EDITORIAL

Cedar Valley Alliance: Total is stronger than individual parts

Setting out a solid foundation with broad representation will make success more likely for an organization such as the Greater Cedar Valley Alliance.

Last week's organizational meeting of the metro area's new economic development umbrella group was promising, suggesting a level of cooperation not often seen among area government and business leaders.

Those organizing the joint operation seem to recognize the importance of meeting swiftly. The organization will last as long as the members see its usefulness.

"We have a year or so to build the trust of the subsidiary organizations," said University of Northern Iowa President Robert Kooch, one of the organizers. "It's to the organization's advantage to work together to solve problems as they appear."

We fully believe this is in the best interest of everybody in the Cedar Valley.

The Greater Cedar Valley Alliance arose because business leaders and developers saw the necessity of a single, unified, comprehensive economic development group in which the various existing economic development groups share interest.

The hope is to provide a collective voice for area economic development - whether industrial, retail or what have you - while still maintaining the integrity of the member organizations. Not signing on the dotted line could be a challenge.

The meeting at Sunnyside Country Club in Waterloo was held to hash out the group's corporate structure with the various groups represented from the chambers as well as the Cedar Valley Economic Development Corp, the downtown groups, the convention visitors bureau and city governments. A follow-up meeting will round out the group.

By the end of the meeting, the

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Dems' stances on Iraq unclear

The only presidential candidates with a truly coherent position on President Bush's Iraq policy is President Bush. He believed it before the war started, he supported it and he's made it clear.

Among the Democrats, Howard Dean's position is about coherent. He opposed the war before it started, and he believes it has not turned out as he expected. There is a day question of why Dean bothers to have a "point plan" for Iraq instead of just one policy.

The troops home. After all, Iraq is less of a threat to international order and its own citizens than when Saddam Hussein was in power. If it wasn't worth American lives to improve the situation there, is it worth more lives now?

Sidewalks in Iraq, Ace LaBarborian probably knows next. He was a strong supporter of removing Saddam by force and yet was in a position in warning, before the war started, about some of the problems everyone points to now. Then came Dick Gephardt, John Edwards and John Kerry. They all supported the resolution authorizing Bush to go to war - a position with the whiff of strategy about it, given each man's record or lack of it on such issues. But they all are highly critical of what that resolution has wrought.

Writing the paradigm is Wesley Clark. He claims to fame is that he supported the use of ground troops in the

Michael Kinsley is the result of Bush's inveterate leadership during the war and/or the post-war occupation. He should have waited longer for a diplomatic solution. We should have insisted on the participation of the Big State countries. We should have been better prepared for the challenges of rebuilding. But the resolution that the Senate rejected was a last-ditch effort to make the administration accountable to Congress. Congress has a right to ask how the war was won and lost, and the resolution would have allowed that. The resolution was not a surrender to the administration; it was a call for accountability.

Congress's stance on Iraq is unclear. Some members support the war, while others want to see it end. The resolution would have given Congress a seat at the table, but the administration would have had the final say.

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Saddam captured

The capture of Saddam Hussein is a significant event in the war in Iraq. It marks the end of his regime and the beginning of a new chapter in the country's history. The world watches as Iraq transitions to a democratic government.

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A tyrant caught, a window opened

The capture of Saddam Hussein will have a crucial psychological impact on Iraqis and on the Arab world. This doesn't mean the insurgency will end. Clearly, this bedraggled man inside a hole without a cell phone, with no personal security, under attack by Iraqis and U.S. troops. These attacks may even increase in the near term, as the insurgency's leaders try to make it clear they're still strong.

But the seizure of Saddam, alive, provides a psychological turning point in the war in Iraq. It gives U.S. forces a crucial strategic chance to get their flagging postwar policy right.

The trend will dispel Iraqi fears that U.S. officials wanted Saddam to be apprehended. Many Iraqis believed he was still free because that was what the United States wanted. This fueled Iraqi suspicions of America's broader intentions and undermined U.S. efforts to get human intelligence about the insurgents.

When I heard Saddam Hussein was captured, I recalled an English professor I met six weeks ago in Baghdad, in offices that had been locked of all furniture and books after the war ended. These women spoke fluent English and held doctorates, but they - like many Iraqis - thought America's failure to catch Hussein was part of a deliberate plot. The devilish Americans wanted to keep Iraq weak so U.S. troops could stay any still and control Iraq until the U.S. victory.

"We know you burnt the books who wrecked our buildings," one professor told me. "It was essential from the instant way out of this by talking about how the Bush administration deceived the American people, you acted like George Romney who was laughed out of the 1968 presidential race for saying he had been "unemployed" in supporting the war in Vietnam."

On the other hand, if they say, "No, I don't regret my support for this war," that question naturally rises. What if everything you said for the war was wrong? You must respect the concept of the war itself, why are you making such an unbeli- fuse? Apparently, if you had been correct, we'd be in the same mess.

Like mice frustrated in a maze, the candidates seek escape routes out of this logical trap. Sometimes they say the current mess is just the result of the decision to go to war it

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