

**Barham Salih, Prime Minister of Kurdistan, interviewed by CBC Television's the fifth estate in Washington, D.C., March 15, 2003**

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF YOUR VISIT TO WASHINGTON NOW?

We are on the brink of change in Iraq and at this critical juncture ... it's vital that we speak directly with the U.S. government to ensure that our concerns and our aspirations are duly considered by the decision makers in the United States.

SO THAT MERITS A TRIP FROM YOUR HOMELAND OVER HERE TO HAVE A FACE TO FACE CONTACT?

These are critical times for my people. Matters I would say of life and death and our destiny. And in today's world the United States is the pre-eminent power. The United States is about to lead a coalition to help the people of Iraq liberate our country from the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein. Washington is important and it is important American decision-makers hear directly from ourselves about our concerns about our aspirations and to understand the depth of passion and feelings back home. And the expectations of people and equally importantly for me as well and for my people to learn of the American intentions and American foreign policy vis a vis Iraq and the process that is about to unfold.

BUT IS THERE REALLY MUCH CHANGE FROM WHAT YOU WERE TELLING THE UNITED STATES MAYBE 10, 12 YEARS AGO AND WHAT THEY WERE TELLING YOU?

Probably not. I think the United States should have a clear understanding of what the struggle of the Kurdish people and the struggle of the Iraqi people is about. We want to remove this dictatorship from power. We want to establish a federal democracy that will be at peace for the people of Iraq and ... the neighbors of Iraq. But nevertheless this is a monumental undertaking by the United States and for that matter by the people of Iraq as well. And it is important that we speak very directly, very openly and very specifically about as I said the concerns and the aspirations of my people.

CAN WE GO BACK TO HISTORY -- BACK TO 1988 WHEN I THINK YOU WERE THE REPRESENTATIVE IN LONDON?

I was a representative in London yes.

SO YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN IN A POSITION TO KNOW WHAT WAS GOING ON IN THE SENATE AND CONGRESS AND WHITE HOUSE ADMINISTRATION. DO YOU REMEMBER THE PREVENTION OF GENOCIDE ACT?

I do.

## WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER ABOUT IT?

I remember the United States Senate passing a resolution calling for economic sanctions on the government of Iraq because of its use of chemical weapons against the Kurdish people. The administration at the time vetoed the resolution because Iraq was looked at as against Islamic Iran. And many touted the dictatorship in Baghdad as a model of secular Arab nationalist regime that could help western interests in that region. How wrong they were.

DO YOU RECALL THROUGH THAT PERIOD SPECIFICALLY AS IT WAS COMING BEFORE THE SENATE, AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE KURDISH PEOPLE, DID IT HAVE ANY IMPORTANCE FOR YOU KNOWING SUCH A TOUGH BILL WAS COMING?

It meant a lot to us and I tell you what. Let me take you back almost a year before that as well. In 1987 I was a representative in London. We heard news in April, 1987 that Iraq began using chemical weapons against Kurdish villages in which dozens of Kurdish civilians men, women, children were killed. I remember – and soon thereafter Iraq began using chemical weapons as a conventional means of war against the Kurdish people and against the Kurdish resistance. I remember writing letters on behalf of my leader to members of parliament to the two other people who were with in positions of influence and decision-making in the United Kingdom at the time. I remember a letter coming back from the foreign office to one of those members of parliament who said we hear of these reports but we can not verify these reports.

We are aware of human rights violations and we call upon the government of Iraq to respect the rights of the Kurds and the other communities of Iraq. But we do not have verifiable evidence that these reports are true. Unfortunately they had to wait a year before the television cameras in Halabja related the indisputable evidence of Iraq's chemical weapons atrocities against the Kurdish people. The bodies of nearly 5,000 Kurds between the streets of Halabja in that terrible atrocity. The Senate of the United States with the leadership of senator Jessie Holmes at the time drafted this resolution. Senator Kennedy I remember was also involved. Senator Al Gore was involved. The administration at the time out of what may be termed as real politic analysis chose to veto that resolution and not implement it. Perhaps had the international community acted then to resign the bad dictatorship in Baghdad probably the world might have mitigated the disaster of Kuwait and we may not have had to deal with this crisis in Iraq.

There is a historical context that is always with me. We live there. Our expectations were dashed too many times in our living memory. Hopefully this time is for real. Hopefully this time the world will not turn its back on the people of Iraq.

MOST PEOPLE I TALK TO HAVE NEVER HEARD ABOUT THIS ACT. IN SPEAKING TO SOME KURDS, I GET THE SENSE THAT THIS WAS SOMETHING THAT THEY KNEW ABOUT AND THEY CARED A LOT ABOUT AND THEY WATCHED – THEY WATCHED IT GO THROUGH. CAN YOU GIVE A SENSE

FOR A CANADIAN AUDIENCE WHICH HAS NO IDEA WHAT THIS ACT WAS OR MEANT WHAT IT MEANT TO THE KURDISH PEOPLE AT THE TIME?

It meant a lot. It meant a lot and I remember actually doing the translation from English to Kurdish myself. We were all excited. The United States Senate speaking with one voice calling for sanctions against tyranny. Perhaps we did not understand that the administration can veto such a resolution. We thought we have a very important policy document and we do. Still I think that document is important. It speaks to the wisdom and the courage of people who will take on what might be termed as a rationale real political type of decision-making process. Today is such time as well I mean in a way history is reversed. Today you have the United States administration. You have the United States President speaking in a very forceful and equivocal way about the need to help the people of Iraq liberate their country. Many people on the other side in a way -- to use a term -- are choosing to question that and not choosing to equivocate on the moral imperative of helping the people of Iraq overcome tyranny. I hope this time we get it done. Iraq is a nightmare. The people of Iraq have endured 35 years of this terrible, terrible disaster. People need to view things in the proper context. I believe the moral context is the most important.

AND I THINK THAT THE PREVENTION OF GENOCIDE ACT GOES STRAIGHT TO THAT ISSUE OF THE MORAL CONTEXT?

It is 14 years late. In fact tomorrow on the 16<sup>th</sup> of March is the anniversary of the Halabja chemical attack. It is a good reminder of the calamity that was visited upon the people of Iraq and the people of Kurd... But let me say this it is important. In 35 years of this tyranny .... over Iraq, 2 million people have been killed in wars of aggression that this regime has committed against Iran and against Kuwait and in the genocide that was committed against the Kurdish people and the terrible atrocities that were committed against the other communities of Iraq .... Two million people is a staggering number. The Saddam Hussein should have been deposed long ago. International community chose to be indifferent to the plight of the Iraqi people. Better late then never. We have a real opportunity of ridding Iraq of ridding the world of this aggressive dictator and giving the people of Iraq an opportunity to live in peace and liberty.

LET ME TAKE YOU BACK ONE MORE TIME TO THIS ACT. WHAT MESSAGE DID THE KURDISH PEOPLE TAKE FROM IT WHEN IT WAS FIRST BROUGHT IN AND WENT BEFORE THE SENATE?

The message well the Kurds have a problem. Say we have no friends but the mountains. The mountains have always sheltered us from tyranny and have us a refuge. The message I remember as I was translating that document into Kurdish and passing it back home to our leadership and so that it would be broadcast on our Kurdish radio station. My hope was that it will convey the message that the Kurds are not alone. We have friends beyond the mountains of Kurdistan. No doubt it gave us hope that help will be on its way. No doubt it gave us the expectation that the international community will move. But in reality our expectations were dashed. This document, while very important in our

history, and it speaks to the courage and the leadership of men and women of honor, who chose to challenge a rationale of real politics, of U.S. foreign policy of that matter wasn't democracies. But still, it did not impact the situation in a real way and Saddam Hussein was allowed to stay in power. Saddam Hussein was allowed to continue with his campaign of genocide a campaign of ethnic cleansing. And regrettable the document remained a document of no real consequence to the lives of people inside Kurdistan.

WHAT MESSAGE DO YOU THINK IT SENT TO SADDAM HUSSEIN?

I think I'm sure that Saddam Hussein would have been very concerned about that document. Because sanctions at that time would have meant considerable uneasiness, considerable setback to his policies. But when the resolution was vetoed I'm sure that he felt vindicated. He felt that he could get away with murder, which he did.

AND IN TERMS OF HOW IT WOULD HAVE AFFECTED THE WAY THINGS HAVE TURNED OUT NOW HAD THOSE SANCTIONS GONE INTO PLACE, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN A VERY DIFFERENT WORLD. YOU ALLUDED TO THIS EARLIER AS WELL. IF THEY'D GONE INTO PLACE, DO YOU THINK WE WOULD BE SITTING AND TALKING?

No I don't think so. I really think had the world acted to restrain Saddam and give him an equivocal message that his aggression his human rights violations will not be tolerated we may not have had the Kuwait disaster. We are here today talking about yet another war in Iraq because Saddam Hussein was left too much to play and pursue his aggressive agenda.

YOU SAY THAT IT WAS THE ADMINISTRATION THAT VETOED IT WHICH INDEED IT WAS. BUT IT WAS ACCUMATIVELY DIMINISHED AND DILUTED SO THAT BY THE TIME IT WAS PASSED IN CONGRESS, THERE WASN'T THAT MUCH LEFT ANYWAYS. SO IF ONE IS GOING TO POINT TO THOSE WHO OPPOSED IT, IT STARTED WELL BEFORE THE ADMINISTRATION DON'T YOU FEEL?

I think no doubt there were a lot of politics involved and the administration was on the record to be very much against that resolution because it would have complicated its diplomatic engagement with Iraq. At the time there were what do you call it credits and agricultural assistance or whatever engaged many interests. There was also at the time a senior congressional delegation led by some very notable Senators who went to visit with Saddam and came back and were speaking of Saddam Hussein as this moderate secular Arab leader with whom the United States can do business. How wrong they were.

FROM THE PAST NOW TO THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE. THERE'S ANOTHER TROUBLED NATION IN THAT AREA OR ONE OF MANY AND THAT'S ISRAEL. AND ONE THING IT HAS TO WORRY ABOUT IS WHETHER THERE WILL BE A CHEMICAL ATTACK THERE. AND SO THE RESPONSE THAT THE ISRAEL GOVERNMENT HAS TAKEN IS TO DISTRIBUTE PROTECTIVE GEAR AND GAS

**MASKS AMONG CITIZENS. WHAT'S HAPPENING IN KURDISTAN ON THAT LEVEL?**

We have not been able to distribute gas masks to our population and don't have any. To the Canadian government out of concern of the people of Kurdistan and defenseless population of Halabja who have suffered chemical attacks will do something to help us to – to various NGO's and United Nations organization this is an important matter a humanitarian concerned. I held a town hall meeting recently, which was broadcast, on television. Somebody asked me the Kuwaitis are getting the gas masks what about us? I of course acknowledged the fact that we do not have any gas masks. And I said if I were to characterize what this war should be about it should be about making the people of Iraq like the people of Kuwait with a government that can take care of their protection. Take care of their security. The irony is their government the government of Kuwait is distributing gas masks to the population. Here in Iraq we are fearful that supposedly our government may unleash chemical weapons against us.

**PETER GALBRAITH ONE OF THE AUTHORS OF THE PREVENTION OF GENOCIDE ACT SAYS THAT LAST AUGUST REPRESENTATIVES OF YOUR GOVERNMENT ARRIVED IN WASHINGTON AND SAT DOWN WITH RUMSFELD AND BY VIDEO HOOK-UP WITH CHENEY AND SAID LISTEN WE NEED ANTIBIOTICS. WE NEED SMALL POX VACCINE. WE NEED PROTECTIVE GEAR FOR WHAT IS COMING. HAVE YOU RECEIVED THAT?**

We have not. However we are told that there are shipments awaiting, the shipments are ready and to be delivered to us. The geography of our region is not going to be easiest in the world. I'm told that our friends here are working hard to deliver those supplies to us. I wish that they did so long ago. We are talking about a very serious situation. Again, this is the Kurdish fate we have to be content with being late. But I hope they won't be too late.

**LAST AUGUST YOU WERE ASKING FOR IT. WE'RE NOW IN MARCH. A WAR HAS BEEN IMMINENT FOR MONTHS NOW. YOU HAVE TO TRUST THAT THE AMERICANS WILL DO THIS TIME WHAT THEY SAY THEY WILL DO. YOU DON'T HAVE THE GAS MASKS TO GIVE TO YOUR PEOPLE?**

I am disappointed even angry and I think our friends here know about the depth of feelings about the situation. We all know that Saddam Hussein has chemical weapons and biological weapons. And there is a very serious risk of him unleashing these heinous means of war against the defenseless population in Kurdistan. We will continue to work and make sure that these items will be delivered to my people before long.

Let me really say also I mean utilize this opportunity. I call upon the Canadian government. I call upon western democracies while the politics remains politics and people will have different political calculations about any situation but there are universal humanitarian concerns. But Canada is interested and I know. Canada should help us

deliver help, mobile clinics, protective gear for the innocent civilian community back home. Because we are a utterly defenseless in the face of this evil.

THIS GOES TO THE ISSUE OF MORAL OUTRAGE. ONE OF THE REASONS THAT WE DECIDED TO GO BACK AND LOOK AT THE DISSENTS OR MORAL OUTRAGE THAT THE AMERICAN ADMINISTRATIONS HAVE HAD ABOUT WHAT WAS DONE TO THE KURDS WAS TO GO BACK AND LOOK AT HOW THEY REGISTERED THE MORAL OUTRAGE BACK IN 1988 AND IT DOESN'T FIT?

Don't ask a Kurd about morality. We have been a victim of duplicity. But there are double standards in international politics. More often than not the plight of the Kurdish people was subordinated to the interests of others and the world was indifferent to the plight of my people when we were gassed. When we were subjected to a cruel campaign of genocide in which at least 180,000 people were killed.

WE WERE TALKING ABOUT THE PROBLEMS OF THE AMERICANS USING AS ONE OF THE JUSTIFICATIONS FOR WAGING WAR AGAINST SADDAM HUSSEIN NOW THE MORAL OUTRAGE. BECAUSE WHAT HE DID TO HIS OWN CITIZENS AND YET WHEN YOU GO BACK TO 1988 AND YOU LOOK FOR EVIDENCE OF MORAL OUTRAGE IT IS VERY HARD TO FIND. AND HERE YOU ARE AGAIN HOW MANY YEARS LATER DEPENDENT ON THE SAME NATION?

I think my response to that the moral imperative of helping the people of Iraq overcome the brutality of the ... dictatorship is unquestionable. As a Kurd I have learned to live with double standards of the international community. My people paid dearly for the indifference of the world. When we were being gassed when we were being subjected to the most cruel war of genocide. We're talking about today I once again say from my perspective as a Kurd as an Iraqi I call for people to be moral in their commitment to helping us overcome .... There is an overwhelming case to be made on moral ground to help the people of Iraq. The positions of the U.S. government 10 years ago, 13 years ago or even a few years back on the plight of the Iraqi people should not inhibit a moral position today in favor of deliberation of the people of Iraq. The argument is often termed as war or no war. For me as an Iraqi me as a Kurd really it is an interesting concept. Why? Because we are already living through our war. We are already suffering a terrible, terrible war being inflicted upon my people. There still continues to be ethnic cleansing that are still controlled by the government of Iraq. We want help to end the war that is being committed against us. People must understand the context. This dictatorship has caused the death of 2 million people in wars of aggression against Iran and Kuwait and in the campaigns of genocide against the Kurdish people and the other campaigns of repression. There can be no way to doubt the morality of coming to help the people of Iraq overcome tyranny. And that is key. I'm not saying that the United States is going to war on that very basic premise and that premise alone. Sure there are issues of weapons of mass destruction. There are issues of terrorism. There are issues of American national interests. But from my vantage point as an Iraqi I can not be but grateful for the help that I think my people will oversee in the days and weeks ahead to help liberate our country.

I am a freedom fighter. We have been fighting for our freedom for decades. We have fought this terror at the time when the United States was supporting this tyranny. That's important to understand. We're fighting for our liberation on our own terms and on our own turf in a way in our own country. And this is not the first time in history when a persecuted people reaches out for help from the international community. The Americans led coalitions to help liberate France, Italy, Germany, Japan, Bosnia, Kosovo why not Iraq? Does that mean with this intervention I can forget about what happened in the 80's? Absolutely not. And I would impress upon my friends in the United States the imperative of learning from history. Complicity with dictatorship does not pay. Indifference towards genocide does not pay. Investment in people, empowering people helping a people to liberate their country is the right moral course. But at the same time I believe it is a right policy course for great nations like that of the United States. Because ultimately it will help establish a stable peaceful democratic government in Iraq that ... and friendship with the international community and with the United States.

BUT AGAIN YOU'RE USING A MORAL ARGUMENT.

My argument is only moral. My argument is only moral. I care for the plight of my people. I care for the liberation of my people. I care for the freedom of the Iraqi people.

BUT YOU – YOUR MORALS WILL NOT PERSUADE NATIONS YOU HAVE WITNESSED NOT BEHAVE MORALLY THAT IT HAS NOT PERSUADED THEM IN THE PAST. I SUPPOSE MY QUESTION IS TWO FOLD. DO YOU BELIEVE THAT THIS TIME FOR SOME REASON THE MORAL ARGUMENT IS GOING TO WORK OR DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING – SOMETHING ELSE TO SAY TO THE ....?

I'm a realist – I am a realist and I think most people care about morality. But most nations act upon their national interest. But I do believe in this world that we live in this inter-connected world that we live in morality matters. Morality is not devout from reality . Helping the people from Iraq liberate Iraq removing this dictatorship from power. Establishing a federal democracy in Iraq is the moral thing to do. But I believe also will help American national interest as well. It will provide for a greater degree of stability in the Middle East.

YOU TALK ABOUT THE AMERICANS AS YOUR FRIENDS—

hmm...

--AND YET, WE ALL KNOW THE HISTORY OF THE RELATIONSHIP—

Oh course...

--BETWEEN THE KURDISH PEOPLE AND THE AMERICANS.

And I...

AND IT IS-- FORGIVE ME-- PERHAPS A LITTLE BIT DIFFICULT TO ACCEPT THAT YOU SEE THEM AS FRIENDS AFTER WHAT YOUR PEOPLE HAVE SUFFERED BECAUSE OF WHAT THE AMERICANS HAVE DONE AND HAVE NOT DONE FOR YOU, RIGHT UP TO THE PRESENT, WHERE THEY HAVE NOT PROVIDED YOU WITH EVEN THE MINIMAL...

I think one thing I can be proud of, in early discussion that I have with friends in the United States, I point out the inconsistencies of the policies towards Iraq and towards the Kurdish people, on many, many occasions in the past. But at the same time, I cannot be but grateful for the fact that over the past ten years the United States and the United Kingdom have helped protect my people against renewed aggression and genocide, because this protection that has helped us develop. I have a lot of misgivings about American foreign policy over the last ten years, even though I acknowledge this important contribution that they have made to the protection of the Kurdish people. But I think their engagement with us was very limited. And if we were to contrast their engagement with the Iraqi Kurdish in the south governing institutions of Iraqi Kurdish .. to the engagements that the United States has had, for example, the Palestinian National Authority... is an interesting comparison.

But nevertheless, this is a reality that I have to deal with. I want to improve upon the engagement of the United States - the superpower of today's world, the preeminent power in today's world - we want to get help from the United States, and we could work hard to get the United States into a position where it will consider in a serious way helping the people of Iraq overcome tyranny. We are at that juncture now. At this juncture, the United States - the Senate of the United States - has committed to helping us overcome tyranny. I'm sure we will have disagreements. I'm sure that we have differences of opinion on this or that issue. But the important thing to me, at this juncture, we are talking about help from a U.S.-elect coalition to overcome bad dictatorship. I remind myself-- I remind my constituents that this dictatorship has caused the death of two million people.

BUT THE FRIENDS YOU'RE TALKING TO NOW IN THE STATES - I ASSUME THAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT MR. BUSH...

I'm talking about many friends in the Senate as well - who have always been vocal on our issue, and have been very consistent in our issue, and today may have misgivings about this war that may happen in Iraq. These are tough issues. From my vantage point, I see it from my Iraqi optic - from my Kurdish optic. My focus is Saddam Hussein. Some of my friends who were with us in, 1988 calling for sanctions on Iraq, they have a different position on the world because they see through a different optic. But I do remind-- and we have very candid discussions and exchanges, and about them. And I say to them, and remind them... not that they need reminding of the morality of government to help the people of Iraq. In fact, they are very mindful of the need, of the

moral case. But they have other misgivings about American national interests, whether this will get them into trouble with the allies, with their region.

AS WE DISCOVERED IN 1988, YOU CAN HAVE AS MANY FRIENDS IN SENATE AND SOME IN CONGRESS WHO WERE DETERMINED TO SHOW MORAL OUTRAGE . SO, IT'S THE ADMINISTRATION REALLY THAT IN THE END DECIDES IF...

At the moment we have this administration committed to a division of a democratic Iraq that will be at peace with the people of Iraq. But... this is my country. It's my cause, and I have to make sure that we will win the battle for a democratic Iraq. I'm very grateful and hopeful that the United States will stay the course with us, but let us remind ourselves of one fact: We live there. It's our country. We will do it no matter what. We've been there before. We have fought this tyranny at the time when the United States was supporting the dictatorship. We have no choice but to continue with our struggle. I'm gratified to know , of the vision of the president of the United States, in terms of , the commitment he has made to a democratic peaceful Iraq. This is important. We have worked hard to win the support of the United States.

In 1988 – I mean, this is a point – in 1988-- in 1991, we were trying to get the United States to support us. We failed. We have succeeded now. I'm not saying that it is our effort that has brought the United States to this very position - no doubt a number of factors. But we are very grateful that we have the United States supporting us in our mission to bring about a federal democracy in Iraq. We can still question the inconsistencies of American policy ten years ago, five years ago, and nothing-- that debate shall always be there. But where we are today, we are on the brink of changing Iraq. I believe this is a moral thing to do, , to help the people of Iraq free themselves and overcome tyranny. This is the moral issue. Two million people have been killed by this regime.

OK...

22 million Iraqis are in this prison, subjected to ethnic cleansing... subjected to all kinds of torture and oppression. There can be no moral equivocation about-- This must be about freedom. This must be about human rights. This must be about basic universal values that all of us in a civilized world must care about.

BUT REALLY, WHEN IT COMES DOWN TO IT, THEY'RE INTERESTED MOSTLY AND MAINLY IN WHAT'S GOOD FOR THE UNITED STATES, WHICH IS, AS EVERY COUNTRY, WHAT...

I would argue on that account. It should be good for the United States to have a stable, federal democratic Iraq that will not tolerate the wiles of an aggressive dictator to power, like the one that we have today.

IS THERE SOMETHING THAT YOU CAN-- I'D LIKE TO ASK BOTH THINGS: SOMETHING THAT YOU'RE ASKING FROM THEM AND SOMETHING YOU HAVE TO OFFER THEM?

Well, I have asked them, and we are asking them for support for our vision for a democratic federal Iraq. I believe we have a commitment, a serious commitment from this administration to that vision. I hope that we will be able to stay the course together for that, to make sure that we accomplish that vision, because I'm sure that there will be other factors that will come into play at deliberation. The United States will have many, many other priorities on the Iraq that they will be interested in. , I believe we can offer the United States the potential of a peaceful democratic Iraq that will be anchored in friendship with the International Community and with the United States too.

BUT WHAT ABOUT MORE CONCRETE THINGS RIGHT NOW?

Like what? Tell me. Ask me. They have not asked us, but...

HAVE YOU REQUESTED A SUM OF MONEY, SUCH AS, FOR EXAMPLE, THE TURKS HAVE?

We... believe Iraq is a rich country. Iraq what will be used for the reconstruction of Iraq and for the well-being of the Iraqi people. We will be going through some difficult times. Certainly in our region , where our conditions are very precarious, we've talked about some economic conditions. And I want to remind you we are freedom fighters.

IT'S INTERESTING THAT IF EVER THERE WAS A TIME FOR THE MORAL ARGUMENT TO SUCCEED, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN IN—

If this now...

--1988--

But...

AND IT DID NOT SUCCEED.

15 years late – too late. No, not too late. Late... But it's better than never.

I SUPPOSE...

Don't you think? I mean, seriously, I mean, why should we have the Americans boxing into this position? We should be grateful that they have moved on and how are now supporting liberation now.

I SUPPOSE TOO, SPEAKING AS A WESTERNER, ONE OF THE PROBLEMS IS THAT WHEN ONE HAS ONE POWER THAT IS SO LARGE COMPARED TO ALL

OTHERS, AND FOR VARIOUS OTHER REASONS, THERE'S A LOSS OF CREDIBILITY IN THE REASONS THEY GIVE FOR SOME OF THINGS THEY DO. SO WHEN THEY BRING UP THE MORAL OUTRAGE OF SOMETHING THAT HAPPENED IN 1988, AND ONE IS AWARE OF WHAT THE-- SOME OF THE SAME PEOPLE DID IN 1988, I THINK PEOPLE WOULD BE FORGIVEN IF THEY DO NOT NECESSARILY TAKE THAT AT FACE VALUE.

I'm saying this question is not , impertinent at all. We must make sure that we will stay the course and we must make sure that the moral argument remains the paramount consideration as we deal with the consequences of the situation. I mean, there will be, I'm sure, many other political calculations and interplay before long. But I hope that we will continue to ensure that , the moral argument will be a determining factor of how the world will react to the situation in Iraq.

AND I'LL JUST ASK ONE LAST QUESTION: YOU ARE SITTING DOWN WITH SOME OF THE VERY SAME PEOPLE WHO WERE IN POWER IN 1988. AND YOU ARE USING THE VERY SAME ARGUMENTS TO PERSUADE THEM. WHAT IS IT LIKE TO SIT DOWN WITH THOSE SAME PEOPLE? AND DON'T YOU HAVE THE TEMPTATION TO SAY: HOW DARE YOU? HOW COULD YOU HAVE..? WHY SHOULD I BELIEVE YOU NOW?

I am soliciting their support. I am soliciting the support of the United States for liberation in Iraq, and the president of the United States has made an important commitment to the cause of democracy in Iraq. And I think it's-- upon us to utilize that commitment to its full potent-- shall ensure that the people of Iraq, at long last, will have a chance at peace and a chance at freedom.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.