Congressman Ron Paul U.S. House of Representatives February 26, 2002

Before We Bomb Iraq...

The war drums are beating, louder and louder. Iraq, Iran, and North Korea have been forewarned. Plans have been laid and, for all we know, already initiated, for the overthrow and assassination of Saddam Hussein.

There's been talk of sabotage, psychological warfare, arming domestic rebels, killing Hussein, and even an outright invasion of Iraq with hundreds of thousands of US troops. All we hear about in the biased media is the need to eliminate Saddam Hussein, with little regard for how this, in itself, might totally destabilize the entire Middle East and Central Asia. It could, in fact, make the Iraq "problem" much worse.

The assumption is that, with our success in Afghanistan, we should now pursue this same policy against any country we choose, no matter how flimsy the justification. It hardly can be argued that it is because authoritarian governments deserve our wrath, considering the number of current and past such governments that we have not only tolerated but subsidized.

Protestations from our Arab allies are silenced by our dumping more American taxpayer dollars upon them.

European criticism that the United States is now following a unilateral approach is brushed off, which only causes more apprehension in the European community. Widespread support from the eager media pumps the public to support the warmongers in the administration.

The pro and cons of how dangerous Saddam Hussein actually is are legitimate. However, it is rarely pointed out that the CIA has found no evidence whatsoever that Iraq was involved in the terrorist attacks of 9/11.

Rarely do we hear that Iraq has never committed any aggression against the United States. No one in the media questions our aggression against Iraq for the past 12 years by continuous bombing and imposed sanctions responsible for the deaths of hundreds of thousands of children.

Iraq's defense of her homeland can hardly be characterized as aggression against those who rain bombs down on them. We had to go over 6,000 miles to pick this fight against a third-world nation with little ability to defend itself.

Our policies have actually served to generate support for Saddam Hussein, in spite of his brutal control of the Iraq people. He is as strong today- if not stronger- as he was prior to the Persian Gulf War 12 years ago.

Even today, our jingoism ironically is driving a closer alliance between Iraq and Iran, two long-time bitter enemies.

While we trade with, and subsidize to the hilt, the questionable government of China, we place sanctions on and refuse to trade with Iran and Iraq, which only causes greater antagonism. But if the warmongers' goal is to have a war, regardless of international law and the Constitution, current policy serves their interests.

Could it be that only through war and removal of certain governments we can maintain control of the oil in this region? Could it be all about oil, and have nothing to do with US national security?

Too often when we dictate who will lead another country, we only replace one group of thugs with another- as we just did in Afghanistan- with the only difference being that the thugs we support are expected to be puppet-like and remain loyal to the US, or else.

Although bits and pieces of the administration's plans to wage war against Iraq and possibly Iran and North Korea are discussed, we never hear any mention of the authority to do so. It seems that Tony Blair's approval is more important than the approval of the American people!

Congress never complains about its lost prerogative to be the sole declarer of war. Astoundingly, Congress is only too eager to give war power to our presidents through the back door, by the use of some fuzzy resolution that the president can use as his justification. And once the hostilities begin, the money always follows, because Congress fears criticism for not "supporting the troops." But putting soldiers in harm's way without proper authority, and unnecessarily, can hardly be the way to "support the troops."

Let it be clearly understood- there is no authority to wage war against Iraq without Congress passing a Declaration of War. HJ RES 65, passed in the aftermath of 9/11, does not even suggest that this authority exists. A UN Resolution authorizing an invasion of Iraq, even if it were to come, cannot replace the legal process for the United States going to war as precisely defined in the Constitution. We must remember that a covert war is no more justifiable, and is even more reprehensible.

Only tyrants can take a nation to war without the consent of the people. The planned war against Iraq without a Declaration of War is illegal. It is unwise because of many unforeseen consequences that are likely to result. It is immoral and unjust, because it has nothing to do with US security and because Iraq has not initiated aggression against us.

We must understand that the American people become less secure when we risk a major conflict driven by commercial interests and not constitutionally authorized by Congress. Victory under these circumstances is always elusive, and unintended consequences are inevitable.