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CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF US POLICY AND OPTIONS IN
DEALING WITH IRAQ

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CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF US POLICY AND OPTIONS IN DEALING WITH IRAQ

Introduction

Saddam Hussein's Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) programs constitute a threat to US national interests, in light of Iraqi progress in obtaining a nuclear weapon and more capable WMD delivery systems. Hussein's previous use of chemical weapons against the Iranians and Kurds prove his willingness to use WMD.¹ This willingness, coupled with his political objectives of regime survival² and regional domination,³ comprise a dangerous combination that threatens US national security and economic well-being.

Over the past decade, Hussein has repeatedly violated UN Security Council resolutions designed to contain Iraqi aggression and disarm the WMD program.⁴ This lack of cooperation resulted in a US foreign policy toward Iraq that favors preemptive, unilateral military action with the political objectives of total WMD disarmament⁵ and regime change.⁶ This policy is causing consternation within the world community, which seeks to resolve the crisis within a "legitimate" UN framework. This disagreement over the handling of Iraq, along with other issues such as America's perceived unbalanced support for Israel in the Palestinian conflict, is straining US relations with its allies and eroding its credibility and diplomatic influence abroad. Further deterioration in relations, especially with Islamic countries, could hamper "The Global War on Terrorism" and prevent the US from obtaining basing and overflight rights in the Gulf region. This leaves the US with a dilemma in which unilateral action to protect legitimate US interests could cause significant harm to US relationships around the world and further ignite the unstable situation in the Middle East. This paper will analyze this complex national security problem and

provide both non-military and military options designed to meet US political objectives while fostering cooperation and stemming the spread of anti-American sentiment.

Iraq's Threat To Vital US National Interests

The Strategic Environment

The US possesses an unprecedented advantage in military and economic power and influence in the world today. Despite this advantage, for the first time since the fall of the Soviet Union, US citizens abroad and at home feel vulnerable to attacks on the homeland perpetrated by terrorists and rogue states. The destruction of the World Trade Center triggered the realization that US enemies have the reach and ability to threaten the American way of life. As the world grows smaller through cheaper and faster modes of travel; open borders; and the interconnectivity of information, financial and economic systems, democratic nations will become more vulnerable to asymmetric WMD or cyber attacks. The release of a biological agent in a major city, the detonation of a nuclear weapon, or cyber attacks against core US infrastructure systems could kill millions of people and cost billions, or perhaps, trillions of dollars. As the September 2002 National Security Strategy (NSS) states, "We [the US] are menaced less by fleets and armies than by catastrophic technologies in the hands of an embittered few."⁷ The new NSS policy for dealing with transnational or rogue state threats is clear: "the US will **prevent** our enemies from threatening us, our allies, our friends, with weapons of mass destruction."⁸

US National Interests

Before discussing options and solutions to the Iraqi problem, it is important to determine whether Iraq is truly a threat to US vital interests. Let's start with a definition of vital interests. There are several sources that attempt to define national interests. A succinct definition was

selected from the 1999 NSS. Developed by the Clinton administration, the NSS defined vital interests as interests of "broad, overriding importance to the survival, safety and vitality of our nation." Specifically, these interests include US physical security and economic well-being.⁹

The Iraqi Threat

With vital interests defined, the next question is does Iraq's possession of WMD pose a threat to US physical security and economic well-being? If so, is the threat imminent? Answering these questions is problematic because of the difficulty in assessing Iraq's WMD capability, especially since UN weapons inspections ceased four years ago. A 24 September 2002 British intelligence report on Iraqi WMD claims that Iraq possesses chemical and biological weapons, which are deployable within 45 minutes.¹⁰ The report also claims Iraq possesses up to 20 al-Hussein WMD-capable missiles with a range of 650 km,¹¹ has an active ballistic missile development program,¹² and is developing Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) with a range of 800 km.¹³ Most disturbing is the evidence that Iraq continues to actively seek nuclear-weapon technology and fissile materials, including uranium from Africa.¹⁴ If Iraq acquires fissile material, it could possess a nuclear weapon in one to two years.¹⁵ If Iraq is forced to produce the material internally, weapon development could take up to five years.¹⁶

Despite Hussein's possession of chemical and biological weapons, there is little evidence to suggest that the US faces an imminent threat from Iraqi WMD. The CIA judges the likelihood of Hussein initiating an attack in the foreseeable future as "low."¹⁷ This seems plausible when one considers that Hussein's primary instinct is survival. Fearful of a response that could mirror America's destruction of the Taliban, it is unlikely he would risk his survival through a preemptive chemical or biological attack without a nuclear weapon in his possession. Iraqi defectors indicate Hussein said his one mistake in invading Kuwait was not waiting until he

possessed a nuclear weapon.¹⁸ This indicates Hussein views the nuclear weapon as critical to any future military success. There is also some concern Hussein will arm Al Qaeda with WMD. This is unlikely for three reasons: (1) if the attacks were traced back to Iraq, America will likely respond with military action that will jeopardize his survival; (2) he mistrusts Usama Bin Laden, who sought permission from Saudi Arabia to attack his country after the 1990 Kuwaiti invasion; and (3) Hussein and the Ba'ath party are secular and have little liking for Islamic fundamentalism. A CIA report signed by the deputy director, John McLaughlin supports this premise: "Baghdad for now appears to be drawing the line short of conducting terrorist attacks" and "Hussein will more likely use WMD for blackmail, deterrence, or otherwise as his arsenal grows."¹⁹ After careful consideration of Hussein's survival instincts and the fact he is probably a year or more away from obtaining a nuclear weapon, I conclude that it is not likely he will attack in the near term. Thus, Iraq does not pose an imminent threat to US interests.

In the longer term, following Hussein's acquisition of a nuclear weapon, the threat to US security and economic well-being becomes more plausible. Despite more than a decade of economic sanctions and blockades, Hussein has made steady progress toward acquiring a nuclear weapon. Three billion dollars a year, illegally acquired through surcharge-kickback deals outside the UN Food-for-Oil Program, was available to purchase equipment and technology used in weapon development. This equipment was smuggled through porous neighboring borders.²⁰ Iraq's acquisition of a nuclear weapon would provide an asymmetric capability that could create a balance of power in the region, potentially neutralizing US military power by the threat or actual detonation of a nuclear weapon. Once Iraq possesses a nuclear weapon, Hussein can consolidate power by holding the Persian Gulf hostage to any number of demands and threaten to use nuclear weapons against his neighbors, Israel and US troops to attain his objective of

regional dominance. Past behavior, which includes blowing up Kuwaiti oil fields, the gassing of Kurds and Iranians, and the torturing and killing of political dissents and their families, indicate no limits to his ruthlessness. There is no telling what measures he might take to destabilize a region where nearly 50% of the world's oil resources reside.²¹ Currently, 30% of US oil is imported from the Persian Gulf.²² The US can mitigate a disruption for a period of time by tapping strategic reserves and increasing Russian oil imports. The choke point lies with Japan and Europe, which are more susceptible to Gulf oil disruptions that can seriously impact their economies.²³ Most significant to the US, spot market prices will increase, causing a subsequent rise in the price of energy. The interconnectivity of world markets could cause US prices to increase, placing a significant drag on the economy.²⁴ Combining the threats terrorists pose on US soil with a nuclear-armed Iraq, threats to national security and economic well-being become unacceptable. These circumstances form the justification for US political objectives toward Iraq: WMD disarmament and regime change.

Achieving American Political Objectives Without Military Intervention

Since the end of the Gulf War, 16 UN resolutions backed by economic sanctions and blockades have been unsuccessful in disarming Hussein's WMD programs.²⁵ Specifically, Resolution 687 mandates Iraq's disarmament and weapon inspections to certify Iraq was no longer producing WMD.²⁶ Four years ago weapons inspectors left Iraq unable to fulfill mission requirements, as Hussein concealed weapons and production facilities and refused unfettered access to installations. The US has grown frustrated with the UN due to its inability to force Iraq to comply with the resolutions and to stop the illegal flow of money to WMD programs.

The objectives of WMD disarmament and regime change result from the belief that Hussein cannot be deterred from producing and using WMD. For over 11 years, Hussein

resisted UN mandates despite economic sanctions that degraded Iraqi quality of life, caused suffering among his people and fostered diplomatic isolation. Hussein has not bowed to persistent economic, diplomatic and military pressure and shows no inclination to do so in the future. This has resulted in a US policy that seeks to force Iraqi compliance through the use of unilateral military force if necessary.

Domestic Constraints

Despite high presidential approval ratings, there is domestic pressure for the administration to exhaust diplomatic options before taking unilateral military action against Iraq. Congress recently passed a bipartisan resolution authorizing presidential use of force. Despite Congressional support and opinion polls indicating Americans believe Hussein is a threat to US interests, a majority of Americans believe the US should not act without UN approval.²⁷ The weak economy is also becoming a larger concern to Americans. A recent Pew Research poll showed voters by a 2 to 1 margin believe President Bush could be doing more to help the economy, and they want candidates to talk more about domestic worries rather than national security issues abroad.²⁸ Anti-war sentiment is growing across universities and protests are increasing in US cities. These domestic trends provide the international community some leverage in challenging any US inclination to act unilaterally. There is also a danger that if the conflict is protracted, Americans may not have the resolve to stay the course.

International Constraints

Despite Iraq's bold defiance and the clear breaking of UN resolutions, significant world opinion against a US-led military intervention exists. There are several causes for this: US willingness to conduct unilateral, military action without UN approval; US refusal to participate in several international treaties such as the Kyoto Protocol; US support of Israel and its

occupation of Palestine; and the apparent suffering of Iraqi citizens under the sanctions. US strength and a perceived unilateralist tone are becoming unsettling to the international community. Countries like Germany and France are seeking to contain American power through public diplomacy and the UN. Many Arab countries, such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt, have publicly stated that their support for military action is only possible following UN approval.²⁹

There are also economic forces at play as countries compete to sell goods to Iraq. Russia and France have economic agreements with Iraq and other countries continue to legally deal in the shipment of seemingly harmless technology and equipment. Several countries are concerned about the status of these agreements after Hussein is removed from power.³⁰ Will US companies receive favorable treatment and crowd out the competition?

In order for the US to achieve its political objectives in Iraq without permanently damaging its international position, it should consider implementing a sustained public diplomacy campaign. This campaign should convey a respect and appreciation for other cultures and ideas; a willingness to engage in serious dialogue on the issues; and a commitment to resolve the crisis under the UN umbrella. As discussed earlier, the US does not face an imminent threat to its national security until Hussein obtains a nuclear weapon. While it is generally agreed that deterrence will not stop Hussein from achieving his objectives, there is time to make a good faith effort through the UN to avoid military intervention. Taking this approach will legitimize US efforts, reaffirm US commitment to work within the international system, strengthen US credibility and build support for a coalition if military action is necessary by the winter of 2003.

Options Short of Military Intervention

There are non-military options still available for making a legitimate attempt to resolve the Iraqi crisis in the next year. The problem is, short of negotiating an exile agreement with

Hussein, most non-military solutions provide little hope for achieving the objective of regime change. The administration recently signaled a willingness to allow Hussein to remain in power if he complies with the 16 UN resolutions, to include verifiable disarmament. Whatever is decided, it is important to consider how adept Hussein is at working around sanctions and hiding WMD, and the difficulty in assuring that UN member nations uphold the sanctions.

Diplomatic Options

After 10 years of intransigent behavior by Hussein toward the world community and brutal treatment of his people, it is difficult to imagine a diplomatic solution as either possible or desirable. But to gain international legitimacy, build a worldwide coalition and reduce anti-American sentiment around the world, the US must give the UN one last chance to use coercive diplomacy to compel Hussein into disarming his WMD programs. UN Security Council members are working on a new resolution that calls for Iraq to reveal all materials relating to WMD and to give unfettered access to all key buildings.³¹ The problem lies in reaching agreement on the toughness of the sanctions, including whether palaces are fair game for inspections. Britain and the US also want this new resolution to give the UN immediate authority to use any means necessary (to include force) if Hussein obstructs inspections. France and a number of other countries do not wish to give this authority in the first resolution and are insisting "all means necessary" will require the passing of a second resolution after Hussein is given the opportunity to comply.³² Since Hussein is a year or more away from obtaining a nuclear weapon, there is room to compromise. The US should support the French version of the resolution with the agreement that if Hussein does not comply with the new resolution within six months, a second resolution will immediately go before the Security Council for a vote. It is

again important to recognize that in the unlikely event Hussein agrees to unfettered inspections, the US objective of regime change may not be achievable.

There is one diplomatic option that could achieve disarmament and a regime change--the exile of Hussein and his family. While the idea of Hussein retiring to an island paradise may seem inappropriate or unpalatable, a successful exile meets both political objectives. The best course of action is to broker the exile agreement through a third country such as Russia or France. The potential shortfalls of such an agreement include who will assume power once Hussein leaves Iraq, where will he go, and what assurances can be made he won't attempt to return? This solution also assumes Hussein is willing to cede his objective of regional domination. Perhaps if he is convinced that he risks losing everything and will face a trial for crimes against humanity at The Hague, he may be willing to broker a deal.

One of the most significant and difficult diplomatic issues complicating the handling of Iraq is the Israeli/Palestinian problem. A great deal of Arab anti-American sentiment derives from America's perceived support for Israel's military action against the Palestinians and Israel's occupation of Palestine. This sentiment is hindering US efforts to draw Middle Eastern Arab states into a military coalition against Iraq. The US has to make resolving the Israeli/Palestinian problem a priority and should embark on an intense diplomatic campaign. Resolving this issue is easier said than done, but is vital for US credibility and Arab support for any attack on Iraq.

Economic Options

Like diplomatic options, few economic options remain to force Iraqi compliance with disarmament objectives. Embargoes and blockades have limited Iraq's conventional capability; however, UN sanctions and management of Iraqi oil sales have not stopped the flow of technology and equipment vital to Iraq's WMD programs, ballistic missile programs and air

defense system. Compounding the problem, Hussein has done a masterful job of generating anti-Western sentiment by advertising the suffering of Iraqi citizens under the UN sanctions.

There are two reasons that the flow of weapon system technology and equipment goes unabated. First, UN members are not complying with the sanctions. Between 1993 and 1998 the UN Special Commission on Iraq (UNSCOM) uncovered covert transitions between Iraq and more than 500 companies from 40 countries.³³ Effective sanctions require 100% cooperation by all countries. One option for solving this problem is to toughen economic blockade and embargo rules. The UN could pass a resolution stating any country that does business with Iraq outside the Food-For-Oil Program, or allows the flow of goods across its borders, will face UN sanctions. The second reason the flow of weapons goes unabated is that Iraq is adept at converting seemingly benign equipment and technology or "dual-use technologies" into weapon system accessories like mobile biological labs, mobile missile launchers or nuclear weapon production equipment.³⁴ This issue is tougher to manage because banning dual-use equipment and technology will hurt legitimate efforts to sustain the Iraqi economy, cut export profits of UN countries and inflame the Arabs as their concern for the Iraqi people increases. The only way to resolve this problem is through inspections or regime change.

One area where the US can leverage economic incentives is with Russia, which continues to support France's effort to limit the scope of the new UN resolution currently on the table. Russia believes that if Hussein is removed from power and the US establishes a pro-Western regime in Iraq, Russian oil companies may take a backseat to American businesses.³⁵ The US should provide Russia some incentives and assurances that support for regime change will result in economic rewards and a substantial role in the reconstruction of Iraq.

Informational Options

According to Joseph Nye, "power is the ability to affect outcomes"³⁶ and proper dissemination of information is an alternate source of power that can "shape the preferences of others." The US must exploit informational outlets such as satellite TV, radio, newspapers, and psychological operations capabilities to reverse anti-American sentiment in the Arab world. Some of this problem resides in simply getting a better message out to the Arabs. The administration needs to craft "Arab-sensitive" speeches and avoid inflaming Arab opinions. Constant talk of unilateral military action, and sound bite phrases like "axis of evil" and "dead or alive," plays well to domestic audiences, but cause shock and concern in the Arab world. It makes them wonder, "does the US respect the sovereign rights of countries who dissent?" American statesmen and diplomats need to appear on overseas media outlets like al Jazeera to discuss the positive virtues of US Middle East policy.

American propaganda outlets such as Voice of America must continue to transmit messages to Iraqi citizens and soldiers to let them know America stands for their freedom. It should also be clear that if they remove Hussein from power, America will support and aid Iraq in re-establishing a free society, predicated on the values most cherished by the Iraqi people.

Achieving American Political Objectives Through Military Intervention

Carl Von Clausewitz, the German military theorist once wrote, "War is nothing but the continuation of policy with other means."³⁷ If diplomatic and other non-military instruments of power prove unsuccessful in compelling Iraqi WMD disarmament, and assuming Hussein continues to make progress towards acquiring a nuclear weapon, little choice exists but to intervene militarily to achieve WMD disarmament and regime-change objectives.

A preemptive US attack does not violate international law because the UN already authorized the use of force under Resolution 678, which remains in full force today.³⁸ Despite

having the authority, the US must resist unilateral action. One Gulf War lesson is that a coalition with Arab support provides a winning formula for a western state to intervene militarily in the Islamic world. The prospect of attacking Iraq is fraught with constraints and risks that are best mitigated through the backing of the UN and Arab states. If Hussein does not comply with new UN resolutions and the UN refuses to back military action, the US will be forced to develop a coalition unilaterally. No matter the size of the coalition, US forces must be prepared to meet the administration's political objectives while taking the fewest number of American casualties, preventing the war from spreading outside of Iraq and avoiding a humanitarian disaster in Iraq.

Military Strategic Setting, Capabilities and Vulnerabilities

The conduct and character of a second major confrontation with Iraq is likely to take on different dimensions and pose some new operational and political constraints on coalition forces.

The political objectives of WMD disarmament and regime change are a direct threat to Hussein's survival and will likely motivate Hussein to employ all means at his disposal to ward off coalition forces. Hussein will base his military objectives on lessons learned from the past and his desire to ensure regime survival. With this in mind, his objectives are likely: (1) attrite coalition forces and inflict high casualties through use of WMD; and (2) drive coalition forces out of Iraq by turning US domestic and international public opinion against the conflict. Based on these objectives, Hussein will view coalition ground forces, Israel and international public opinion as three coalition Centers of Gravity (COGs) within his reach. He will deploy chemical and biological weapons and potentially create an urban warfare "Somalia" scenario in the hope of inflicting high casualties and weakening American resolve.³⁹ Any inner city combat beyond precision bombing strikes, could inflict significant civilian casualties and suffering, generating large refugee flows and potentially a humanitarian disaster. This scenario will play into

Hussein's hands. As the media reports Iraqi suffering, world opinion may create pressure for conflict termination. The best Hussein can hope for, short of having a nuclear capability, is conducting a war of defensive attrition that weakens world resolve and leaves Hussein in power.

The big unknown that could bolster Iraq's chances for executing a war of defensive attrition is how the Iraqi citizens and the regular army will react to coalition attacks. Will Iraqi citizens fight or flee? Will the Iraqi regular army fight or surrender? Some Western journalists visiting Iraq sense that Iraqis will fight to defend their country.⁴⁰ The Ba'ath government claims to have trained and armed six million Iraqis to complement a military force of around 420,000.⁴¹ It is plausible that Iraqis living in such a closed society, constantly bombarded with anti-American rhetoric and upset over 11 years of economic sanctions, could be fighting mad. Conversely, Iraq is a repressive society where political torture and executions are common. It is difficult to imagine this type of treatment will generate deep-seated support for Hussein. As far as the Army goes, Gulf War results indicate that fighting in the desert will probably lead to general surrender of Iraqi regular forces. The 75,000-strong Republican Guard and Special Republican Guard forces⁴² are Hussein's most loyal and professional soldiers and are less likely to surrender. Surrender becomes more likely if they believe that Hussein's regime will fall from power, eliminating any chance of post-war retribution against them.

International constraints will also impact military efforts. Several Middle Eastern nations, including Egypt and Saudi Arabia, have stated they would not support military action against Iraq without UN approval. Lack of Egyptian and Saudi support undermines the legitimacy of coalition action and may increase anti-Western feelings that can further destabilize the region. Lack of Saudi overflight rights, and access to bases and desert territory, will significantly constrain coalition options for avenues of attack. This will force a ground invasion through the

swampy southern region or northern mountains, and increase aircraft flight time, causing a decrease in bombing efficiency. Finally, attacking Iraq will likely generate WMD ballistic missile attacks against Israel and other neighboring states. If Israel retaliates, the conflict may spread to other Islamic nations, threatening Arab participation in any coalition.

Despite these concerns and constraints, with proper planning and execution, coalition forces can achieve their political objectives. The US has superior air power, command and control, fielded forces, weaponry, intelligence assets and logistics capability. These strengths are neutralized somewhat if Hussein hides air defense and WMD assets in major cities or draws friendly forces into urban warfare where casualties counts will increase. In open desert warfare, coalition forces have a proven ability to overrun Iraqi troops and there is little reason to believe this won't happen again. Iraq's conventional strength is half of what it was in the Gulf War,⁴³ the Navy is virtually non-existent,⁴⁴ and as in the Gulf War, coalition air power should render the Iraqi Air Force ineffective. According to Anthony Cordesman of the Center for Strategic and International Studies and publisher of "Iraq's Military Capabilities in 2002," coalition forces will require 150,000 troops or fewer since the US has experienced a 20-fold increase in precision bombing effectiveness since 1991.⁴⁵ Large stockpiles of pre-positioned hardware and supplies, and the current presence of 60,000 personnel, 300-plus aircraft, and 275-plus tanks and armored personnel carriers provide a solid baseline for action.⁴⁶

The impact of chemical weapons on coalition forces is an operational concern, but, since 1991, improvements in chemical gear and training have left troops better prepared to counter chemical effects. Fighting during the cool weather season and timing attacks to coincide with unfavorable chemical deployment conditions will also neutralize their effectiveness.

Concerns about the war spreading to Israel or other countries are legitimate if Hussein is able to launch ballistic missile attacks. In the Gulf War, coalition ability to track, target and destroy mobile targets was low; however, with the introduction of UAV intelligence and attack platforms, tracking and destroying mobile targets will improve significantly.

Finally, a primary complicating factor that requires US protection is the Iraqi citizens. Widespread harm to Iraqi citizens will generate a world public opinion backlash. If Hussein hunkers down in Baghdad and other major cities, the coalition must work with Arab nations to conduct information operations designed to draw citizens out of the cities into refugee camps. Under Arab control, these camps will protect Iraqis from urban warfare effects and provide a pool of citizens for the opposition army. Hussein may attempt to stop citizens from leaving the cities; however, this is unlikely due to the increased risk of fueling an internal uprising.

Military Objectives and Iraqi Centers of Gravity

Based on the stated political objectives and an analysis of the military strategic environment, capabilities and vulnerabilities, coalition forces should adopt the following military objectives: (1) develop a viable Iraqi opposition force; (2) gain air superiority and render Iraq's air defense system ineffective; (3) severely degrade Iraq's ability to deliver WMD; (4) prevent the conflict from spreading to neighboring countries; (5) render the Iraqi armed forces ineffective; (6) minimize Iraqi citizen deaths and casualties; (7) seize territorial control of Iraq; and (8) destroy Iraq's WMD production capabilities and supplies. Fulfillment of these objectives will reduce risk to coalition troops and neighboring nations from conventional and WMD attacks, address refugee humanitarian concerns, and allow attainment of political objectives.

The targeting of Iraqi COGs should reflect careful consideration of the primary objectives of regime change and WMD disarmament, with an eye to building a lasting peace. Under this

construct, coalition instruments of power should focus on government officials, WMD and military forces. Specific targets may include: command and control infrastructure; air defense systems; WMD stockpile, production, and launch facilities; palaces; Republic Guard and Special Republican Guard forces; the regular army; and Saddam Hussein. Allied forces should resist targeting industrial facilities, water and electrical systems, and non-military-relevant transportation nodes. This represents a slight deviation in the air campaign strategy from the First Gulf War. The differences are mainly driven by different political objectives. Avoiding these targets will minimize Iraqi civilian suffering, gain favorable media coverage for world consumption and reduce reconstruction costs after the war--all vital for achieving a lasting peace.

Strategic Concept

The selection of military objectives and COGs was based on the assumption that Iraq will attempt to fight a war of attrition, focused on maximizing casualties through the use of WMD, and drawing coalition forces into an urban warfare environment. Below is an analysis of each military objective, to include how military forces will execute the strategy, the resources required and how successful outcomes will contribute to achieving political objectives.

Develop a viable Iraqi opposition force: The Bush administration recently authorized the training and equipping of 10,000 Iraqi exiles to assume roles as battlefield advisors, interpreters, forward spotters for laser-guided bombs, and military police.⁴⁷ If these exiles were also to receive urban warfare training, when aided by air power and led by special operations forces, they can potentially take the fight into Baghdad if Iraqi forces hunker down. In addition to performing military functions, exiles can lend legitimacy to the coalition effort by involving themselves in enemy surrenders and the leading of friendly forces into liberated towns and

villages. The two main challenges to this initiative are achieving credible combat-readiness and resolving potential conflicts between factions seeking power in a post-Hussein government.

Obtain air superiority and render Iraq's air defense system ineffective: One of the first priorities in this campaign is to gain air superiority and destroy Iraqi air defenses in order to provide coalition forces freedom of movement, both in the air and on the ground.

Severely degrade Iraq's ability to deliver WMD: Immediately following initial attacks against Iraqi air defense systems, Air Force and Navy strike aircraft and Tomahawk missiles should simultaneously attack all known WMD delivery systems. Initially, allied forces should avoid hitting storage and production facilities to prevent dispersion of chemical and biological agents. Successful targeting of delivery systems hinges on obtaining accurate intelligence from various HUMINT and SIGINT sources. Special operations forces on the ground will aid in targeting and destruction. A successful operation will neutralize Iraqi WMD delivery systems, reducing coalition casualties and the risk of a chemical attack against neighboring countries.

Defend neighboring countries from WMD or conventional attacks: Neutralizing Iraq's WMD delivery systems is one of the most important defensive measures coalition forces can take to protect neighboring countries. To counter the conventional missile threat, Navy and Air Force fighters and bombers must simultaneously target and destroy fixed and mobile ballistic missile platforms. The Army will provide a second tier of defense by deploying mobile anti-missile batteries throughout the region. Successful accomplishment of this objective will prevent the conflict from spreading beyond Iraqi borders, strengthen the coalition and aid in controlling anti-Western sentiment throughout the region.

Render the Iraqi armed forces ineffective: As with the Gulf War, the campaign plan should include a prolonged period of air attacks to weaken Iraqi ground forces by inflicting casualties,

destroying equipment, and cutting off supply routes and communication. Once they are sufficiently weakened and the threat of WMD is mitigated, Marines and Army ground forces should go on the offensive. Initial objectives should focus on overrunning and securing all open desert locations and lightly defended small and medium-size cities. As friendly forces approach Baghdad, psychological operations should intensify against Republican Guard and Special Republican Guard forces in the hope of encouraging surrender or military coup. If Iraqi forces and citizens choose to stay and fight, initially, US forces should not forcibly enter Baghdad. A recent war game exercise indicated that dislodging 160 "enemy fighters" in urban warfare resulted in 100 coalition casualties.⁴⁸ The best course of action is setting up a perimeter around Baghdad and controlling the flow of materials into the city. Coalition air attacks and special operations teams should continue taking the battle to Iraqi forces, but avoid civilian casualties wherever possible. It is conceivable that Hussein will use citizens as human shields to protect his military forces. Under these circumstances, coalition forces should remain patient while continuing to apply steady pressure and publicize any Iraqi war crimes.

Minimize Iraqi citizen deaths and casualties. This may be accomplished through careful targeting and by providing safe havens for Iraqi citizens and army deserters. Friendly forces need to prepare for the potential flow of refugees out of major cities by working with Arab nations to set up camps in overrun towns and desert areas. If major cities are under siege, psychological operations must focus on drawing Iraqi citizens from the cities to the safety of the camps. Providing safe havens for Army deserters also provides an opportunity to convert regular Iraqi forces into opposition forces. The coalition must make every effort to ease Iraqi citizen suffering and to advertise these efforts through the media to positively influence world opinion.

Seize territorial control of Iraq. In order to meet the political objective of regime change, coalition forces must seize control of Iraq. Rendering Iraq's army ineffective, overrunning desert locations in the south, west and north, and controlling access to the major cities will give coalition forces effective control of Iraq and will place Hussein under a great deal of pressure. Iraqi Republic Guard and Special Republican Guard forces are likely to become disenchanted, increasing the probability of a coup. Special Operations forces, along with CIA operatives and the Iraqi opposition, must work to exploit this situation by inciting discontent and offering favorable surrender conditions to the military. Other than air attacks and special operations incursions, friendly forces should not attempt to engage in street fighting. The cost in terms of friendly force and Iraqi civilian casualties may exceed tolerable levels, leading to further erosion of world public opinion and US domestic resolve for continuing the conflict. The best course of action is patience. Eventually, persistent pressure will result in a coup, exile, or surrender leading to Hussein's death or capture and subsequent regime change.

Destroy Iraq's WMD production capabilities and supplies: When the Iraqi regime falls, CIA, UN inspection teams and military forces can complete the process of destroying Iraq's WMD in order to meet the political objective of WMD disarmament.

Potential Results

There is a wide variability in the potential length and cost of this conflict based on how events unfold. A successful military operation may be defined as meeting the political objectives, mitigating the effects of chemical and biological weapons on friendly forces, preventing a spread of the war outside Iraq, and avoiding undue pain and suffering to the Iraqi people. Risks are present in all these areas and have been discussed extensively throughout this paper. Coalition leadership must continually assess the situation and adapt to any obstacles the

"friction of war" and a thinking enemy may pose. Americans must be prepared for a drawn-out conflict if Hussein manages to hold out in Baghdad. This could turn out to be a thorny issue if a stalemate lasts six or more months. The biggest concern associated with the campaign is the coalition's ability to manage the level of Iraqi citizen pain and suffering. If Hussein manages to hold Baghdad for a sustained period of time, the media will broadcast images of Iraqi suffering around the world and negatively affect world public opinion. For this reason, campaign success hinges on careful military target selection within Baghdad and the successful flow of humanitarian aid into the city during any siege operation. If coalition nations avoid capitulating to media and public pressure to end the conflict early, exert military pressure on the city through discriminate air strikes and special operations incursions, enforce an airtight economic and arms embargo, apply diplomatic pressure, conduct successful psychological operations, and incite internal uprisings, the regime will eventually fall via coup, exile agreement or outright surrender.

Once Hussein is removed from power, coalition nations have a responsibility to leave Iraq with functioning institutions, to include a military force strong enough to protect Iraq's oil reserves and sovereignty. The war-termination and post-conflict phases of this campaign must focus on building a lasting peace. This is no easy task in Iraq, where current government officials and several ethnic and exiled groups will seek prominent roles in the new government.

Immediately following regime collapse, eliminating security threats, establishing humanitarian operations and forming a democratic, power-sharing government will be the highest priorities. Coalition forces should initially take responsibility for maintaining law and order and, with the help of non-governmental agencies, arranging for and distributing humanitarian aid. To ensure legitimacy and world buy-in, UN and Arab nations must assume responsibility for establishing a new government and the formation of a UN police force to

conduct Arab-led peacekeeping operations. Establishing a stable government inclusive of the three main ethnic groups--Shiites, Sunnis and Kurds, and determining whom to leave in power from the current regime will be complex and challenging.⁴⁹ Arab countries with ties to these groups must pressure them to non-violently participate in a power-sharing agreement. Army civil affairs units under the auspices of the UN must evaluate the condition of Iraqi institutions after 30 years of repressive dictatorship and develop a plan for transformation to new government. On a positive note, unlike other war-torn nations, Iraq possesses an educated and sophisticated population⁵⁰ and enough oil reserves to fund reconstruction efforts.⁵¹ When regime change occurs and a stable government is formed, Iraq will have the intellectual capability and resources to build a promising future.

The cost of achieving regime change in Iraq is difficult to assess due to the many unknowns. Some analysts have estimated the cost as high as 200 billion dollars.⁵² Is this a cost worth accepting? Probably, if one considers that a biological attack against a major urban area could cost the US economy 750 billion dollars.⁵³

Conclusion

After a careful analysis of this complex national security issue, it is clear that Hussein will represent a threat to US security and economic well-being once he obtains a nuclear weapon in the next one to five years. Hussein's refusal to comply with 16 UN resolutions and his tenacity in holding out after 11 years of economic sanctions, provide little hope for achieving the US political objectives of WMD disarmament and regime change via non-military instruments of power. Despite the grim prospects, time exists for the US to work within a legitimate UN framework to make one last attempt at reaching a diplomatic solution. The US must resist engaging Iraq unilaterally, as this will only increase international tension and fuel anti-American

sentiment around the world. The US should adopt the French UN resolution proposal, but work to attach a time limit of six months for Iraqi compliance. If Iraq complies with the new inspection conditions, the US should drop demands for regime change. If Iraq fails to meet the mandate again, the UN Security Council should swiftly pass a second resolution authorizing force. By working within this framework and conducting a rigorous public diplomacy campaign to quell anti-American sentiment, domestic and international support for coalition-based military action will grow. This could set the stage for a military intervention by the winter of 2003.

As the US makes a legitimate attempt to solve the crisis diplomatically, preparations and plans should continue for solving this problem militarily. There are significant risks to conducting operations against Iraq, as Hussein is likely to use all means necessary to ensure his regime survival. The first task is to build a coalition that includes the Arab nations. As Gulf War experience shows, this is a winning formula. Coalition plans must focus on minimizing coalition casualties, preventing the spread of the war to neighboring countries, avoiding a humanitarian disaster in Iraq, and ensuring that the groundwork is laid for a lasting peace. Neutralizing Hussein's WMD and missile delivery systems early and avoiding entanglement in an urban battle are critical to the success of this campaign. With patience, coalition forces will strangle Hussein and his forces, leading to regime change and WMD disarmament.

Finally, the most difficult task with regard to Iraq may be establishment of a lasting peace. Ethnic groups such as the Sunnis, Shiites and Kurds must broker a power-sharing agreement so Iraq may reach its true potential. Iraq's human capital and oil reserves provide a solid foundation for an American-friendly regional power. A friendly Iraq could ensure stability and the free flow of oil in the Middle East, while serving as beacon for democracy in the Arab world--all of which serve US national interests.

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