

# NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA



## THESIS

**DUAL CONTAINMENT IN THE PERSIAN  
GULF: STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS AND  
POLICY OPTIONS**

by

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June, 1996

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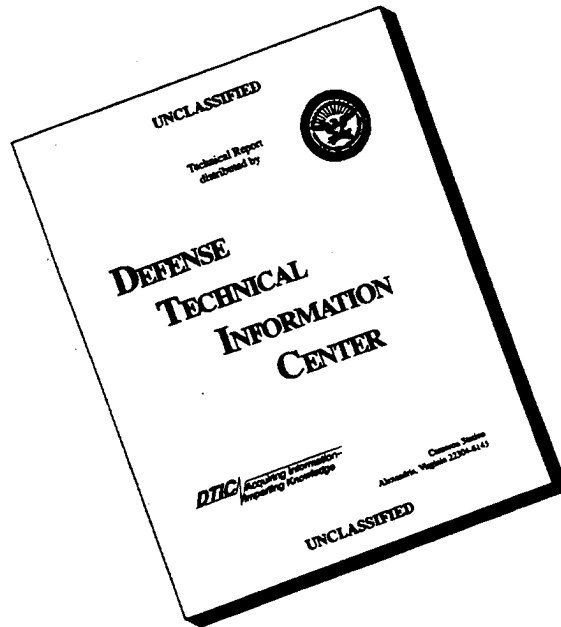
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**DUAL CONTAINMENT IN THE PERSIAN GULF: STRATEGIC  
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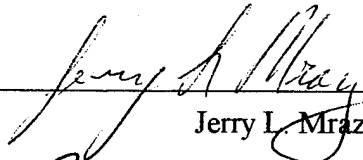
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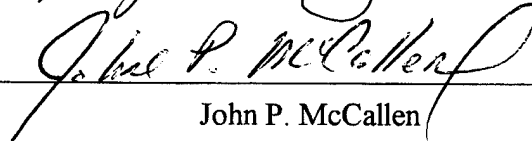
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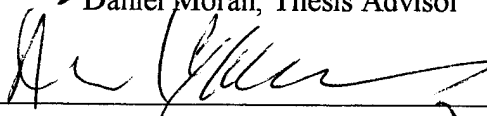


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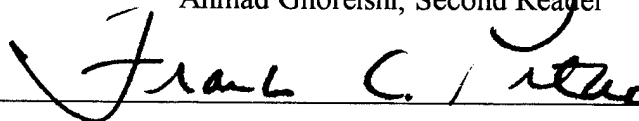
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## ABSTRACT

This thesis is a critical analysis of US foreign policy toward Iran and Iraq known as a policy of dual containment. The objective of dual containment is to isolate these regimes politically, economically and militarily. This thesis evaluates American conduct in the region for the last 50 years, in order to show how previous strategies culminated in the present policy. It discusses both the merits and problems inherent in dual containment, as well as the impact of this policy on its two intended recipients. In closing, the thesis offers possible policy options, including an analysis of their specific advantages and disadvantages. The findings of this research conclude that dual containment is a sustainable policy in the near term and ensures that US vital national interests in the region are not challenged. In the long term, however, it is argued that America needs to initiate a policy of incremental engagement toward both Iran and Iraq. This strategy should begin with economic ties leading eventually to diplomatic relations. Nevertheless, both regimes need to demonstrate the desire and ability to accept the standards of behavior as established by the community of nations.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION .....	1
II. REVIEW OF UNITED STATES FOREIGN POLICY IN THE PERSIAN GULF ..	5
A. OVERVIEW .....	5
B. PRE-WORLD WAR II .....	6
C. POST WORLD WAR II .....	8
D. TRUMAN DOCTRINE .....	9
E. EISENHOWER DOCTRINE .....	10
F. KENNEDY AND JOHNSON ADMINISTRATIONS .....	13
G. NIXON DOCTRINE .....	15
H. CARTER DOCTRINE .....	18
I. REAGAN ADMINISTRATION .....	21
J. BUSH ADMINISTRATION .....	23
K. CLINTON ADMINISTRATION .....	25
L. POLICY TRENDS .....	28
M. NATIONAL INTERESTS .....	29
III. DUAL CONTAINMENT: A POLICY DEBATE .....	31
A. OVERVIEW .....	31
B. DUAL CONTAINMENT .....	34
C. THE RISKS OF DUAL CONTAINMENT .....	38

D.	CRITICISMS OF DUAL CONTAINMENT .....	40
E.	SUMMARY .....	50
1.	Strengths of Dual Containment .....	50
2.	Difficulties of Dual Containment .....	51
F.	CONCLUSIONS .....	54
IV. DUAL CONTAINMENT: IMPACT OF IMPLEMENTATION .....		57
A.	OVERVIEW .....	57
B.	DUAL CONTAINMENT'S IMPACT ON IRAN .....	58
1.	Politically .....	58
2.	Economically .....	60
3.	Militarily .....	63
4.	Summary .....	68
C.	DUAL CONTAINMENT'S IMPACT ON IRAQ .....	69
1.	Politically .....	70
2.	Economically .....	74
3.	Militarily .....	78
4.	Summary .....	81
D.	CONCLUSIONS .....	82
V. CONCLUSIONS .....		85
A.	OVERVIEW .....	85

B.	POLICY OPTIONS .....	85
1.	Containment .....	85
a.	Advantages .....	86
b.	Disadvantages .....	87
2.	Engagement .....	87
a.	Option 1: Engage Iran, contain Iraq .....	88
b.	Option 2: Contain Iran, engage Iraq .....	88
c.	Option 3: Engage Iran and Iraq .....	88
d.	Advantages .....	88
e.	Disadvantages .....	89
3.	Aggression .....	90
a.	Advantages .....	90
b.	Disadvantages .....	90
C.	PREDICTIONS .....	91
1.	Political .....	91
2.	Economic .....	93
3.	Military .....	94
D.	RECOMMENDATION .....	94
E.	CLOSING .....	96

BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	99
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INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST ..... 107

## I. INTRODUCTION

The goal of this thesis is to examine present US foreign policy and strategic alternatives in the Persian Gulf. Specifically, we wish to evaluate the current policy of "dual containment," which aims at the isolation of Iran and Iraq, in light of American national security interests in the region, and also in light of flexible strategic alternatives.

Accordingly, this thesis will address the following questions:

- What are the underlying influences that have shaped a dual containment policy toward Iran and Iraq?
- What impact has this policy had on these regimes and the surrounding Gulf states?
- Is the United States unnecessarily cutting itself off from potential dialogue with these regimes?
- Do more promising alternatives exist, or has containment been adopted simply as a "default" policy in the absence of more creative approaches?

President Clinton began to set the foundations for America's current Persian Gulf policy almost immediately upon assuming office. During his first year in office, his administration issued numerous policy objectives. These aspirations culminated in the announcement of dual containment on May 18, 1993.<sup>1</sup> The policy is the creation of two senior White House aids - Martin Indyk, at that time the National Security Council's Middle East Officer, and Anthony Lake, Special Assistant to the President for National Security.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Lenczowski, George, "Iran: The Big Debate," *Middle East Policy*, Vol. III, No. 2, 1994, p. 52.

<sup>2</sup> Lake, Anthony, "Confronting Backlash States," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 73, No. 2, March/April 1994, p. 45 and Indyk, Martin and et al, "Symposium on Dual Containment: US Policy Toward Iran and Iraq," *Middle East Policy*, Vol. III, No. 1, 1994, p. 1.

With this announcement the United States formally altered its foreign policy toward the two most powerful and populous Persian Gulf states - Iran and Iraq. Thus, the Clinton Administration began to isolate these states politically, economically, and militarily.

The rationale for dual containment is the direct result of three events. First, the end of the Cold War has allowed the United States to pursue a more discriminate policy. Previously, these two nations were used by the superpowers as pawns, with the Iraqi regime leaning to the Soviets, and Iran developing ties to the United States (which were of course severed by the Iranian Revolution in 1979). No longer, however, is America forced to balance one state against the other to achieve its strategic objectives. With the demise of the Soviet Union, America became the sole remaining superpower, and now has the luxury of selectivity with respect to foreign policy strategies. A second determining factor is the political outcome of Desert Storm. Although the war was a clear military victory for the coalition forces, its political aftermath is considered a failure by many observers because Saddam Hussein remains in power. The United States, ever leery of Saddam's preoccupation with military adventurism, is resigned to the fact that American foreign policy must incorporate strategies that will cripple this despot. Additionally, the issues that initially led to this war are still unresolved and other difficulties have manifested themselves - increased political uncertainty, heightened regional hostility, fear of military actions, and the specter of weapons of mass destruction (WMD).<sup>3</sup> The third factor is the Arab-Israeli peace process. Both Iran and Iraq have well-documented ties to subversive elements that are

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<sup>3</sup> Stav, Arie, "Mideast Arms Races: Reaching Critical Mass," *Global Affairs*, Vol. VIII, No. 3, Summer 1993, p. 60.

opposed to the peace process. In the case of Iraq, these relations are generally formed with the more radical Palestinian groups. Iran, in contrast, tends to form ties with Shiite Islamic fundamentalists - like Hezbollah. It is the belief and desire of the Clinton Administration that this strategy of dual containment severely cripples Iran and Iraq's ability to influence their surrogates in the Levant.

The significance of this policy is that it is focused on a region that is vital to the national security of the United States. Approximately 66 percent of the world's known oil reserves are found in the Persian Gulf and the surrounding states. Not only is oil very abundant, but it is accessible and of high quality. Iran and Iraq are considered the regional superpowers. These two nations have a combined population exceeding 85 million people. Although neither presents a serious challenge to a NATO type military, they do pose a very real threat to the surrounding Gulf states. The United States has for the past 50 years stated that uninterrupted access to oil from the Persian Gulf is of vital national interest. The defense of these vital interests equates to a willingness to war to ensure that they are not challenged.

This thesis is divided into four chapters, excluding the Introduction. Chapter II reviews past US policy in the Persian Gulf. It surveys previous American policies toward Iran and Iraq identifying the basis for dual containment. The chapter begins by examining America's limited role in the region prior to World War II, and traces the subsequent expansion of America's interest, as well as the policy shifts this expansion entailed.

Chapter III discusses the criticisms that have been leveled at dual containment, and explores the objectives and risks associated with dual containment, as propounded by the

Clinton Administration, along with objections that have been raised in various quarters. The chapter concludes with an objective synopsis describing the strengths and difficulties of the dual containment policy.

Chapter IV considers the impact of dual containment on its two intended victims - Iran and Iraq. Dual containment is designed to isolate these two rogue states on three fronts - politically, economically and militarily. Yet dual containment does not equate to duplicate containment. Iraq is isolated by the world community, which is generally respectful of the UN sponsored sanctions against Iraq. On the other hand, sanctions against Iran are generally unilateral, and are pursued only by the United States. The chapter concludes by examining how dual containment has affected Iran and Iraq.

Chapter V considers the policy options available to the United States. These options run the gauntlet from passive isolation, as prescribed by dual containment, to active military action against these regimes. Principal advantages and disadvantages of each option are outlined. This chapter also predicts future events in the region based upon the current situation and US strategic interest in the region. It concludes with policy recommendations for both Iran and Iraq.

## II. REVIEW OF UNITED STATES FOREIGN POLICY IN THE PERSIAN GULF

### A. OVERVIEW

This chapter identifies the past trends of American policy in the Middle East with a view to identifying a sense of direction for the development of the policy of dual containment. To its authors the concept of containment is not new and the policy "incorporates a number of elements from previous American policies."<sup>4</sup> The authors of the policy of dual containment find it to be, "the culmination of a trend toward an increasingly direct American strategic role in the gulf."<sup>5</sup> Officials in the Clinton Administration, "have tried to justify 'dual containment' in historical terms," as a logical progression of US policy in the region.<sup>6</sup>

American interest in the Middle East has grown over the past 200 years. In the late nineteenth century US interest was primary commercial. With World War II came a strategic interest in the area, especially the Persian Gulf. Since the end of World War II the interests of the United States have deepened and become "petrostrategic."<sup>7</sup>

Early commercial endeavors in the Persian Gulf required no political commitments

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<sup>4</sup> Gause, Gregory F., "The Illogic of Dual Containment," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 73, No. 2, March/April 1994, p. 59.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Goodarzi, Jubin H., "Dual containment: Origins, Aims and Limits," *Middle East International*, No. 507, 25 August 1995, p. 20.

<sup>7</sup> Palmer, Michael A., On Course to Desert Storm: The United States Navy and the Persian Gulf, Naval Historical Center Department of the Navy, Washington DC, 1992, p. 135.

on the part of the United States. American policy makers from the 1850's to the 1930's rejected any political role for the United States in the region.

The beginning of World War II marks America's first political commitments in the Persian Gulf. Those commitments led to greater involvement and interdependence between the United States and the Persian Gulf states. It has been stated that America considers itself the "Guardian of the Gulf," a role that has been assumed through deliberate policy doctrines, covert actions, and diplomatic/military reaction to crises.<sup>8</sup>

The national interests of the United States in the Middle East remained relatively constant from 1946 through 1989. America pursued three broad security objectives in the region: containment of the Soviet Union; the security of Israel; and access to oil. The end of the Cold War brought to a close the confrontation with the Soviet Union. Containment in the region continues, however, the Soviets have been replaced by the backlash states of Iran and Iraq.

## **B. PRE-WORLD WAR II**

Not until the Treaty of Versailles, which ended World War I, do we see the first signs of a concerted US policy toward the Middle East. Before World War II, American interests in the Middle East focused on three cultural issues: theological missions, expanding the availability of medical treatment, and the establishment of educational institutions.<sup>9</sup>

In 1908 oil was discovered in Iran. This discovery solidified US commercial

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., pp. 243-249.

<sup>9</sup> Lenczowski, George, The Middle East in World Affairs, 4th ed., Cornell University Press, Ithaca NY, 1980, pp., 791-792.

interests in the region. However, on a political level the US government was not seeking to develop relations with Iran. This task was undertaken entirely by private companies, most notably Sinclair Oil. Later, in 1934 Chevron negotiated a contract with Saudi Arabia, again deepening US commercial interest in the region.

The late 1930s saw the spread of totalitarianism throughout Europe and the beginning of World War II. President Roosevelt declared that the United States was neutral to all belligerents; nevertheless, it was only a matter of time before America would become entangled in the conflict. Prior to World War II, the US government had rejected any diplomatic or military presence in the region.<sup>10</sup> The US government would not commit troops to support or defend a region still considered under the influence of the British Empire.<sup>11</sup> The war, however, finally forced Roosevelt to act. One primary interest of Roosevelt was using the Persian Gulf as a route to resupply the beleaguered Soviets. The best available way to move war supplies to the Soviet Union, provided by the Lend Lease Act, was to transport the materiel through Iran. With the stationing of 30,000 US noncombatant troops in Iran to perform this function, America had become firmly entrenched as a major "player" in the region. Washington continued to view the region under the British sphere of influence and Iran as nothing more than a transit country, a "bridge to victory."<sup>12</sup> The war rapidly expanded America's economic and military presence.

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<sup>10</sup> Palmer, Michael A., Guardians of the Gulf: A History of America's Expanding Role in the Persian Gulf, 1833-1992, Maxwell Macmillan, NY, p. 19.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>12</sup> Lenczowski, George, American Presidents and the Middle East, Duke University Press, Durham NC, 1990, p. 8.

### C. POST WORLD WAR II

After World War II the US national interest in the Middle East centered on three specific tasks. The first was confronting the potential threats from the Soviet Union, the second was the sovereignty of Middle Eastern nations, and the third were Western interests in the region - primarily oil.<sup>13</sup> Palmer states, "An Office of Naval Intelligence assessment of 1949 concluded that, 'the center of world oil-producing activity is slowly but steadily shifting from the Western Hemisphere to the Middle East'."<sup>14</sup> The war highlighted the West's increasing dependence on Gulf oil and exposed the shortcomings of Great Britain's plans for defense of the region.<sup>15</sup>

In 1945 a crisis developed in northern Iran. The Soviets were attempting to influence and expand their presence in the area. While American and British troops departed Iran after the six-month period, stipulated by treaty, the Soviets not only violated the withdrawal deadline, but expanded in a southerly direction.<sup>16</sup> It was after a determined President Truman confronted Stalin concerning this open and hostile occupation that the Soviets eventually withdrew from Iran.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>14</sup> Cited in Palmer's Guardians of the Gulf: A History of America's Expanding Role in the Persian Gulf, 1833-1992, p. 41.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>16</sup> Lenczowski, American Presidents and the Middle East, p. 8.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

Thereafter, the Soviet threat was met with a series of Presidential doctrines and executive orders. These executive actions were, "periodic attempts to replace a decreasing British presence with a US commitment to the region's defense" against the Soviet threat.<sup>18</sup> These acts would be enlarged and refined by successive American presidents by "extending economic and technical assistance, strengthening military potential and establishing closer cultural ties."<sup>19</sup>

The role of the United States in the Middle East since WWII is unprecedented in history. For the previous two centuries the British and Russian Empires were the influential outside powers. The concern of these two giants was often focused on the "buffer states" between their empires. After WWII this balance shifted with the beginning of a steady British withdrawal and the expansion of the Soviet's sphere of influence.<sup>20</sup>

#### **D. TRUMAN DOCTRINE**

The first official US policy commitment in the Middle East came with the Truman Doctrine, which was announced on March 12, 1947. The primary thesis of the Truman Doctrine was containment of the Soviet Union. The United States was standing firm refusing to allow Iran, Turkey, or Greece to fall under Soviet influence. Any Soviet expansion in these areas would be at the risk of armed confrontation with America. This declaration was unprecedented in US history. For the first time the United States stated in

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<sup>18</sup> Kuniholm, Bruce R., "Retrospect and Prospects: Forty Years of US Middle East Policy," *Middle East Journal*, Vol 41, No. 1, Winter 1987, p. 9.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

peacetime that it would go to war in defense of countries outside the Western Hemisphere.

While this doctrine involved the Middle East, it was limited in scope. First, it was a doctrine directed at the Soviet Union, aimed at holding their expansion. Second, it was confined to the northern tier of Middle Eastern states. With the Truman Doctrine began the gradual US role as defender of the region. With the growing Western dependence on oil and Soviet threats to the region the US Joint Chiefs of Staff "saw the balance of power in both Europe and the Near East as mutually reinforcing."<sup>21</sup> As America began to take on a major role in the area's defense it inherited the "British mantle" of colonialism.<sup>22</sup> This Anglo-American cooperation would eventually become a factor leading to a negative image for the United States throughout the Middle East.

Further fueling the fire of anti-Western sentiment was Truman's support and recognition of the state of Israel. His decision, which was against the advice of the War and State Departments, infuriated the Arab world. This American recognition of Israel resulted in an increased hostility between Jews and Arabs, and would come to dominate a major portion of US policy in the Middle East for the next five decades.

#### **E. EISENHOWER DOCTRINE**

The 1952 presidential election brought the Republicans to office; nevertheless, American interest in the Middle East remained constant - containment of the Soviet Union,

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

security of Israel, and access to oil.<sup>23</sup>

The first major crisis for Eisenhower in the Middle East began fermenting during the Truman years. In the 1950s Dr. Mohammed Mossadegh, leader of Iran's National Front, (and later Prime Minister) introduced legislation to increase oil commissions for Iran from the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company.<sup>24</sup> The dispute became hostile, with Great Britain eventually breaking diplomatic relations with Iran. The United States initially held a neutral view of the conflict. After Mossadegh made overtures toward the Soviets, Eisenhower feared a communist takeover of Iran. This fact, combined with the cease-fire in Korea, Stalin's death, and a less aggressive Soviet Union allowed Eisenhower a freer hand in the Gulf.<sup>25</sup>

The fear of Soviet expansion into the Persian Gulf, resulted in the genesis of operation "Ajax," a joint British-American covert plot to overthrow Mossadegh. The cost of the operation was estimated at \$100,000 to \$200,000.<sup>26</sup> The outcome of "Ajax" was a successful American and British covert action, which resulted in the overthrow of Mossadegh.<sup>27</sup> From this point forward, the Shah of Iran would be viewed as "America's man." American policy in the Persian Gulf became tied to the Shah's failures and successes.

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<sup>23</sup> Lenczowski, American Presidents and the Middle East, p. 31.

<sup>24</sup> The Anglo-Iranian Oil Company has evolved into present day British Petroleum (BP).

<sup>25</sup> Palmer, Guardians of the Gulf: A History of America's Expanding Role in the Persian Gulf, 1833-1992, p. 69.

<sup>26</sup> Lenczowski, American Presidents and the Middle East, p. 38.

<sup>27</sup> Kuniholm, p. 14.

Additionally, operation "Ajax" became the seed of contempt and distrust toward America in general and toward the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and its Iranian counterpart, SAVAC, specifically.<sup>28</sup>

In 1956, following further British withdrawal, this time from the Suez, the United States announced the Eisenhower Doctrine. America was prepared to use its armed forces to protect the integrity of any Middle Eastern nation that requested assistance when threatened with attack by any state controlled by "international communism." Two basic flaws are apparent with the Eisenhower Doctrine. First, most instabilities in the region were not due to the Soviet Union. Second, the problems created by Arab nationalism were not of the nature to be deterred by presidential doctrine.<sup>29</sup> The Eisenhower Doctrine divided Arab nations along the lines of conservative monarchies supporting the West and nationalist regimes looking to the Soviets for guidance and support. This doctrine coincided with the expansion of the "Arab Cold War," which was a confrontation between the conservative monarchies and the secular nationalist regimes.<sup>30</sup>

Similar to the Truman Doctrine, the Eisenhower Doctrine was aimed at arresting the spread of communism and Soviet influence. Like the Truman Doctrine its focus was containment of the Soviets on the Northern Tier. The Eisenhower Doctrine expanded the policy to include the entire Middle East.

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<sup>28</sup> Palmer, Guardians of the Gulf: A History of America's Expanding Role in the Persian Gulf, 1833-1992, p. 71.

<sup>29</sup> Kuniholm, p. 15.

<sup>30</sup> For additional readings on the Arab Cold War see Lenczowski, American Presidents and the Middle East, Chapters 2 and 3.

## F. KENNEDY AND JOHNSON ADMINISTRATIONS

During Kennedy's brief time in office his foreign policy agenda was preoccupied with Cuba and Vietnam. During his administration two significant events occurred in the Persian Gulf, which set the stage for the Iranian Revolution and the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

Kennedy continued with the Eisenhower doctrine regarding the Northern Tier states. Unlike Eisenhower, Kennedy pressured the Shah in cases involving human rights abuse. Kennedy established a committee to review Iranian-American relations. The committees concluded that Iran was in danger of collapse internally, the Shah was weak and indecisive, and needed to institute drastic reforms. The Shah, after reviewing the report, reluctantly accepted the committee's recommendations and set up a series of land and civil reforms. These reforms became known as the "White Revolution."<sup>31</sup> Two of the major instituted reforms concerned the emancipation of women and land reform.

Mullahs, Iranian religious leaders, began preaching to the masses that the Shah was destroying the family and the foundations of Islam. One of these mullahs was Ruhollah Khomeini. After being arrested and facing possible execution, the religious leaders bestowed upon Khomeini the title of "Grand Ayatohla," which under Islamic law pardoned him from execution. Khomeini fled the country and remained in exile for almost 15 years before returning to Iran to overthrow the Shah's regime.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Lapidus, Ira M., A History of Islamic Societies, Cambridge University Press, NY, 1988, p. 585.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 587.

The Johnson Administration's foreign policy was overshadowed by Vietnam.<sup>33</sup> Johnson's policies toward the Middle East were tailored toward a domestic agenda, thus placing its emphasis on the prosperity of Israel. As Lenczowski has stated, "Johnson was primarily motivated by domestic political calculations: pro-Israel votes and money and his desire to neutralize the protests of many friends of Israel against his Vietnam policy."<sup>34</sup> The result was a frustrated Arab world, which attacked the state of Israel in 1967. Meanwhile, between 1963-73, Iran experienced its most stable period in modern history. Johnson, an extremely savvy legislative politician, pushed a number of bills through Congress providing aid and funding for the Shah. As a result, with US backing the Shah continued to strengthen his power base, and the flow of oil to the West continued uninterrupted.

In June 1961 Kuwait received its independence from Great Britain. The radical Iraqi leader, Abdul Karim Qassem, having proclaimed his country to be the "Eternal Iraqi-Republic," immediately set his sights on the newly created, oil-rich state. After Qassem moved his troops to the Kuwait border, a coalition of sorts was formed between Britain and the Arab League, while the United States remained neutral.<sup>35</sup> Although Qassem eventually withdrew his troops from the border, Iraqi desires to conquer Kuwait were only temporarily restrained.

The Kennedy and Johnson Administration's Middle East policies were a continuation

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<sup>33</sup> Palmer, Guardians of the Gulf: A History of America's Expanding Role in the Persian Gulf, 1833-1992, p. 82.

<sup>34</sup> Lenczowski, American Presidents and the Middle East, p. 115.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 78.

of those of their predecessors, with only slight variations. Dominating American policy in the Gulf were the three major US interests: containment of the Soviets; security of Israel; and the uninterrupted flow of oil. However, Kennedy and Johnson did not heed the advice of Eisenhower. He believed the Middle East was far more important to the US than Southeast Asia.<sup>36</sup> Eisenhower sent troops to the Middle East, but rejected similar action in Southeast Asia.<sup>37</sup>

#### **G. NIXON DOCTRINE**

With the arrival of the Nixon Administration in 1969, US policy toward the Middle East embraced a "hands-off" approach. Nixon became personally involved in shaping US foreign policy and was acquainted with many world leaders, including the Shah of Iran and King Faisal of Saudi Arabia. Nixon shifted American foreign policy development from the State Department to the White House. Thus, Nixon became the architect of his own foreign policy.

Nixon knew the United States could not be the world's hegemonic power. Therefore, in response to the British withdrawal from all areas east of Suez, Nixon implemented his doctrine in the Middle East. The Nixon Doctrine announced on July 25, 1969 focused on Asia, but its approach applied to the Middle East as well.<sup>38</sup>

The Nixon Doctrine's thesis was the development of a "twin pillar" policy, which

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<sup>36</sup> Palmer, Guardians of the Gulf: A History of America's Expanding Role in the Persian Gulf, 1833-1992, p. 85.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Lenczowski, American Presidents and the Middle East, pp. 117-118.

established regional "policemen." The nations of Saudi Arabia and Iran (with the weight of the responsibility falling to Iran) became the "policemen" for the Middle East. The relation between the Shah and the United States became even more interdependent, only ending after the Iranian revolution in 1979.<sup>39</sup>

In October of 1973, the Egyptians massed tens of thousands of combat troops on the western banks of the Suez, and on 6 October the Egyptians crossed into the Sinai. The war that followed became known as the Yom Kippur War. Initial Israeli equipment and manpower losses from the Egyptian offensive were heavy.<sup>40</sup> Israel made a desperate plea to the US for resupply of munitions, aircraft and missiles. Nixon responded by ordering US forces to establish an "air-bridge," with most weapons and munitions cargo coming from American prepositioned supplies in Germany. Whether American aid strongly influenced the Israeli victory or not is beyond the scope of this paper. However, to the Arab world it was unanimously perceived that the United States had chosen sides.

Arab reaction, therefore, was predictable. The conservative oil monarchs, under considerable internal pressure, blamed the United States for the Arab defeat. As a face-saving device, the oil producing monarchies decided the West must be punished, and used oil as the weapon. The result was the 1973 oil embargo. The Shah, who had close ties with the Israelis and the United States was not a willing participant in the embargo. As a result, Iran's oil production and foreign exports increased drastically, and foreign currency filled

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>40</sup> For an in-depth analysis of the Yom-Kippur War see Herzog, Chaim, The Arab-Israeli Wars, Vintage Books of Random House, NY, 1982, pp. 227-315.

the Iranian coffers.

The Shah used this new wealth to initiate a tremendous arms build up to counter the growing hostilities between Iran and the Arab world.<sup>41</sup> The Shah also invested heavily in domestic programs. Iranians began living beyond their means and inflation began to soar. The economy was unable to adjust to this massive influx of capital. Large portions of the “Bazaaries” and the middle class lost their jobs and livelihoods. These people blamed the government for their economic troubles. They turned to the mullahs for guidance. The seeds for revolution were planted.

In summary, here again the United States had not taken a direct role in the Persian Gulf's security and stability. Because Nixon, like Kennedy and Johnson, was preoccupied with Southeast Asia, he allowed other nations to lookout for American interests in the region. Nixon accomplished this task by providing arms and support to the area through Iran and Saudi Arabia. This approach reversed all previous US policies, “that had rejected as destabilizing and counterproductive a massive military buildup of any state within the region.”<sup>42</sup> Additionally, with the Nixon Doctrine came a shift to looking at the Middle East nations in direct relation to American interests rather than just a location balance against the Soviet Union.

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<sup>41</sup> Palmer, Guardians of the Gulf: A History of America's Expanding Role in the Persian Gulf, 1833-1992, p. 89.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 88.

## H. CARTER DOCTRINE

President Carter, like the presidents before him, sought to contain the Soviet threat. The central themes of Carter's foreign policy in the Middle East went beyond counteracting the Soviet threat and he was willing to tackle broader issues even at a cost. This point is illustrated by the following passage from his memoirs:

I took seriously the commitments I had made as a candidate. Peace, human rights, nuclear arms control, and the Middle East had been my foreign policy concerns . . . our nation would have to resolve many such serious questions, which had long been ignored or deliberately avoided because of the incompatibility of the White House and Congress, fear of special-interest lobbies, or concerns about the next election.<sup>43</sup>

The promotion of human rights became the focal point of Carter's foreign policies.

Carter's policies, emphasizing human rights and arms reductions, impacted the Shah tremendously. Lenczowski writes, "A call for respect of human rights could easily be interpreted as American disapproval of the Shah's domestic policies and as an encouragement to opposition."<sup>44</sup> Again, American foreign policy was undermining the Shah's regime within Iran itself.

The Shah, heeding this advice, initiated a series of civil reforms. These reforms were handed down while Iran was experiencing a severe recession. The result was a series of anti-government demonstrations led by the mullahs. The Carter Administration, possibly unsure of how to read the events occurring in Iran, was unable to formulate a consistent

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<sup>43</sup> Carter, Jimmy, Keeping the Faith: Memoirs of a President, Bantam Books, NY, 1982, p. 66.

<sup>44</sup> Lenczowski, American Presidents and the Middle East, p. 185.

policy. President Carter never seemed to decide whether insistence on human rights in Iran or Iran's strategic value to the United States was more important.<sup>45</sup> As 1978 came to a close Carter said of the situation, "it was obvious even to his own supporters that the Shah would have to leave the country before order could be restored."<sup>46</sup> On February, 1, 1979, while the Shah was traveling abroad, Khomeini returned from Paris.<sup>47</sup> Ten days later, the regime of Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi was over.<sup>48</sup>

Initially, US-Iran relations were cordial, with America extending diplomatic overtures and continued shipment of arms. However, after a secret meeting in Algiers in November 1979 between Mehdi Bazargan's, the Iranian Prime Minister, and Zbigniew Brzezinski, Carter's national Security Advisor, Khomeini became distrustful of both parties.<sup>49</sup> One item discussed between the two men was the admittance of the Shah into the United States for medical treatment. After the details of this meeting were revealed, Iran experienced a series of demonstrations against America. Khomeini realized these demonstrations were a popular movement and joined them to remove Bazargan from the government. The result of the demonstrations was the storming of the US embassy and the taking of American hostages. Khomeini held the hostages for 444 days and used them as a

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 193.

<sup>46</sup> Carter, p. 443.

<sup>47</sup> Lenczowski, American Presidents and the Middle East, p. 198.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 199.

means to embarrass the Carter Administration and to consolidate his Islamic revolution.<sup>50</sup>

With the rise of Khomeini, Saddam Hussein's predominately Sunni Iraq feared an attack from predominately Shiite Iran. When Khomeini began talking about a greater Islamic Republic and appealing to the masses to rise and overthrow the regime, Saddam made preparations for war. Also, Saddam mistakenly believed that Iran was militarily weak from the revolution. Saddam also knew the United States would not oppose him in a war against Iran due to the hostage crisis. Subsequently, Iraq opened hostilities with Iran in September 1980. Also, during this period America was faced with another crisis in the Middle East. In December 1979, Soviet troops invaded Afghanistan. Carter's reaction to the invasion was highlighted in his State of the Union Address on January 23, 1980:

Let our position be absolutely clear: An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States. It will be repelled by use of any means necessary, including military force.<sup>51</sup>

With the Carter Doctrine the United States continued to value the strategic significance of the Persian Gulf. America was now going to assume a more direct role for responsibility and defense of the Middle East. The primary goal was preventing a hostile power from dominating the region, in this instance the Soviet Union. The Carter Doctrine, also, gave improved military accessibility to the region for US forces with the development of the Rapid Development Force and the prepositioning of war stocks.

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 203.

<sup>51</sup> Carter, p. 483.

## I. REAGAN ADMINISTRATION

When President Reagan assumed office in January of 1981, the Middle East was in considerable chaos: the Soviets were in Afghanistan fighting a guerilla war against a determined Afghanistan force; Iran and Iraq were fighting a war of attrition; and Israel was conducting operation Peace for Galilee, which was designed to rout Palestinian forces from Lebanon.<sup>52</sup> Reagan did not micro-manage his foreign policy. On the contrary, he surrounded himself with talented and qualified advisors and let them carry-out his overall objective - roll back of the Soviets. Unlike past administrations, which sought to contain the Soviets, Reagan wanted to “roll back” Communism at every front. This doctrine was implemented in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Angola, and Afghanistan. The policy became known as the Reagan Doctrine.

During Reagan’s time in office, he faced two crises in the Persian Gulf. The first was the covert “arms-for-hostages” deal with the Iranians. The second was the so called “tanker war,” in which Kuwaiti tankers were placed under US registry.

The “arms-for-hostages” deal was significant in that it was the first US attempt to establish a dialogue with moderate elements in Iran. Although the ultimate successes or failures of the operation are still being discussed, one major consequence was the erosion of Arab confidence in American integrity. Again, the United States had sacrificed Arab-American alliances by conducting covert operations with the traditional enemy of the Arabs, the Persians.

The oil monarchies of the Persian Gulf were under a constant threat from Khomeini’s

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<sup>52</sup> Lenczowski, American Presidents and the Middle East, p. 212.

regime. The Iranian regime in turn, challenged the legitimacy of these monarchies. “By what right do you rule” is Iran’s often quoted slogan. Because of US action, these conservative oil states’ faith in the US government was severely shaken.<sup>53</sup>

Initially, America declared neutrality in the Iran-Iraq War. Iraq initiated the war with the intentions of fulfilling the following objectives, “reverse diplomatic losses of the 1970s, forestall the spread of Iranian revolutionary influences to its own Shiite population, capture valuable oil producing territories, topple the Iranian regime and establish Iraqi supremacy in the Gulf.”<sup>54</sup> However, the United States began to side with Iraq as the eight-year long war progressed. During the mid 1980s, Iran began to openly attack commercial shipping in the Gulf and to lay mines in Gulf waters.<sup>55</sup> These attacks on commercial shipping came on the heels of Iranian advances on the battlefield. These successes were significant enough for Iran to begin to contemplate targeting Kuwaiti assets in the region.<sup>56</sup> At this point eleven Kuwaiti tankers were re-registered under the US flag.<sup>57</sup> Reagan also increased the American naval presence in the region. Finally, the Iranian land and sea offenses were eventually curtailed, in some measure from Reagan’s firm stand against Iran.<sup>58</sup> In July of 1988, Iran-

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 241.

<sup>54</sup> Lapidus, p. 657.

<sup>55</sup> Palmer, On Course to Desert Storm: The United States Navy and the Persian Gulf, p. 111.

<sup>56</sup> Lenczowski, American Presidents and the Middle East, p. 245.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Palmer, On Course to Desert Storm: The United States Navy and the Persian Gulf, p. 119.

Iraq accepted a UN negotiated cease-fire.<sup>59</sup> Again, the Persian Gulf was returned to the status-quo of a balanced Iran and Iraq.

In summary, Reagan continued to work within the framework of the Carter Doctrine, which strengthened regional security and stated US military objectives in the region. During the Reagan years, US policy became more aggressive, ready to challenge any regime or organization that threatened America or its citizenry. Also, the transfer of arms to the region continued to increase, especially to Saudi Arabia.<sup>60</sup>

## **J. BUSH ADMINISTRATION**

During the early 1990s the world witnessed the downfall of many Communist regimes and the end of the Cold War. President Bush, who came to office in 1989 was forced to grapple with this dramatic change. Concerning the Middle East, Bush had to tailor his policies to reflect this new world order. Containment of the Soviet Union was a moot point. Israel's sovereignty was almost guaranteed due to the loss of Soviet influence in the Arab world. Access to oil was the only US interest that could be challenged in the Middle East. American priorities in the region now focused on the Israeli-Palestinian peace process and continued access to Persian Gulf oil.

To maintain access to oil, US policy in the Persian Gulf continued to balance Iraq against Iran. However, one major weakness of this policy was the, "lack of shared vision

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<sup>59</sup> Lenczowski, American Presidents and the Middle East, p. 252.

<sup>60</sup> For complete statistical data on arms transfers to the Middle East see Cordesman, Anthony H., After the Storm: The Changing military Balance in the Middle East, Westview Press, San Francisco CA, 1993.

with the countries of the region."<sup>61</sup> Early in his administration, "President Bush adopted a relatively more conciliatory policy toward the Islamic Republic of Iran, [and] his administration actively supported Saddam's Iraq."<sup>62</sup> The Bush Administration sought to expand trade with Iraq and deflect Congressional investigations into Iraq's human rights violations.<sup>63</sup>

President Bush had been "pursuing a policy of bringing Iraq back into the family of nations, through diplomacy and economic aid." The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait came as a surprise.<sup>64</sup> American policy had been aimed at building up Iraq to support and balance it against Iran.

Bush gained international support to oust Saddam Hussein's forces from Kuwait by using the United Nations as a means to legitimize and build a military coalition to oppose Iraq. After UN sanctions and diplomatic efforts failed to persuade Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait the United States launched Operation Desert Storm, liberating Kuwait through a massive military campaign. The American led coalition achieved the preservation of the nation of Kuwait, maintained access to oil reserves, and was a crushing defeat for Iraq's military and infrastructure. Despite this huge victory for the coalition forces, Saddam

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<sup>61</sup> Kuniholm, pp. 17-18.

<sup>62</sup> Bill, James A. and Springborg, Robert, Politics in the Middle East, 4th ed., Harper Collins College Publishers, NY, 1994, p. 387.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p.388.

<sup>64</sup> Gordon, Michael R. and Trainor, Bernard E. LTGEN, USMC, The General's War, Little Brown and Company, Boston MA, 1995, p. 5.

Hussein remained in control of his regime and went on to stage brutal campaigns against the Shiites in southern Iraq and Iraqi Kurds in the north.

President Bush left office with the United States no longer able to strike a balance of power between Iran and a war weakened belligerent Iraq. The Gulf had become an "American lake," and US access to oil unquestioned, yet, "no stable security arrangements for the Gulf emerged from America's victory of 1990-1991."<sup>65</sup> Saddam Hussein was still in control in Iraq and continued to consolidate his power. America had turned to an arsenal of UN sanctions in an attempt to subdue Iraq.<sup>66</sup> The balance of power would now depend upon the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) nations.<sup>67</sup> President Bush said of America's agenda in the Middle East:

... we will maintain forces deployed in the region, expand our bilateral defense arrangements, reposition materiel and equipment, and conduct joint and combined exercises to defend the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of our partners in the region. We will continue to work to assure access to oil, deter recourse to war, terrorism and subversion, and enforce UN Security Council resolutions.<sup>68</sup>

## **K. CLINTON ADMINISTRATION**

President Clinton took office in a time when conducting foreign affairs were

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<sup>65</sup> Gause, Gregory F., Oil Monarchies: Domestic and Security Challenges in the Arab Gulf States, Council on Foreign Relations Press, NY, 1994, p. 175.

<sup>66</sup> White House, A National Security Strategy of the United States, US Government Printing Office, Washington DC, January 1993, p. 8.

<sup>67</sup> The GCC nations consist of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

increasingly complex. Clinton's first year in office was "a period of 'international deregulation,' one in which there are new players, new capabilities, and new alignments - but, as yet, no new rules."<sup>69</sup> Many political analysts find that President Clinton's administration began with a "sense of confusion" in defining US interests and foreign policy.<sup>70</sup>

In spite of its confused start the Clinton Administration defined US interests in the Middle East the same as previous administrations. In the President's national security strategy he states:

The United States has enduring interests in the Middle East, especially pursuing a comprehensive breakthrough to Middle East peace, assuring the security of Israel and our Arab friends, and maintaining the free flow of oil at reasonable prices. Our strategy is harnessed to the unique characteristics of the region and our vital interests there, as we work to extend the range of peace and stability.<sup>71</sup>

President Clinton has embarked upon a policy of engagement and enlargement. In this strategy the President has stated that America is not the "world's policeman," although, as the remaining superpower, militarily and economically, the United States is obligated to

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<sup>69</sup> Haass, Richard N., "Paradigm Lost," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 74, No. 1, January/February 1995, p. 43.

<sup>70</sup> Wolfowitz, Paul D., "Clinton's First Year," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 73, No. 1 January/February 1995, p. 30. Some contend the confusion went beyond President Clinton's first months. "That American foreign policy stands in disarray and confusion is one of the few propositions on which a consensus exists in the country today." Hendrickson, David C., "The Recovery of Internationalism," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 73, No. 5, September/October 1994, p. 26.

<sup>71</sup> White House, A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement, US Government Printing Office, Washington DC, February 1995, p. 30.

create stable political relations and open trade.

By engaging nations through “preventive diplomacy” (support for democracy, economic assistance, military presence, military-to-military contacts, and multilateral negotiations) America can focus its resources “where it can make the most difference.”<sup>72</sup>

Enlargement is described by the Clinton Administration in the following terms:

Our national security strategy is based on enlarging the community of market democracies while deterring and containing a range of threats to our nation, our allies and our interests. The more that democracy and political and economic liberalization take hold in the world, particularly in countries of geostrategic importance to us, the safer our nation is likely to be and the more our people are likely to prosper.<sup>73</sup>

The strategy of engagement and enlargement was tested in 1994 when Iraqi threats against Kuwait were answered by America’s rapid deployment of forces to the threatened border. In the words of Secretary of Defense William J. Perry “in short, the Gulf in 1991 was a prime example of America’s ability to fight a war, and the Gulf in 1994 was a prime example of our ability to prevent one.”<sup>74</sup>

A significant part of President Clinton’s strategy to safeguard US interests in the Persian Gulf is dual containment. In conjunction with dual containment, the United States “will maintain our longstanding presence which has been centered on naval vessels in and

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>74</sup> Perry, William J., “Working with Gulf Allies to Contain Iraq and Iran,” Prepared remarks to the Council of Foreign Relations, NY, 18 May 1995 (LEXUS-NEXUS).

near the Persian Gulf and prepositioned combat equipment.”<sup>75</sup> The Clinton Administration’s primary focus in the Gulf is to “reduce the chances” that any nation will threaten the sovereignty of any of the GCC states.<sup>76</sup> In addition to American presence in the Gulf the US strategy calls for helping the GCC nations maintain a collective defense.

#### **L. POLICY TRENDS**

The trend in US policy in the region in recent years has gone from indirect involvement, using the Persian Gulf states as a setting for the Cold War confrontation, to very direct American intervention, to include armed confrontation with Gulf nations. Over the course of American involvement there have been numerous presidential doctrines issued, covert operations, and diplomatic/military reactions to crises that have flared up. During this time, America drew a line along the Northern Tier of Middle Eastern states against the Soviets and later on drew a “line in the sand” against Iraqi aggression.

Over the past fifty years Iran has gone from ally to adversary. Presidents Kennedy and Carter pushed for democratization and human rights, which created friction for the Shah’s regime. The Nixon Doctrine placed Iran in the role of regional hegemon that sparked the Shah to build a massive and costly military. Nearly two decades of direct US involvement and support in Iran ended in the creation of the first Islamic republic, devoutly anti-American and now labeled as a backlash state.

Beginning with the Carter administration US policy sought a balance of power

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<sup>75</sup> White House, A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement, p. 30.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

between Iran and Iraq. American policy, while clearly focused on maintaining a regional balance of power was indirect in its method, using such covert methods as "arms for hostages." Iraq's invasion of Kuwait brought the United States back to a direct role, this time engaging in armed confrontation with Iraq.

President Clinton's policy of dual containment continues along the trend of more direct US involvement with Persian Gulf states. The United States is leading what it hopes to be worldwide isolation of Iran and Iraq.

#### **M. NATIONAL INTERESTS**

While the policy of the United States has taken various forms over the last five decades, the American national interests in the Middle East have been steady: confronting the Soviet Union, security for Israel, and access to oil. The end of the Cold War put an end to concerns for containing the Soviet Union, but containment has shifted to the backlash states of Iran and Iraq. Progress is being made toward the security of Israel with the Arab-Israeli peace process. Access to Middle Eastern oil is a vital national interest for the United States, an interest that America is willing to wage war to maintain.

Although, American interests have remained constant in the Persian Gulf, the challenges to those interests have changed. The threat to US dominance in the region until 1989 was the Soviet Union. The threat today, as defined by the Clinton administration, is extremism and the response is continued direct involvement of the United States in the Persian Gulf.

President Clinton is taking this direct role a step farther with dual containment. America is not only directly involved in regional security, but two specific Middle East

nations are the focus of US containment. The Clinton policy of dual containment can be seen as, "the culmination of a trend toward an increasingly direct American strategic role in the gulf."<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Gause, "The Illogic of Dual Containment," p. 59.

### III. DUAL CONTAINMENT: A POLICY DEBATE

#### A. OVERVIEW

In 1993, the United States altered its foreign policy toward the Persian Gulf states of Iran and Iraq. The underlying factor for this policy shift was the demise of the Soviet Union. The United States, no longer having to balance Soviet influence, had the luxury of becoming more selective in its choice of policy options. The two architects of this policy were Anthony Lake, Special Assistant to the President for National Security, and Dr. Martin Indyk, Special Assistant to the President and National Security Council.<sup>78</sup>

The Clinton Administration determined that the two most populous and powerful nations in the region, as a result of their past behavior, are rogue states. In the case of Iraq, the American-Iraqi relationship changed from open trade and dialogue during the Reagan and early Bush years to a policy of complete isolation during the later Bush years and the Clinton Administration. The reasoning for the policy shift toward Iraq is most apparent - its invasion of Kuwait in 1990. In the case of Iran, the United States has followed an increasingly hard line policy. This strategy is a result of increased frustration with the Iranian regime. The United States, no longer concerned with encroaching Soviet influence in the Gulf, is able to isolate Iran without concern for loss of influence to another superpower.

Dual containment, as outlined by Indyk, is attempting to accomplish the following agenda:

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<sup>78</sup> Lake, p. 45 and Indyk et al, p. 1.

- Ensure that US and Allied interest in the region are not challenged
- Maintain a favorable balance of power in the region
- Promote peace between Israel and the Arab world
- Politically isolate Iran and Iraq<sup>79</sup>

Indyk's strategy behind dual containment "means applying constant pressure by boycotting and isolating both (Iran and Iraq) without trying to differentiate or separate them."<sup>80</sup> In his maiden address, as US ambassador to Israel, Indyk outlined what the Clinton Administration considers as American strategic interest in the region: "The first being the existence and security of the State of Israel, followed by the well-being of the superpower's friends in the Arab world, and lastly, free access to Persian Gulf oil at low prices."<sup>81</sup>

Many Middle Eastern experts and foreign governments, however, disagree with dual containment. Disapproval ranges from partial disagreement of certain issues to complete objection. Opponents complain that the policy is short-sighted and lacks pro-active commitment by the United States in the world's most unstable region. Additionally, dual containment runs contrary to Clinton's overall foreign policy objective of engagement and enlargement.<sup>82</sup>

The ban on sale of Iraqi petroleum products and enforcement of sanctions against Iraq is attainable. However, in the case of Iran, America's attempt to unilaterally isolate that

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<sup>79</sup> Indyk, et al, pp. 1-7.

<sup>80</sup> Cited from \_\_\_\_\_. "Commentary Attacks Indyk Speech, Dual Containment," Tel Aviv *YEDI'OT AHARONOT*, Daily Report 24 May 1995, p. 3, translated from Hebrew, FBIS-NES-95-101, article ID "drnes101\_1\_95010".

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> For a complete review of the Clinton Administration's foreign policies see, White House, [A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement](#).

government is nothing more than a pipe dream. The only groups hurt by unilateral sanctions are US companies and the American consumer. A recent bill introduced by Senator Alfonse D'Amato (R) New York calling for an American boycott of all foreign firms providing oil equipment and services to Iran, finds the United States has become hypocritical in its policies.<sup>83</sup> In essence, foreign companies would be forced to choose between trading with Iran or the United States. America had previously "dubbed illegal a similar boycott (by Arab states on companies willing to trade with Israel)."<sup>84</sup>

Opposition also focuses on the past failures of containment in general. Containment, it is argued, is nothing more than lack of a policy. If the United States truly wants to influence these regimes the approach should be a constructive and open dialogue. Containment is a policy of delaying action. Eventually, the United States will open diplomatic channels with these regimes. By opening firm, but fair dialogue now, these two states will eventually succumb to US pressure more quickly than through isolation. Dual containment and Congressional rhetoric of boycotts and covert actions to overthrow these regimes creates additional instability in an inherently unstable region.<sup>85</sup> Assad Homayoun, a former Iranian diplomat, said the "worst mistake the United States can commit is to offend the Iranian people by CIA covert action . . . The only way to overthrow the corrupt,

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<sup>83</sup> Barraclough, Colin, "As Iran Seeks Oil Partners: US Firms Can't Join the Dance," *Christian Science Monitor*, 12 December 1995, p. 8.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Republican Senator Alfonse D'Amato introduced the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions Act of 1995 on January 25 (legislative day, January 10), 1995. House Leader Newt Gingrich also recently introduced a bill authorizing \$18 million for covert action against the Iranian government.

totalitarian ideological regime of Iran is by political, psychological and intellectual struggle, not by means of weapons.”<sup>86</sup>

This chapter will present both sides of the debate on dual containment. It will describe the reasoning behind the development of dual containment and the inherent risks associated with its implementation. The chapter will also present criticism of the policy from leading scholars and diplomats. Finally, the chapter will summarize the debate and offer possible policy alternatives to dual containment.

## **B. DUAL CONTAINMENT**

The official announcement of the policy of dual containment came from a speech delivered by Martin Indyk in May of 1993. Lake, Indyk’s superior, expounded further on dual containment in March 1994. Lake begins by defining the core values of the United States, which he sees as general US interests. These four core values are: 1) pursuit of democratic institutions, 2) expansion of free markets, 3) peaceful settlement of conflict, and 4) promotion of collective security.<sup>87</sup>

Standing in opposition to these core values are what Lake defines as “backlash states,” specifically Cuba, North Korea, Iran, Iraq, and Libya. The article further elaborates that these backlash states are aggressive and defiant, with growing ties between them.<sup>88</sup>

These backlash states share some common characteristics that run counter to

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<sup>86</sup> Cited in Perlmutter, Amos, “Containing the Muscle of Iranian Mullahs,” *Washington Times*, 16 January 1996, p. A13.

<sup>87</sup> Lake, p. 45.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

American core values. Those characteristics are: control of power through coercion, suppression of human rights; promotion of radical ideologies; opposition to popular participation; inability to engage constructively with other nations, or to function well in alliances, and possession of a "siege mentality," as evidenced by seeking to obtain weapons of mass destruction.<sup>89</sup>

Lake states that as the sole superpower the United States has a responsibility to confront the backlash states and neutralize, contain, and reform them. Since each backlash state is unique, it is necessary for US policies to be tailored to each state, with the primary focus on containment. The containment of these states will be done in three ways. First, through isolation from the international community. Second, diplomatic and economic pressures using such methods as UN sanctions or international boycotts. Third, restrictions of their military and technical capabilities.<sup>90</sup>

With the above foundation established Lake completes the article by looking specifically at the dual containment of Iraq and Iran. The specific regional interests for the United States in desiring a balance of power in the Persian Gulf are protecting "the security interests of our friends and in the free flow of oil at stable prices."<sup>91</sup>

Lake reviews the recent policies that attempted to balance power in the region. The Nixon Doctrine's building up Iran, and the Reagan efforts to support Iraq against Iran both,

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., p. 46.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., pp. 46-47.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., pp. 47-48.

relied upon one of these backlash states to balance the other. Today both regimes are hostile to US interests and the only acceptable option, he believes, is containment of both nations. Dual containment cannot be accomplished by the United States alone; however, it requires the assistance of regional allies, especially the GCC nations.

Lake acknowledges that the Clinton administration has certain advantages that previous administrations did not. First, with elimination of the Soviet Union the strategic importance of Iraq and Iran is decreased. Second, the balance of power between Iraq and Iran is at a much lower level of military capability than in the previous two decades. Third, since the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq the GCC nations are less reluctant to join the United States in military alliances, more willing to allow the deployment of US troops, and prepositioning of military stocks. Finally, American relations in the Middle East are strong with Egypt, Israel, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia.<sup>92</sup>

Based upon the changes in the region the United States no longer needs to rely on Iraq or Iran to be a part of the balance of power equation. The Clinton Administration, referring to dual containment, is "confident that we can sustain this situation for some time"<sup>93</sup>

Lake points out that dual containment is not duplicate containment. The Clinton Administration recognizes that the regimes in Iraq and Iran are very different, requiring tailored approaches. Iraq is Saddam Hussein's regime: secular, aggressive, committing crimes against humanity, and, in general, an international renegade. Iran is an Islamic

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<sup>92</sup> Lake, pp. 48-49.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., p. 49.

Republic; a theocratic, revolutionary regime with a feeling of cultural and political destiny, engaged in "outlaw behavior."<sup>94</sup>

Lake notes that the United States is not opposed to an Islamic government; nor, does the United States want to overthrow the Iranian regime. He states that what America seeks is an "authoritative dialogue" in which to discuss Iranian behavior.

The tactics of the containment of Iraq center on the UN resolutions and reflect an international consensus. The United States wants a democratic Iraq and supports the exiled Iraqi National Congress. Frustrating the containment is what Lake calls Saddam's defiance, combined with a guise of compliance toward the UN sanctions. The Clinton Administration believes that once the sanctions are complied with and oil flows again Saddam will renew his pursuit of weapons of mass destruction.

Lake argues, "Iran is both a lesser and a greater challenge."<sup>95</sup> This challenge is the dilemma facing American containment of Iran. More normal relations with Iran are conceivable, but according to Lake, "political differences with Iran will not easily be resolved." In spite of these formidable differences this is not a "clash of civilizations." What the United States is opposed to is extremism, either secular or religious. Iran challenges American interests in five areas: 1) seeking weapons of mass destruction, 2) sponsoring terrorism and assassinations, 3) opposing the Arab/Israeli peace process, 4) seeking to

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid., p. 50.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., p. 52.

acquire offensive weapons, and 5) exploiting difficult situations with US allies.<sup>96</sup>

In containing Iran the Clinton Administration is not supported by UN resolutions, but instead must attempt to create an international consensus for support. Some challenges exist in confronting Iran's procurement of conventional weapons. It is difficult to distinguish between military items for self defense and those that have an offensive use that could destabilize the region.<sup>97</sup>

Lake concludes by stating that dual containment is "a realistic and sustainable policy"<sup>98</sup> Dual containment is not a crusade, but a "genuine and responsible effort" to protect American interests, stabilize international politics, and enlarge the community of nations committed to America's core values.<sup>99</sup>

### **C. THE RISKS OF DUAL CONTAINMENT**

The proponents of dual containment admit some risks are involved in pursuing this policy. Since the regimes in Teheran and Baghdad are seen as weak, these risks are discounted as unlikely by Lake. The three major risks will be reviewed below.

The first risk is that as a result of dual containment Iran and Iraq "may be driven together in their efforts to resist the West."<sup>100</sup> In a view from the Middle East it has been said

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<sup>96</sup> Indyk, et al, p. 5.

<sup>97</sup> Lake, p. 53.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., p. 55.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., p. 54.

that, "Baghdad and Teheran might form an axis and seek support from France and Russia"<sup>101</sup>

Some evidence of limited cooperation between Iraq and Iran, specifically in recent prisoner of war negotiations, has been observed. In August of 1995 Iran released 100 Iraqi prisoners of war captured during the 1980-88 war. This may signal initial attempts at normalizing relations between the two nations. Or it may be, as one news agency said, "that the two countries are just playing cards in order to confront the US containment policy against them."<sup>102</sup>

Many observers see the possibility of driving Iran and Iraq together as remote, since very basic cultural and political differences exist between the two nations. They fought a costly war for eight years and have disputed the Shaat-al-Arab for even longer. As Martin Indyk stated, "they distrust each other much more than they distrust the Great Satan, the United States."<sup>103</sup> This seething hostility between these two nations was highlighted by Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz. He accused Iran of initiating the Gulf War, holding some 20,000 POW's, and supporting and sponsoring anti-Iraqi terrorist groups.<sup>104</sup>

The second risk involved with dual containment is that Iran will be provided

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<sup>101</sup> \_\_\_\_\_. "Saddam's 5-year Old Thirst for Revenge," *Mideast Mirror*, Vol. 09, No. 146, 1 August 1995 (LEXUS-NEXUS).

<sup>102</sup> \_\_\_\_\_. "Iran Issues Decree Releasing 100 Iraqi POWs," *The Xinhua News Agency*, 15 August 1995 (LEXUS-NEXUS).

<sup>103</sup> Indyk, p. 6.

<sup>104</sup> Lorieux, Claude, "Tariq Aziz: Iraq is not Opposed to Arab-Israeli Peace Process, Paris *LE FIGARO*, 30 September, 1995, p. 2, translated from French, FIBIS-NES-95-191, article ID "drnes191\_k\_95003".

opportunities to "meddle and prey on Iraqi weakness."<sup>105</sup> A fear exists that Iran will attempt to destabilize Iraq by manipulating the Iraqi Shiite and Kurdish populations. Up to this time, no concrete indications have surfaced that either group is interested in leaning toward Iran, or that Iran has made any significant overtures to fully support these groups.

The third risk that dual containment brings is the complete destabilization or disintegration of Iraq. It is possible that Saddam's regime will collapse under the weight of UN sanctions. A total collapse of the regime could create either a weak military junta or a political vacuum.<sup>106</sup>

Pressures on a shattered Iraqi regime could come from an internal power struggle. More drastic consequences might be seen if the forces were external. Neighboring nations may seek to carve up Iraq.<sup>107</sup> Or, Iran could attempt to put a friendly regime in Baghdad and begin to exert pressure on neighboring Gulf nations.<sup>108</sup>

#### **D. CRITICISMS OF DUAL CONTAINMENT**

One criticism of dual containment is the value or cost of a policy of containment in general. Lessons can be drawn from the US policy of containment of the Soviet Union. Whether the object of containment is the Soviet Union or backlash states the goals, strategies, and criticisms are similar.

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<sup>105</sup> Lake, p. 54.

<sup>106</sup> Gause, "The Illogic of Dual Containment," p. 63.

<sup>107</sup> Gold, Dore, "Middle East Chess Players Abandon Old Strategies," *The Jerusalem Post*, 15 September 1995, p. 11.

<sup>108</sup> Gause, "The Illogic of Dual Containment," p. 63.

The strategy of containment is to confront the opposition at strategic points of conflict, and hold them there. Following this course the initiative is given to the opposition; containment becomes a policy of reaction. Containment has no mechanism internal to it that specifies the terms of an end to the confrontation. Specific terms to initiate a process to bring about an end are not present; it is a policy that by design wears down the other side. Henry Kissinger has called it, a "doctrine of perpetual struggle."<sup>109</sup>

In reflecting on the containment of the Soviets, Kissinger makes several observations that apply to the current containment of backlash states. The goal of containment is "the age-old American dream of a peace achieved by the conversion of the adversary."<sup>110</sup> He sees containment as a doctrine that is a seemingly endless stalemate, essentially passive, taking too long and costing too much, and assuming that the collapse of an adversary can be achieved in an essentially benign way.<sup>111</sup>

Containment, by virtue of its design, requires a great deal of support from allies and places the United States in a position of strengthening countries already on its side. The containment of the Soviets was initiated at the height of America's strength and the same can be said of America's current position in the Gulf. The United States enjoys a position of strength in the Gulf, and by focusing entirely on these regimes it is granting these outlaw

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<sup>109</sup> Kissinger, Henry, "Reflections on Containment," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 73, No. 3, May/June 1994, p. 122.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 120.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 129-130.

states "moral equivalence" to the United States.<sup>112</sup>

Possibly the greatest weakness of a strategy of containment is the absence of any avenue for diplomacy until the "climactic final scene." The final scene does not happen until the United States can accept "the conversion of the men in the black hats."<sup>113</sup> Containment of the Soviet Union was successful after forty years, at a great cost in time and resources.

Turning now to specific criticisms of dual containment, Graham Fuller finds that dual containment is not a useful concept.<sup>114</sup> He prefers the notion of single containment of Iraq. Dual containment from Fuller's perspective has three problems. First, it overstates the threat posed by Iran. Second, we need to take more care in dealing with Iran since it is the first major Islamic Republic, we may be setting critical precedents. Finally, the United States should move to, "a more open order in the Gulf," allowing America to create useful security arrangements.<sup>115</sup>

Fuller sees dual containment as an unnecessarily confrontational policy. Of more value, according to Fuller, would be a policy of "inclusion" seeking some kind of dialogue with Iran.<sup>116</sup>

Both Anthony Cordesman and Phebe Marr see dual containment as essentially

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid., p. 123.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., p. 130.

<sup>114</sup> Graham Fuller is a senior analyst at the RAND corporation. He has written and spoken extensively on American policies in the Middle East.

<sup>115</sup> Indyk, et al, p. 7.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

military containment, or, at a minimum, the preservation of the current military balance in the Gulf. Given the ability (or inability) of the Gulf states to match up with Iraq and Iran militarily the job falls to the United States.<sup>117</sup> Successful containment of Iraq and Iran, especially in the procurement of weapons of mass destruction, will "mean a US presence and US deployment" to the Gulf.<sup>118</sup>

In agreement with Fuller, Cordesman also argues that we have grossly over estimated the capabilities of Iran, and that Iraq's military is certainly crushed. The challenge for successful implementation of dual containment lies in America's ability to support it through military commitment. Cordesman predicts that America's cumulative decline in defense spending will amount to 27.2% by 1999.<sup>119</sup> Facing this constraint Cordesman questions whether the United States can afford containment.

In view of potential decreases in defense spending by the United States, Marr points out that the power balance will require an active role by the GCC nations and our other "regional allies" (as defined by Martin Indyk: Turkey, Egypt, and Israel).<sup>120</sup> The GCC

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid., Anthony Cordesman is a Professor of National Security Studies at Georgetown University and a Woodrow Wilson Fellow. Phebe Marr is a Senior Fellow at the National Defense Institute. Cordesman states containment is "basically an American ability to contain Iranian and Iraqi military power.," p. 11, and Marr states that balance of military power will be from the United States, "for the foreseeable future," p. 15.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., p. 15, see also, Gause, p. 61, Goodarzi, p. 20, and Rouleau, p. 70, all exploring the increased expenditures required by GCC nations to support dual containment.

nations are slipping in their commitment to dual containment and even "questioning aspects of our policy toward Iraq."<sup>121</sup>

Reliance on our regional allies presents several special problems. Turkey is still carrying a burden from Operation Desert Storm from the loss of revenue of Iraqi oil shipments. Egypt is weighed down by a great number of domestic problems to be of much help in Gulf security. Israel is politically unable to provide direct support.<sup>122</sup>

In a recent article on dual containment Jubin Goodarzi states that dual containment is "more of a 'non-policy' than a policy option."<sup>123</sup> He sees that the policy has little influence in determining any events in Iran or Iraq. Beyond these limitations are the potential disastrous consequences that it brings to Iraq - complete destabilization. He sees the sanctions as having the effect of "the steady marginalization of the middle class - an essential pillar in a healthy and stable Iraqi society."<sup>124</sup>

Continued US military presence in the Gulf to contain Iran and Iraq may lead to "their delegitimization and loss of credibility in the eyes of the local population, thereby sowing the seeds for political discontent."<sup>125</sup> While serving as an effective force to contain

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>123</sup> Goodarzi, p. 20, see also, Wolfowitz, p. 40, finding the Clinton Administration using dual containment to avoid issues.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., an increased American presence could become a "lightening rod for discontent," Gause, "The Illogic of Dual Containment." p. 62.

backlash states the American military could become a target for fundamentalist movements in the Gulf monarchies.

The location, size, resources, and population of Iran and Iraq will mean that they "will always be major actors in the Gulf."<sup>126</sup> A fundamental flaw in dual containment is simply isolating such significant regional actors.

In his rebuttal to Anthony Lake's article on dual containment, F. Gregory Gause critiques the policy and finds several "tragic flaws." He highlights the risks of forcing Iran and Iraq together, destabilizing Iraq, and the requirement to bring about an unlikely cooperation between regional allies (Egypt, Turkey, Israel, and the GCC states). Cooperation from regional allies is weakening from pressures to reopen diplomatic channels and especially to open economic avenues with Iran and Iraq. Even American businesses have expressed concern about the continued isolation of Iran.<sup>127</sup>

Gause finds that the most serious flaw in dual containment is the notion that the regional status quo in the Gulf can be maintained over the coming years, and that "any changes there can be stage-managed by Washington."<sup>128</sup> In Iraq, especially with pressure from the United States, the government is unstable. Concerning Iran, no reasons are apparent that this regime is willing to play any role in its own isolation and demise.

Jack Patterson, looking specifically at the effects of dual containment on Iraq, finds

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<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Gause, "The Illogic of Dual Containment," pp. 60-61.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., p. 62.

what he calls a "sanctions dilemma." He notes that sanctions were used prior to Operation Desert Storm in an attempt to avoid war. Instead, the sanctions became a "trap door" to war. The sanctions were tried and when they failed the only option that remained was armed confrontation. If sanctions didn't work prior to that war why should there be an expectation that sanctions will work differently now?<sup>129</sup>

Patterson also points out that economic sanctions do not have the "humane" aspects often attributed to them. Sanctions are often seen as serving as an alternative to war, limiting suffering; however, they have "had the same effects on the civilian population as smart bombs."<sup>130</sup> Patterson believes that economic sanctions without some mix of nonmilitary options will not lead to acceptable solutions in Iraq.

Eric Rouleau also takes a critical view of the policy of dual containment.<sup>131</sup> He sees this as another example of America attaching moralism to foreign policy. The United States has a desire to identify "good" and "bad" states, but this categorization is not used with any consistency. Rouleau acknowledges America's desire to see a regime change in Iraq; however, he does not see the containment of Iraq through sanctions as leading to an overthrow of Saddam's government. The people of Iraq don't have the energy or desire to overthrow their government since they are "absorbed by the daily struggle to survive the

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<sup>129</sup> Patterson, Jack, "The Sanctions Dilemma," *Middle East Report*, Vol. 24, No. 2-3, March/June 1994, p. 25.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Eric Rouleau is a former French Ambassador to Turkey and Tunisia.

embargo."<sup>132</sup> Sanctions against Iraq are more enforceable due to world condemnation of Iraq. However, with every rule there is an exception. In this case, it is the unique status of Jordan. The Kingdom is exempt from UN sanctions that bar Iraq from exporting its oil and imports 75,000 barrels per day from Iraq.<sup>133</sup> Jordan pays world market price for the oil, which is significant income for the Iraqi coffers.

The French have become increasingly rebellious toward world policy of isolating Iraq. The French, traditional supporters of Iraq, maintain that contacts must be established within Iraq. The French government is pursuing what it describes as "a policy of getting over the crisis (with Iraq), and the sooner the better."<sup>134</sup> The Europeans believe that because Iraq has 10 percent of the world's oil reserves, it cannot be ostracized forever.<sup>135</sup>

In addition, the French contend that present world policy toward Iraq is favorable to American business. American corporations, through the Polish embassy are already signing contracts for major projects in Iraq once the sanctions are lifted.<sup>136</sup> The French protest that Saudi Arabia, America's strategic ally, is the greatest beneficiary from dual containment.

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<sup>132</sup> Rouleau, Eric, "America's Unyielding Policy Toward Iraq," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 74, No. 1, January/February 1995, p. 68.

<sup>133</sup> Al-Khalidi, Suleiman, "Jordan and Iraq to Discuss Oil Pipeline Deal," *Reuters News Service-Middle East*, 9 September 1995 (LEXUS-NEXUS).

<sup>134</sup> Cited from Borowiec, Andrew, "US Oil Trade with Iran Angers European Allies," *Washington Times*, 3 March 1995, p. A1.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Hamadah, Hasan, "Sanctions Part of US Economic Strategy," Paris *AL-MUHARRIR*, 6 March 1995, p. 9, translated from Arabic, FBIS-NES-95-091, article ID "drnes091\_s\_95013".

Saudi oil exports since Desert Storm have increased by some estimates as much as 33 percent, while the world continues to pay inflated prices.

In examining dual containment, as it applies to Iran, inconsistencies are apparent according to Rouleau. While America seeks to build a coalition to isolate Iran economically the United States remains one of Iran's three primary trading partners.<sup>137</sup> Although the American embargo prohibits domestic importation of Iranian oil, "American companies spend between \$3.5 and \$4 billion on Iranian oil, to be sold on the world market."<sup>138</sup> These figures combined with \$800 million in state of the art technology transfers (Apple Computer, Chrysler Corp., Motorola, RJ Renolds, and Bell Helicopter) account for almost \$5 billion in trade.<sup>139</sup> American companies have displaced Germany and Japan as Iran's most important trading partner.<sup>140</sup> The People's Mojahedin of Iran, an Iranian resistance group with Communist ties, reports that EXXON Corp., purchased close to \$2 billion worth Iranian oil.<sup>141</sup> Iran, which spends \$2 billion a year on arms, is in effect able to by all its military armament needs, including nuclear technology with American petrodollars.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> Rouleau, p. 61.

<sup>138</sup> \_\_\_\_\_. "When Trade and Foreign Policy Collide," *Washington Post*, 20 March 1995, p. A18.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, p. A18.

<sup>140</sup> Borowiec, p. A1.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*

Iran, taking advantage of American unilateral sanctions against it, has sought to develop other lucrative markets. The Iranian government estimates at least 80 foreign companies are investing in ten major gas and oil projects.<sup>143</sup> Russia has announced that it expects to export to Iran more than \$4 billion in goods - including nuclear technology.<sup>144</sup>

India has seen an opportunity to forge ties with Iran to put further pressure on Pakistan.<sup>145</sup> India's relationship with Iran is mainly focused on military matters. India has offered to assist the Iranians in the maintenance and service of their submarines, communications equipment, aircraft and tanks.<sup>146</sup>

Turkmenistan and Iran have completed an agreement to build a \$215 million oil pipeline to be completed in 1997. Iran is the major investor by providing 80 percent of the development capital.<sup>147</sup> This agreement is seen as another example of the shortcomings and failures of the Clinton Administration's foreign policy toward Iran.<sup>148</sup>

Lenczowski also outlines inconsistency in the US policy directed toward Iran. As

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<sup>143</sup> \_\_\_\_\_. "Russia and Iran Agree to Set Up Joint Oil Development Companies," *Compass Newswire*, 28 December 1995 (LEXUS-NEXUS).

<sup>144</sup> \_\_\_\_\_. "The New Russo-American Rivalry in the Middle East," *Mideast Mirror*, Vol. 10, No. 9, 12 January 1996 (LEXUS-NEXUS).

<sup>145</sup> \_\_\_\_\_. "Iran Woos India, Looking for Options in Asia," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, September 1995, Sec. Feature, Vol. 7, No. 9, p. 6.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> \_\_\_\_\_. "Iran: Turkmen Gas Pipe Link Gets Go-Ahead," *MEED*, Vol. 39, No. 36, 11 September 1995, p. 93.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

noted by others, he sees that America conducts diplomacy and trade with other nations that do not share our views on human rights. He contends no proof exists that isolation will force a country to improve its human rights performance.<sup>149</sup>

Lenczowski questions one of the basic foundations of the policy against Iran, the exportation of Islamic fundamentalism. Lenczowski states that "religious fundamentalism per se is not a crime."<sup>150</sup> It may be inaccurate to assume that all terrorism in the name of Islam is exported from Iran.

He also challenges two other fundamental points of dual containment: the Rushdie affair and Iran's opposition to the Arab-Israeli peace process. The Salman Rushdie affair should not be allowed to undermine the relations between nations because of an author's "foolish utterances."<sup>151</sup> Iran's opposition to the peace process is simply that nation's view, and the United States should not assume it can dictate how any state thinks.

## **E. SUMMARY**

### **1. Strengths of Dual Containment**

According to Lake and Indyk the policy of dual containment depends upon three larger considerations. First, prior to the end of the Cold War, the United States was forced to support one regime against another in order to maintain a balance of power in the region against Soviet aggression. With our major adversary eliminated from the region, US policy

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<sup>149</sup> Lenczowski, "Iran: The Big Debate," p. 60, as well as Fuller citing the China example.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., p. 61.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

toward the Persian Gulf is able to become less restrictive and more discriminate. With both Iran and Iraq displaying openly hostile policies toward America, the United States is at liberty to institute a policy that contains both regimes, without suffering a loss of strategic advantage. Secondly, the fundamental goal of dual containment is to politically and economically isolate these regimes, in part in order to increase the chances for a lasting peace settlement between the Arabs and Israel. Therefore, a policy that inhibits contact between these regimes and their surrogates can only expedite the peace process. Thirdly, the policy facilitates a forward deployment of US military to a region of the world that is capable of exploding at any time. Not only does American military presence decrease the chance of further war in the region, it also increases cooperation between our allies in the form of training exercises and joint operations.

The Clinton Administration contends that as long as the present regimes remain in power in Iran and Iraq, the United States does not need to depend on either hostile state to maintain the balance of power or to protect American interests in the region. Dual containment is a realistic and sustainable policy that marries vital US national interests with the realities of the Persian Gulf. Dual containment continues to allow America to accomplish its three primary objectives in the region - isolation of Iran and Iraq, security of Israel, and access to oil.

## **2. Difficulties of Dual Containment**

The basis of most objections to dual containment seems to focus on the passiveness of the policy. America has chosen to "wait-out" the present regimes of Iran and Iraq. The United States waited almost 50 years before the powerful Soviet Union imploded, but at

what cost? Thus, the same question is asked concerning dual containment in the Persian Gulf. What is the cost to the United States by pursuing this policy of isolating the two most powerful and populous countries in the region? Kissinger's complaint of containment is that this policy does not contribute to the overall US grand strategy.

Fuller contends that the United States has almost become obsessed with Iran. The Clinton Administration, by declaring Iran as one the most threatening regimes in the world, gives that government and its ceaseless call for Islamic revolution legitimacy. The United States has over estimated the power and influence of Iran. He maintains America should follow a policy of single containment of Iraq, while seeking out possible replacement governments for a post-Saddam Iraq, and advocates open and productive engagement with Iran.

Cordesman argues that America, when assessing Iran and Iraq's military strengths, focuses on order of battle numbers rather than actual capabilities. In essence, the United States overestimates the military threat from these regimes. On the other hand, he believes these countries will eventually acquire WMD and that containment will not be able to stop this procurement. Containment, an extremely expensive policy for the US military, will only slow down the process of WMD procurement. Cordesman does not argue with the overall strategy of dual containment, but questions how long the United States will be able to deploy its military forces to the region. If the United States insists on pursuing containment of Iran, its focus should be devoted to WMD only.

Marr echos many of Cordesman's views toward dual containment; however, she is less optimistic of America's ability to project troops to the region, and questions America's

ability to influence these regimes through sanctions. She is another proponent of productive dialogue with the government of Iran and the possible replacement of the government of Saddam Hussein.

Gause, one of the most outspoken critics of dual containment, believes the policy is unattainable. The United States, by isolating itself from Iran and Iraq, has effectively cut off any influence it may have had over these two states. He claims that the United States cannot contain Iran unilaterally, and that international pressure is growing to reevaluate the UN sanctions against Iraq. Gause notes that such a large American military presence in the region creates instability. The legitimacy of the Gulf monarchies face internal challenges. These factions contend the only reason the conservative monarchies hold power is with US military assistance. Gause concedes that the American military presence lends credence to their arguments that these regimes are illegitimate, and acting as US puppet states. Gause proposes that the United States seek productive dialogue with Iran to ensure its security needs are met. A similar dialogue must be opened with Iraq when it eventually transitions to a post-Saddam government. He also proposes that the United States seek out all other actors (Iraqi Shiites and Kurds) to ensure that Iraq does not break into ethnic states when Saddam's regime is gone.

Rouleau says the United States must stop attaching morality to its foreign policy. He sees America preaching a policy of containment of Iran, but is one of Iran's leading trading partners. Concerning Iraq, Rouleau highlights that sanctions are not hurting the regime, instead hurting the most vulnerable, Iraqi citizens - a view shared by Patterson. Sanctions and embargos will never fulfill their expected purpose because each of these backlash

regimes have international trading partners. Iraq continues to trade with Jordan, and Iran has completed numerous contracts with numerous other states. Rouleau believes the only way to improve the situation in the Persian Gulf is through productive dialogue with both regimes.

Lenczowski, also, is critical of the dual containment policy. His major disagreement with the policy is in regard to Iran. He contends that the United States trades with other nations not sharing our political or ideological view - namely China and Vietnam. Islamic fundamentalism is not a crime, and neither is Iranian opposition to the Arab-Israeli peace process. The United States cannot let one personalized incident, the Rushdie affair, influence so heavily our overall policy toward Iran.

#### **F. CONCLUSIONS**

Most experts seem to support containment of Iraq, with varying degrees of severity. The Clinton Administration favors the most stringent rules governing containment - no trade or diplomatic contact. Conversely, the French advocate lessening of the sanctions and possible dialogue with the present Iraqi regime.

If the United States does continue with its present policy toward Iraq, it will be quite obvious when the opportunity would exist to open up relations with that country. Iraq and Saddam are synonymous. He is the government; therefore, when he is removed from the scene, the window of opportunity will be open.

Iran, on the other hand, is more complicated. It is well documented that America's policy of containing Iran is based on past US disappointment with opening productive dialogue, and that regime's unrelenting hostility toward America. The United States has

chosen to remain silent and confrontational to the Iranians. American policy makers have chosen to distance the United States from any diplomatic contacts and have attempted with limited success to inhibit American companies from doing business with Iran.

Critics of dual containment generally agree that Iran is not the threat that the United States perceives it to be. Opponents of dual containment all recommend some form of diplomatic relations with the Islamic Republic. If the United States would pursue such a policy, the question that arises is not how to open the lines of communications, but with whom in the Iranian regime.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> Ghoreishi, Ahmad, "Prospects for a Regime Change in Iran," unpublished article, 1995, p. 20.



#### IV. DUAL CONTAINMENT: IMPACT OF IMPLEMENTATION

##### A. OVERVIEW

From its inception in May 1993, the goal of the dual containment policy, as outlined by Martin Indyk and Anthony Lake, has been to isolate Iran and Iraq on three fronts: politically, economically, and militarily. In the case of Iraq, this policy has enjoyed far more success due to the international community's willingness to participate. In the case of Iran, however, it has had only two crusaders - the United States and Israel. This chapter will discuss the successes and failures of dual containment as they apply to the political, economic and military isolation of Iran and Iraq.

The United States has maintained its policy of dual containment for more than three years. No indications exist that the Clinton administration will cease its policy toward what it still considers to be backlash states. America continues its containment of Iran despite pressure from many nations to open trade with Iran. The United States is pursuing the containment of Iran without UN sanctions. The United States is creating what Richard Haass has called a "foreign policy posse." This posse is an informal coalition of nations voluntarily aiding America in its goal of containment of Iran. The United States has to provide the impetus and the resources for this posse. Opposed to UN sanctions, foreign policy posses "lack clear political or legal authority and means of reliable financing."<sup>153</sup>

In addition, the United States remains adamant about continuing the isolation of Iraq.

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<sup>153</sup> Haass, Richard N., "Foreign Policy by Posse," *The National Interest*, No. 41, Fall 1995, p. 63.

This containment, however, has taken on a different flavor. Since the Bush Administration, America's relationship with Iraq has increasingly focused on a single individual - Saddam Hussein.

## **B. DUAL CONTAINMENT'S IMPACT ON IRAN**

### **1. Politically**

Unlike Iraq, Iran has no central power figure who leads the nation. Iran is ruled by a coalition government.<sup>154</sup> The Islamic Republic of Iran has a constitution. It allows for an Executive branch headed by an elected president, a legislative branch consisting of the Majlis (Parliament) made up of publicly elected members, and a judicial branch. The entire government is supervised by a Council of Guardians made up of Islamic scholars. This Council of Guardians ensures that all laws and regulations are consistent with Islamic principles. Finally, above all others is the Faghih, who is the supreme religious leader of the nation.<sup>155</sup>

Since the Revolution in 1979, Iranians have become increasingly disenchanted with their government. This is especially true since the death of the charismatic Ayatollah

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<sup>154</sup> For a complete description of the main factions in Iranian politics and their agendas see Mansor, Mike, "A Glossary of Contemporary Politics in the Islamic Republic of Iran," *The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, Vol. XIV, No. 8., April 1996, p. 77.

<sup>155</sup> Aghayan, Alexander, Doing Business with Iran after Prohibition, <http://ns1.win.net/iran/paper.html>, NY, 1995. The Faghih has the ultimate say in Iranian politics. He is the sovereign authority who can override both the parliament and the president. The Faghih is only found in the Shiite sect of Islam. He is appointed to rule in the absence of the 12th Imam. Although, the present Faghih, Aliakbar Khamnie may have the authority to control Iranian politics, he does not have the tools. The military and other security forces are under the control of other political elements.

Ruhollah Khomeini in 1989. No strong political figure has filled the void left by Khomeini; therefore, numerous power struggles for control of the government have occurred.

Quasi-governmental foundations and institutions, seemingly accountable to no one, have created a state within the state and, in the pursuit of their private goals, have sapped the country's financial and economic resources and dragged the government to the verge of economic bankruptcy.<sup>156</sup>

Today, the most recognized face in Iranian politics belongs to President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani. President Rafsanjani is considered by many Western analysts to be a "moderate."<sup>157</sup> The Iranian President has faced many obstacles since the death of Khomeini. These obstacles include the aftermath of the Iran-Iraq war, a crumbling economy, and leading a country targeted as the number one enemy of the sole remaining superpower.

President Rafsanjani and the other ruling figures have been able to turn the last obstacle - US condemnation - to their advantage. They have justified their existence and right to rule by claiming that Iran is not a third world power. The rhetoric these leaders preach to the masses is that Iran is a world power, which in turn explains why the United States has made such military and diplomatic efforts to isolate it. The Iranian regime often makes reference to the United States crediting Iran with having the power to shape events such as the Arab-Israeli peace process, and the spread of Muslim fundamentalism in Algeria and Egypt.

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<sup>156</sup> Ganjbakhsh, Amir H., "After Two Disastrous Decisions, Revolutionary Iran at a Crossroad." *The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, Vol. XIV, No. 8, April 1996, p. 73.

<sup>157</sup> This title is a carry over from the 1980s, as his political element was the "moderate" Iranian group responsible for the infamous "Missile for Hostages" deal worked out with the United States under the Reagan Administration.

The Iranian regime has blamed all existing internal problems on America. "If I were Rafsanjani, 'says a Tehran political analyst,' I would hold daily prayers of thanks to Clinton."<sup>158</sup> Petrossian's article summarizes this perversely symbiotic relation between Iran and America:

The constant US attacks on Iran have helped the government blame its shortcomings on foreign plots and to dampen public criticism of economic hardship. And at a time when many Iranians might have been wondering where the Islamic Republic is heading, they find their country attracting the kind of attention from Washington that is normally reserved for fellow superpowers. Such are Iran's power and influence.<sup>159</sup>

## 2. Economically

With the announcement by a subsidiary of CONOCO Corporation in 1995 that it had procured contracts with the Iranian government for oil exploration, the Clinton Administration has increased its determination to cripple the Iranian economy. "America's trade ban covers all sectors and curtails the \$329 million of US exports that went directly to Iran in 1994."<sup>160</sup> The major drawback to this policy objective is the lack of support from the international community - most notably the Europeans, Japanese and Russians. "Japan and European allies such as France, Italy, Germany, and Britain, which have large companies that want to work with Iran's oil program, have resisted such restrictions on trade on both

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<sup>158</sup> Petrossian, Vahe, "US has a Serious Problem with Iran," *MEED*, Vol. 39, No. 18, 5 May 1995, p. 3.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>160</sup> Rathmell, Andrew, "Iran's Liquid Lifeline" *Jane's Intelligence Review*, Vol. 7, No. 9, September 1995, p. 411.

political and economic grounds.”<sup>161</sup>

In the late 1980s, Iran was forced to borrow heavily from international lenders because of its very costly war with Iraq. Today, this debt is estimated at \$22 billion, most of which is owed to Japanese and European firms.<sup>162</sup> Therefore, the Japanese and Europeans are hesitant to follow Washington’s lead to economically isolate Iran and hinder its ability to repay its foreign debt.

In 1994, approximately \$14 billion of this debt came due and Iran was unable to pay. When Iran approached its lenders for rescheduling options, the Clinton Administration was able to delay refinancing of this outstanding debt. Much to the Clinton Administration’s dismay, Iran did reach an agreement with its creditors in 1995, and has been able to make required payments totaling approximately \$4 billion a year. This equates to between one third and one fourth of its total oil revenues.<sup>163</sup>

Exportation of petroleum products is the lifeline of the Iranian economy. As a result, the major focus of the Clinton Administration’s attempt to isolate Iran economically has been centered on attempts to disable this portion of the economy. The success of this policy has been limited. John Gannon, Deputy Director of the CIA has said that “Iran will maintain

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<sup>161</sup> Memon, Ali N., “Bring Iran Into the Peace Process,” *The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, Vol. XIV, No. 8, April 1996, p. 93.

<sup>162</sup> \_\_\_\_\_. “Iran Awaits New Confrontation,” *MEED*, Vol. 40, No. 4, 26 January 1996, p. 2.

<sup>163</sup> The exact dollar amounts for Iran’s debt, repayment schedule, and percentage of oil earnings has been reported by many different sources; however, these sources and their dollar amounts do not agree with each other. This thesis, therefore, has taken the average from all the different sources.

its oil sales because it uses sophisticated marketing tactics and because its crude oil is of good quality.”<sup>164</sup> This observation has proved correct. Iran has found new contracts for the approximate 400,000 barrels of oil that US companies purchased per day in 1994.<sup>165</sup> Iran was also able to replace the contracts signed with CONOCO. The French oil company TOTAL quickly filled the void when CONOCO was forced to break off the agreements.

The most devastating problems facing the Iranian economy are not a result of external sanctions, but rather of internal factors. Iran’s population has more than doubled over the last 17 years - to almost 65 million.<sup>166</sup> Due to this huge population growth, the average annual per capita income is estimated at a modest \$4,720. The government has not been able to meet the demands of this growing population. The unemployment rate of individuals between 15-24 is twice the national average, which was 15-20 percent in 1993.<sup>167</sup>

As previously discussed, Iran’s economy is dependent on oil, “receiving about 85 percent of its foreign exchange earnings from the sale of oil.”<sup>168</sup> Oil on the international market is traded in US dollars; therefore, because the dollar has lost up to 25 percent of its value since 1994, coupled with a strong Japanese Yen and German Mark, Iran on occasion

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<sup>164</sup> Feuilhaerde, Peter, “Iran Shrugs off US Sanctions,” *The Middle East*, Issue No. 251, December 1995, p. 25.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

<sup>166</sup> Twing, Shawn L., “Iran at a Glance,” *The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, Vol. XIV, No. 8, April 1996, p. 89.

<sup>167</sup> Ghoreishi, Ahmad, “The Impact of the Political Outlook of Iran’s Decision Makers on the Security of the Persian Gulf,” unpublished article, 1995, p. 5.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

loses up to 20 percent of its potential revenue.<sup>169</sup>

### 3. **Militarily**

Despite dual containment's objective of restricting military and technological capabilities, Iran's military has continued to expand, much to the displeasure of the United States and its Gulf allies. This outcome is a clear set back for the Clinton Administration and its policy of dual containment. Two questions arise. First, why do the Iranians continue to devote a large percentage of their national treasury to military expansion - clearly confrontational to the world's only superpower? Second, what impact has the dual containment policy had in hindering this expansionism?

A review of Iran's military order of battle reveals a country with an extremely powerful military capability. However, counting equipment and munitions does not give a complete picture of a nation's capability to wage war. A deeper military analysis reveals a much different picture. Iran is attempting to expand its military because of three national security concerns.

The first concern is Iran's geopolitical environment.<sup>170</sup> Iran is surrounded by states, which are for the most part unstable and on occasion hostile toward the Islamic Republic. Simply, Iran lives in a dangerous neighborhood. Cordesman describes it as an "arc of crisis and its boundaries span the distance between the former Soviet Union and the Gulf and

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<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

<sup>170</sup> Ghoreishi, "The Impact of the Political Outlook of Iran's Decision Makers on the Security of the Persian Gulf," p.12.

between Southwest Asia and the Middle East.”<sup>171</sup> With the break up of the Soviet Union numerous crises have erupted in the Central Asian plateau on Iran’s northern and eastern borders. Civil wars are raging in Afghanistan and Tadjikistan. These wars are forcing large numbers of refugees to seek shelter inside Iran’s borders.<sup>172</sup> These refugees are causing political instability for the regime. “Such migration will exacerbate the country’s existing social economic crisis, and thereby raise the likelihood of political instability inside Iran.”<sup>173</sup>

Iran’s western border with Iraq is no better. The Iranians still fear Saddam Hussein. In little more than a decade, he has invaded both Iran and Kuwait. The Iran-Iraq war dragged on for eight years and it is considered the bloodiest since World War II, with more than one million casualties. Despite the loss of life due to the carnage of the war, the Iranian military expended between 40 and 60 percent of their arsenal in waging it.<sup>174</sup>

Finally, Iran’s conventional military rearmament is driven by concern that the Islamic Republic’s weapons are old and obsolete. The vast majority of Iranian weapons were procured by the state under the Shah’s reign - equating to 1970s technology, at best. Therefore, due to hostile neighbors, depleted stocks, and obsolete weapons the Iranian regime believes it is justified in its pursuit of conventional military weapons. It is for these reasons that Iran has challenged the United States and “embarked upon a military

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<sup>171</sup> Cordesman, Anthony H., Iran and Iraq: The Threat from the Northern Gulf, Westview Press, Boulder CO, 1994, p. 20.

<sup>172</sup> Ghoreishi, “The Impact of the Political Outlook of Iran’s Decision Makers on the Security of the Persian Gulf,” p. 12.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

rearmament program.”<sup>175</sup> “Given Iran’s geopolitical isolation and the multitude of threats it faces, its rearmament can be seen as a prudent defensive measure.”<sup>176</sup>

Iran, although impacted by unilateral sanctions imposed by the United States, has been able to establish relations with other nations to provide training, assistance, and weapons. The most notable of these nations are Russia, China, and North Korea. In 1992, Russia signed an agreement with Iran to deliver three Russian Type 877 EMK “Kilo” class diesel electric submarines, with one being delivered in 1992 and the other in 1993.<sup>177</sup> Iran was the first Gulf state to acquire an underwater warfare capability.<sup>178</sup> Although this acquisition is seen by the Clinton Administration and Gulf allies as a viable threat, the Persian Gulf itself is the “Kilo’s” main impediment. The Gulf is shallow for submarine operations, making them extremely vulnerable to American and allied anti-submarine warfare tactics. If the Iranians attempt to project their military power with these vessels in the Gulf, their survival rate would be very low.<sup>179</sup> The only reasonable alternative use for the submarines would be to deploy them in the Indian Ocean - outside the restrictions of the Persian Gulf. Doing so, however, raises equally complex issues of how to operate

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<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

<sup>176</sup> Rathmell, Andrew, “Iran’s Rearmament - How Great a Threat?,” *Jane’s Intelligence Review*, Vol. 5, No. 7, July 1994, p. 322.

<sup>177</sup> At the time of this writing only two submarines have been delivered. The Russians are withholding the delivery of the third “Kilo” due to Iran’s failure to pay.

<sup>178</sup> \_\_\_\_\_. “Iran Steps Up Gulf Exercises,” *Jane’s Military Exercise and Training Monitor*,” October/December 1995, p. 12.

<sup>179</sup> Cordesman, Iran and Iraq: The Threat from the Northern Gulf, p. 73.

submarines in deep ocean waters. Other obstacles facing the Iranian Navy include training and funding.

The Russians and Iranians have not limited their arms transfers to naval units only. Numerous other deals concerning the delivery of advanced fighter aircraft, such as 30 MIG-29 Fulcrums and 12 SU-24 Fencers have occurred, and several SA-5 anti-aircraft missiles. Additionally, the Russians and some former Soviet client states have provided the Iranians with more than 300 modern T-72 tanks.<sup>180</sup>

North Korea is also attempting to help the Iranian regime bolster its military capability. Weapons deliveries have consisted of Scud missile launchers and T-55 tanks. Nevertheless, both of these platforms are outdated, and bring no major threat to the battle field. These platforms are adequate only for hitting non-strategic targets, civilian population centers, and for use against internal disturbances. Additionally, they serve to unsettle Iran's Arab neighbors.

China has been willing to challenge the Clinton Administration's attempt to isolate Iran. The Chinese have delivered an undetermined number of C802 surface-to-surface cruise missiles to Iran. The Islamic Republic is credited with a cruise missile test firing in March 1996.<sup>181</sup> China has, also, made delivery of five Hegu Class Missile Craft in July of

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<sup>180</sup> For a complete inventory and capabilities of Iranian weapon purchases from the former Soviet Union and its client states see, Cordesman, Iran and Iraq: The Threat from the Northern Gulf and Twing, "Is Iran's Military Buildup Purely Defensive or Potentially Destabilizing?"

<sup>181</sup> Starr, Barbara, "Iran Adds New Threat with Cruise Missile Test," *Jane's Defense Weekly*, Vol. 25, No 6, 7 February 1996, p. 14.

1994.<sup>182</sup>

Another concern for Washington is Iran's attempt to acquire WMD. Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres states in a recent interview that he believes Iran is only four years away from acquiring a nuclear bomb. He maintains the combination of Iran and its fundamentalism ideology is the greatest threat facing the world since Communism and Fascism.<sup>183</sup> Dual containment has enjoyed some success in controlling parts and material needed for the development of nuclear weapons. On the other hand, it has done little to stem the flow of Russian nuclear technologies. The financially troubled Russians are more than willing to sell their nuclear expertise and services to the highest bidder. The Russians have recently signed an \$800 million contract to complete a nuclear facility on Iran's Gulf coast.<sup>184</sup> The Russians maintain that this plant will be unable to provide materiel needed to produce weapon grade plutonium, but the Clinton Administration is unsure. They believe that this plant will provide the knowledge and materiel to eventually develop a nuclear bomb through "dual-use technologies."<sup>185</sup> The consensus among nuclear experts is that Iran's nuclear program is in its infancy. Nevertheless, if this rogue state should decide to build a nuclear bomb, the question that arises is not if, but when?

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<sup>182</sup> Bruce, James, "Navy Steps Up Exercise in Gateway to the Gulf" *Jane's Defense Weekly*, Vol. 24, No. 17, 28 October 1995, p. 19.

<sup>183</sup> Peres, Shimon, Interviewed on *ABC's News Night Line*, 29 April 1996.

<sup>184</sup> Bruce, James, "Russians Sign Deal to Finish Iran's Reactor," *Jane's Defense Weekly*, Vol. 24, No. 5, 21 January 1995, p. 3.

<sup>185</sup> "Dual-use technologies" is technology that was originally designed for one purpose, but has the potential to be used in other capacities. Examples of "dual-use technologies" include computers, communications equipment, and nuclear technologies.

#### 4. Summary

The major objective of dual containment as applied to Iran has been to isolate this regime on three fronts - politically, economically, and militarily. Concerning political isolation and forcing a regime change, the Clinton Administration's policies have achieved little. On the contrary, the ruling figures of Iran have often been able to capitalize on the Clinton Administration's open hostility toward their country. Although the vast majority of problems facing Iran's government are internal, it has been able to shift the blame to the United States in the eyes of the Iranian public.

With regard to economics, the containment of Iran, combined with poor fiscal and state planning has had a negative impact on Iran's economy. Despite significant natural and human resources "Iran today has one of the lowest standards of living in the world"<sup>186</sup> However, many people believe the main effects of dual containment and its objective to economically isolate Iran "will be indirect and psychological - undermining business confidence and complicating economic reforms."<sup>187</sup> The only clear victory for dual containment, outside of US participation, has occurred with the Japanese. They have agreed to delay by one year the delivery of a \$1.4 billion concessionary loan for a dam project.<sup>188</sup> It is safe to say that America's policy of isolating Iran economically has had mixed results. The Iranian economy has suffered more from mismanagement, corruption declining growth

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<sup>186</sup> Teimourian, Hahzir, "Iran's 15 Years of Islam," *The World Today*, Vol. 50, No. 4, April 1994, p. 70.

<sup>187</sup> \_\_\_\_\_. "Iran Awaits New Confrontation," p. 2.

<sup>188</sup> \_\_\_\_\_. "US has a Serious Problem with Iran," *MEED*, Vol. 39, No. 18, 5 May 1995, p. 2.

rates, low oil prices, and a weak US dollar than from US-sponsored sanctions.

American manufactured weapon exports to Iran are banned. America's European allies have been forced to rethink and delay deliveries of technologies that may be used for other than civilian application - so called "dual use technologies." Most military experts agree that dual containment has decreased the overall weapon sales to Iran to about a third of what they were in 1992.<sup>189</sup>

Dual containment may have succeeded in crippling the Iranian military in other ways as well. During Operation Desert Storm, one of the most difficult obstacles for the coalition forces to overcome was the incompatibility between each other's weapon systems. Iran is experiencing this same difficulty. Iran has been forced to build its military based upon weapon systems from at least five different nations - a tremendous obstacle if Iran wishes to challenge allied forces militarily and disrupt the flow of oil. At present, their capacity to carry-out such an operation on a sustained basis is practically nonexistent.

### **C. DUAL CONTAINMENT'S IMPACT ON IRAQ**

The main instrument of the Clinton Administration's containment policy toward Iraq is the full implementation of the resolutions and sanctions imposed by the UN since the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Unlike the unilateral US sanctions levied against Iran, the UN resolutions "reflect the international consensus in support of an end to Saddam's repression of the Iraqi people."<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> Weiner, Tim, "Cruise Missile is Test Fired from a Ship by Iran's Navy," *New York Times*, 31 January 1996, p. A5.

<sup>190</sup> Lake, p. 51.

Iraq's current political, economic, and military conditions are a direct result of a combination of three events: Iraq's eight-year war with Iran, the aftermath of Operation Desert Storm, and more than five years of UN sanctions. These catastrophic events have thrown Iraq backward economically and socially to a pre-industrial age.<sup>191</sup> While the intended target of dual containment is the regime of Saddam Hussein, many observers see the Iraqi people as the true victims. "The question many ask is whether Iraqis are going hungry because of Saddam's policies or because of the sanctions?"<sup>192</sup> The sanctions are an attempt to force a regime change and stop human rights violations; however, these sanctions may be leading to an entrenchment of Saddam's regime and increased human suffering inside Iraq.

#### **1. Politically**

In October 1995, Saddam Hussein held a referendum that gave the Iraqi people a choice of Saddam for another seven years or someone else. The choice was a simple "yes" or "no" vote. The reported turnout for the election was 99.47 percent (8,348,700) of eligible voters. More than 99 percent of those voters chose "yes" for the continuation of Saddam's presidency.<sup>193</sup>

Saddam points to this overwhelming popular support as a triumph over UN sanctions

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<sup>191</sup> Rouleau, p. 62.

<sup>192</sup> Shahin, Mariam, "Going Hungry," *Middle East International*, No. 509, 22 September 1995, p. 10.

<sup>193</sup> \_\_\_\_\_. "Iraq: Referendum Heralds Change at the Top," *MEED*, Vol. 39, No. 43, 27 October 1995, p. 31.

and the American policy of dual containment. The near unanimous election returns, however, are more likely the result of Saddam's oppressive political tactics. The significance of this democratic mockery is "a demonstration not of the extent of Saddam's popularity but of his control."<sup>194</sup> Saddam's opponents are dealt with harshly and brutally. Murder is often the result for those who fall from favor, and in many cases the murder of entire families as well.

The crushing economic impact of the sanctions has created two very distinct political classes in Iraq. The first is the relatively small inner circle to whom Saddam extends power and privileges. This group is composed mainly of family members, associates from his tribe in Tikert, high ranking Baathist party leaders, and some high-ranking military officers. Many of this ruling group are actually profiting from the trade embargo and their lifestyles have been unaffected by the sanctions. One journalist reported of his travels in Baghdad:

(Iraq's) new private hospitals are catering to a small but affluent class of citizens who are largely immune to the effects of sanctions. Scattered among the battered Toyotas, which crowd Baghdad's main streets are brand new, top-of-the-range luxury cars. Many of them bear a blue number plate, marking them as belonging to government officials.<sup>195</sup>

The second group are the political "have-nots," consisting of the majority of Iraqis. It is this group that possesses the potential to resist and oppose Saddam and ultimately overthrow his

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<sup>194</sup> Jarrah, Najm, "Is Saddam Opening the Way for Change?," *Middle East International*, No. 511, 20 October 1995, p. 3.

<sup>195</sup> Ash, Toby, "Iraq Seeks Relief from Sanctions," *MEED*, Vol. 39, No. 8, 31 March 1995, pp. 4-5.

regime. Yet the effect of economic sanctions may be to stifle any popular uprising.<sup>196</sup> With the masses worried about mere survival (barely existing on government controlled food rations), Saddam can hold down most internal opposition.

Saddam has been able to effectively use the results of the sanctions for his own political advantage. Controlling the distribution of the limited food supplies and goods that enter the country, he is able to reward his supporters with unequal shares of food, goods, and services. In essence, he is buying their loyalty. A 1995 report stated:

Rumors of coup attempts surface regularly, but one of the keys to Saddam Hussein's survival is that those insiders who are in a position to overthrow him are totally dependent on his patronage. Their chances of survival without the awe-inspiring figure of Saddam Hussein are limited.<sup>197</sup>

Saddam has also used the sanctions to deflect criticism of him and his regime. The Iraqi press claims that the United States and Kuwait are the evil forces behind the sanctions, with the aim of punishing the innocent people of Iraq. One report stated:

State-run newspapers marked the fifth anniversary of the invasion of Kuwait by attacking the US in front-page editorials. "The responsibility for the crisis does not fall on Iraq but on America in the first place and Kuwaiti rulers in the second," said the daily Al-Jumhuriya.<sup>198</sup>

Saddam and his ministers have instituted a very effective propaganda campaign to influence international opinion that Iraq has made sincere attempts to comply with the UN

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<sup>196</sup> Scott, Roddy, "Saddam's Fate in the Balance?," *The Middle East*, Issue No. 249, October 1995, p. 8. "Their worries are centered on a much more basic issue - physical survival." Later in the same article Scott states, "Iraqis appear to care less about democracy and reform than the food on their plates." p. 9.

<sup>197</sup> Ash, "Iraq Seeks Relief from Sanctions," p. 5.

<sup>198</sup> \_\_\_\_\_. "Iraq," *MEED*, Vol. 39, No. 32, 11 August 1995, p. 9.

resolutions. As a result, he has found several permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (France, Russia, and China) willing to listen to his claims, and to begin entertaining ideas of lifting some or all of the sanctions, "France and Russia have been leading an initiative at the UN to lift the oil embargo."<sup>199</sup> However, the United States and Britain have remained firm, to the point of threatening a veto if a resolution to lift the sanctions is presented to the UN Security Council.

During the first years of dual containment there have been reports of assassination attempts against Saddam, aborted coup attempts, and the defection of high ranking members of the inner circle.<sup>200</sup> Reports were circulated of an army battalion that mutinied and appeared to be ready to march on Baghdad. This alleged rebellion was quickly put down by a large force from the Republican Guard.<sup>201</sup> It is difficult to gauge the accuracy of these reports of unrest. Opposition groups outside Iraq are quick to build up each attempt as a major blow to Saddam. On the other hand, the Iraqi regime works with equal vigor to down play or deny any incident of rebellion or attacks.

Political opposition groups inside and outside Iraq remain fragmented, weak, and lacking in strong leadership. Some of the impotence of the opposition is blamed on

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<sup>199</sup> Kagian, Jules, "Show-down at the UN?," *Middle East International*, No. 495, 3 March 1995, p. 10.

<sup>200</sup> Ash, Toby, "Defections Wound Saddam Hussein," *MEED*, Vol. 39, No. 34, 25 August 1995, p. 2. Ash states that "there is little evidence of a widespread collapse in the president's authority."

<sup>201</sup> Bruce, James, "Saddam Crushes Military but Fails to Quell Unrest," *Jane's Defense Weekly*, Vol. 24, No. 1, 8 July 1995, p. 15. Bruce states that "two Republican Guard brigades swiftly crushed the revolt."

America's policy of dual containment. Containment only passively promotes the idea of a regime change and does not provide what the opposition groups want: active support, with some even calling for military support.

## 2. Economically

The basic structure of the Iraqi economy makes it extremely vulnerable to trade sanctions, boycotts, and embargos. Iraq began to industrialize its economy following World War II. To finance this modernization in the post-World War II era, Iraq, like most Persian Gulf states relied on the export of its petroleum products. Meanwhile, its main imports were food products.<sup>202</sup> Because of this poorly diversified economy, when economic sanctions were first instituted in 1990 they began to have an immediate impact on Iraq.

Cutting off oil trade has crippled Iraq's ability to purchase food stuffs, since "over two-thirds of Iraq's food requirements were imported."<sup>203</sup> Having relied on imported food the nation's agricultural industry had not developed and was not prepared to fill the demand created by the sanctions. Further complicating the situation are sanctions on importing agricultural equipment, seeds, and fertilizers.<sup>204</sup>

By 1990 Iraq was suffering from an enormous international debt. The debt, estimated at more than \$42 billion, was a direct result of the high costs of the eight-year war

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<sup>202</sup> Al-Roubaie, Amer and Elali, Wajeeh, "The Financial Implications of Economic Sanctions Against Iraq," *Arab Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 17, No. 3, Summer 1995, pp. 55-57. From 1976 through 1989 oil accounted for over 60% of Iraq's gross domestic product (GDP) while agriculture was a mere 6% of the country's GDP.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64.

with Iran. Even if sanctions were to be lifted immediately, Iraq is deeply in debt and "the financial burden of Iraq is further complicated by the rapid increase in the amount needed to service the debt."<sup>205</sup>

The Iraqi defeat in Operation Desert Storm was a devastating blow to the nation's infrastructure. Critical public health facilities and services were destroyed: power plants, sanitation facilities, water purification plants, and transportation networks.<sup>206</sup> Attempts to rebuild these public services have been slow, costly, and for some reconstruction projects, impossible.

Another impact of sanctions, which can be substantial, is the reduction in government revenues and expenditures. In Iraq, the income tax base is not adequately developed to provide the government with sufficient revenues to pay for its expenditure programs.<sup>207</sup>

Placing sanctions on an unbalanced economy suffering from an enormous foreign debt and a destroyed infrastructure, has resulted in almost complete economic collapse. Some economists speculate that Iraq may never fully recover from the resultant damage.<sup>208</sup>

Hyper-inflation has devalued the currency to levels that make most wages meaningless. Price increases on basic food items since the sanctions were imposed are hard to comprehend: wheat up 4,531%, powdered milk up 3,661%, bread up 2,857%, and sugar

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<sup>205</sup> Ibid., p. 62.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid., p. 54.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid., p. 59.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid., p. 54.

up 2,208%.<sup>209</sup>

Inflation has impacted the Iraqi education system as well. Neither schools nor students can afford to buy pencils, paper, or textbooks. Many parents no longer send their children to school, opting instead to send them out to work in the hope of providing additional food for their family. Literacy rates are beginning to decline and fear is growing that an entire generation of Iraqis will lack a basic education.

Iraq has not yet reached an agreement with the UN concerning its entitlement to sell oil in order to purchase humanitarian supplies, food and medicine. The meager food supply coupled with hyper-inflation has created a crisis in public health. A May 1995 report said of the UN sanctions:

As a result hospitals can no longer provide treatment, surgery cannot be performed and people are dying from curable cancers. This was never the intention of the Security Council, nevertheless, that is the situation as it currently stands.<sup>210</sup>

Infant mortality rates have skyrocketed. A public health survey conducted in December 1995 found "nearly a fivefold increase in mortality among children under the age of five in Baghdad compared to the period prior to the imposition of economic sanctions."<sup>211</sup> Children are suffering from malnutrition. A United Nations Children's Fund report stated that "half a million children, more than 9,000 a month, had died of malnutrition and diseases

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<sup>209</sup> Ibid., p. 63.

<sup>210</sup> \_\_\_\_\_. "Turning the Screw," *The Middle East*, Issue No. 245, May 1995, p. 6.

<sup>211</sup> Smith-Fawzi, Mary C. and Zaidi, Sarah, "Sanctions, Saddam and Silence: Child Malnutrition and Mortality in Iraq," *The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, Vol. XIV, No. 6, January 1996, p. 13.

because of sanctions."<sup>212</sup>

One impact of world isolation has been the destruction of the Iraqi middle class. This economic class, the backbone of any modern society, has been able to manage for a time using savings or by selling their family belongings. However, as Iraq enters its sixth year of UN sanctions, those resources that were available to the middle class are almost exhausted.

Economic sanctions following a destructive war and compounded by the Iraq government's abusive social and political policies, have devoured the country's once -substantial middle class and further impoverished the already poor. Even if tomorrow the sanctions were lifted and the regime was to vanish, the capacity of Iraqi society to reconstitute itself is in grave peril.<sup>213</sup>

Investors and business groups are positioning themselves to move into Iraq once the sanctions are lifted. Several French and Russian companies have agreed to terms with the Iraqi government on oil exploration, refining, and sales, although all of these agreements are contingent upon the termination of UN sponsored sanctions.<sup>214</sup> The motivation for France and Russia for lifting of the sanctions lies in the fact that Iraq owes both nations several billion dollars.<sup>215</sup> No progress will be made in repaying these debts until Iraq can once again

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<sup>212</sup> Jansen, Michael, "The Tragic Toll of Sanctions," *Middle East International*, No. 492, 20 January 1995, p. 6.

<sup>213</sup> Graham-Brown, Sarah, "Intervention, Sovereignty and Responsibility," *Middle East Report*, No. 193, Vol. 25, No. 02, March/April 1995, p. 2.

<sup>214</sup> \_\_\_\_\_. "Iraq in Brief" *MEED*, Vol. 39, No. 9, 3 March 1995, p. 19.

<sup>215</sup> Joffe, George, "Iraq-The Sanctions Continue," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, Vol. 6, No. 7, July 1994, p. 314. Iraq owes France approximately \$6 billion and Russia \$9 billion "which they would desperately like to recover."

enter the world oil market.

While the British government has remained firmly in support of the United States in continuing the sanctions, a British business group toured Iraq in February 1996 establishing contacts for possible future trade. Turkey, another backer of US policy, has nevertheless struck a deal with Iraq to resume use of the twin oil pipeline from Kirkuk to Yamurtalik once Iraqi oil sales resume. The deal also included the sale of food and medical supplies to Iraq.<sup>216</sup> The only major world businesses not aggressively positioning themselves to trade with Iraq are US companies.

### 3. **Militarily**

The policy of dual containment does not seek to deny Iraq a defensive military force. The goal is to eliminate Iraq as a threat to regional security and eliminate its potential to develop WMD. Additionally, a United States goal is to hinder Saddam Hussein from using his military against its Kurdish and Shiite minorities.

Iraq is still perceived as a threat by the GCC nations. In October 1994 Saddam moved troops toward the Kuwaiti border, which triggered a rapid and sizable deployment of American troops to Kuwait. One news report said of this show of force by Saddam:

A movement of his troops to southern Iraq and the potential message of such movement sent shudders through the Gulf states. Saddam is still there, still ready, if not fully able, to launch a destructive attack against his neighbors.<sup>217</sup>

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<sup>216</sup> \_\_\_\_\_. "Iraq and Turkey Prepare for Oil Sales," *MEED*, Vol. 40, No. 11, p. 21, 15 March 1996.

<sup>217</sup> Shahin, Mariam, "Saddam Plays Poker," *The Middle East*, Issue No. 240, December 1994, p. 7.

Internally the Iraqi military remains a threat to the Kurdish and Shiite minorities. The United Nations established "no-fly" zones in the northern and southern regions of Iraq have limited Saddam's military operations, but not stopped them entirely. Saddam has used his elite forces and the Republican Guard to squelch rebellions and eliminate opposition groups within these minorities.

Saddam has sought to maintain and build his military capacity even with his economy in crisis, and despite sanctions prohibiting the purchase of military hardware. However, "according to UN officials, European companies are still supplying Iraq with prohibited material."<sup>218</sup> Since the sanctions close off normal arms purchases, Iraq must turn to high-cost black market suppliers for spare parts and new equipment. This action becomes an especially expensive proposition since a portion of these illegal arms are confiscated prior to delivery.<sup>219</sup>

Saddam has paid another high price for his military in the form of increased salaries. In a July 1995 decree Saddam raised the salaries of members of the armed forces, internal security units, and intelligence services by 70%.<sup>220</sup> Keeping their standard of living higher than the average Iraqi buys him their loyalty.

Desertion rates have been inordinately high in regular army units. Attempting to

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<sup>218</sup> Bruce, James, "Briefing: Playing Hide and Seek with Saddam," *Jane's Defense Weekly*, Vol. 25, No. 1, 3 January 1996, p. 15.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18, a shipment of Russian-made missile parts intercepted in Jordan in November 1995 had an estimated value of \$25 million.

<sup>220</sup> \_\_\_\_\_. "Iraq: In Brief," p. 22.

curb the increase in desertion, Saddam resorted to severe punishments including branding and amputations. This type of punishment obviously became a public relations liability for Saddam and the practice was stopped.<sup>221</sup>

UN resolutions require the complete elimination of Iraq's WMD including the destruction of weapons and manufacturing facilities. Inspection teams have found that Iraqi nuclear weapon capabilities were more advanced than suspected, but have been able to destroy most items related to this program. "Although UN weapon inspectors have dismantled the main elements of the A-bomb project, this does not mean that it could never be revived."<sup>222</sup>

Iraqi chemical and biological WMD potential and capabilities pose a different challenge. The Iraqi government and UN inspectors have not been able to account for more than 17 tons of biological weapons production material. Of equal concern is the possibility that Iraq may have in excess of 100 Scud missiles and mobile launchers, which are capable of delivering chemical or biological weapons as far as Riyadh, Tel Aviv, or Tehran.<sup>223</sup>

Iraq is still seeking to build long-range missiles. As reported in March 1995:

Sources have confirmed reports of a seizure of very sophisticated missile parts destined for Iraq. The discovery of the rocket parts seem to confirm the suspicion of some countries, like the United States, that Iraq is still trying to

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<sup>221</sup> \_\_\_\_\_. "Iraq," p. 23, the penalty of amputating the ears of deserters was ended on 17 March 1996.

<sup>222</sup> George, Allen, "The Australian Connection," *The Middle East*, Issue No. 240, December 1994, p. 11.

<sup>223</sup> Isby, David C., "The Residual Iraqi 'Scud' Force," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, Vol. 7, No. 3, March 1995, p. 115.

build long-range weapons.<sup>224</sup>

Iraq is prohibited from building missiles with a range of 250 kilometers or greater. One "unconfirmed report," however, claims that Iraqi designers are working on a new rocket with a 3,000 kilometer range.<sup>225</sup>

#### 4. Summary

Dual containment has been successful in containing Saddam Hussein's regime, but has not eliminated him. Many political analysts point to Saddam's continuing control and find it unlikely that he will be removed from power.<sup>226</sup> Opposition groups, both inside and outside Iraq, lack the determination or leadership to oust Saddam. The political focus for the Iraqis is not a regime change, but a desire to have the UN sanctions terminated. The sentiments of one journalist in 1994 still ring true in 1996:

Sanctions are the main if not the only issue on the minds of Iraqis today. Saddam will stay in power and his people will continue to die and their only hope is the foreigners who want to make money will be able to create a sufficiently strong lobby to end the embargo and let them live.<sup>227</sup>

However, Iraq's mere compliance with the UN sponsored sanctions has not been sufficient. For the Clinton Administration, the sanctions need to remain in place until Saddam's regime

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<sup>224</sup> Kagian, Jules, "Caught Cheating," *Middle East International*, Issue No. 515, 15 December 1995, p. 11.

<sup>225</sup> Lennox, Duncan, "Briefing: Ballistic Missiles," *Jane's Defense Weekly*, Vol. 26, No. 16, 17 April 1996, p. 43.

<sup>226</sup> Rathmell, Andrew, "Iraq-The End game?" *Jane's Intelligence Review*, Vol. 7, No. 5, May 1995, p. 228. Rathmell quotes Graham Fuller as stating, "it is time for the Clinton Administration to recognize that 'dual containment' has contained Saddam Hussein, but that the policy is unlikely to remove him."

<sup>227</sup> Shahim, "Saddam Plays Poker," p. 9.

is gone.<sup>228</sup> Bowing to American pressure, the UN Security Council continues to reaffirm its postponement on lifting the oil embargo against Iraq, undoubtedly the most crippling of the sanctions.<sup>229</sup>

Despite a world wide embargo to ship weapons of any sort to Iraq, this rogue state is still able to procure them. However, it must be acknowledged that containment of Iraq has been extremely effective in curtailing this regime from acquiring any real quantities of sophisticated weaponry. The equipment that Saddam is buying is usually outdated or extremely overpriced and presents no significant military threat, but may be used for curbing internal disturbances and riots.

#### **D. CONCLUSIONS**

Dual containment has been in effect for over three years. This policy of political, economic and military isolation of Iran and Iraq has achieved some of its objectives. The authors of dual containment stated that their goal was not duplicate containment, but rather to tailor the policy specifically to each state. The impact of implementation of dual containment has enjoyed better overall success with regards to Iraq than Iran.

America's attempt to control Iran politically, economically, and militarily has been almost without success. It is practically impossible to isolate Iran geographically. The country is too large and its borders are porous. The first goal of attempting to change Iranian's political system has only succeeded in allowing numerous political elements there to blame their problems on the United States. The second goal of attempting to damage

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<sup>228</sup> Graham-Brown, Sarah, "Intervention, Sovereignty and Responsibility," p. 5.

<sup>229</sup> \_\_\_\_\_. "Turning the Screw," p. 6.

Iran's economy was short-lived. Any economic loss suffered by Iran due to US sponsored unilateral sanctions was quickly recovered. European and Asian nations were more than willing to fill the void left by the pullout of American companies. The most important goal of the Clinton Administration has been to hinder Iran's attempt to rearm itself. This objective has also been frustrated by the cash starved nations of the world, who have been more than willing to sell the Iranians military equipment - for a price. Finally, as in Iraq, these sanctions create unintended victims. In this instance, it has turned out to be American business.

Iraq's geography makes it easier to isolate. All of Iraq's neighboring countries have agreed to uphold UN sponsored sanctions, with the exception of some limited trade with Jordan and Turkey. Iraq is, in essence, geographically isolated from the rest of the world. Also, the structure of its economy has contributed significantly to the success of containment. Iraq's main exports and imports, before sanctions were levied against it, were petroleum products and food stuffs, respectively. The community of nations has very effectively severed both of these economic lifelines. The goal of the Clinton Administration is to cripple this country politically, economically and militarily. This has been achieved, at the price of considerable suffering to the population.

Dual containment was designed to force political change in Iraq. Nevertheless, Saddam Hussein remains in power, and from all indicators will continue to be Iraq's leader into well into the future. Dual containment was intended to undermine the Iraqi economy and to encourage the populace to rise up and challenge the regime. The opposite has occurred. The rich are still in control and have not suffered. Meanwhile, the victims have

been the Iraqi middle class and poor, who are now more concerned about finding their next meal than undertaking revolutions. Finally, and most important, the greatest consequence of dual containment and its instrument of choice - UN sanctions - has been its devastating effect on Iraqi public health.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

### A. OVERVIEW

This chapter analyzes the advantages and disadvantages of various policy options available to the United States in determining its future course of actions toward Iran and Iraq. It will attempt to predict how events may unfold based on empirical data, the current situation in the region, and US security requirements. This chapter will also present the author's recommendation for US policy in the region.

### B. POLICY OPTIONS

After reviewing past and present US policies regarding the Persian Gulf, three broad American policy options have emerged. First, America certainly has the option of continuing its policy of dual containment. Second, various alternatives of engagement are available. This choice could include engaging either Iran or Iraq, or both. Third, the United States can actively and aggressively seek regime changes in Iran and Iraq through overt or covert military activities.

The following is a brief description of each of these policy options. Each alternative is presented along with its major advantages and disadvantages.

#### 1. Containment

The United States has the choice of maintaining dual containment in its current form. The Clinton Administration can continue with unilateral sanctions against Iran while attempting to foster a larger international coalition against Tehran. Iraq has not yet demonstrated serious willingness to comply with the UN resolutions. Although some

nations have wavered in their commitment to support UN-imposed sanctions, the United States has the diplomatic and military clout needing to insure that the resolutions and current sanctions are broadly respected.

*a. Advantages*

(1) The policy of dual containment enjoys domestic support. Most Americans are unhappy with both Iran and Iraq and believe it is in our national interest to limit their influence. As a result, Congress, the voice of the people, is inclined to support dual containment. Additionally, for those seeking greater isolation for America, dual containment is an acceptable policy approach. After almost five decades of pursuing a policy of containing the Soviet Union, Americans are comfortable with containment as a foreign policy strategy.

(2) Continuing the policy of dual containment would demonstrate commitment and dedication to international affairs by President Clinton. He was plagued by criticism early in his administration for having no clear foreign policy agenda.<sup>230</sup> Dual containment was an early foreign policy statement. President Clinton has been able to silence his critics with his continuing support of this policy.

(3) Dual containment is a low cost policy politically. The vast majority Iraqis and Iranians in this country have been extremely supportive of dual containment, since it was the brutality of these regimes which forced them to take refuge in America.

(4) Dual containment ensures that America's vital interest in the region remains

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<sup>230</sup> Graham-Brown, Sarah, "Security Council Conflicts Over Sanctions," *Middle East Report*, No. 193, Vol. 25, No. 2, March/April 1995, p. 5.

unchallenged. American military units are always on station, ready to counter these regimes on a moment's notice.

*b. Disadvantages*

(1) Because the United States has failed in its attempt to gain international support for sanctions against Iran, its policy has to some extent set it at odds with important allies in Europe and Asia. American firms are losing out on opportunities to do business with both Iran and Iraq. European and Asian companies are presently trading with Iran, and are drawing up plans to do business with Iraq as soon as the sanctions are lifted.

(2) Criticism is building within the United Nations that the containment of Iraq is punishing its citizens, rather than Saddam Hussein. One of the goals of UN sanctions, and dual containment, is to relieve human rights violations within Iraq - not to heighten them.

(3) The pressure of dual containment may cause Iraq to break apart if Saddam is removed from power. The world has come to realize that in the post-Cold War era, new nations formed on ethnic and religious grounds are extremely volatile. This breakup could further complicate political stability in the region.

(4) Maintaining a US Naval presence and reserve military stocks in the region is costly.

(5) Dual containment is too passive to force a change in behavior from either regime. Containment is a policy of inaction, which gives both regimes an inflated sense of power.

**2. Engagement**

The following three options are variations of the engagement alternative. The advantages and disadvantages of all three policy options overlap; therefore, they will be

considered together. All three options would begin slowly in engaging the target nation or nations and would be directed at expanding economic links first and political ties next.

*a. Option 1: Engage Iran, contain Iraq*

This option requires that the United States abandon its attempt to isolate Iran. America must reverse its present foreign policy agendas and explore ways to engage Iran. Also, this option still requires the containment of Iraq until this state completely complies with all UN resolutions.

*b. Option 2: Contain Iran, engage Iraq*

Efforts to isolate Iran would continue under this directive. Subsequently, the United States would increase its efforts to encourage international support for the containment of Iran. America would attempt to engage Iraq commercially and diplomatically. This option, however, requires approval from the United Nations that Iraq has met all provisions of the UN resolutions.

*c. Option 3: Engage Iran and Iraq*

This option brings together the criteria for engagement options 1 and 2. Each nation would present different challenges for engagement and would require separate approaches by the United States.

*d. Advantages*

(1) Opening economic and/or political dialogue with either Iran or Iraq (or both) would exemplify the Clinton Administration's overall national strategy of engagement and enlargement. One of the tenants of the national strategy is to seek the peaceful integration of the international community, and engaging these two states, if successful, would be a

great step in that direction.

(2) Engagement would expand business opportunities for American companies, opening up markets and access to resources.

(3) Engaging one or both of these nations would enhance the likelihood of modifying the behavior of these regimes. Change is more likely to occur as a result of engagement than from containment.

(4) Opening relations with either Iran or Iraq would be an economic benefit to other nations in the region by expanding markets and eliminating trade barriers.

(5) Any of the three options of engagement would provide greater security for the GCC nations. Increased stability in the Persian Gulf would also lessen the military requirements for the United States.

*e. Disadvantages*

(1) Attempting to engage either Iran or Iraq would present a huge political risk for the President of the United States, Saddam Hussein, and the ruling elements in Iran. After years of portraying the other as the source of great evil, the slightest suggestion of engagement could be interpreted as a sign of political weakness.

(2) Domestic pressure in the United States to support the Arab-Israeli peace process and the security of Israel would stand in opposition to any of the options for engagement. Engagement with Iran or Iraq could be interpreted as a threat to Israel's security.

(3) Engagement with Iran and/or Iraq would reduce current oil prices. This action would be extremely unsettling for the GCC nations and also for the oil producing states in America.

(4) After several years of pursuing dual containment, shifting to a more open policy may not be well received by all of America's allies in the region.

(5) A significant difficulty in any attempt to engage Iran would be in deciding whom to approach in the Iranian regime.

(6) Engaging Iran or Iraq could be interpreted as a symbolic victory for them against the United States and the West.

### **3. Aggression**

This option involves the United States actively seeking or supporting a change in the regimes of Iran and Iraq. Efforts under this option could involve both covert and open support of opposition groups seeking to change the regimes in Iran and Iraq.<sup>231</sup>

#### *a. Advantages*

(1) This option would bring an active and quicker change in the regimes as opposed to the passive and long-range approach of dual containment.

(2) Opposition groups exist in both Iran and Iraq that would welcome an active US role. In Iraq a very clear target exists - Saddam Hussein.

#### *b. Disadvantages*

(1) Aggressive American action directed at either Iran or Iraq would be difficult to achieve militarily or covertly.

(2) The potential political cost for actively supporting opposition groups or covert operations, which may become public, would be extremely risky. Exposure of such

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<sup>231</sup> Rathmell, "Iraq-The Endgame," p. 225. Rathmell states that "senior figures have argued that US policy of dual containment takes too long term a view and that more decisive intervention is necessary to change the regime in Baghdad."

activities in either Iran or Iraq could further galvanize anti-American attitudes in those nations.

(3) Selecting this option might carry the risk of terrorist retaliation by either Iran and Iraq. Attacks could target the United States or US allies in the region, jeopardizing America's two national interest - access to oil and the security of Israel.

(4) A regime change may not yield the desired results. A new regime in Iran or Iraq could even be worse than those presently in control.<sup>232</sup>

### **C. PREDICTIONS**

Before voicing a policy recommendation, it is necessary to hypothesize some near term Iranian and Iraqi aspirations. The behavior of these two nations and the surrounding states will be a determining factor in future policies of the United States. The following predictions are based upon the policy trends reviewed in Chapter II and the impact of the current policy of dual containment on Iran and Iraq, as presented in Chapter IV.

#### **1. Political**

The Islamic Republic of Iran has been in existence since 1979 and shows no sign of weakening. The Iranian regime will likely proceed along a path of softening its revolutionary rhetoric and backing away from some of its extreme points of view. As Iran becomes more economically interdependent with Europe and Asia, certain ideological compromises will be required by Iran to maintain these ties. Iran has already shown a more

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<sup>232</sup>Levins, John M., "As Iraq Awaits Saddam's Downfall King Hussein Revives Hashemite Claim," *Washington Report on the Middle East*, Vol. XIV, No. 5, January 1996, p. 25. As stated by Levins, "The great dilemma with Saddam for the Iraqi people, the Arab world and the West as well, is that the devil you know is better than the one you don't. When Saddam goes, someone worse might follow."

moderate approach by not pursuing the "death warrant" against the author Salman Rushdie.

Iraq will comply with UN resolutions before this decade is over. The desire to attempt to reenter the family of nations is growing in Iraq, but the desire to end the sanctions will be the driving force for compliance. As cruel as the sanctions may be, they are having an effect on Iraqi willingness to open up with the world, to engage in international trade, and to reestablish diplomatic relations with a wider range of nations. However, America's desire to see Saddam Hussein removed from power is not likely to be fulfilled soon, and not as a result of UN sanctions. The United States needs to prepare for the possibility of dealing with Saddam as a legitimate leader of Iraq. Saddam and his regime will be around for some time to come.

The political climate in the United States does not currently allow for engagement of Iran and Iraq, but may change. If President Clinton is reelected in 1996, he may feel less compelled to bow to domestic pressures. Alternatively, a policy change could be made with a new republican administration.<sup>233</sup> The next president, regardless of which party he represents, will have an opportunity to reevaluate dual containment and make a decision to stay the course or change policy direction.

The number of nations supporting the US policy of dual containment will continue to decrease, while diplomatic ties between Iran and the rest of the world will grow. Political

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<sup>233</sup> \_\_\_\_\_. "Saddam Hopes BW Confession is Enough to Convince USA," *Jane's Defense Weekly*, Vol. 24, No. 9, 2 September 1995, p. 27, "Washington . . . is unlikely to entertain any serious debate on the sanctions issue until after the 1996 presidential elections."

pressure will increase from members of the United Nations to end the sanctions against Iraq. In the Middle East completion of the Arab-Israeli peace process will eliminate one more point of contention between the backlash states and America.

## **2. Economic**

US efforts to isolate Iran have hurt the Iranian economy. Nevertheless, Iran has made efforts to open trade with other nations. Iran's economy is expanding and has made sufficient attempts to service its foreign debt. Iran will continue to expand its European and Asian trade as worldwide support for dual containment shrinks.

Not until UN sanctions are lifted will Iraq be able to begin rebuilding its economy. Sanctions have ruined Iraq's economy, but many European and Asian firms are ready to begin rebuilding it following the removal of sanctions.

Both Iran and Iraq possess oil resources that are of interest around the world. Of equal importance are the possibilities of using either or both of these nations as transit routes for oil and gas supplies from the Caspian Sea. Iran could become a key player in the full realization of the value of the oil fields in Turkmenistan if pipeline routes are placed through Iran to the Persian Gulf.

Dual containment has had far less economic impact on the United States than on Iran and Iraq. However, in the future, as Iran and Iraq open up to the world, dual containment will be judged to have held US companies out of these new markets. Dual containment will have given nearly all other businesses in the world a head start in Iran and Iraq at the expense of American corporations.

### **3. Military**

Dual containment has been unable to deter either Iran or Iraq from expanding their military strength. As economic conditions improve in each of these countries their revenues will grow, which will allow them greater ability to finance their rearmament programs.

General economic relations will grow between the GCC nations, Iran, and (eventually) Iraq. With this expanded interdependence, comes a decrease in the perception of these nations as threats to the GCC. It is possible that the GCC will slow arms purchases from the United States as a result.

Diminished Iranian and Iraqi threats to Persian Gulf security will lessen the need for a large US presence in the region. The GCC nations will use this outcome as an opportunity to ease the US military out of their countries, a presence that for most Gulf monarchies is a political liability. The bottom line for the United States is the potential loss of its foothold in the region.

#### **D. RECOMMENDATION**

The United States should pursue a more active policy of engagement and enlargement. The White House needs to take the opportunity, following the upcoming presidential election in 1996, to begin an incremental process of engagement with Iran. Containment of Iraq should continue until full compliance with all UN resolutions is reached. However, even before full Iraqi compliance is attained, American strategic planners should begin to formulate plans for open engagement with Iraq.

The first method of engagement should be commercial. It may take years before any manner of formal diplomatic relations can be established with Iran or Iraq. Business

relations could pave the way for diplomatic ties, reintroducing America slowly to Iran, and later to Iraq. As President Clinton stated, "nations with growing economies and strong trade ties are more likely to feel secure and to work toward freedom."<sup>234</sup>

By engaging both Iran and Iraq it will be simpler to monitor compliance with efforts to limit WMD. Guarantees for human rights would be better observed from within these nations rather than attempting to influence them through isolation.

Iran is simply too large to ignore. Because of its size and location, Iran will always be a significant player in the Persian Gulf region. The United States is much more likely to have an impact on the Iranian regime from inside than outside.

America must find some common ground with Iran. As previously suggested, that may initially be through economic contact. Iran was willing to make an oil concessions deal with CONOCO, which suggests that a desire exists in Iran to accept US businesses within their borders. If America doesn't engage Iran soon, opportunities will be lost for any meaningful entry into the Iranian economy. Other nations have already filled the void created by lost American business.

The United States has been able to conduct business and diplomacy with other nations that we do not see eye to eye with. China has struggled with charges of human rights violations, yet retains a most favored nation trading status with America. After a protracted conflict with Vietnam the United States has recognized Vietnam and is beginning to open commercial relations.

Opening up with Iran could also place added pressure on Iraq to comply with the UN

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<sup>234</sup> White House, A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement, p. I.

resolutions. It is possible that US engagement with Iran could in some way serve as a positive example for Iraq.

Until Iraq complies with all the UN resolutions the United States should continue a policy of containment. The resolutions should run their course. Too much time and effort have gone into the containment of Iraq to end just short of the goal.

Saddam Hussein has proven that he wants to buy and build long-range, offensive weapons. The Iraqi WMD program is not fully uncovered and thus remains a potential threat to all of Iraq's neighbors. Progress has been made by UN inspectors in uncovering details of Iraqi weapons programs and this progress should not be lost by stopping short of full compliance.

Though the UN resolve in the enforcement of sanctions has weakened the resolutions are still in effect. The United States must demonstrate resolve in completing the efforts begun in 1990.

In time Iraq will buckle under the pressure of the sanctions and comply with the UN resolutions. Preparations need to begin on how America plans to deal with Iraq. The question must be asked: After containment, what?

#### **E. CLOSING**

The Persian Gulf has grown into an area of vital interest to the United States. Iran and Iraq are physically and politically significant in the region. Whether the United States chooses to contain or to engage these two nations, it will require a high level of political energy.

The United States should seek to engage and influence the Persian Gulf region. The

Clinton administration has stated:

Our national security strategy is based on enlarging the community of market democracies while deterring and containing a range of threats to our nation, our allies and our interests. The more that democracy and political and economic liberalization take hold in the world, particularly in countries of geostrategic importance to us, the greater our nation is likely to prosper.<sup>235</sup>

A US policy, which recognizes that Iran and Iraq are less of a threat if they are engaged, will be the greatest contributor in achieving our strategic interest in the region.

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<sup>235</sup> Ibid., p. 2.



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