

LARSON URGES NEW U.N. EFFORT; COALITION ACTION TO DISARM IRAQ AND INSTITUTE DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 7, 2003

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WASHINGTON- In a letter sent today to President Bush and shared with Secretary of State Colin Powell and U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan, U.S. Congressman John B. Larson (CT-01) urged that the U.S. seek U.N. action designed to force the exile of Saddam Hussein from Iraq. Larson urged that Hussein's exile be followed by a U.S.-led international coalition to disarm Iraq and destroy its weapons of mass destruction. Larson stated that coalition forces must also act to prevent civil war between ethnic factions and lead the way in allowing the Iraqi people to choose their own democratic government.

The text of the letter is below:

March 7, 2003

Dear Mr. President,

As the nation moves toward what may possibly be the last week of comprehensive negotiations at the United Nations for a stricter resolution regarding the disarmament of Iraq, I would urge you to consider and exhaust all of the options available to us and our allies to appropriately deal with the threat posed by Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction programs before committing the nation to war.

I have written in the past urging that more time be allowed for arms inspections and for the continued commitment to working through the UN Security Council. As I mentioned then and as Prime Minister Tony Blair has said, the inspections need not take many months, but investing more time in them should aid our diplomatic efforts as well as our military plans, and at that time I outlined several of the strategic benefits afforded by this process.

However, I would urge you in the days ahead as the option of war is ultimately discussed to consider the merits of alternative resolutions or plans that could be offered or considered by the U.S. and the U.N. which are designed to force the exile of Saddam Hussein from Iraq. Once Saddam has left, international coalition partners led by the U.S. could then move into Iraq immediately bringing humanitarian aid and commencing with disarming the nation and destroying Saddam's weapons of mass destruction. Finally, an international task force could be designated to prevent civil war among the various factions throughout the country, to help institute stability, and lead the way in creating a stable democratic government chosen by and accountable to the Iraqi people.

To date, I have been heartened by the actions of your Administration to work with our allies and the international community in the United Nations to disarm Iraq, and I still believe that whatever action against Iraq is ultimately taken, it is to our advantage that it be taken with the sanction of the Security Council. The opportunity to fulfill the goals of ultimately disarming Iraq, protecting America from terrorism, providing humanitarian assistance to Iraq's people, and promoting stability in the region without embarking on a near unilateral military campaign can only strengthen the United States' standing as a leader in the international community and the ultimate success of the United States' long-term foreign policies.

Respectfully,

s/ JOHN B. LARSON

Member of Congress