Thank you very much for coming. We live in very interesting times, times that find our nation, particularly those who lead us, talking more and more about war, war with Iraq; and I’d like to emphasize right at the start of this presentation that I’m not a pacifist, I’m not someone who is afraid of war, I’ve been to war, I’m a veteran of the US Marine Corps and I’d go to war again if required to defend my country. But I would say it’s never something to be undertaken lightly, war is never something to be trivialized, and I’m fearful that’s what happening in the debate and the discourse in the US today in regards to the war on terror and also in regards to the possibility of war against Iraq we have trivialized the subject of war, it is something that I believe the American people are taking lightly. War is not a game, war is not something that we might think it is, it is not a video cursor on a grainy black & white image following a building while a silver shaped object comes in and blows up the building, war is about death, it’s about destruction, plain and simple, and I think we should understand that when we talk about war, the reality of war. We should understand that there is no such thing as a good war. War is
never good. War is about death, destruction, kill or be killed. And I think that when we talk about an American war we are talking about the American military: the most well trained, well equipped, well led killing machine in the history of the world. And I don’t say that with a negative connotation, because understand that, when we talk about war we’re talking about killing plain and simple. As a Marine Corps veteran I have to tell you: when I took my Marines out to the rifle range and we shot at shoot-up targets at 300 meters it wasn’t because we like to kill paper, because I was training my marines to put rounds accurately down range so that sometime, when called upon to do so, the would put these same rounds into the flesh of a fellow human being, terminating that life. When I spent hours on the range calling in air strikes and artillery strikes on the radio it wasn’t because I really had that thing about blowing up stacks of rubber tires; it’s because a some time I and other Marines would be called upon to bring in those air delivered munitions, those artillery delivered munitions on targets that would include vehicles filled with human beings, thereby terminating their life. That’s what war is about, killing, plain and simple.
Don’t trivialize it; don’t make light of it. It’s real, it’s awful, it’s the most awful thing you will ever experience once you’ve been through it. It’s something you would never wish on anybody else. War represents the ultimate failure of mankind to exist as human beings because it’s about killing fellow human beings. Now, there’s no such thing as a good war. There are however times in which war, however tragically, is justified, because we are human beings and we live in an imperfect world and especially in a nation such as the United States where I actually believe we have something worth defending, we have something good here, we have something great, we have something with potential, we have something worth fighting FOR. Therefore there comes a time when it is justified to fight for our country, to wage war in defense of our people. And in that case while it won’t be a good war it could very well be a just war, a just war. So, let’s examine that concept of why we as a democracy go to war, and I think in my mind one of the best reasons why democracies such as ours go to war was put forward by our president Abraham Lincoln in his Gettysburg address when he said that the government of the people, by
the people, for the people shall not perish from the face of the Earth. We go to war when our national existence has been put at risk, plain and simple. We go to war in defense of America, in defense of the American way, in defense of our way of life. We are talking about going to war with Iraq. And what I would ask each of you in that room to consider when thinking about such a war is: Does Iraq pose a threat to our national existence? Now, if you listen to the rhetoric coming out of D.C., out of the Bush administration - and I need to say right up front, out of fairness, you know this is fairness in advertising, I’m putting all my cards on the table: I’m a card carrying Republican, of conservative/moderate leanings who voted for George W. Bush for President. Okay, I can hear the hisses in the background but the fact is, I’m just being right up front with you, I’m not here with a political agenda, I’m not here to slam the Republican, I am one, I’m a Republican, I voted for this guy, and yet when I listen what he and his administration say about Iraq - if I were uninformed on the subject of Iraq I would be concerned. Because we are being told that the Administration KNOWS that Iraq possesses
weapons of mass destruction, chemical weapons, biological weapons, is seeking to acquire nuclear weapons and they might achieve this nuclear weapons capability in the near future, long range ballistic missiles, heck, we just had a republican senator on TV with me a couple of weeks ago who said Iraq is on the verge of developing a 2 and 3 stage missile that will enable them to reach America. And that this missile could be tipped with biological and chemical weapons, and it could make September 11 pale in comparison when the inevitable attack comes. We have also been told that Iraq is a nation that has clear links with international terror organizations that have it in for America. Iraq is a state sponsor of terrorism; Iraq is in cahoots with Al Quaeda. Based upon this briefing that the American people have been given by their administration the threat is obvious. Saddam Hussein, one of the most evil men on the face of the Earth has at his fingertips weapons of mass destruction and he means us no good. Now, Saddam is not dumb enough to launch this attack himself, nooooo, Saddam is a wily character: Saddam will use as his proxy the forces of international terror, Al Quaeda and those who perpetrated the
events of September 11. He will equip them with weapons of mass destruction and then these nefarious characters will proceed to launch an attack on America that will devastate us in a manner which will even look September 11 seem like a picnic by comparison. I have to tell you, ladies and gentlemen, if I were the average American, ill informed as we all are on Iraq I would be concerned. Therefore, when my senators stand before me and say: We need to consider a preemptive strike against Iraq! We can’t sit here and wait until Iraq reaches it’s strength and then launches an attack, strikes out and damages the American people, no! , If we see that threat materializing we must unleash the American military in defense of our nation, preemptively, because we cannot stand by idly while the threat materializes over the horizon and I have to tell you: that’s a compelling argument. Especially after September 11 because I can guarantee you, not too many American would like to see a repeat of that horrible day, not too many Americans want to stand by and wait for more buildings to collapse, wait for thousands more Americans to perish, especially when they are told by their elected
representatives that we can prevent this by cutting of the head of the snake and the head of the snake is Saddam Hussein. Seems sort of cut and dry, doesn’t it? Hell, I’m ready to go to war right now, based on that presentation, and that’s a presentation that - while I might have overly dramatized it is made almost verbatim day after day after day after day. Especially on Sundays, there’s this thing called the Sunday talk shows and if you turn on the TV you’ll see a parade of government officials, senators, administration officials and representatives getting before the American public, making this very argument. But trust me, the tool of democracy, the machine of democracy is working, you see, we also have senators here who say: You know, Mr. President, you can’t go to war unless Congress gives you the authority to go to war. We live in a democracy, we live in a nation governed by the Constitution of the United States of America and the constitution clearly says that only Congress has the authority to declare war, so Mr. President, don’t think about going to war until Congress passes a resolution authorizing you to go to war. Fair enough, Senator Byden, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, he
has just called a hearing on Iraq. Now, this hearing is supposed to provide that congressional oversight constitutionally mandated where the legislative branch has oversight over the executive branch. So they are now going to hold to account the Bush administration in regards to their Iraq policy. This is going to be a detailed hearing in which they will determine: Is there a case for war against Iraq? But wait a minute, there is other stuff they want to talk about, too. It seems to me most of the things they want to talk about include: What will a post Saddam Iraq consist of? Now, excuse me, I know, I’m a simple Marine and I don’t have grasp of this complex issue but if you are talking about a post Saddam Iraq - haven’t we therefore already said, we are going to war to get rid of Saddam? You can’t talk about a post Saddam Iraq until you talk about the case for war against Iraq itself. And the case for war seems clear: You have to make a case that Iraq represents a threat to the United States of America. Now, the administration has said, this case is black and white” We know Iraq possessed chemical weapons, we know Iraq possesses biological weapons, we know Iraq is pursuing the
acquisition of nuclear weapons, we know Iraq has ballistic missiles. We know Iraq has clear links with the forces of international terror, which mean us harm. And I say this: when I see someone say they know something that implies certainty of knowledge, and by God, as an American citizen, I want to know that knowledge. Share it with me, Mr. President, share it with me Mr. Rumsfeld, share it with me whoever is out there saying Iraq has these weapons because I’m here to tell you right now: to date they have provided the American public with little more than rhetorically laced speculation. There has been nothing in the way of substantive fact presented that makes the case that Iraq possesses these weapons, that Iraq has links to international terror, that Iraq poses a threat to the United States of America worthy of war. And until that case is made we shouldn’t be talking about a post Saddam Iraq. We should be talking about why the administration is out there, fear mongering. Why the administration is out there making a case for war when no such case exists. What is the motivation for this? Let’s step back from that for a second and go again to the case for war because there will be hearings. Senator
Byden has called for these hearings and one of the things he has said is that he wants to talk about the threat posed by Iraq. Does Iraq possess weapons of mass destruction? Critical question. Iraq DID possesses weapons of mass destruction; of that there can be no doubt. I spent seven years in Iraq as a weapons inspector, hunting down these weapons programs. Iraq used to have factories that produce biological weapons; chemical weapons, of several varieties, nuclear weapons, long-range ballistic missiles. Furthermore, when Iraq, under pressure from the Security Council and mandated, required by Security Council resolution, when Iraq was required to declare the totality of its weapons of mass destruction holdings, it lied. They lied. They failed to declare a biological weapons program. They failed to declare a nuclear weapons program. They declared less than 50 percent of the chemical weapons program, they declared less than 50 percent of their ballistic missile program, and they created a systematic mechanism of concealment to keep these hidden capabilities away from the weapons inspectors. Obviously, Iraq had something up its sleeve holding on to
this. They did not do it because they love international peace and humanity; they did it because they wanted to retain this capability. But us weapons inspectors, our mandate was to go down and seek out and hunt down these weapons, and we did so. We did so over the course of many years, and we were successful. It wasn’t pretty, it wasn’t easy, and I think all of you have seen probably fifteen too many times the video images of some hard nosed inspector, probably looked a lot like me, standing in front of a facility, with his hands on his hips, waving his hands in front of an Iraqi official and saying: “Let me in!” you know, like Moses: Let my people go! “Let me in, I demand entrance, you have no right to stop me.” And there was a short little Iraqi with a black beret and a green military uniform, black mustache, saying: “No, you are not coming in.” And everybody who saw that videotape went: “See, those Iraqis, they’re goofing around with those inspectors. They must be hiding something. Behind that wall there must be weapons of mass destruction, they’re up to no good. Now, I’m here to tell you: Don’t always believe what you see on TV because it’s not that easy. The fact of the matter is: The Iraqis for the
most part fully cooperated with the weapons inspectors. Weapons inspections enjoyed tremendous success in Iraq. By 1995, 1996 we could ascertain a ninety to ninety-five level of disarmament, verified. Not because we took at face value what the Iraqis said; Ladies and Gentleman, I’m here to tell you that I and other weapons inspectors never believed a word of what the Iraqis told us after their first lie. We don’t trust them, never will. No, we achieved this level of verification based upon our own hard work. When Iraq said they didn’t have a particular piece of manufacturing equipment used in biological warfare capabilities we did not believe them. We went to Europe and we scoured the countries that sold technologies to Iraq until we found the company that had an invoice that showed that Iraq bought five of these pieces of equipment. And the five were delivered by airplane in Baghdad on a given date and here’s an invoice signed by the Iraqi official and we would present these documents to the Iraqis and they would say: Oh, THAT equipment. And then they’d take us to a location where either the equipment was intact and we blew up it up or they took us to a location where the equipment was
destroyed and we did a serial number, confirmed that that indeed was the piece of equipment, and that’s why I can say that 90 to 95 percent: because we tracked each piece down and destroyed it on our own. We don’t give the Iraqis credit for anything, they have lied to us once, they have lied to us again and they’ll probably lie to us again in the future. No, when I talk about a disarmed Iraq it’s because we inspectors could verify 90 to 95 percent. Now, there is some that we can’t, there is five to ten percent around that we can’t put our hands around. Why? For any number of reasons. One, let’s remember that we talk about a lengthy process. By the time the Iraqis started to come clean and we started to make progress we were already three to four years down the road on this process. And with time things get lost, get misplaced, memories get clouded and it’s hard to get a hundred percent certainty on anything. Even if they were fully cooperative, 100 percent would be difficult. But, also remember that Iraq was a nation that went through a pretty horrific war where government buildings were blown up, documents were scattered, people were killed, that has an impact also on coming to absolute certainty.
Economic sanctions cause tremendous problems for the way a government governs and again, that creates issues. But the biggest issue of all came from the Iraqis themselves. They undertook something called: unilateral destruction. You see, all that stuff they tried to hold on to and hide from us? About a year later they realized, hey, these inspectors are pretty good, and they’re not quittin’, they’re not quittin’. If we get caught holding on to this stuff, we’re in trouble. The US might bomb us again. So we’re just going to blow it all up and pretend it never existed. We’ll just tell the inspectors: “What equipment?” and they’ll go away. And they blew it all up - but we did not go away. We would show up with a document, saying: ‘What about this stuff?’ And the Iraqis go: ‘Damn! Ahm, we blew it up, it’s over here in a field.’ They held on to 98 missiles, finally they were compelled to declare, 98 missiles. They took us out to a field expecting to see 98 missiles laying there in the field ready to be counted. And we got to the field and there is nothing there. So, what’s going on? They say: ‘We blew ‘em up and we buried them under the ground.’ So now we became forensic archeologists, bringing out bulldozers,
digging up the earth, bringing up the missile parts. And then, we’re talking parts! We have to go through them piece by piece and gather the serial numbers off of them. It takes months of hard work. Then we go to Russia who produced these missiles and we say: ‘Give us the production logs.’ We go through the production logs and we match each piece with a given missile and we match that missile with a given shipment to Iraq and soon we can verify 96 of 98 of these missiles, two missiles are missing. Now, we have a whole pile of junk over here, bits and scraps of metal that we think are the final two missiles. But because Iraq lied to us we can’t accept at face value these being two missiles. So we don’t give Iraq credit for two missiles, they are still two missiles short. Now the Iraqis say: ‘But we destroyed them, we destroyed them!’ We say: ‘Prove it.’ ‘There is the metal.’ ‘No. Prove it.’ - ‘Clearly we destroyed a lot of missiles.’ - ‘Yes, we know that. We want to know where these other two missiles are.’ - We blew them up. - Bring the officers that blew them up. How many missiles did you have 98. Do you have any documentation for this? - No. - Did you videotape this? - No. - How do we know you’re
not lying to us; you’ve lied to us before. - ‘We’re telling the truth this time.’ This does not fly. You see what I’m getting at? We can’t give them a hundred percent! We can’t. Now, it gets more complicated if you take an issue such as VX nerve agent, very very dangerous stuff. Now, the reason why I focus on VX is that when you talk about the other nerve agent that Iraq had, the Sarin, the Tabun - a lot is made of this. You’ll hear a lot from people who vehemently disagree on my position on Iraq, saying, ‘Scott, man, you are such a naive fool. Iraq has got 20,000 unaccounted for unfilled munitions and we know that Iraq has lied about their production rate in their Sarin and Tabun factories so therefore we assume that they filled these munitions with nerve agent and they are hiding them from the weapons inspectors. You are so naive to say that they are not there.’ Call me naive, please. What I do know about Sarin and Tabun is that is has a shelf life of five years and after that it deteriorates, becomes useless worthless gunk. So even if the Iraqis manage to manufacture this nerve agent in excess of what they declared, even if they managed to put this in these munitions and to secret them away - they are
hiding junk today, useless utter junk. The only stuff that could be viable from a nerve agent perspective would be VX munitions. Now, here we got a problem. VX is a curious problem and it’s one I think underscores some of the complexities when we speak about the disarmament of Iraq. Iraq denied having a VX nerve agent program, right up front: ‘We just don’t have one.’ Now, we had intelligence information that said they have one, but it was the kind of information you can’t really go to the bank with, you can’t go in front of the Security Council and say: ‘This is our intelligence information, we want to you condemn Iraq for lying.’ It wasn’t that specific, it was good, but not that specific. Now, we always thought that an Iraqi research and development plant for VX was at this place Mafona State Astulgia (???), giant chemical weapons factory. A lot of it was blown up during the war, a lot of it was blown up by the inspectors, and it is basically an empty shell of a building, a complex. And we would send inspectors in there periodically to do sampling etcetera and one day one of our inspectors was standing here next to the big empty building that we used to think was the VX plant and he said:
‘You know, we are still trying to figure out what you did with the VX factory that was in here.’ And the Iraqi turned around and said, ‘There is not a VX factory, never was.’ And the inspector thought, here is this story again; the Iraqi turns to a building next to it that was bombed during the war and says: ‘The VX factory was in here.’ And the inspector looks at the factory and says, my god, that is a perfect preserved site, a snapshot in history of the VX program as of January 31st 1991 when that building collapsed from the air strike. So quickly we mobilize a team of forensic archeologists who lift the building off this blown up bunker, very dangerous work. I mean, these inspectors are putting their lives on the line for international peace and security. They lift the roof, they crawl in there and they find a research and development laboratory with documentation. They pull the documents out and lo and behold, there is the VX program! Now, we turn to the Iraqis and say: ‘About that VX program...’ - ‘Oh, THAT VX program..., ja, ahm, that was just a research and development program, we never really perfected the production of this stuff. But as we go through the logbooks -- the Iraqis told us, we tried three
different ways of producing VX -- but as you go through the logbooks you see they did five ways. So they admitted a forth and we got them to admit a fifth and we found out that the fifth actually worked and produced VX. And they said, yes, well, we produced a couple hundred liters of that. But it wasn’t stabilized, we got rid of it, we destroyed it. And we say: Okay. And what the ‘stabilized’ means is that they could produce this VX and for a moment in time it would be deadly for human beings, for a moment in time, and then it would start to degrade and it became sludge. So it’s not a good weapon because if you put it in a weapon and you took it to the front line - by the time you’re ready to fire it it’s useless. You need to stabilize it and they claim they had not perfected the methodology to stabilize this VX. We say, all right, all right, take us to the field where you dumped this stuff. And so off to the field we go and sure enough they point to the field and there is dirt and we take the core sample and we analyze the dirt, and yes, there is degradation byproduct of the VX, and we’re like: Okay, wonderful, what container did you put it in? And they say, oh, these big old steel things over here, and we go swab out the
inside and they have been cleaned out with bleach, there is nothing to be found, except at the end there is a little purge valve. And one of the inspectors went to the purge valve, stuck a swab in there and there is liquid. Put the swab in a plastic bag, walked off, tested it - stabilized VX! We say, hey, what about this? And the Iraqis went: ‘Oh, that stabilized VX, gosh, you know, ja, we did stabilize VX but we never put it in a weapon. We never put it in a weapon, we just did it and then we got rid of the program.’ And we said, great. And went off to the pit where they blew off a bunch of warheads and we picked up the scraps from the warheads, did scrapes of it, sent it to the laboratory and we found the degradation byproduct of stabilized VX. So they did weaponize it. So, from what I’m telling you, you got to be concerned about the Iraqi VX program, no? They lied to us across the board, obviously they are hiding something, something is going on. But let’s dig down to the next level. The research and development of that factory is destroyed. The product of that factory is destroyed. They weapons that they loaded up have been destroyed. And, more importantly, the equipment that they procured from Europe that
was going to be used for their large scale VX nerve agent factory, was identified by the special commission, still packed in its crates in 1997 and destroyed. Is there a VX nerve agent factory in Iraq today? Not on your life. Is it something we should be worried about? Absolutely. Absolutely we should be worried about it. That’s why I’m a big proponent of getting weapons inspectors back into Iraq, back on the job to do the task of finishing the mission of disarming Iraq. To me that is a ten times more productive effort than talking about putting 20,000 marines on the ground. We should pursue the disarmament of Iraq. It’s a complicated issue. Iraq is a modern industrial society; it’s a society that has an advanced petrochemical infrastructure. When I testified to the Senate in September of 1998 they asked me how long would it take Iraq to reconstitute its weapons capabilities. I said, six months. Six months after inspectors leave Iraq could - and I emphasize the word ‘could’ reconstitute aspects of its chemical and biological weapons program. This is the truth; there is nothing from stopping them of doing it. But they would have to start from scratch, start from scratch because they don’t have a factory
any more, we destroyed it. They don’t have production equipment, we destroyed it. They would have to go out in their industry and pick bits and pieces of dual use capability and reconstitute, reconfigure existing industrial infrastructure to produce this chemical agent. And if they did that it is detectable, readily detectable. I’m an intelligence officer, and I’ve worked on this issue of detecting weapons of mass destruction around the world, I’m aware of the technologies that are available and I’m here to tell you that if Iraq were producing chemical weapons today in any meaningful scale we would have definitive proof, plain and simple. Plain and simple. So when you hear people say they know Iraq has chemical weapons today, what they are saying is “We know that Iraq has rebuilt their factories since December 1998 and we know what kind of weapons they have produced. But that’s not what we hear. What we hear is: Iraq has chemical weapons; we know Iraq has chemical weapons! How do you know? - Because Iraq used chemical weapons against the Kurds in 1988 and they used chemical weapons against the Iranians in their eight-year war. Yes, I agree, they did - but how does that translate into
continued possession today? It doesn’t. It doesn’t. But it plays upon the fear factor. They are emphasizing Iraq’s past irresponsible behavior and they are projecting that into the current time and then they are giving Iraq capability that they can’t substantiate. We live in very dangerous times in which this kind of rhetoric is used to spur the American people on towards war. There is going to be Senate hearings; what I would ask is that you, the American people, ensure that in these hearings we don’t have a sham, which is nothing more than diplomatic smoke screen enabling Congress to give President Bush the green light to go to war. Keep in mind that the very Senators who are holding this hearing have for the most part signed on to the concept of regime removal, they have signed on to the legitimacy of war against Iraq, and there is a very big risk that these hearings become nothing more than a front for a continuation of fear mongering, a continuation of trying to come up with a case for war against Iraq that is speculative, full of rhetoric, and lacking in substance. And then we have the real risk of Congress rushing to a resolution authorizing the President to use force
against Iraq to remove Saddam Hussein from power, and then the President acting on that on very short notice. How short? Right now the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force in Campen (???) California is preparing to have 20.000 marines deployed, ready for combat operations in the region by mid October. I have to tell you right now as a guy who was part of the first Gulf war that when you deploy that much military power forward, disrupting their training cycles, disrupting their operational cycles, disrupting everything, spending a lot of money, it’s very difficult to pull them back without using them. And once you deploy them forward there is a very short window while their combat efficiency is at a high level. If you deploy combat troops forward, if you don’t use them their combat efficiency levels drop off precipitously. You got to use them in short order or you loose the effectiveness. So if we’re talking about 20.000 marines forward deployed in short order, that means you better expect war in October. The air force used the vast majority of its precision guided munitions blowing up caves in Afghanistan in the past couple months, Congress has just passed emergency appropriations
funding telling Boeing Company to accelerate their production of JDAM kits, that is these are the GPS satellite kits that go on bombs that allow the bombs to go down and hit a precision target on the ground while the plane gets to fly away, ‘launch & release’. They are basically taking [year] 2003, 2004 deliveries and accelerate them by September 30 2002 [he said Sept 31st, no such date] when they have to be delivered to the air force. Why? Because the air force has been told to have three air expeditionary wings ready for combat operations in Iraq by mid October. If there is a trend catching on here I hope you are catching up on it. We may be at war with Iraq by mid October and yet when you turn on the TV you hear people say its just rhetoric, its just speculation. ‘Oh, that clever George Bush, he is playing psychological games with Saddam. You see, he is pretending to go to war, he is making the war talk and hopes that Saddam makes a mistake.’ This is much more than war talk. We are committing American ground troops in significant numbers to that region and we are doing it in a manner that is indicative of impending warfare. This is not theory, this is not idle talk, this is real.
This is real, and the only way this war is going to be stopped is if Congress stops this war. And the only way you are going to get Congress to stop this war is to insist that the hearings they are getting ready to be held focus on making the case for war against Iraq. This is the single most important question that has to come out of this hearing: What is the case for war against Iraq? Right now the administration says that because Iraq has weapons of mass destruction; then Congress should demand from the administration: What evidence do you have that Iraq possesses weapons of mass destruction. Now, many people have said: ‘Scott, what if the administration has secret evidence, really really secret stuff, super super secret that they can’t share because it would be putting something at risk?’ Ladies and Gentlemen, we are talking about war. War. It’s not a game. This is not diplomacy. We’re going to war with Iraq and if the case for war against Iraq centers on their possession of mass destruction I guarantee you this: if the administration HAD such evidence, we’d be at war with Iraq right now! We would not be talking about it; it would be a ‘fait accompli’! The fact that we are sitting here debating war with Iraq
means that the administration doesn’t have this kind of information. And yet they are getting away with basically what amounts to a lie to the American public by saying they know that Iraq possesses this. It’s high time that Congress stand up through the vehicle of the impending hearings and demand: ‘How does the Administration know?’ And Congress won’t do this on their own. They’re going to need you, the American people, to light a fire under their feet. And you got a little bit of time left, hearings start in maybe a week or a week and a half. You don’t have that much time, you’re running out of time; I’ve been saying we’re running out of time for a long time now, the clock is ticking. It’s ticking towards war, and it’s going to be a real war. It’s going to be a war that is going to result in the deaths of hundreds if not thousands of Americans, tens of thousands of Iraqis, a war that is going to devastate Iraq, a war that is going to destroy the credibility of the United States of America around the world. I just came back from London and I can guarantee you this: While Tony Blair may talk a good show about war the British people and the bulk of the British government do not support this war. I was in
Europe and I’m telling you the Europeans don’t support this war, NATO doesn’t support this war, and no one supports this war. [applause] If we had a case for war against Iraq, if we could substantiate the allegations that Iraq has weapons of mass destruction the exact opposite would be true. You know, before you go to war the last thing you want is friction. You want things to be as smooth as possible [coughs 35:08] Nothing about the way the Bush administration is moving towards war is smooth, it’s full of friction. And the quickest way to end this friction is to put the proof on the table that Iraq has weapons of mass destruction. [coughs 35:22] When I spoke to NATO Don Rumsfeld had just finished going through Bruxelles and he gave a briefing about the Iraqi threat and he was demanding that NATO pony up and come and say NATO will support the American war against Iraq. And most of the NATO members were willing to do this because the hold America in such high esteem. They would never believe that their Secretary of Defense would come and give them misinformation. But you know, they had some questions, so they said Mr. Rumsfeld, we have a question. Donald Rumsfeld refused to
answer any questions. He refused to provide any details to back up what he said. Instead he comes out with a fancy little statement. People said: ‘We need evidence!’ He said: ‘You know, we don’t need absolute proof here. The absence of evidence is not the evidence of absence!’

[audience laughter] I don’t know how many people here saw the X-man in “The Sphinx”: “In order to lift yourself up you have to stop putting yourself down” - but it sounded very much like this cartoon character - but this is real life, ladies & gentlemen, this is our Secretary of Defense, standing before NATO, leading them on, and refusing to answer questions. So now I go before NATO at their invitation to try and answer the questions that Rumsfeld wouldn’t. The United States of course boycotted the meeting condemning those who sponsored it by saying how dare they, how dare they give a platform to a known enemy of the state? [laughter] But I have to tell you this: by the time I finished sixteen of the nineteen members were writing letters of complaint to the United States asking why they had been lied to [applause]. And the reason why I bring this up is that we have a situation here where the Bush administration has
basically built a foundation for war that is built on a bed of lies. There is a lot of people who say that America will do the right thing in the end, and yes, I believe that, America will do the right thing in the end; we are a good people, we truly are a good and just people, and when confronted with the awful reality we will reject this. So if we go to war with Iraq and we kill tens of thousands of innocent Iraqis we in the end will hold our government accountable. But it’s too late at that point, too late. We can’t wait for truth and the awful reality of war to come home before we jump into action. We are also a people that believe in truth, that believe in truth and we hate being lied to, and we are being lied to right now. [coughs 38:08] and it’s time for this lie to be exposed in the upcoming hearings. If you do anything in the next couple of days before this hearing I would request that you write letters to your Senator *** John Kerry demanding that he use his position on the Senate Foreign Relations Commission to demand that the Bush administration substantiate the facts that backs up their claims that Iraq possesses weapons of mass destruction today. Because void of that there is no case for war and without a case for
war there should be no war. If you want to stop a senseless war, a war that should be stopped, demand that Senator Kerry do the right thing in the upcoming hearings and hold him accountable. Now I’m going to allow you to hold me accountable for what I have been saying over the last couple minutes and I’ll take any questions people might have from the audience. Thank you very much. [applause]

A lot of people are wonder what role oil plays in this and in particular in weapons of mass destruction people are wonder about that Israel also is known to have nuclear weapons and the US gives aid to Israel. And along the lines of nuclear weapons people are wondering what this International Atomic Energy Association has been finding in Iraq and what you have to say about what kind of nuclear capacity Iraq possessed by 1991 and what capacity they may or may not have today.

Ritter:
Okay, oil. I will be the first to admit that we are a nation with an economy that is heavily
dependent on oil and foreign sources of oil. And there is a tendency of people therefore to assume that the hidden hand of oil is everywhere behind this. But what I will say about Iraq is this: Ja, Iraq has the second largest proven reserves of oil in the world, it is a nation that will play heavily in the world’s oil economy in the future. As we speak the United States buys 60 to 80 percent of the oil produced by Iraq, either through direct contracts or purchasing from intermediaries. The oil minister of Iraq, Amer Rashid (????) has stated on camera to numerous outlets that if sanctions are lifted Iraq will do whatever it takes to ensure that the strategic energy requirements of the United States are met. Ladies & Gentlemen, this is not about oil. You can’t get a better deal than the ones I just outlined. We already have access to Iraq’s oil, if they are pumping at full capacity it could be increased if economic sanctions were lifted; but we are buying it. The Navy ships that operate the maritime interdiction force in the Persian Gulf to stop the smuggling or Iraqi oil are fueled by Iraqi oil [laughter audience] and it does not get any better to have the oil minister of Iraq state that they will do whatever it takes to ensure our
strategic energy requirements are met. If it was about oil this would be done. The oil plays a factor in here, you see, oil is being used by Achmed Shal??? and the Iraqi National Congress [the exile group I suppose. Martin] to buy off potential support. Achmed Shal is meeting with people as if it’s his oil to give away. He is already negotiating with major American oil companies so that they provide political support for the Bush administration’s efforts to remove Saddam Hussein and he is parceling out Iraqi oil concessions. So there is the indirect influence of oil but again this comes down to the elimination of Saddam Hussein; and the reason is: domestic American politics; not oil. I believe that the most important feature here is the fact that we have built ourselves into a rhetorical corner, we have demonized Saddam Hussein to the point where it becomes politically impossible for any politician to step forward and talk about undertaking a different course of action because of the concerns that their constituents, the American public, will hold them accountable. Because of the concern that once they step forward and speak out against removing Saddam Hussein that they have exposed some vulnerability that will be
exploited by any potential political opponent. So I hope that answered the oil question. I could be wrong; the oil could have its hidden hand anywhere and could be running this war - I just personally don’t think that’s the case.

On the issue of the International Atomic Energy Agency and its role: You know, it was very popular to lambaste the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency and to say that they were never as good as UNSCOM, they were never as aggressive; some of their original inspectors were the same people that were responsible for safeguarding inspections in the 1980s when Iraq lied to the IAEA and started building a nuclear weapons program. All that is true, but I’ll tell you this: my experience with the International Atomic Energy Agency show that they were the most professional inspection agency anybody has ever seen; that they handled the issue of Iraq’s nuclear disarmament professionally and thoroughly; and that when we talk about the four categories of prohibited weaponry; chemical, biological, nuclear and long-range missiles the one category that has been eradicated more than any other is the nuclear. Every one of Iraq’s
nuclear enrichment programs were destroyed eliminated, off the face of the earth. They are gone; the production equipment is gone, the facilities have been leveled. Iraq’s means to produce components have likewise been eliminated. The IAEA did a very very good job of monitoring Iraq’s industrial infrastructure to ensure that these things cannot be reconstituted. Now, we don’t have IAEA inspectors in there today. So people say, oh my gosh, what could the Iraqis be doing; you are hearing a lot from administration people that Iraq could be on the verge of a nuclear weapon. Well, if they were to be on the verge of a nuclear weapon it would be a miracle, literally a miracle. Because basic science and technology would say: How would they do this? In order for Iraq to produce a nuclear bomb today, indigenously, they would have to resurrect their enrichment program. This would require the expenditure of tens of billions of dollars and the manufacture of facilities that are readily detectable by a variety of intelligence means. Nobody has detected this. So now, where are they going to get it? They have to acquire fissile material from abroad. Now, there is a lot of people out there who say,
‘That’s easy to do. We got the former Soviet Union, they got all that nuclear stuff floating around, I mean, there is just a whole bunch of nuclear grade material on the market, on the black market.’ And I say: ‘Really? Show me a case of substantial amounts of highly enriched uranium floating around on the black market! You might hear cases of a gram here, a gram there, a horror story here, a horror story there but there ISN’T a whole bunch of highly enriched plutonium floating out there ready for someone to buy. There just isn’t that stuff out there. It’s not that easy, ladies and gentlemen. But let’s say Iraq actually did it, got their hands on 25 kilograms of highly enriched Uranium. They still have to process it further to make it useable in an Iraqi design bomb. You know, Iraq knows how to design a bomb, they have a bomb design. And Iraq could today maybe build the components of this bomb. They have solved the high explosive lenses, they have solved wave dynamics, they have solved the electronic triggering devices and they probably could resurrect this and build the components of a nuclear device today. But now they have to take that highly enriched Uranium, they have to process it - this means: melt it
down to get the impurities out - and then they have to cast it again and mill it to meet the requirements of their weapon. You don’t do this in a cave; you don’t do this in a basement. It requires technology, it requires a facility, it requires special handling equipment, special tools - and it emits gamma rays. It’s detectable, detectable, detectable and we have not detected it. So I would not loose any sleep over Iraq’s nuclear weapons program and I guarantee you this: instead of talking about getting Marines into Iraq if we focussed on getting weapons inspectors into Iraq you would not have to worry about Scott Ritter’s speculation about what Iraq is doing today because we would have inspectors in there today with the wherewithal, the equipment, the knowledge; and they would KNOW what Iraq is doing. And to me certainty of knowledge is a better course than sitting back here in fearful speculation. So I would be again encouraging everybody to talk about getting weapons inspectors back to work in Iraq as soon as possible.

Why aren’t weapons inspectors in Iraq? Well, as I said early on, right off the bat, Iraq lied, cheated,
obstructed, interfered - and you can throw any other term you want in there. Iraq, they aren’t good, they are the bad guys, so let’s get rid of that right off the bat. We are not out of Iraq because they kicked us out. Iraq did not kick us out of Iraq. There is a mythology out there that says, hey, Saddam kicked the inspectors out and now he won’t let them back in. No. Inspectors were ordered out in mid-December 1998 by Peter Burleigh, the deputy ambassador of the United States to the UN mission in New York. He picked up the telephone, called Richard Butler and said: “The United States orders you to remove all inspectors” Why? Because two days later the United States began bombing Iraq without any authority from the Security Council, using as intelligence for the targets that they bombed information gathered by UN weapons inspectors who were used by the United States as a vehicle for espionage for over five consecutive years. That’s why inspectors aren’t in Iraq today and that’s why you’re going to have trouble getting them back in. Because the United States corrupted the foundation of law upon which we were mandated to do our task. Iraq today just finished three consecutive meetings
with the Secretary General about the return of weapons inspectors. One of the things the Iraqis have asked is for assurances from the Security Council and the Secretary General that once they let inspectors back in what assurances will be given that these inspectors will not again be used by the United States to spy on Saddam Hussein. And the United States has ordered the Security Council and the Secretary General to refuse to answer that question. So I ask you this: If you were an Iraqi, would you let the inspectors back in? And the answer is: Not on your life! And until the United States is willing to step up and play the game fairly, fairly, in accordance with the law it passed. You see, when I went into Iraq as a weapons inspector I had ‘carte blanche’ to do anything I damn well wanted to do. And I did. I could go to Saddam Hussein’s bedroom - I have been there! I could go to his toilet - I have been there. I could go anywhere I wanted in Iraq because the law said the Iraqis had to give me immediate access to any facility designated for inspection by the executive chairman. And I got there. It wasn’t pretty, it wasn’t easy and sometimes it was damn difficult. But I got there. Why? Because the law said so. Why would Iraq
allow me to do that? Not because I’m a tourist, not because I have a fetish about Saddam Hussein - because I am a weapons inspector carrying out the mandate given to me by the Security Council to get rid of, plain and simple: chemical weapons, biological weapons, nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles with a range greater than 150 kilometers; that is all I’m authorized to do. The second I deviate from that mandate, one iota, I am no longer a legitimate inspector, I am a spy. Now, Iraq made it difficult on us, they lied to us all the time; and I told you, we were mandated by the Security Council to achieve a one-hundred percent level of disarmament - that’s impossible! But it’s not my job as an inspector to go: “That’s impossible!” My job is to salute smartly and to go off and try to accomplish my mission. So that when we require proof that Iraq is no longer hiding weapons and Iraq is refusing to discuss this with us because the people we think are hiding the weapons are the same people hiding Saddam Hussein we have to undertake certain courses of action. That’s why my team incorporated ‘signals intelligence operatives’ who operated covertly inside Iraq to intercept the phone calls of
Saddam Hussein and his inner circle. That’s why my team cooperated with the intelligence services of a number of nations to operate human intelligence networks inside Iraq, spies, recruiting spies inside who could report back to us. That’s why I traveled to Israel over 30 times working with Israeli intelligence to precisely read U-2 [surveillance plane] imagery so we could see what the Iraqis were doing on the ground. Now, people would say, oh my god, that’s spying! Hell no, it’s not, not if I ensure everything we’re doing is focused on the issue of disarmament. But the problem comes: we collect a lot of information, not all of it has anything to do with disarmament. And that information was misused by the United States of America. Not only that, in the final phases of our work in Iraq the United States put pressure on my boss so that certain aspects of that sensitive work that we’re doing were taken over by the United States without any oversight by the weapons inspectors and were used by the united states purely to target Saddam Hussein using the weapons inspectors as a cover for their work. This is wrong, this isn’t right, this is why the weapons inspection process was discredited and this is why when the
inspectors were ordered out by the United States and the United States used their information to target Saddam Hussein; the Iraqis said: You are not welcome back. I hope that answered the question why we are not in Iraq today. [applause]

Now, on Israel. Ladies and gentlemen, I’m going to be the first to tell you right now that there is no fairness here, this is not a fair world we live in. The Security Council passed a resolution that singled out Iraq and you can sit here and argue until you are blue in the face that this is unjust, that Israel has weapons of mass destruction, that Iran has weapons of mass destruction, so on and so forth. It’s irrelevant. What is relevant is that the Security Council passed a resolution under chapter 7 of its charter that says Iraq cannot have these weapons, plain and simple; that’s what weapons inspectors go in there to do therefore, to disarm Iraq. Now, hidden, though, in this resolution is something called Paragraph 14 where it talks about a commitment to build upon the disarmament of Iraq to create a Middle-East zone free of weapons of mass destruction. Now, this is non-binding, it does not mean that
inspectors are anywhere near going to Israel or Iran. But what it means is that there is recognition that you cannot disarm Iraq in a vacuum. We cannot have a situation where Iraq alone is singled out. This, if you do this, if you insist on Iraq unilateral disarmament, Iraq lives in a dangerous neighborhood, surrounded by enemies who possess horrific weapons of mass destruction capability themselves. All you are doing is creating a situation where you are guaranteeing that some time down the road Iraq will be similar to post-World-War One Germany under the Versailles treaty will break out. And when they break out they will break out in a vengeance. I still believe we need to disarm Iraq. That is international law and it’s a good thing; there is nothing good about the weapons that Iraq possessed but I do believe that we have to no only talk about the short term goal of disarming Iraq but we have to talk about the long-term goal of bringing stability to the Middle-East so that we can start drawing down the weapons of mass destruction stockpile of all nations, and this includes Israel. Because you will not have peace and stability in the Middle East
until Israel stops having a nuclear weapon, plain and simple [applause, end question one]