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STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S. POLICY IN IRAQ: WHAT NOW?

BY

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ABSTRACT

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Currently, the underpinning of United States policy toward Iraq is based on a U.S. desire to enforce United Nations Security Council resolutions enacted against Iraq's government, and more specifically against Saddam Hussein's regime, at the conclusion of the Gulf War. Since 1991, the U.S. government's strategy has been to contain Iraq through a combination of diplomatic, economic, informational, and military means. Despite these means, which include enforcing no-fly zones over Northern and Southern Iraq, diplomatic pressure backed up by occasional missile strikes, and an economic embargo , Saddam Hussein remains recalcitrant and the U.S. continues to be concerned about Iraqi non-conventional weapons programs. Terrorist attacks against America at the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in September 2001 have given the Bush administration cause and public support to reevaluate U.S. policy toward Iraq. On one hand, it is possible that Saddam Hussein's regime is supporting, and possibly sponsoring, terrorism. On the other hand, there is a very real concern, especially throughout the moderate Muslim world, that expanding the fight against terrorism to include Iraq would undermine President Bush's fragile anti-terrorism coalition, possibly leading to a clash of civilizations. Therefore, the war on terrorism should be considered a catalyst for redefining U.S. national policy and strategy toward Iraq. This paper discusses the evolution of current U.S. policy toward Iraq, assesses key issues concerning the use of military force to meet national security objectives, and evaluates criteria likely to influence success or failure once the decision to use force has been made. The paper concludes that, as a result of the ongoing War on Terrorism, a number of strategic factors currently exist that support the use of military force to overthrow Saddam Hussein's regime.

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STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S. POLICY IN IRAQ: WHAT NOW?

This paper examines strategic issues and implications for US policy in Iraq related to the decision whether or not military force should be used to overthrow Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq. Specifically, the paper considers US involvement in Iraq since the end of the Persian Gulf War in 1991 as the basis for support of two key points. First, that the use of US military force to date has been appropriate, measured, and in keeping with a national security strategy that recognizes a politico-military environment drastically altered by the collapse of the Soviet Union. Second, the position that a preponderance of factors currently exist, as a result of the United States' involvement in the ongoing War on Terrorism, that make this the right time for the US to take military action in Iraq.

This paper will first discuss current US national security principles and policies brought about by an end to the bi-polar world as a backdrop for analyzing the national security environment in which the military instrument of national power might be used. It will then briefly discuss the doctrinal underpinnings of military operations other than war (MOOTW), the broad category to which military operations in Iraq belong since the Gulf War. As a starting point for discussing current US policy in Iraq, it will provide a historical review of how US national policy on Iraq has evolved since the end of the Gulf War and discuss the various national security objectives that constitute this policy. This paper will then describe three critical issues related to the decision to use military force to achieve national objectives in Iraq: political considerations; international and regional support; and military capabilities. Next, it will evaluate those criteria most likely to influence success or failure once the decision to use military force has been made. Evaluation criteria include: national interests, costs and risks, both in strict financial terms and regarding any possibility for casualties, and finally, concerns about US public support for military involvement in Iraq.

The paper concludes that the use of military force in Iraq since the Gulf War has been consistent with stated national security policy and objectives. There are, however, a number of recommendations concerning US policy in Iraq related to planning, organization, and funding. Once these shortcomings are addressed, and the associated risks assessed where they still exist, the US would be wise to leverage a number of compelling factors as a result of the ongoing war against global terrorism and act now, using military force if necessary, to overthrow Saddam Hussein's regime.

BACKGROUND

A NEW WORLD ORDER

The use of the military instrument of power, that is the use of US military forces in meeting national security objectives, has been debated throughout US history. This is especially true, since the dissolution of the Soviet Union brought an end to the bi-polar era and left the US as the world's only superpower. Almost immediately, talk of a "new world order" entered political lexicon with President Bush senior's stated vision of the US and her allies working together to thwart aggression and to resolve global problems.[1] Simplistically, the fall of communism was thought to be the ideal time to seize the initiative and promote global democratization.

Unfortunately, thoughts of a peace dividend as a result of winning the Cold War were short lived. What was coined the "new world order" is more pragmatically portrayed by Max Singer and Adam Wildavsky in their book The Real World Order as a world separated into two parts: zones of peace, wealth, and democracy; and zones of turmoil, war, and development.[2] These latter zones include Eastern and Southeastern Europe, much of the territory of the former Soviet Union, and most of the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Of great concern to the United States, these zones of turmoil comprise 80% of the worlds known oil reserves, 85% of the world's population, and nearly 90% of the world's Muslim population.[3] Even more unsettling, the preponderance of annual population growth, of over 81 million people per year takes place in the developing world.[4] It is this new world order that US national security policies must address.

NATIONAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

It was impossible to predict the drastically changed international security environment the US finds itself in today. A greatly reduced threat of war between major powers has given way to a far different national security agenda, one far more concerned with contemporary threats such as the proliferation of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, terrorism, and international crime. In particular, globalization has wrought an environment in which greatly increased economic interdependency between all nations has changed international norms that dominated world politics since the end of World War II. More than a decade later, the US' national security strategy, a strategy developed to cope with the "new world order," continues to evolve to redefine America's role in a rapidly changing world.

The most recent version of US strategy, "A National Security Strategy for a Global Age," restates the core objectives found in previous versions of the document: enhancing security,

promoting prosperity, and promote democracy and human rights.[5] The two-part strategy to meet these objectives requires the US to maintain its position of world leadership and to take appropriate measures to ensure advancement of US national interests. A key element of the strategy is its stated goal of "shaping the international environment" by using an array of tools across the spectrum (diplomatic, military, economic, informational) of national instruments of power.[6]

MILITARY OPERATIONS OTHER THAN WAR

Of particular interest to this paper's thesis are the implications for US policy and the considerations decision-makers should account for when deciding whether or not to use the military instrument of power in attaining national security objectives in Iraq. Since the end of the Gulf War, the US military has been used primarily in fulfilling a wide array of non-conventional roles in Iraq, referred to collectively as military operations other than war (MOOTW). In MOOTW, the military instrument of national power is used for other than large-scale combat operations. As in the case with Iraq, MOOTW is very often joint and/or combined operations and usually has some level of involvement by civilian governmental, non-governmental (NGO), or private volunteer (PVO) organizations.[7] According to Joint Publication (JP) 3-07, Joint Doctrine for Military Operations Other Than War, MOOTW contribute to the attainment of national security objectives by supporting strategic options including deterrence, forward presence, and crisis response.[8] Within each of these options exist a range of potential MOOTW capabilities and responses based on the degree of overriding threats to US national interests and national resolve to act in a given situation. A fundamental principle for MOOTW is that all aspects of the operation are subjugated to the political objectives to be achieved.[9]

The various types of MOOTW operations undertaken by the US military in Iraq since the Gulf War ended are shown bolded in Table 1. Each of these missions conforms to the requisite

Arms Control	Combating Terrorism	DOD Support to Counter drug Operations
Enforcement of Sanctions / Maritime Intercept Operations	**Enforcing Exclusion Zones**	Ensuring Freedom of Navigation and Overflight
Humanitarian Assistance	**Military Support to Civil Authorities (MSCA)**	**Nation Assistance / Support to Counterinsurgency**
Noncombatant Evacuation Operations (NEO)	Peace Operations	Protection of Shipping
Recovery Operations	**Show of Force**	**Strikes and Raids**

TABLE 1. TYPES OF MOOTW OPERATIONS

MOOTW doctrine and are illustrative of the full range of operations possible, from the use or threatened use of force on one hand, to those not involving the use of force on the other. In every case, determining whether military force is appropriate, measured, and most importantly, in support of national security objectives, requires an analysis of the policy that drives those objectives. Accordingly, a review of US policy in Iraq is now in order.

THE EVOLUTION OF US POLICY IN IRAQ

> We squandered our victory in Desert Storm by not deposing Saddam Hussein because we feared a power vacuum. The price of an imaginary stability was the slaughter of the Shiites in the south and the Kurds in the north, with the remainder of Iraq's people deprived and oppressed unto this day -- while Saddam supports terrorism and nurses weapons of mass destruction.[10]
>
> — Ralph Peters, Wall Street Journal

Any discussion of US policy in Iraq following the Gulf War must first consider US policy leading up to the Gulf War. Since the time the United States became the principle industrialized foreign power in the Persian Gulf, US vital interests in the region have not changed. A primary US interest has been to maintain access to the vast supplies of inexpensive and readily available oil from the Gulf, a critical commodity to the economies of all industrialized nations. A second, related interest has been to preserve regional stability by preventing the emergence of a regional power unfriendly to US interests. A two-pronged approach to attaining regional stability has been to create security arrangements with friendly nations in the region and to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. A third US interest in the region, one that relates more broadly to the Middle East, has been to ensure the security of Israel.[11]

Prior to the Iranian revolution, the US used a "two pillar" policy in the Gulf, relying on strong relations with both Iran and Saudi Arabia.[12] Following the Shah of Iran's fall in 1979, US policy changed and attempted to pursue a "balance of power" between Iran and Iraq.[13] During the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988) for example, the US acted to buttress Iraq when it appeared as though Iraq might be in danger of losing the war. It was the stated goal of US policy to ensure Iraq's ability to be a regional counterweight to Iranian expansionist aspirations. Partially due to US support, Iraq emerged from its war with Iran as the region's strongest military power. In spite of concerns raised by Iraq's use of chemical weapons and a dismal human rights track record, cooperative efforts continued throughout the Reagan years in an attempt to positively influence Iraq. Shortly after President Bush's inauguration, he ordered a review of US policy in dealing with Iraq. The review resulted in the release of National Security Directive (NSD) 26,

"U.S. Policy Toward the Persian Gulf" in June 1989, which espoused limited engagement with Iraq. On one hand, NSD-26 offered "political and economic incentives," while on the other hand threatening negative sanctions regarding the use of chemical weapons, disregard for human rights, and continued development of Iraq's nuclear weapons programs.[14] As late as early 1990, the US was actively trying to entice Iraq into better behavior by providing Iraq a series of agricultural loans and credit guarantees. All efforts failed as witnessed by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August of that year.

Following the Gulf War, US policy in Iraq centered on taking those actions necessary to force Iraq's compliance with UN Security Council Resolutions. Although nearly fifty UN Security Council Resolutions have been imposed in the intervening years, the basis for economic sanctions rests in UNSCR 661, and for full compliance with verified destruction of WMD in UNSCR 687.[15] A summary of the provisions of each of these resolutions, as well as those related to oil-for-food, are included at Table 2.[16]

UNSCR 661 (1990) • Establishes comprehensive economic sanctions on Iraq, except for supplies intended strictly for medical purposes and, in humanitarian circumstances, foodstuffs. • Prevents imports into other states of all commodities and products originating in Iraq. • Prevents any state from making available funds or any other financial or economic resources in Iraq
UNSCR 687 (1991) • Requires Iraq and Kuwait to respect international boundaries • Requires Iraq to unconditionally accept destruction of all WMC and means of producing WMD. • Subjects Iraq to monitoring and verification (inspections have not been conducted since 1998). • Requires Iraq to not acquire or develop nuclear weapons or nuclear-weapon usable material or subsystems, research, development, or manufacturing facilities related to nuclear weapons.
UNSCR 986 (1995) - Oil-for-Food • Allows for a specified amount of oil to be sold in exchange for humanitarian supplies, controlled the UN, as a temporary means to stop the suffering of the Iraqi people (there is no cap on the amount of oil). Iraq took five years to accept the UN's Oil-for-Food provisions. • Requires 30 percent of the money to be used for war reparations (reduced to 25 percent in 2000). • Requires Iraq to fulfill requirements in other resolutions, I.e. UNSCR 661 and 687. • Program is extended at six-month intervals (most recently Jan '02) and has been expanded to include other materials for development of the Iraqi infrastructure.

TABLE 2. KEY PROVISIONS OF CURRENT UN/US - IRAQ POLICY

Throughout the post-Gulf years, however, there has been near continuous debate about the efficacy of sanctions as the basis for UN policy. Simply put, the argument goes that Iraq's people suffer as a result of the sanctions, rather than Saddam and the elites who constitute his power base, for whom the sanctions are intended.[17] The counter argument justifies continued sanctions as a "cost-effective and successful" means to contain Saddam Hussein who poses a

continuing threat to regional peace and security.[18] Any suffering experienced by the Iraqi people, according to pro-sanctions advocates, is solely Saddam's responsibility. Official US policy on Iraq, therefore, is based on the belief that a properly managed oil-for-food program can effectively mitigate the impact of sanctions on Iraq's civilian population for as long as sanctions on the Iraqi regime remain in effect.[19] Additionally, Saddam Hussein has steadfastly refused to comply with obligations spelled out in UNSCR 687, and in the face of great international pressure, boldly expelled UNSCOM weapons inspectors for the last time in 1998.[20]

CURRENT US NATIONAL SECURITY OBJECTIVES IN IRAQ

Despite no shortage of material related to US policy in Iraq, clearly stated national security objectives to achieve that policy were difficult, if not impossible, to find. A review of a compendium of available information, however, revealed four key objectives:[21]

- Maintain regional stability by keeping Iraq too weak to contemplate aggression
- Eliminate Iraqi nuclear, biological, chemical programs and capability
- Overthrow Saddam Hussein's regime while maintaining a unified Iraq
- Prevent instability among allies in the region that might result from US action

Not surprisingly, these objectives are multi-faceted and, therefore, need to be considered as they relate to other concerns that affect US policy in the region. For example, the US finds itself at odds with many of its regional and Western allies in pushing for continued sanctions of Iraq and must weigh this fact heavily. There are also charges that the US is ambivalent to the needs of Kurds and Shiites in their quest for autonomy and, as previously mentioned, to the plight of Iraq's poor and starving populace. Likewise, US policy in Iraq does not exist in a political vacuum. Rather, partisan politics and public support are a major concern in deciding to use military force in attaining the above US security objectives. Finally, inherent in the collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime is a great deal of uncertainty on the part of Iraq's neighbors and a very real fear, especially on the US' behalf, of increased Iranian influence. For these complex reasons and others, the US Congress decided in early 2000 against appropriating $97M to Iraqi opposition groups. While the Iraq Liberation Act of 1998 calls for US financial assistance, education, and training to Iraqis seeking the removal of the current Baghdad regime and its replacement by a new, more democratic government, Congress couldn't identify an acceptable, executable plan and specific operational goals for use of these monies.[22] It is helpful, therefore, to analyze a number of the key issues embedded in, and that impact, US policy in Iraq.

ISSUES ANALYSIS

This section of the paper will analyze three issues: political considerations related to a changed political landscape and the preeminence of diplomatic instrument of power over all others; the critical importance of international and regional support as it relates to coalitions, Arab sentiment toward the US, and to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process; and military capabilities for their likely impact on US policy as national leaders contemplate the use of military force to overthrow Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq. Embedded in this analysis is an assessment of which issues take precedence and what, if any, trade-offs exist between them.

A word of caution, however, is in order before continuing. In their book, Confronting Iraq: U.S. Policy and the Use of Force Since the Gulf War, authors Daniel Byman and Matthew Waxman studied the role coercion through the use of military force has played in US policy in Iraq.[23] Attempts to successfully coerce Iraq in this way, according to the authors, can be difficult to assess for two reasons. First, coercion is a two-way street. That is, at the same time the US attempts to apply pressure through military force, Iraq will attempt to thwart and respond to that pressure. Second, coercion is difficult to assess because the same action can have both positive and negative effects.[24] For example, military force was effective in driving Saddam out of Kuwait, but not in eliminating the problems posed by Iraq's WMD programs. Likewise, while the US' use of military force in containing Saddam has arguably been successful in maintaining regional stability, there's near-unanimous consensus that the cost of success has been increased anti-American sentiment. Therefore, with regard to analysis of issues related to US national security objectives, and for that matter, when assessing success or failure of US policy in Iraq, decision-makers must remain focused on the interaction of the two states within a broad international context. I have attempted to do the same in the analysis section of this paper.

POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS

While not an exhaustive list, there are certain key political considerations that weigh heavily in the decision to use military force in Iraq. Three particularly important political considerations analyzed in this paper are the changed political landscape ushered in by the US' ongoing *War on Terrorism*, the preeminence of the diplomatic instrument of power over all others, and hence, the significance of the interagency role in deciding what to do in Iraq.

A Changed Political Landscape

America's strategic security environment has been dramatically altered by the September 11th terrorist attacks on the US homeland. The loss of more than three thousand

innocent civilian lives, as well as the sheer magnitude of wanton destruction as a result of the attacks, unquestionably provides a strong moral imperative to use military force in Iraq should linkage be established. Politically, the attacks issued in, at least for now, an era of unprecedented bipartisanship in the U.S. Congress. This fact, in addition to soaring public support for President Bush, make consensus on what to do about *the Iraq problem* a real possibility. On the domestic front, the first attack on American soil since the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor in 1941 has changed the psyche of US citizens. Post 9/11, any and all actions taken to prevent further attacks have had staunch support. Likewise, President Bush's widely publicized statement to the world community that "you are either with the US or with the terrorists"[25] in the war against terror met broad international support. Therefore, should evidence be found indicating Saddam Hussein is guilty of sponsoring or harboring terrorists, related in any way, even tangentially, to the September 11th attacks on America, the existing political landscape presents a real window of opportunity for the US to sway opinion, at home and abroad, in support of military action in Iraq.

The Diplomatic Instrument of Power

As the development of the Department of Defense's most recent Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR 2001) bore out, the process used in determining national goals and interests and developing national strategies to attain those goals is itself a political process.[26] It stands to reason then, all other considerations impacting the decision to employ US military forces, as well as the manner in which to use them, are subjugated to political considerations. That political decisions reign supreme is stated clearly in Joint Publication 3-07 when it discusses the importance of synchronizing the use of military force with the political objectives being sought.[27] In Iraq, the decision to employ military force, and in what capacity, must be grounded in the political objectives to be met. President Bush's decision to use military forces in Afghanistan, for example, is consistent with what is essentially a political objective -- to lead the free world against the evils of terrorism -- good vs. evil. In the same way, any subsequent decision to extend military operations into Iraq must first be politically acceptable, and must second be able to stand up to any potential political fallout. However, as alluded to previously, military action in Iraq justified by the war against terror is far less likely to result in political wrangling – costly in terms of both time and US public support.

Other instruments of national power, although subjugated to politics, are used in concert with diplomacy. To that end, diplomatic initiatives are in play before, during, and after other instruments of power are contemplated. As was the case in Haiti, when eleventh hour

negotiations obviated the need for armed intervention, decision-makers and politicians alike must continue to pursue diplomatic solutions even after the use of military force has been authorized. In Iraq, because US concerns are long-standing and because Saddam has been so recalcitrant, there will likely be a tendency to abandon initiatives for a peaceful solution too early. This should be avoided. Rather, analysis is required very early in the planning process to determine the right combination of instruments to use and in what capacity. Early planning is also consistent with the reality that some possible military force actions, for example a naval blockade of all Iraqi shipping in the Gulf, may be more time sensitive. Decision-makers must avoid opting for one option over another based solely on expediency. Again, proper diplomatic planning is the best way to ensure all options are considered for their effect in supporting national interests, as well as their likelihood for success.

Interagency Concerns

Reaching interagency consensus is the final political consideration that will impact the outcome of a decision to use military force in Iraq. If the decision is made to use military force to support political objectives in Iraq, the interagency role in keeping their constituents, as well as the US public, abreast of political realities will be critical. Military commanders and diplomats alike must maintain contact with and understand various agencies and branches of government, as well as their specific goals and objectives throughout their involvement in Iraq.[28]

INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL SUPPORT

As with political considerations, there are a host of issues related to the US' attempt to gain and maintain support for an eventual decision to use military force in Iraq. Numerous lessons learned from the Persian Gulf War illustrate how important, yet how difficult this portends to be. This is particularly true as it relates to three issues: garnering coalition support, acting to alleviate anti-American Arab sentiment that might otherwise undermine US aspirations in Iraq, and to understanding the overarching significance the Palestine-Israeli peace process plays in resolving the Iraq problem on terms favorable to US national interests in the Middle East.

Coalition Support

Any re-examination of the Gulf War leads one to conclude that a key to the US' overwhelming success was the strength of the Coalition put together in the earliest days of the conflict by President Bush and sustained throughout. Made up of thirty-five nations, united in

their conviction that Saddam Hussein's aggression should not stand, the Coalition's greatest value may have been the international political legitimacy it garnered, rather than any advantage in strict military terms.[29] Of course, some Coalition partners also made invaluable military contributions. For example, while unquestionably in their own best interest, the fact remains that Desert Shield/Desert Storm would have been nearly impossible if Saudi Arabia had refused to grant allied aircraft full access to the Kingdom's airfields and airspace. Other partners such as Japan, rather than contribute military forces as part of the core Coalition, chose instead to provide much needed financial support. This proved to be critically important in compensating those who took on the added cost of providing military forces, as well as in reimbursing those in the Coalition who were otherwise hurt financially as a consequence of the actions taken against Iraq. An equally critical decision during the Gulf War was the issue of which nations should comprise the multinational force,[30] and then, knowing what contributions chosen participants could realistically provide to ensure expected roles were understood and executed.

Sufficed to say, gathering and sustaining coalition support for military operations in Iraq is likely to be the most difficult task facing US national leaders. Similarly, contacting and working with the host of international, government, and private organizations with interests in Iraq, to ensure their cooperation with the military, will be crucial to achieving overall success. However, it bodes particularly well for the US that George W. Bush, like his father before him, has demonstrated strong international leadership in the days following the September 11th terrorist attacks. He has built and sustained an anti-terrorism coalition that would likely stand behind a US-led decision to take action in Iraq, assuming irrefutable evidence linking Saddam's regime to state sponsored terrorism was forthcoming.

For decision-makers contemplating the use of military force in Iraq, three critical lessons regarding coalitions can be drawn from the Gulf experience. First, like it or not, only the US has both the capability and the credibility to build and sustain a coalition with enough staying power to finish the job in Iraq -- US leadership is essential. Next, once attained, continued coalition solidarity will depend on the US' ability to maintain Arab unity to see military operations through. Finally, the US must insist on UN support for coalition actions and do whatever is necessary to continue to work issues through the UN framework, so as to elicit unanimity, even if only tacit support, among the permanent members of the UN Security Council.[31] This third point is particularly important because, as mentioned above, international political legitimacy in the Gulf War had its basis in UNSC Resolutions authorizing the use of force to remove Iraq from Kuwait.

Anti-American Arab Sentiment

An equally compelling concern for decision-makers considering military force in Iraq is countering the wide spread anti-American sentiment throughout the region. Only the most ardent hawks, for example Chairman of DOD's Defense Policy Board Richard Perle, advocate unilateral US action, irrespective of concerns by and about moderate Arabs that might undermine coalition unity.[32] At the other end of the spectrum, US Army War College Professor and author Sami Hajjar calls for increased dialogue between the US and Islamic fundamentalists, saying that "engaging moderate Arabs is justified in light of US national concerns."[33] Answers to the question: "why so much hate of Western ways, values, and institutions?" are extremely complex. That said, Zbignew Brzezinski, National Security Advisor during the Carter Administration, succinctly answered the question this way: "political rage over a number of issues."[34] While addressing these issues is beyond the scope of this paper, it is nonetheless important to realize that from an Arab point of view, according to Brzezinski, "US policy toward Iraq has been, at best, confusing."[35]

The salient point is that military planners and decision-makers need to remain cognizant of existing perceptions throughout much of the Arab world. Anti-American sentiment fomented by Islamic fundamentalists and Arab-Israeli relations are two issues that, if the US is not careful, could undermine US policy in Iraq. For example, continuous bombing and sanctions aimed at punishing Saddam Hussein are perceived throughout the Arab world as mistreatment of the people of Iraq. Likewise, many Arabs believe American policy is "two-faced" because it provides uneven levels of economic assistance and shows vastly different levels of commitment to human rights and democratic ideals in its relations with Israel and the Arab states in the Middle East. Sufficed to say, it would be a great advantage to understand and appreciate moderate Arab discourse on the "Islam factor" in order to avoid missteps, especially as it relates to an understanding of "Jihad" -- Islamic conflict and conflict resolution.[36] To date in the *War against Terrorism*, for example, the Bush administration has shown great sensitivity to the important role moderate Arab concerns play on the world stage. Similarly, if the US decides to undertake a war with Iraq in the future, national leaders must continue to be cognizant of moderate Arab concerns and to ensure appropriate measures are taken to mitigate them.

The Israeli-Palestinian Problem

Throughout the Arab world there is no greater concern regarding American foreign policy than as it relates to the US' perceived unfairness in addressing the Israel-Palestine conflict in the Middle East. Of course, this point was not lost on Saddam Hussein, who played the "Israeli

card" throughout the Gulf War, using scud missiles in an attempt to break up the Coalition by bringing Israel into the war.[37] Although his attempts failed, it is likely he will try again, perhaps harder, should his regime once again be threatened. Long-standing US efforts to find an acceptable formula for peace have proven ineffective and fighting between the two sides continues unabated. Still, the argument for linkage between the Israel-Palestine problem and US involvement in Iraq is a strong one[38]. Once recognized, US strategists then need to leverage this linkage, so that any information operations campaign succeeds in undermining Iraqi propaganda and favors US interests. Linkage is also a first, very important, step in addressing the aforementioned Arab concerns about seemingly "two-faced" US policy as it relates to Israel. For example, President Bush's recent on-the-record suggestion that a Palestinian homeland is a condition for peace between Israel and Palestine indicates US national leaders recognize and understand the importance of fairness and equitability in Middle East relations and policies.

MILITARY CAPABILITIES

According to Dennis Drew and Dr. Donald Snow, force development decisions revolve around "the most effective use of resources to meet requirements" established by the most likely scenarios in which the force could be brought to bear.[39] The question then, concerning the use of military force in Iraq, is whether that force is capable of succeeding. By simply examining force capabilities, one might reasonably expect a quick and painless US victory should the decision be made to use military force in Iraq. Unquestionably, a comparative advantage, in terms of both numbers and quality of trained and ready conventional troops and equipment, is lopsided in the US' favor. After all, sanctions are believed to have been very effective in limiting Iraq's ability to rebuild conventional forces that were essentially cut by 50% as a result of the Gulf War.[40] Likewise, a severe shortage of parts and lack of training have hampered Iraq's ability to properly reconstitute and train its remaining conventional forces.[41]

Despite the US' relative conventional military strength, there are good reasons for caution. First, Iraq is known to have robust chemical and biological warfare programs, and may have nuclear weapons, that could be used to offset the US' overwhelming conventional advantage[42]. Additionally, Saddam Hussein has a track record of using chemical weapons -- against the Kurds in Northern Iraq and against Iran during the Iran-Iraq War.[43] It comes as no surprise, therefore, that the Iraqi leader is assessed by US analysts to be crazy enough to use WMD, especially in a last ditched attempt to save himself and his regime, if pushed to the brink of collapse.[44] Ironically, it is the US' belief in Saddam's willingness to use WMD that provides the

strongest justification for taking military action if Iraq continues to defy UN sanctions aimed at eliminating his WMD capability.

There are, however, other questions related to US military capabilities that must be thoroughly considered and answered before committing to use military force in Iraq. Is the US military capable of overwhelming success in urban warfare, for example, if toppling Saddam Hussein's regime requires fighting in the streets of Baghdad? Similarly, will military operations get bogged down in Iraq and risk expending too many resources that could have been used to fight the ongoing war against terrorism in other theaters? Is the US military prepared for, and capable of, a long term commitment of US troops in Iraq to provide security and to set the conditions for a peaceful transition to Iraq's new government? For that matter, what alternatives exist for a follow-on government in Iraq -- one that is acceptable to both Iraq's neighbors in the region and to the Iraqi populace? Dr. Shafeeq Ghabra, an expert on Gulf security and political issues in Iraq, suggested that the process used to build the interim government in Afghanistan is a likely model for establishing a new government in Iraq.[45] And while Dr. Ghabra admitted to many unknowns concerning what such a government would look like and who would lead it, he was quite certain US military forces would need to occupy Iraq for a period of months, or possibly years, following the overthrow of Saddam Hussein's regime.[46] While there are many unknowns, the important point regarding military capabilities is to caution decision-makers to fully consider the range of possible environments US military forces might have to fight in; for example, non-conventional, urban, or as an occupying force. Once considered, there is quite logically an obvious need to properly train and equip military forces prior to using them, so that they can be successful in that capacity.

Once issues related to US policy are analyzed, possible options for US policy should be evaluated against those criteria decision makers assess as the most likely to impact upon the success or failure of that policy. It is this next step in the policy review process that this paper will now address.

POLICY EVALUATION

This section of the paper evaluates four criteria that will very likely impact the success or failure of a US policy that calls for using military force to overthrow Saddam Hussein's regime: US national interests, the risks associated with such a policy, the likely costs, and the importance of US public support. While these criteria do not constitute an exhaustive list, they are critically important considerations for decision makers debating next steps for US policy in Iraq.

NATIONAL INTERESTS

According to Drew and Snow in their book on national security processes and problems, national interests are those things determined by political authorities to be of great importance to the United States and that form the basis for the strategies developed to attain them.[47] The difficulty comes in determining where along the continuum, between vital and peripheral, a given interest falls.[48] There's little disagreement, for example, that WMD in the hands of Saddam Hussein is a matter of "real" strategic interest to the US. But other considerations, such as those mentioned previously, complicate the decision to use military force to take care of the problem. In light of such complexity, the debate has become whether a "vital national interest" standard should be met before committing US forces.[49] However, even when a desired outcome is clearly in the US' national interest, there is no guarantee of a willingness to commit military forces to that end. Rather, political leaders decide whether, when, and how to commit the US military only after considering the possible consequences of such an action, both in the context of the current crisis and with respect to overarching US interests and national policy. However, four "fundamental truths" related to the use of military force can help them in making this difficult decision.

First, the use of US military force must be consistent with America's core values stipulated in our National Security Strategy. Our decision, for example, to lead humanitarian relief operations to aid the Kurds in Northern Iraq immediately following the Gulf War was, rather simplistically, *the right thing to do* based on a "US tradition dating back to 1812" of supporting human rights as an instrument of foreign policy.[50] Next, engagement must support US strategic priorities that "stand up for peace and security, promote global prosperity, and advance democracy and human rights around the world."[51] Next, decision-makers must determine the conditions under which the use of military force would be appropriate. Somewhat facetiously, this consideration is heightened in importance due to an unwritten US policy, developed in the post-Cold War era, that no longer tolerates large numbers of casualties. Finally, decision-makers must ask themselves whether potential consequences inherent in use of military force are worth the risk, and if so, at what cost? The issue of risk will be discussed next.

RISKS

Presidential Decision Directive 25 lists the factors that guide US decision-makers in deciding to allow US military forces to participate in UN operations.[52] The first of six major policy areas specifically addressing involvement by US military forces calls for disciplined and coherent choices about which operations to support.[53] Drew and Snow refer to this process as

one of "risk management" and "risk reduction", where risk is defined as the gap between threats posed to US national security and its capability to counter those threats.[54]

PDD-25, and the "Weinberger Doctrine" that preceded it, necessitates that decision-makers understand the need to evaluate each situation against established criteria, before electing to employ US forces.[55] In the case of Iraq, strict application to these criteria is especially difficult because there are so many unknowns. For example, a military mission to overthrow Saddam Hussein's regime might not hold up later to a long and protracted "nation building" mandate. A wide range of factors important to assessing risk: public support, the likelihood of non-conventional weapons, time of commitment, coalition participation, etc., are also virtual unknowns or likely to change throughout military operations in Iraq. For this reason, risk may not be the most useful criterion in this case. Costs, however, is another criteria that merits consideration.

COSTS

The ongoing *War on Terrorism* is a financially costly enterprise. Following a long list of sizable budgetary adds at the end of FY01 to pay for ongoing operations in the wake of the September 11th attacks, President Bush submitted a FY02 budget request that increases the previous year's defense budget by nearly $50B -- justified in large measure by the expectation that the war against terrorism will continue indefinitely.[56] There are also other less-obvious costs adding to the final tab. For example, in order to gain needed assistance and allegiance from key strategic coalition partners, the Administration is believed to have been very liberal in essentially writing off debts owed to the US government. Additionally, initial figures for what it will cost to bring about a full recovery, and to make restitution to all of parties affected by the World Trade Center and Pentagon attacks, exceed a mind-boggling $100B.[57] In light of these strictly financial costs, and because the US economy is currently depressed, the question of whether to expand the military mission in Iraq anytime soon must surely consider the financial implications of such a choice.

Cost, however, cannot be measured strictly in financial terms. Other costs, those involving loss of life, human rights and dignity, prestige, credibility, and opportunity, weigh heavily in the decision to employ military forces. For example, the Clinton Administration had to defend itself against claims that "pin prick" missile strikes in response to a failed Iraqi assassination attempt against former President Bush in Kuwait, and in response to Iraq's expulsion of U.N. weapons inspectors, cost the US credibility as a result of looking weak. Likewise, partisan politicians and pundits alike claim American prestige throughout the world

was undermined because the US did not respond swiftly and with overwhelming military force following terrorist attacks on the Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia, at US embassies in Africa, and on the USS Cole in the Port of Yemen. Hence, the use of military force is often justified by the *unacceptable cost of doing nothing*, as some in Washington believe may be the case with Iraq.[58] America's leadership, as well as her altruism, remains the long-term underpinning of her ability to shape the international environment in support of US national interests,[59] but they come at a cost. As with risk, these costs are difficult to measure with any certainty and may only be useful in considering a range of best case and worst-case potential outcomes against which to evaluate the likelihood of success. A final criteria worth considering for its impact on US policy in Iraq is the role played by US public support.

US PUBLIC SUPPORT

Carl von Clausewitz, in his book On War, refers to "the passions that are to be kindled inherent in the people" as one of the three sides of the "trinity of war".[60] While war has been called a continuation of policy by other means, therefore, it is also inextricably tied to the will of the people to prosecute it. There is no reason to believe that war with Iraq will be any different. There are, however, three fundamental truths regarding US public support that today's decision makers should keep foremost in their minds when deciding whether or not to use military force in achieving national objectives.

The United States' public has an aversion to casualties. Because of this aversion, there is almost always an initial reluctance to commit troops to any military action, and this will certainly be the case with Iraq. It is usually left to politicians to make a convincing case for the US public that contemplated action is in America's interest in spite of the possibility for casualties. It is illustrative to note that President Bush's initial decision to involve US forces in Somalia in 1992 had strong public support as a result of long-standing American resolve to take the moral high ground against human suffering. A strictly humanitarian mission, however, proved incapable of ending the starvation that had precipitated it, because Somalia's government had collapsed into a state anarchy and warlords obstructed relief agencies' efforts to distribute food and supplies throughout the country.[61] Once the mission in Somalia changed, first to providing security necessary to ensure delivery of relief supplies[62], and later in support of a U.N. "nation building" resolution[63], public support became tenuous. Eventually, President Clinton made the decision to withdraw US forces when US public support evaporated following the deaths of 18 Americans in a Mogadishu firefight. Fresh memories of the terror attacks on September 11th, reinforced by

tales of Saddam's capability to perpetrate something far worse, should help in persuading public opinion toward action in Iraq, possibly to the point where the public demands action.

United States' public support can be fleeting. An important point regarding public support for military force is the requirement to ensure political objectives used to justify action in the first place are realistic. Unrealistic goals that garner support on idealistic grounds, say an end to all terrorism, or the elimination of all WMD, stand a good chance of causing a backlash of opposition when expectations are unfulfilled. Likewise, as the US' experience in Somalia clearly demonstrates, public support can evaporate quickly when goals and missions change, especially when faced with unexpected difficulties. US policy in Iraq immediately following the Gulf War is another example of this principle in action. Although US public support for the war itself was strong, support was completely lacking just a few months later when President Bush contemplated military action to intercede on behalf of Kurdish people in Northern Iraq who had attempted and failed to overthrow Saddam Hussein.[64]

The United States' public doesn't like to fight alone. While the American public understands and even relishes its role as a global leader, they are not likely to support subjecting US military forces to operations for which there is little or no international support. Political leaders who understand this principle will do well to gain at least some international agreement on the need to use military force, as well as some level of commitment of troops from traditional allies, quite possibly under UN auspices.[65]

RECOMMENDATIONS

The above discussion, while somewhat broad in scope, essentially leads the reader to one main point: if it is to be used appropriately, military force must support U.S. political objectives that are well developed and defined. It stands to reason that developing and defining the U.S national interests, for both the international community and the American people, and as those interests relate to Iraq, the Persian Gulf, and the broader Middle East, is a matter left to politicians and national leaders. This section of the paper offers three straightforward recommendations, related to international, political, and military concerns, and based on the issues and criteria extensively developed earlier in the paper. I believe these recommendations, if followed, will increase the likelihood of success should our nation's leaders opt to use military force to overthrow Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq.

The first recommendation is that planning for the use of military force to overthrow Saddam Hussein must begin with garnering a near universal international acceptance of the US' need to act. If international support is to be possible, political objectives for US involvement

must be developed and thorough consideration given to the most appropriate means to *"tell the US story"* to the rest of the world. Significant effort, early in the planning process, directed by the state department and in concert with other agencies, possibly wielding other national instruments of power, needs to be taken so that every consideration is given and every opportunity taken to obviate the need to use military force. Moderate Arabs, along with other potential coalition members, need to know that every alternative to the use of force was considered and to fully understand why military force is now required. In this manner, the U.S is then viewed by the world community as having no other viable alternative.

Once world public opinion is garnered, the second recommendation is that prior to directly confronting Iraq, the US should take the necessary steps to develop the explicit role that other nations will take in support of US policy. The decreased likelihood of US unilateral action requires that every contributor be given the opportunity to provide input, outline their unique capabilities, and to state their ability to contribute. These abilities will most likely range from the contribution of military forces by traditional US allies, to gaining unencumbered access rights to other countries airspace and infrastructure, to gaining financial assistance and promise of reimbursement from countries that cannot send military forces or provide infrastructure resources. While understandingly difficult in today's fractious world environment, all participating nations should come to a shared understanding of the role each plays, and what if any, shared responsibilities can be expected before, during, and after military action against Iraq. Gaining international support will be even more important in the time immediately after the US' military objective is achieved. International assistance to nations within zones of turmoil, war, and oppression – certainly the case in a post-Saddam Iraq – is critically important if conditions for a lasting peace in Iraq are to ever be possible. Since the world will ultimately benefit from a responsible Iraq, it is the world that must ultimately pay, albeit within their means, to achieve that goal.

Finally, the third recommendation is to straightforwardly communicate to the American people the costs and risks associated with military action against Iraq in order to gain their unconditional support. The effort spent in gaining international support for military action against Iraq mentioned in the first recommendation has the added benefit of conceptually preparing the American people for war. However, this third recommendation goes much deeper, in that it seeks to directly define the costs and risks associated with war. As previously mentioned, war is an expensive undertaking, both in terms of strict financial costs that affect the economic well being of the nation, and regarding the very real possibility for significant loss of human life. The US needs to be realistic about its ability to mobilize for full-scale war against

Iraq during a time when so much national treasure is committed to other, equally important, defense issues. Immediate steps should be taken to provide for the inevitable cost of military action in Iraq by carrying out a comprehensive review and, if necessary, overhauling the processes used to fund military operations in time of war. US budget constraints are highly problematic and a long term view must be taken, so that both the costs of action and the costs of inaction are considered. America's reaction to the September 11th attacks has shown the extraordinary character of our nation to steadfastly support their nation in times of real crisis. The American people are ready for straightforward dialogue on the issue of what it will cost to keep their country safe from similar attacks in the future.

While these three recommendations may appear simple, successfully executing them in today's fast moving international and domestic environment will prove complex and difficult to achieve. Adding to the complexity, these recommendations are synergistic in nature. The first recommendation -- developing the international acceptance of the U.S need to act -- then develops the basis for second recommendation involving the explicit coalition planning for military, financial and political support before, during and after the successful war. Finally, positive steps must be taken on the first and second recommendations in order to lay the conceptual groundwork for the final, and perhaps most important, recommendation; straightforward dialogue with the US public concerning risks and costs of military action in Iraq.

CONCLUSIONS

US decision-makers contemplating next steps in the ongoing *War on Terrorism* should do so within the context of enduring US national security objectives. When the debate turns to Iraq, US decision-makers need to understand that the success or failure of an attempt to overthrow Saddam Hussein's regime by force depends more on the character of the political objectives being sought, than on the military force used to achieve those objectives.

This paper analyzed strategic issues and evaluated criteria with implications related to the question of whether or not military force should be used to overthrow Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq. Current US national security principles and strategy, brought about by an end to the bi-polar world, were used as a backdrop in assessing that military involvement in Iraq since the end of the Persian Gulf War has been as a means to support diplomatic ends, and that the application of force has been measured and appropriate to the political goals sought. The paper then discussed current US policy on the use of military force in Iraq and discussed the paramount importance of three related issues: the preeminence of political considerations over all others; the requirement to gain and sustain international and regional support for US

initiatives; and the need to ensure the military's capability to accomplish stated national objectives. Finally, criteria related to US national interests, costs and risks, and concerning US public support for military involvement in Iraq were evaluated with an eye toward their likely impact on the success or failure of any decision to use military force.

Ultimately, this paper supports the premise that as a result of the United States ongoing war against global terrorism, a number of factors now exist that compel the US to act, using military force if necessary, to overthrow Saddam Hussein's regime. If, as many believe, the September 11th attacks are a harbinger of far more destructive attacks, both in terms of civilian lives and damage to the US economy, and if Saddam Hussein is shown to be culpable in proliferating such weapons of terror for use against America, then there may be no choice but to act preemptively with force, irrespective of the risks and costs inherent in doing so. This paper concluded by identifying three straightforward recommendations that will increase the likelihood of success should our nation's leaders make a near term decision to use military force in Iraq as the next step in the global war against terrorism. "What now?" may very well be the most important decision of George W. Bush's Presidency.

WORD COUNT = 8677

ENDNOTES

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[9] Ibid., sec. II, p. 8.

[10] Ralph Peters, "In Praise of Instability," Wall Street Journal, 1 November 2000, sec. A., p. 20.

[11] The ideas in this paragraph are based on remarks made during the Commandant's Lecture Series and follow-up discussions.

[12] Richard N. Haass and Meghan L. O'Sullivan, Honey and Vinegar: Incentives, Sanctions, and Foreign Policy (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 2000), 52.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Haass, 55.

[15] William F. Donaher and Ross B. DeBlois, "Is the Current UN and US Policy Toward Iraq Effective?" Parameters vol. 31, no. 4 (winter 2001-02): 112.

[16] Donaher, 116.

[17] Daniel L. Byman and Matthew C. Waxman, Confronting Iraq: U.S. Policy and the Use of Force Since the Gulf War (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Publishing, 2000), Ch. 5, 33-34.

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[19] Bruce O. Riedel, Remarks to the National Security Council (Washington, D.C.: 18 June 1999.

[20] Michael Kirk, prod. Frontline: Gunning for Saddam, 90 min. Public Television Series, Nov, 2001. Videocassette

[21] Ibid. Mr. Riedel, specifically states "goals" rather than "objectives for US policy in Iraq. Those goals include: containment of Saddam Hussein, to alleviate suffering of the Iraqi people, and to encourage the overthrow of Saddam Hussein's regime.

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[32] Jim Glassman and Nick Schulz, "We Don't Need Anyone's Permission," The American Spectator vol. 34, issue 8, November/December 2001, 40-41.

[33] Sami G. Hajjar, "The U.S. and Islamic Fundamentalists: The Need for Dialogue," USAWC Strategic Formulation Exercise selected readings (2-4 October 2001), reprinted from Strategic Review, (Winter 1997), 1-6.

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[40] Kenneth Katzman, "The Persian Gulf: Issues for U.S. Policy, 2000," Congressional Research Service (CRS): Report for Congress (Washington, D.C.: The Library of Congress), 3 November 2000, 3-7.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Kirk. The video discusses Saddam Hussein's desire to possess weapons of mass destruction dating back thirty years. Iraq's nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons programs are described in some detail using first-hand accounts and interviews with UN weapons inspectors, Iraqi defectors, and US intelligence analysts.

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[44] Patrick M. Hughes, LTG, USA, Director, DIA, "Global Threats and Challenges: The Decades Ahead," Statement for the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, 28 January 1998. Note - Source includes an unclassified excerpt entitled: Iraq -- Continued Belligerence. Although dated, there is no reason to believe the US assessment regarding Saddam Hussein's willingness to use WMD has changed, other than to be more convinced of that prospect now.

[45] Shafeeq Ghabra, "Middle East Regional Studies," lecture, Carlisle Barracks, PA, U.S. Army War College, 5 February 2002, cited with permission of Dr. Ghabra.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Drew, 27.

[48] Ibid., 29.

[49] Chester A. Crocker, "Ambush in Mogadishu: The Lessons of Somalia - Not Everything Went Wrong," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 74, No. 3, (Spring 1995), 14.

[50] Taft.

[51] Clinton, 1.

[52] Nina M. Serafino, US Foreign Policy: Implementing PDD-25 (Washington D.C.: Congressional Research Service, CRS Report 1B4043), 17 November 1995, 4.

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[54] Drew., XV.

[55] Casper W. Weinberger, "The Use of Military Power," Defense, January 1985, 2-11.

[56] Dennis S. Ippolito, "Budget Policy and Fiscal Risk: Implications for Defense," (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute), September 2001, 23. Additionally, from lecture at Carlisle Barracks, PA, U.S. Army War College, October 2001. Cited with permission of Mr. Ippolito.

[57] Multiple news sources have estimated the total cost of the September 11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in the range of $100B to $500B when considering, as yet unknown, second and third order consequences for the US economy. I have used the more conservative estimate here.

[58] Glassman, 41.

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[64] Kirk. The video discusses why US support for Iraqi opposition groups is unlikely to result in an uprising to overthrow Saddam Hussein's regime. In three previous cases, the US decided against providing US troops to support opposition forces in part because the Administration (President Bush in 1991, President Clinton in 1992 and 1996) determined US public support for military actions did not exist.

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