military strike by the United States is going to ensure future compliance. I'm seeing a pattern here, and I don't see how one military strike is going to end it.

(APPLAUSE)

BERGER: The UN inspectors who have been in the country since 1991-92 -- despite the fact that Saddam has tried to conceal, hide, divert -- have been remarkably successful.

They've destroyed more of his weapons of mass destruction since the Gulf War than were destroyed in all of the Gulf War. So, they are an effective institution, even when you have a Saddam Hussein who's trying to make life difficult for them.

So, the best result would be to get them back in. If they got back in and they were given access to all parts of the country, we would hasten the day when we were able to say that this country has no more weapons of mass destruction.

Now, if he keeps them out or he says there's certain places you can't go -- it's a pretty good tipoff that that's where he doesn't want them to go -- then we could try to accomplish militarily what

we're not able to do on the ground. That is, we can try to reduce his weapons of mass destruction threat significantly through a military action and reduce his capacity to threaten his neighbors. It is, in a sense, trying to do -- to some degree, but by military means -- what the inspectors are being deprived of doing on the ground.

So, they have been effective. It would be better if they got back. If they can't get back, we'll have to try to accomplish the same objective in a different way.

PROTESTERS: No war!

WOODRUFF: All right, we have a question from this corner here. Yes, sir, go right ahead.

QUESTION: This question is for Secretary Cohen. With the recent attacks on the World Trade Center and the Oklahoma City bombing, do you have any concerns that military involvement in Iraq will encourage terroristic attacks here at home?

COHEN: There are always the potential worldwide -- there is the potential worldwide that we could have acts of terrorism. One of the reasons why we have been so concerned about the spread of biological and chemical weapons is that they might in fact use chemical and biologicals, as we saw during the subway incident in Japan with sarin gas.

What we're talking about as far as spreading either anthrax or some other deadly poison.

(SHOUTS)

COHEN: But the question really is, are we going to live in fear of these threats and therefore be paralyzed from taking action in order to reduce it, or take action to curb it as best we can?

We cannot be intimidated by the threat of acts of terrorism in order to alter our policies. We have to be prepared to deter it, to detect it, and obviously to respond to it. But we cannot be intimidated by the threat of terrorism that would be directed against us here or abroad.

(APPLAUSE)

SHAW: Next question, sir. Next question.

QUESTION: Yes. Good afternoon. My question is for Secretary Cohen.

I'd like to know, assuming that the United States does do air strikes on Iraq, I was wondering what the United States is prepared to do if Iraq decides to retaliate by attacking its neighbors?

COHEN: We have obviously taken that into account. We have planned for virtually every contingency. Should Saddam Hussein seek to strike out against his neighbors, we have prepared defensive measures. We have deployed a number of defensive batteries. We have

defensive forces in the region, and we would respond rather swiftly, also, should he attack his neighbors.

So we have been coordinating very closely with all of the countries in the region. And as Secretary **Albright** has said, she has been to the region. I just returned. They are well aware of the threat. They understand that there is a bully in the region. He's armed and he's dangerous, and therefore, they are frightened about it. And they want us there, also, to make sure that he is not able to attack them directly.

PROTESTER: You're the bullies.

SHAW: I have another question for Secretary Cohen. The question reads, since we are unsure where Iraq's weapons are, how can we direct a bombing strike against them?

COHEN: We have carefully selected the targets that will be necessary in order to reduce his ability to

threaten his neighbors or to deliver weapons of mass destruction.

We have, reasonably, I would say, very good evidence in terms of intelligence where these systems are in fact produced as far as the delivery system. We have a good set of options available for us should it become necessary.

So we're confident that we will be able to diminish his capacity to reconstitute these systems and to deliver them, and that will be our goal.

WOODRUFF: All right. We have a phone call, a question, from upstate New York. Tell us who you are and where you are from. Do we have you on the line?

QUESTION: You're talking about Sheldon (ph)?

WOODRUFF: Yes. Go right ahead, sir.

QUESTION: Yes, my question for the secretary of defense. There's been information with regard to Iraq sending many of its weapons to Algeria, the Sudan and Libya, and these countries would be armed with the weapons.

And I'm concerned for the American people that these countries in -- could together send weapons of destruction at the United States, not to mention Russia, who is giving us a left-handed threat. And I'm just concerned if we have good protection on the distance (ph) early warning system in this country, and we should consider that more than anything else.

Go ahead.

COHEN: First of all, there was a report that Saddam may be shifting some of his assets to other countries. I have looked at the evidence underlying that and have not been able to substantiate it. It is a theory but is not backed up by any evidence to date.

You may recall that prior to the Gulf War he did, in fact, transfer some of his aircraft to Iran. That aircraft is still in Iran. So I think Saddam Hussein is not interested in transferring many of his assets to other countries because he probably will not get them back.

But we have more than an adequate deterrent against any of the countries that have been rumored to have received this. And with respect Russia, I just returned from a two-day series of meetings with the minister of defense and members of the Duma, and the foreign minister.

And I'm satisfied that we have a strong relationship with Russia. We have a number of issues that transcend this particular difference of approach. And I don't foresee that it would be rarefied into any other relationship other than the one we currently have.

They have a difference of opinion. But that difference is not going to present insurmountable difficulties for us or interrupt the relationship we have with them on a whole variety of issues including substantial reductions in nuclear weapons.

WOODRUFF: All right. I understand we have another question on the point. And if you would, perhaps you can direct it to Secretary **Albright** or Mr. Berger.

QUESTION: Yes, Secretary **Albright**, there are news media reports that Iraq has moved much of their weapon industry to other countries. Would we consider targeting them in other countries?

ALBRIGHT: First of all, as Secretary Cohen has said, we have no indication that this is taking place. What we are concerned about is Saddam Hussein, who has a record of using weapons of mass destruction against his neighbors as well as against his own people, and a brutal dictator who is terrifying his people and threatening the region. And our policy is to contain him. That is what we're trying to do.

WOODRUFF: In connection with -- I just would have a follow up for any one of you -- perhaps Mr. Berger -- the concern that some have expressed, if we hit one of these biological or chemical weapons, a concern about the agent being released into the atmosphere.

BERGER: As I said before, Judy, and of course it's not appropriate for any of us to discuss specific operational plans should this become -- should a military action become necessary -- but it has been a cardinal principle of the planning of this operation that we should seek to minimize civilian casualties.

That we should seek to minimize civilian casualties. And obviously, in any kind of a military conflict, that is not possible, particularly, when you're dealing with someone like Saddam Hussein who uses people as shields.

But this issue has been taken into account and we have no intention of trying to reek havoc on the Iraqi people.

SHAW: Our international town hall meeting will continue in a moment from Ohio State University. We'll be right back.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

ANNOUNCER: We now return to "Showdown with Iraq: An International Town Meeting."

SHAW: ... from Germany. Go ahead, sir.

QUESTION: Yes, I'd just like to state to Secretary Cohen, Secretary **Albright** and Mr. Berger, as a member of the United States services, in the Army, that I wanted to let you know that I give my full support. Although, it is my duty to do in the United States Army, but just to let you know that I fully agree with what you need to do. Go ahead and do it.

If a soldier or member's life needs to be lost, let it start with mine...

(APPLAUSE)

... because Saddam Hussein...

SHAW: If either of you has a reaction, I have a question here from a person in the audience.

QUESTION: The White House budget for VA medicine is not sufficient to meet the needs of the current veteran population. What happens if there are large numbers of new combat disabled veterans?

(APPLAUSE)

COHEN: First of all, let me respond with respect to the participation of our service men and women. You just heard in that call from Germany, one young man who indicated how committed he is to carrying out the mission that is required. We have a number of people here in the audience today also who represent the United States military.

Let me indicate to all of you are here and all who are watching that we intend to take care of you, that we intend to minimize the risk to your lives, those who are willing to put it on the line for the country.

There can be no guarantee that there will not be casualties on our part, as General Shelton had pointed out. But we have taken into account every contingency. We will do our level best to minimize the risk of harm.

With respect to the veterans affairs budget, obviously that needs to be increased in terms of dealing with veterans, as far their needs, but we do not anticipate having significant losses or injuries during this particular mission. That's why it has been very carefully circumscribed in terms of the mission itself.

And when the question has been raised in the past -- Why not just

go in? -- I might point out that we had some 26,600 men and women who were involved in Panama trying to locate Manuel Noriega, a very tiny country, and it took days to try to track him down at some considerable loss of life and quite a few wounded.

And so this is something much more serious, and that's exactly why we have really confined our mission to reducing his capacity to intimidate his neighbors and to deliver weapons of mass destruction. That's precisely the reason -- to minimize the risk to our men and women as well.

WOODRUFF: All right. We have a questioner here. The gentleman in the white shirt, go ahead.

QUESTION: Yes. I have a question for Secretary **Albright**. Why bomb Iraq when other countries have committed similar violations? Turkey, for example...

(CHEERS)

QUESTION: Can I finish?

(APPLAUSE)

For example, Turkey has bombed Kurdish citizens. Saudi Arabia has tortured political and religious dissidents. Why does the U.S. apply different standards of justice to these countries?

(APPLAUSE)

ALBRIGHT: Let me say that when there are problems, such as you have described, we point them out

and make very clear our opposition to them.

But there is no one that has done to his people or to his neighbors what Saddam Hussein has done...

(SHOUTS)

... or what he is thinking about doing.

(SHOUTS)

I am very...

QUESTION: How about Indonesia?

(SHOUTS)

ALBRIGHT: I think that...

QUESTION: Well, you turned my microphone off.

ALBRIGHT: ... the record will show that Saddam Hussein has produced weapons of mass destruction, which he's clearly not collecting for his own personal pleasure, but in order to use. And therefore, he is qualitatively and quantitatively different from every

brutal dictator that has appeared recently.

And we are very concerned about him specifically and what his plans might be.

Do you have a follow-up?

QUESTION: Thank you.

What -- my microphone is off. There we are.

What do you have to say about dictators of countries like Indonesia, who we sell weapons to, yet they are slaughtering people in East Timor?

(CHEERS)

What do you have to say about Israel, who are slaughtering Palestinians, who imposed martial law? What do you have to say about that? Those are our allies. Why do we sell weapons to these countries? Why do we support them? Why do we bomb Iraq when it commits similar problems?

(APPLAUSE)

ALBRIGHT: There are various examples of things that are not right in this world, and the United States is trying...

(SHOUTS)

I really am surprised that people feel that it is necessary to defend the rights of Saddam Hussein, when what we ought to be thinking about is how to make sure that he does not use weapons of mass destruction.

QUESTION: I'd like to...

WOODRUFF: Those of you who are shouting, just a moment.

QUESTION: I'd like to make clear that I am not defending Saddam Hussein. I'm not defending him in the least. What I am saying is that there needs to be consistent application of U.S. foreign policy.

(APPLAUSE)

We cannot support people who are committing the same violation because they are political allies. That is not acceptable. We cannot violate UN resolutions when it is convenient to us.

ALBRIGHT: We do not...

QUESTION: You're not answering my question, Madam **Albright**.

(APPLAUSE)

ALBRIGHT: Let me answer that. I suggest, sir, that you study carefully what American foreign policy is, what we have said exactly

about the cases that you have mentioned. Every one of them has been pointed out. Every one of them we have clearly stated our policy on. And if you would like, as a former professor, I would be delighted to spend 50 minutes with you describing exactly what we are doing on those subjects.

(APPLAUSE)

WOODRUFF: Secretary **Albright** had already said she was willing to meet with some of you after the forum. Let's respect that. The more time you take shouting, the more time you take away from people who have questions.

Secretary, I do have a brief follow-up, and that is on this point. There are many countries that have these biological and chemical weapons. Six countries in the Middle East alone. You've stated why Saddam Hussein should be singled out, but it is puzzling to people to wonder why it's OK for these other countries to have biological and chemical weapons but not...

(SHOUTS)

ALBRIGHT: I think that it is clear that other countries have weapons of mass destruction. It is a question of whether there is a proclivity to use them. And Saddam Hussein is a repeat offender. And I think it is very important for us to make clear that the United States and the civilized world cannot deal with somebody who is willing to use those weapons of mass destruction on his own people, not to speak of his neighbors.

(APPLAUSE)

WOODRUFF: Yes, sir. You have -- you have a question.

QUESTION: Good afternoon to the panel.

(SHOUTS)

Good afternoon to the panel.

WOODRUFF: Go ahead and speak up.

QUESTION: My name is Brendon Byrne (ph). I'm a major in the United States Marine Corps.

I'm in the local reserve center here in Columbus, Ohio for the Marine Reserves. My question is for the secretary of defense.

Sir, with the large cuts in active military forces since the end of the last Gulf War, what is the likelihood that large numbers of reserve forces will have to be called up to support our forces currently in the Gulf if and when we decide to attack Iraq?

COHEN: I couldn't hear all of the question, but let me indicate that we have the forces that are assembled and are in place to carry out whatever military option we need to do right now. So, I don't anticipate any additional forces that will be called up or necessary at this point.

SHAW: We have a telephone call from Kansas City.

Caller, please state your question.

QUESTION: Yes, my question is directed toward Mr. Cohen or Mr. Berger. I would like to know, if there is an air attack, air attack, would the B-2 stealth bomber be called into action? And if there was an ensuing ground war, how long would you plan on United States troops being in Iraq?

COHEN: First of all, there is no need for the B-2 bomber. We have the B-52s. We also have B-1Bs in-theater. They are more than sufficient to carry out whatever military strike might be ordered by the president.

With respected to ground forces following any strike, there is no anticipated need. We don't expect to. We do not plan to have any -- any ground forces that would be involved in a land type of campaign.

SHAW: Sandy Berger, what is the White House assessment on this new generation of so-called "smart weapons"?

BERGER: Let me put it this way, Bernie. I think that we have gone over this time and again with -- with the military planners, most recently yesterday. President Clinton and Vice President Gore went to the Pentagon. They had a full briefing from our top military people, from the secretary of defense, with respect to what the -- what would happen if there was a military action here. And I am absolutely convinced that we could accomplish our mission -- the mission being, as I said before, and as others

have said, to significantly reduce his ability to threaten his neighbors with weapons of mass destruction or otherwise.

I am not going to get into the capabilities of particular weapons systems. There's much too much speculation about that in the press. We have real people, real pilots, up in those planes. And the less we discuss the details of those plans, I think the better off we'll all be.

SHAW: Let's follow this lady's question, please?

QUESTION: Missiles landed in Israel during the Gulf War yet, at America's request, Israel restrained itself from -- was restrained from defending itself. What will our country's posture be this time? And how will Israel be expect to protect its citizens in the face of potential Iraqi aggressions?

(APPLAUSE)

ALBRIGHT: I have recently been to Israel. And there have been obviously discussions about this. Every country has a right to make its own decisions about how to protect itself, and we are consulting very closely with Israel.

SHAW: I have a question.

COHEN: Also, in addition to what Secretary **Albright**, in terms of her meetings, I also have met with the defense minister, and we are satisfied that full cooperation will accommodate Israel's defensive needs as well.

SHAW: My question from the questioner -- I'm a mere conduit -- notes the disintegration of the Soviet Union, notes Moscow's trying to improve relations with her Islamic neighbors, and is pursuing her own vital interests. The question -- how do we convince the Russians that it's in their vital interest to support an international coalition against Saddam if push comes to shove?

ALBRIGHT: Well, let me say I have spent a great deal of time with our counterpart, Prime Minister Primakov. He fully agrees with the fact that Saddam Hussein has to fulfill his obligations under the Security Council resolutions. And he has been working with all of us to try to get a peaceful solution.

They are concerned about Saddam's weapons of mass destruction, and I believe that we should all be working on a peaceful solution. But if we can't, I am sure that we will all be together in the end.

WOODRUFF: We have an international call, and it's from -- where? -- the United Arab Emirates.

CALLER: Hello?

WOODRUFF: I hear you say hello. Go ahead.

CALLER: Yes. My question is that now we are waiting for Kofi Annan to come to Baghdad, and if he comes back to -- what do you call it -- to America, (OFF-MIKE) Russia, China and France (OFF-MIKE) against the American military action. Is America going to use -- what do you call -- veto against any opposition?

WOODRUFF: Mr. Berger, did you understand the question? He's talking about the UN secretary-general going to Baghdad this weekend.

BERGER: I'm not sure I precisely understood the question, but let me try. As you all probably know, the secretary-general is going to Baghdad tomorrow. He is going to seek to obtain from Saddam Hussein compliance with UN Security Council resolutions. And we certainly hope and expect that he will do so. That would be clearly the best result.

I think the questioner was saying what if he comes back and he's unsuccessful. I think if he comes back and he is unsuccessful, that is a point at which the president will have to decide whether military action is necessary.

WOODRUFF: If he comes back and is unsuccessful, does that mean war?

BERGER: Well, it would -- we have not set any artificial deadlines in this process. And I don't want to prejudge either his trip -- which we hope will succeed -- or what will happen when he comes back or the timetable with which it might happen.

When he comes back, we will evaluate what he has to say. We will listen to him very carefully. He's a very smart man. And if it is a solution that solves the problem, that will be terrific.

But let's be clear what solving the problem is. It's not just putting it under the rug so that we have it 60

days from now or six months from now or a year from now. These inspectors have to have access to everything in the country. And the inspection regime has to be preserved as a professional rather than a political operation. As long as it meets those tests, we will be very pleased.

WOODRUFF: So all the give has to come from Saddam Hussein and not from the UN or the U.S.?

BERGER: Well, he is the one who is out of compliance with Security Council resolutions. The instructions that the secretary-general goes with not only come from us, but also come from Security Council resolutions, and other members of the Security Council.

And there's a very easy way for this problem to be resolved. And that is for Saddam Hussein to do what he said he would do to General Schwarzkopf in the tent at the end of the Gulf War when he signed the cease-fire agreement: destroy his weapons of mass destruction and let the international community come in and see that he's done that, period.

SHAW: Our international town meeting from Ohio State University will resume in just a moment.

(APPLAUSE)

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

SHAW: Welcome back to our international town meeting. There is a telephone call from Oklahoma.

QUESTION: Yes, my major question is this. It's kind of a two part question. Are we ready to go back and do another strike if this one doesn't work? And the second part of the question is, how many times are we willing to send our children to go fight Saddam Hussein? Are we sending our children and our children's children? How many times do we have to go through this before we take care of him the right way?

(APPLAUSE)

COHEN: The short answer to the first question is yes. We are prepared to go back if necessary. Second part of the question is, how many times? We have spent the past seven years containing Saddam Hussein with no loss of life to the American citizens.

What we have to be concerned about is how long are we prepared to

stay the course to make sure that he doesn't develop weapons of mass destruction, chemical and biological, which will pose a grave threat to your children and grandchildren.

And that's why we're taking the action necessary in order to build up the diplomatic initiative or possibly a military option, if necessary.

So we are there to protect your children and grandchildren from one of the most grievous types of threats that we'll ever see in the future -- that is, weapons of mass destruction.

SHAW: We have a question here, please.

(APPLAUSE)

QUESTION: Yes. This is for Secretary **Albright**.

The U.S. has put a lot of time and effort into peace talks between Israel and Palestine and the Middle Eastern countries. If we go into Iraq, how will this impact those peace talks, and do you perceive any type of backing away from the table if that happens?

ALBRIGHT: Well, I have spent quite a lot of time on this issue in the last months; 1997 was not a great year for the peace talks. But we are determined to continue, and these are two very separate issues that need to be resolved, and we will spend the time that's necessary. I've been in touch with both the leaders there and others in recent days and weeks, and we will continue to press that, because that's an issue of great importance to the United States.

SHAW: An international caller is on the line from Holland.

Hello, Holland. Can we have your question please?

QUESTION: Yes. This is Holland. Just after the Gulf War the United States and all the other allies tried to get the people in the south of Iraq to get an (ph) uprising started, and Saddam slaughtered the people. And nobody, not even Holland, helped them.

Will this happen again, because I don't think that all the people in Iraq are waiting for the allies? That's my question.

SHAW: Thank you for your question.

The question was, if people inside Iraq rebel and rise up, will they be assisted given that they were put down the last time? That's a paraphrase.

(SHOUTS)

COHEN: It has been -- it has been our policy to support opposition groups. We will continue to support alternatives to Saddam Hussein politically. That has been our policy and will continue to be our policy.

(SHOUTS)

PROTESTERS: Bull s**t. Bull s**t.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Shut up!

WOODRUFF: I have -- I have...

(APPLAUSE)

SHAW: Sir, do you have a...

WOODRUFF: Yes, I -- Bernie, I just wanted to follow up on that with a question that a gentleman handed me and wrote it on a card. And he -- and I think it follows well on that last question. And namely, he's asking why doesn't the United States give military support to the democratic opposition in Iraq. And this brings up the whole question of why doesn't the United States give, perhaps release, frozen -- the Iraqis' billions of dollars in frozen assets and make it available to the democratic opposition in Iraq.

BERGER: I think, as Secretary Cohen has said, we have and we will continue to support the democratic opposition in Iraq. I think one has to be very careful though -- this actually relates to the point that the previous caller was making -- if you encourage and almost incite people to rise up against their government, you incur a moral obligation to come to their defense at a moment of peril.

And we have had experiences in this country in the Bay of Pigs, in Hungary in 1956, and in Iraq in 1991, where perhaps our rhetoric has gone ahead of what we are prepared to do. And we've been very careful not to let that happen again.

SHAW: We have a question over here.

QUESTION: Yes, this question is directed to the whole panel. Now if there is no peaceful resolution to the problem, and war is inevitable, and we end up damaging their country even further, are we -- the American people, the taxpaying people -- going to be responsible for making financial reparations to the country?

BERGER: You know, if I can just answer that.

Saddam sits on enormous storehouses of oil. And, as Secretary **Albright** said before, it's the United States, since 1991, that has been trying to say to him -- to give him the right to sell that oil, take that money, buy food and medicine for his people, and distribute it under UN auspices so we make sure that it goes to people and not to tanks.

For five years, he refused even to have such a regime. We finally got such a regime in place. He delayed it another six months. We're now prepared to expand that regime. We would like to see him sell more oil so that more food and medicine can get to the Iraqi people and, believe it or not, he's resisting that.

So I think it is -- our quarrel is certainly not with the Iraqi people. We would like to help them get the food, the medicine, the

other things that they need for their daily lives. There's one obstacle standing in the way of that, and I think all of you know who that is.

WOODRUFF: Do you have a follow-up to that? Does that answer your question?

QUESTION: Yeah. It doesn't seem like Saddam Hussein is too concerned about the people. Like I said, will we be responsible for that? Will we take some sort of action if we damage their country further and we know that, you know, he's not going to do anything about it?

BERGER: I think we would be prepared, again, to use his oil revenue to try to help his people. I don't think we have to take American taxpayer dollars if he's not prepared to use his own oil revenue to help his own people.

WOODRUFF: Before we move to conclusion, we want to give each one of you an opportunity to say what you think is an important point that you want to leave everyone in this hall and in our audience with.

And so let's begin with Mr. Berger and then Secretary Cohen.

(SHOUTS)

COHEN: Well, let me say, first of all to all of you here, we appreciate this opportunity for a lively discussion.

(SHOUTS)

(UNKNOWN): May I be allowed to speak? Am I on?

WOODRUFF: Do you want to let him speak? All right. Why don't you ask your question...

(APPLAUSE)

No. You need to stay at the microphone.

SHAW: No, no. Just ask the question there.

(UNKNOWN): I'll give you my time, but I'm not going to give you my seat.

QUESTION: I was going to go to the podium.

SHAW: No. Just ask your question, please.

QUESTION: OK. First of all I want to apologize for disrupting earlier. The reason I did was I was told by this person here that I would not be allowed to speak. Further, this is not an open forum. It is a media event staged by CNN...

(SHOUTS, APPLAUSE)

If this were a town meeting, if this were a school board meeting

or some other town meeting in a democracy, people would be allowed to make statements as well as ask questions.

WOODRUFF: Do you have a question?

QUESTION: Now, the point that I would like to make, the question I would like to ask, is how can these people sleep at night because we drop -- we are not going to be able to stop Saddam Hussein. We are not going to be able to eliminate his weapons of mass destruction, all of them. President Clinton admitted it. All he wants to do, Clinton said, was send a message to Saddam Hussein. If he wants to send a message, we the people of Columbus and central Ohio and all over America will not send messages with the blood of Iraqi men, women and children.

If we want to deal with Saddam...

(SHOUTS)

... we deal with Saddam, not the Iraqi people.

(SHOUTS)

PROTESTERS: No war.

WOODRUFF: Let's let Secretary **Albright** answer, please.

ALBRIGHT: Let me say that what we are doing is so that all of you can sleep at night, because we are facing...

(APPLAUSE)

We are in a very different kind of a world where we are facing the danger of the spread of the weapons of mass destruction. We had an initial example of this, as Secretary Cohen said, in Tokyo. And we need to really put a stop to dictators who have weapons of mass destruction and threaten to use them against their people.

I am very proud to represent the United States wherever I go. We are the greatest country in the world...

(APPLAUSE)

... and what we are doing is serving the role of the indispensable nation to see what we can do to make the world safer for our children and grandchildren and for those people around the world who follow the rules.

Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

WOODRUFF: We only have a few minutes left. But we also want to give you all a chance to make a concluding thought. Mr. Berger, Secretary Cohen.

(SHOUTS)

If you would please have the courtesy to let them speak.

BERGER: Part of what we fight for as a country is the freedom to argue. And I appreciate all of you coming. I appreciate most of you listening.

(LAUGHTER)

(APPLAUSE)

We have certainly listened to you, at least those who we could understand. And I think the fundamental point here is two, that I want to make, is twofold. Number one, we want to resolve this peacefully.

(APPLAUSE)

But number two, there are some things worth fighting for.

(APPLAUSE)

And those include fighting aggression, fighting people who threaten their neighbors, and fighting to make this world a safer and more secure place for my children and for yours. Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

COHEN: If I could just indicate to the audience, this really is a tremendous example of what democracy is all about. The people who are here expressing opposition and criticism would not be allowed to do that in a number of countries, including Iraq.

(APPLAUSE)

And what Sandy Berger has just said is the people that you see here in uniform and those who have served in the past and those who are serving us today are fighting for the right of each and every one of us to voice our separate opinions. That is a celebration of democracy.

(APPLAUSE)

Let me say, as secretary of defense, it is my obligation not only to try and identify those problems that confront us today but those challenges of tomorrow. Most of you here have children and will be building families in the future. And we have a choice to make. There is an old expression that you can pay me now or pay me later. With respect to Saddam Hussein, we can deal with him now, or our children and grandchildren will have to deal with the spread of chemical and biological weapons later.

(APPLAUSE)

I think now is the time that we deal with it and not later.

(APPLAUSE)

WOODRUFF: We are just about out of time. A time for a word from Secretary **Albright**.

ALBRIGHT: Judy, Bernie, thank you very much, and thanks to everybody here. I think this has been a remarkable occasion, and we have all enjoyed it.

Let me say that we come to the end of the 20th century, and we have fought dictatorship and horrors throughout this century. This is a job we must do. We need your support. We welcome your questions, and we look forward to having more discussions with you.

Thank you all very much.

(APPLAUSE)

WOODRUFF: On behalf of all of us we want to thank everyone in the Columbus area for being here. We want to thank our viewers in the United States and internationally. It's been noisy, but that's the way it is in America.

Thank you all very much.

(APPLAUSE)

SHAW: And also, also...

(APPLAUSE)

... also, you'll get a chance to see and hear yourself again tonight. This town hall meeting will be rebroadcast at 10:00 p.m. Eastern.

We thank Ohio State University and we thank you. Good day.

Bernard Shaw

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