

JCRC Consensus Statement on Iraq

January 14, 2003

Approved by the Jewish Community Relations Council of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin, Sonoma, Alameda and Contra Costa Counties

Introduction

The Metropolitan JCRC approved a position statement on Iraq. The statement was adopted after a 3-month deliberative process that included numerous opportunities to discuss the important issues. The culminating one-hour discussion resulted in an overwhelming consensus (95%) to approve the statement. The statement, which is attached, begins with a brief background and then addresses issues of specific concern and importance to the Jewish community.

The statement makes clear that there is a strong preference that diplomatic efforts rather than military conflict be employed to eliminate the threat of chemical, nuclear and biological weapons posed by Iraq. At the same time, it also takes the position that these weapons pose a serious threat and that if diplomatic efforts fail to eliminate the threat, the use of force will be supported as a last resort.

While the final vote was overwhelming, the JCRC discussed a wide range of concerns on such matters as the extent of the threat posed by Iraq, the appropriateness and timing of any pre-emptive action, the advisability or inadvisability of unilateral action by the U.S, and other important issues. We believe that the JCRC statement embraces the vast majority of these concerns.

Background

- I. In the aftermath of the 1991 Gulf War, in which United Nations coalition forces led by the United States defeated and forced Iraqi forces out of Kuwait, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 687, which required Baghdad to provide the UN with an accurate, full, final, and complete disclosure of all

aspects of its programs to develop weapons of mass destruction including nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC) weapons.

- II. During the 1990s the Security Council sent inspection teams to Iraq, under the administration of U.N. Special Commission on Iraq (UNSCOM) and in cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), to carry out on-site inspections of Iraq's NBC weapons development plants.
- III. Throughout the 1990s, the Iraqi government obstructed the work of the inspection teams. By 1998 all inspections ceased and the UN and IAEA withdrew their inspectors. UNSCOM reported at the time that Iraq had not properly accounted for at least 4,000 tons of ingredients used to make chemical weapons.
- IV. The Bush Administration and the U.S. Congress have come to the conclusion that Iraq – in the context of the international campaign against terrorism – poses a growing threat to the West, including specifically America and its allies. They have further concluded that anything short of complete dismantlement of its unconventional weapons programs—given Saddam Hussein's proven willingness to invade neighboring countries and to utilize chemical weapons even against his own people—will not eliminate the threat.
- V. The Bush Administration agreed to submit the issue to the UN Security Council. On November 8, 2002 the UNSC passed Resolution 1441, which:
 - Recognizes “the threat Iraq's noncompliance with Council resolutions and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and long-range missiles poses to international peace and security;”
 - Recalls resolution 678 (1990) that “authorized Member States to use all necessary means to uphold and implement” previous UNSC resolutions “to restore international peace and security in the area;”
 - Deplores “the fact that Iraq has not provided an accurate, full, final, and complete disclosure, as required by resolution 687 (1991), of all aspects of its programmes to develop weapons of mass destruction;”
 - Deplores that “Iraq repeatedly obstructed immediate, unconditional, and unrestricted access to sites designated by the UNSCOM and the IAEA, failed to cooperate fully and unconditionally with UNSCOM and IAEA weapons inspectors, as required by resolution 687 (1991), and ultimately ceased all cooperation with UNSCOM and the IAEA in 1998;”
 - The resolution further finds that Iraq “has been and remains in material breach of its obligations under relevant resolutions... in particular through Iraq's failure to cooperate with United Nations inspectors and the IAEA” and that Iraq is required to provide the UN and IAEA “immediate, unimpeded, unconditional, and unrestricted access to any and all” sites that weapons inspectors wish to inspect, and that the UN has “warned

Iraq that it will face serious consequences as a result of its continued violations of its obligations.”

Resolution

Given the urgency of the situation, the JCRC:

1. Expresses grave concern about the danger of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons in the hands of unstable or despotic regimes such as Iraq – weapons that pose a serious threat to the United States, Israel and other nations;
2. Calls on Iraq to comply fully with all pertinent UNSC resolutions calling for complete Iraqi cooperation with the UN inspection teams, and to disarm itself of all weapons of mass destruction, specifically nuclear, biological and chemical weapons;
3. Supports diplomatic efforts by the U.S., its allies and the United Nations to secure the elimination of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, with the use of force as a last resort if diplomatic means fail;
4. Out of profound concern over current threats and previous attacks directed against Israel by Iraq, supports Israel’s right as a nation to protect and defend itself from Iraqi aggression;
5. Urges those who oppose military action against Iraq to work within the anti-war movement to ensure that this movement does not adopt an anti-Israel stance.