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COLUMNS

OPERATION IRAQI LIBERATION

by Senator Jim Bunning

Mar 21, 2003 - War with Iraq is underway and soon the Iraqi people will be free from the evil grasp of Saddam Hussein and his tyrannical regime. This could not be a more sobering time for the American people. We can only hope that this war will be over quickly and with as few casualties as possible. There is no doubt, however, that victory will not come easily and certainly not without sacrifice.

But America has the best-equipped, best-trained military in the history of the world. I have seen first hand our troops in action as they trained at Fort Campbell and Fort Knox. I am confident that the brave men and women of our armed forces are ready to meet the challenge and to do their job without fail.

For 12 years now Saddam Hussein and his murderous regime have laughed in the face of the international community, playing a deadly game of deception and delay. In this period, Saddam has violated 17 different UN resolutions demanding that he disarm and abandon his endless desire to obtain nuclear weapons. Saddam was given a simple choice -- disarm or we will disarm you. He chose unwisely and now is paying the price.

Saddam has started two wars with neighboring countries resulting in the loss of thousands of lives. He has given economic and military aid to international terrorist organizations such as Al Qaeda and Hamas and has personally funded the families of suicide bombers, who bring daily terror to the Israeli population. He has wiped out Kurdish populations in the North with chemical and biological weapons and drained the lands of the Marsh Arabs in the south to make room for oil contracts coordinated with Russian, French and German corporations.

Saddam Hussein is not only a threat to his neighbors in the Middle East, but he also poses a very dangerous threat to America's national security. No one will ever forget the horrific events of September 11, 2001, when terrorists struck our country. And we can no longer pretend that Saddam and his weapons of mass destruction are solely a Middle East problem. If his weapons of mass murder were to end up in the hands of terrorists it could lead to something far more devastating than we saw on September 11th. In the interest of protecting the American people and defending our homeland Saddam must be removed from power.

His refusal to meet the requirements of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1441 and completely disarm all weapons of mass destruction is the straw that finally broke the camel's back. Unfortunately, the U.N. failed to enforce its own resolution and President Bush along with Prime Minister Blair were left with no choice but to lead a "coalition of the willing" to enforce it for them.

This war against Iraq is the right thing to do in order to protect our homeland as well as our friends and allies around the globe. It is a just and necessary cause to rid the world of a madman who is just waiting for the chance to strike. It is time to give the Iraqi people back their country and their freedom. Removing Saddam Hussein from power will make the world a safer place for all of us to live.

I say all this with a heavy and concerned heart. I had a son fight in the first Gulf War and know full well how it feels to have someone you love in harm's way. The troops from Fort Campbell and Fort Knox and the reserve units that have been deployed to Iraq will be putting their lives in danger to protect freedom and democracy here at home and abroad.

I believe we owe it to them as fellow Americans to be supportive in every way possible. This is the time for communities to come together and look after one another. This is the time for the United States to be united and remember that freedom, democracy, and human rights are worth the effort. We have the greatest fighting force the world has ever seen. Our men and women in uniform represent the best of what America has to offer. They know what freedom means and they understand that sacrifices have to be made. I now ask my fellow Kentuckians to keep our troops in their thoughts and prayers and give them your unconditional support. May God bless our soldiers and the United States of America.


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