War with Iraq?

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Introduction

CHRISTIAN REUS-SMIT

What curious path has brought us to this point? Just over a year ago, terrorists from the amorphous transnational Al Qaeda network killed thousands of Americans and other nationals by flying planes into New York's World Trade Center, the Pentagon in Washington, and a field in Pennsylvania. Today, the United States is preparing to launch a war against the state of Iraq, emphasising the grave and imminent danger posed by Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction, but animated also by a long-standing goal of 'regime change'. What explains this 'statising' of the so-called 'war against terrorism'? What risks does it pose for regional and world order?

The need to grapple with these questions cannot be exaggerated. Perhaps more than any other issue in the post-Cold War period, the issue of war with Iraq brings to the fore the most fundamental concerns of world order. How should the international community manage authoritarian regimes in possession of, or with the capacity to produce, weapons of mass destruction? When, if ever, is pre-emptive war justified? What role should the United Nations play in authorising such war? Is it legitimate for a hegemonic power to claim the right to interpret and uphold the rule of international law unilaterally? These questions go to the heart of issues of sovereignty, arms control, collective security, the laws of war, global governance, and legal and ethical limits of power projection.

One of the more interesting features of the current debate about war with Iraq is that the advocates' case is decidedly 'idealist'. The hardline men and women of the Bush Administration tell us that war could be short and relatively low cost (at least in terms of American and allied casualties). They highlight the immense military capabilities of the United States, and the likelihood that Iraqi forces will collapse quickly. They deny that war could radicalise Arab opinion, destabilise surrounding states, and exacerbate the Israel–Palestine conflict. They speak as though deposing Saddam Hussein will allow democracy to flower in Iraq, and provide a critical catalyst for a new more peaceful era in regional politics. They cast war with Iraq as essential to the prosecution of the war against terrorism, suggesting that disarming or deposing Saddam Hussein will lower, not increase, the risk of future attacks against Western targets. And they tell us that even American unilateral action strengthens the rule of international law, not weakens it. How many leaps of faith do they ask of us here?

This *Keynote* brings together some of Australia's leading thinkers and commentators on American foreign policy, the politics of the

Middle East, strategic and defence issues, and global governance to reflect on the multiple issues raised by the prospect of war with Iraq. Although they come at the issue from different angles, and differ on a range of points, they adopt sober, realist stances that challenge the leaps of faith asked of us. Amin Saikal sets the scene by examining the regional dimensions of the issue, explaining the evolution of America's policies toward Iraq and the likely consequences of war for the stability of the Middle East. Peter Van Ness traces the roots of the Iraq campaign in the Bush Administration's evolving national security doctrine. Hugh White systematically examines the political and military logistics of an invasion of Iraq, and suggests that simple cost-benefit calculations should counsel caution on the part of the Bush Administration. Peter Gration examines the strategic challenges and risks of war with Iraq, concluding that these are far greater than our politicians concede. Stuart Harris, concluding the volume, takes up the issue of the United Nations and Security Council authorisation.

The Bush Administration asks us to accept the leaps of faith outlined above not because of the detailed case it has made, but because of the universality of American values, the equation of American security interests with those of all peoples, the right of the United States to interpret and defend international law unilaterally, and the power of the American military to translate political interests into outcomes unproblematically. In other words, one set of leaps of faith is undergirded by another, deeper set. The following chapters suggest another path. That we should accept the leaps of faith asked of us only if a careful evaluation of the complexity of the situation facing us, and a judicious assessment of available options and consequences, suggest that the actions proposed are reasonable and realistic. On these questions my fellow contributors are deeply sceptical.

Targeting Iraq?

Amin Saikal

There are many dimensions to the US–Iraq conflict. They can be looked at from varying perspectives to highlight American concerns, Iraqi objections to US behaviour and the wider consequences of a war between the two protagonists for regional stability and world order. The objective of this article is to focus on those dimensions for which ample evidence exists in the public arena. It is also to underline one major contention: that the US is partly responsible for the current crisis and a war with Iraq for the purpose of destroying Saddam Hussein's regime and transforming Iraq into a subordinate US ally, free of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), is unlikely to make the Middle East any less volatile and American interests any more secure in the region in the long run. President George W. Bush has boxed himself into a corner over Saddam Hussein, and a US invasion of Iraq carries a very high risk of inflicting greater suffering upon the Iraqi people and subjecting the region to geostrategic shifts that may be beyond the US's power to control.

US COURTSHIP

It is important to state at the outset that Saddam Hussein's leadership, ever since its formal inception in 1968, has proved to be both morally and politically indefensible. One cannot but be appalled by the nature of Saddam Hussein's dictatorship, his brutal suppression of dissent, his gassing of Iraq's Kurdish citizens, and his history of aggression against Iran and Kuwait, as well as his attempts to defy UN resolutions despite his humiliating defeat in the Gulf War eleven years ago.

However, a US-led invasion of Iraq may prove to be equally indefensible. It is disturbing to note that the United States' policy behaviour towards Saddam Hussein has not been consistent and principled. In the 1980s, under a policy of 'constructive engagement' towards Iraq, the US showed no moral qualms about attempting to seduce and cultivate Saddam Hussein as a friend to counterbalance the anti-American, Islamic regime of Ayatullah Khomeini in Iran. The US assisted Saddam Hussein to fight with Iran the longest, bloodiest, and costliest war in the modern history of the Middle East—a war which lasted from 1982 to 1988 and cost more than one million lives, not to mention the incalculable material destruction and social dislocation that it caused for both sides. The current US Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, was one of the key American figures who played an important role in fostering closer relations between Washington and Baghdad. As President Ronald Reagan's representative, he visited Saddam Hussein in 1983 to convey the President's best wishes to the Iraqi leader and offer him American

help. Washington's assistance ranged from providing Iraq with satellite photographs of Iran's military positions and operations, to tolerating the sale by various American companies of high-tech products which could be used for military purposes, to encouraging US allies to sell sophisticated weapon systems to Iraq. Furthermore, the US supplied some 30 per cent of Iraq's agricultural needs, with virtually all the sales taking place 'under US government credit and subsidy programs that eventually totalled $1 billion a year.'[1]

Washington made no complaint about Iraq producing WMD or using them against Iran and Iraq's Kurdish population. In fact, according to former American ambassador to Iraq, Edward Peck, the US possibly even actively assisted Saddam Hussein's regime to acquire chemical and biological weapons.[2] As late as mid-April 1990, a US congressional delegation, headed by the senior Republican Senator Robert Dole, visited Baghdad to convey a special message from President George Bush to Saddam Hussein and to assure the latter of the United States' desire for continued warm relations.[3]

While maintaining a conspicuous silence over Saddam Hussein's brutalities, including his use of chemical weapons, Washington actively sought to help the Iraqi leader to achieve a level of political confidence and military capability that prepared him for further repressive and aggressive activities. It did so in the clear knowledge that the Iraqi dictator had harboured regional ambitions, with claims over even some of Iraq's Arab neighbours, most importantly Kuwait. In fact, he had invaded northern Kuwait in 1973, only to withdraw when he was threatened by the powerful Shah of Iran.[4]

A USEFUL ENEMY

The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on 2 August 1990 outraged Washington, but probably not to the extent necessary to prompt it to aid the Iraqi people to determine the fate of Saddam Hussein's dictatorship in the wake of Operation 'Desert Storm', which reversed the Iraqi invasion. President Bush personally called on the Iraqi people to rise up against Saddam Hussein, but when they did and when they were confronted

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[1] Barry Rubin, 'The United States and Iraq: From appeasement to war', in Amatzia Baram and Barry Rubin (eds), *Iraq's road to war* (London: Macmillan, 1993), p. 255. Even in the late 1990s, when the current US Vice-President Dick Cheney was running Halliburn (the oil services firm), Halliburn 'sold more equipment to Iraq than any other company did.' For details, see Nicholas D. Kristof, 'Cheney didn't mind Saddam', *International Herald Tribune*, 16 October 2002.

[2] *7.30 Report*, ABC Television, 30 September 2002.

[3] For the text of conversation between the members of the delegation and President Saddam Hussein, see Micah L. Siftry and Christopher Cerf (eds), *The Gulf War reader: History, documents, opinion* (New York: Random House, 1991), pp. 119–21.

[4] For an account of the incident, see Amin Saikal, *The rise and fall of the Shah* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 238, fn. 13.

with the reality that the American defeat had not diminished his repressive capacity against the Iraqi people, Washington refrained from providing the help that the rebellious Iraqi Kurds and the Shi'ites (who incidentally constitute some 60 per cent of the Iraqi population) needed to resist the onslaught by Saddam Hussein's brutal Republican Guard.

What prevented Washington from acting decisively in this respect was not the fact that it did not have a clear UN mandate, for it was prepared in February 1988 to consider punishing Saddam Hussein without such a clear mandate and in the face of widespread opposition to the use of force by most of the regional states and members of the UN Security Council. It was actually a set of geostrategic consider-ations that constrained Washington from acting. These considerations ranged from the lack of a viable alternative to Saddam Hussein, to a fear that in the wake of the Iraqi leader's removal from power Iraq might disintegrate and Iran might emerge stronger, given Iraqi Shi'ites' sectarian affiliation with the Iranians.

Rather, Washington found Saddam Hussein useful as an enemy. It set out to exploit this enmity to change its pre-Kuwait invasion policy of 'constructive engagement' to a policy of 'divide and rule' in the region. It devised a strategy which had two mutually reinforcing aspects. One was to treat Iraq and Iran as the 'enemy' and to pronounce a policy of 'dual containment' towards them. Another was to set up a 'unipolar security system' in the Gulf, whereby the United States, as the sole superpower, would guarantee the security of its Gulf Arab friends—that is, members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC),[5] led by Saudi Arabia—against these 'enemies' in exchange for their political, finan-cial and infrastructural support. Washington wanted the system's immediate objectives to be directed at keeping Iraq weak and out of the regional balance, with an expectation that this would make Saddam Hussein's regime collapse from within over whatever period of time might be necessary to find a viable alternative to it; at ensuring Iran's continued isolation for as long as it took its Islamic government to curb its independent religious posture and acquiesce to the dominance of the United States and its allies in the region; and at deterring and limiting all those regional forces and movements which were perceived as potentially threatening to US and allied interests.

For this, Washington urgently sought to construct a security system based on close bilateral and multilateral alliances with the GCC countries, pre-positioning as much weaponry as necessary in the allied countries, and stationing only a limited number of American troops in the region. This was to enable the United States to act as an 'above the

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[5] The Gulf Cooperation Council is composed of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates.

horizon' actor, capable of dealing with problems whenever and wherever they arose, without stationing a large number of US troops in the area and therefore letting too many of them become the target of hostile actions.[6]

This meant that the new US approach to the security of the Gulf was now premised on maintaining Iraq and Iran as 'the enemy'. Without this, there would neither be a need for the kind of security system that it wanted to construct, nor could that security system function effectively. At the same time, America's allies would become dependent on the US and consequently vulnerable to its dictates. American policy makers, most importantly Martin Indyk (who had a substantial input into the formulation of the policy of 'dual containment') considered this security approach to be the most appropriate for maintaining America's influence in the region in the post-Cold War era.[7]

However, the whole approach soon faced serious difficulties and failed to produce the desired results. The 'dual containment' policy was successfully circumvented by both Iraq and Iran. According to Zbigniew Brzezinski, Brent Scowcroft and Richard Murphy, the first two former National Security Advisors to US Presidents, and the latter a former Assistant Secretary in the State Department, it was effective in isolating two states: Israel and the United States.[8] Saddam Hussein managed to circumvent the UN sanctions in a way that badly impacted on the Iraqi people, with little or no effect on his ability to consolidate his hold on power, and survive as a thorn in the side of the United States. The Iranian leadership effectively used Iran's geopolitical assets to forge closer ties with Russia, China, India, and the European Union. As a result, every American effort at enforcing 'dual containment' ran into a dead end. President Clinton's decision in 1996 to tighten up the sanctions against Iran by ratifying an extra-territorial bill which subjected to American punishment those foreign companies which invested more than $40 million in Iranian oil and gas industries, drew swift, widespread defiance from around the world. Taking the lead were US European allies, most importantly France and Germany, which flatly rejected the imposition of such extra-territorial American laws.

The unipolar security system did not effectively materialise either. Although Kuwait understandably signed a ten-year security pact with the United States in September 1991, Saudi Arabia and other GCC

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[6] For details, see Amin Saikal, 'The United States and Persian Gulf security', *World Policy Journal,* 9(3) Summer 1992, pp. 515–31.

[7] See Martin Indyk (President Clinton's policy advisor on the Middle East), 'The Clinton administration's approach to the Middle East', statement delivered to the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 18 May 1993.

[8] For details, see Zbigniew Brzezinski, Brent Scowcroft and Richard Murphy, 'Differentiated containment', *Foreign Affairs*, 76(3) May–June 1997, pp. 20–30.

members did not find it domestically or regionally wise to provide the United States with the *carte blanche* that it needed to make the system fully operational. This became evident not only in their reluctance to conclude formal bilateral alliances with the US, but also in their subsequent refusal to allow their territories to be used for military operations against Iraq. A number of considerations proved to be instrumental in this respect.

The GCC leaderships, with the exception of those of Kuwait and to some extent Bahrain (whose Shi'ite Muslims have a sectarian affiliation with Shi'ite Iran, and had increasingly grown restive towards their Sunni rulers), reasoned that following the damage done to Iraq as a result of the Gulf War and UN sanctions, Saddam Hussein no longer had the military and economic capacity to act as anything more than an irritant. As for his chemical and biological weapons, much of his stockpiles and long-range delivery missiles were destroyed by the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM), in charge of eliminating Iraq's WMD, before Saddam Hussein forced the Commission out of Iraq in late 1998 on the grounds that it had become a nest of American, British and Israeli spies and that it had no deadline to end UN sanctions against Iraq. Many in the Gulf had come to believe that under the prevailing constraints, Saddam Hussein would find it extremely difficult and costly if he tried to use such weapons against any of the GCC states, or for that matter any of America's other allies—most importantly Israel—in the region. According to this assessment, Saddam Hussein was aware that in the event of an Iraqi chemical or biological attack, the US and Israel's response could be nuclear—a fact which deterred Saddam Hussein from using any weapons of mass destruction during the Gulf War, and which would likely prevent him from doing so in the future, unless he finds himself cornered and decides to take Iraq and possibly the whole region down with him. Should Saddam Hussein take the latter course, most military analysts believed that there might be very little the United States could do to stop him, short of launching a massive pre-emptive strike—a development which could result in widespread civilian casualties and thus international condemnation of the US, as well as possible destabilisation of the region as a whole and the loss of America's grip on the area.

This situation has not changed to date, with one important exception: anti-American anger among Arab masses has escalated following the tragic events of 11 September 2001. This anger has been fuelled by the US failure to deal with the root causes of terrorism, of which Israel's repressive occupation of Palestinian land and continued defiance to comply with UN resolutions in support of the Palestinians' right to a homeland of their own is one. President Bush's strong support of Israel and his support of the right-wing Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon as a 'man of peace', despite the fact that there is nothing in the 50 years of

Sharon's public service to substantiate such a description, has led many in the Arab/Muslim world to become more frustrated with and scornful of the US than ever before. While most among the Arab peoples have little sympathy for Saddam Hussein, Israeli and American behaviour has prompted them to become tolerant of the Iraqi leader and defiant of Washington's call for support against him.

CONSEQUENCES OF A WAR

Should the US and a few of its allies, namely Britain and Australia, launch an attack on Iraq, without an explicit UN resolution authorising the use of force, one could expect a number of major complications.

The first is that because this time Saddam Hussein knows that the US is after him, he may, as a last resort, load some of his intermediate range missiles with chemical and biological weapons and target the oil fields of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia in order to contaminate them and disallow the US and its allies to make use of them for many years to come. He may also set the Iraqi oil wells ablaze and destroy the country's oil platforms. His objective would be to cause a massive rise in oil prices and an energy crisis larger than that of 1973–74, with serious repercussions for the world economy.

The second is that because the Iraqi opposition in exile—the Iraqi National Congress—is still as factionalised and riddled with internal personal and group animosities as it was a decade ago, the US is unlikely to come up with a viable alternative to Saddam Hussein's regime. The main factor that has led the opposition groups to make a show of public unity in recent months is Washington's pressure and promise of securing power for them. In the event of Saddam Hussein's fall, there will be little to keep these groups together. The Iraqi opposition is very different from the Afghan anti-Taliban alliance, led by the dominant Tajik group of Commander Ahmed Shah Massoud, who was assassinated two days before 11 September 2001. The Massoud group proved instrumental in keeping the alliance together, providing the US and its allies with an effective bridgehead and assisting them in the ground war, and leading the alliance to negotiate for an alternative to the Taliban government. The Iraqi opposition lacks such a dominant force and a ground fighting capacity inside Iraq.

This is the main reason why, by early October 2002, the Bush Administration toned down its earlier rhetoric in support of elements of the Iraqi opposition and began working hard on a contingency plan to replace Saddam Hussein's regime, should it become necessary, with a US-run occupation administration, modelled on the one that ran Japan after World War II. However, the problem that such an administration would face is that, unlike Japan, Iraq is not an island state. It shares long borders and extensive cross-border ties with its neighbours. It will be difficult for the US to control these borders and prevent the Iranians,

Turks and Arabs for too long to engage in activities in Iraq in pursuit of conflicting regional interests. This means that the US and its allies will have to remain militarily engaged in Iraq on a long-term basis, which could prove to be more costly than can be anticipated at this point. It could prompt the US to divert resources away from Afghanistan, with a profound effect on the 'war against terror'. Meanwhile, the US promise that it would institute a viable democratic system of governance in Iraq is somewhat hollow. Washington has already declared its determination not to let the Iraqi Shi'ite majority lead the country because it might benefit Iran and the Iraqi Kurds to achieve confederated autonomy that could lead to the break up of Iraq.

The third complication concerns the fact that a US military campaign and Iraq's response this time is bound to be very different from that of 1991. Since the US objective is now regime change and direct destruction of Iraq's WMD, this objective cannot be secured by air bombardment and special force operations alone, as was done in Afghanistan. The US forces will have to go inside Iraq in large numbers and be prepared to fight Saddam Hussein's troops in what might turn out to be very intense and bloody urban warfare. As such, the war may not be as short and swift as many American policy makers and strategists may have hoped. It could carry the risk of high casualties on both sides, and the images of too many Iraqi civilians being killed and injured could only add to popular grievances over Israel's repression of the Palestinians and America's strategic partnership with the Jewish state across the Arab/Muslim world. They could galvanise the Arab masses to the point of explosion not just against the US and its allies, but against some pro-US authoritarian Arab regimes which have not been able either to contain the plight of the Palestinian people or to deter the US and its allies from inflicting another round of suffering on the Iraqi people.

The war itself may remain confined very much to Iraq and possibly the oil fields of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Saddam Hussein lacks the necessary means of delivery to hit Israel, the Arab regimes are devoid of the needed will and strength to defy the US in support of Iraq, and the Iranian regime, which resents any increase in US presence in the region, is bound to be careful, as it was in the Gulf War of 1991, not to provide any pretext for the US to attack Iran. However, this is not to claim that US interests will not be targeted in the Arab world and beyond. All regimes in the region and further afield in the Muslim domain have certainly sought to suppress radical Islamist opposition in one form or another, with the exception of that of Iran where the Islamists, though divided among themselves, are in power. Yet they have succeeded in diminishing the appeal of either radical Islamism as an ideology of popular mobilisation and resistance or Osama Bin Laden and his Al Qaeda network as the recent embodiment of such an ideology. However, one

cannot rule out the existence in concealment of many actual Al Qaeda supporters and non-Al Qaeda potential radical Islamists in the region. A protracted American military involvement in Iraq, without a resolution of the Palestinian problem, could easily play into the hands of such elements. If they do not react immediately, they will have enough cause to swell their ranks and engage in hostile activities in the medium to long run. By the same token, the regimes, especially in some of the Arab countries, may not be able to contain the emotions of ordinary citizens from boiling over, with dire consequences for some of them.

Two countries which may need to be watched closely are Saudi Arabia and Egypt. The Saudi theocratic regime is in a very precarious situation. On the one hand, it is in deep domestic trouble for its mismanagement of the Saudi oil wealth and for failing to build a polity where political inclusiveness, rule of law, separation of powers, independent judiciary and observance of human rights underpin the operation of state and society. This has enabled both radical religious and democratic opposition to gain ground among the Saudis, although largely as an underground phenomenon. On the other hand, it has come under increasing criticism from its main long-standing patron ally, the United States, since the 11 September events. The neoconservative, pro-Israeli elements in the Bush Administration have accused the Saudi regime of having nurtured a kind of Islam and supported a kind of Islamic education at home and abroad which have helped to spawn radical Islamism as a force against the US and Israel. A combination of potential domestic instability and exogenous pressure has left the Ibn Saud rule in a state of limbo and in a weaker position than at any time since the inception of the American–Saudi special relationship some 60 years ago. While in the short run it may be able to withstand the consequences of a US war with Iraq, if it fails to go with the flow of Arab public feelings it can expect very turbulent times ahead—something which could have serious long-term repercussions for regional stability, and the international oil market and economy.

The same goes for Egypt, where Husni Mubarak's veiled authoritarian regime has increasingly been viewed both at home and in the Arab world as under the sway of Washington. The regime faces strong internal opposition from the ranks of growing Islamist and secularist reformists, not to mention Islamic extremists, whom it has been able to suppress but not eliminate. This, together with the fact that the regime has been able neither to improve substantially the living conditions of the poor Egyptian masses, nor to reduce the rampant social and economic inequalities, nor to play a productive role in influencing Washington and Jerusalem (with which it has a peace treaty) to resolve the Palestinian problem, has left the regime in a state of serious potential instability. An American war with Iraq could easily expose the regime to greater domestic and foreign policy problems. Egypt is a key

Arab state, with the largest population. If it is destabilised, it would have a rippling effect on the rest of the Arab world.

The biggest danger that a war with Iraq poses is the further antagonism of moderate Islamists, who form the bulk of Islamists in the Muslim world. They are the ones who believe in Islam as a peaceful ideology of transformation of their societies, but have no aversion to co-existing with the West (or more specifically the United States) interactively and cooperatively in a globalised world. They can be a significant element in terms of creating bridges of understanding and cooperation which are now required between the world of Islam and the West, especially in the negative environment which has emerged since the 11 September events and America's response to those events. Moderate Islamists are already disturbed over the neoconservative hawks who have come to dominate the Bush Administration, with a goal to remake not only the Middle East but also Islam in accordance with US globalist interests. If a war with Iraq provides more tangible evidence about this wider agenda, it is bound to weaken further the position of moderate Islamists in favour of those in the Muslim world who argue for more Islamic militancy as an effective means to defend themselves and their Islamic way of life.

WHAT HAPPENED TO DETERRENCE AND CONTAINMENT?

The question that haunts many in the region and beyond is this: how is it, as Washington has repeatedly claimed, that the American policy of containment and deterrence, which formed the basis of American foreign policy behaviour for 50 years, worked against a superpower like the Soviet Union, but cannot achieve a similar result against a small actor like Saddam Hussein's regime? It is this question that has led many in the Muslim world to suspect that the US has a wider agenda behind a war with Iraq. Some have reason to think that since American neoconservatives never accepted America's 'loss' of the oil-rich and strategically vital Iran as a result of the Iranian revolution of 1978–79, the Bush Administration's wider target is Iran. An American occupation of Iraq, together with its military presence in Afghanistan, Central Asia, the Gulf and Turkey, would provide it with a full encirclement of Iran, and therefore the necessary leverage to cause a shift in the balance of power away from Iranian Islamic hardliners to those Islamists and hidden secularists who want to renew ties with the United States.

A change of this kind would leave the US in an unassailable position to bring favourable political shifts in the rest of the region, although such shifts in the past have proved quite counter-productive. One such shift was when the CIA reinstalled in 1953 the Shah on his throne to rule Iran at the behest of the US. But this eventually contributed substantially to the popular revolution which brought the Shah down 25 years later and caused the US to suffer a major strategic setback in the

Middle East. There is every chance that the US could face a similar backlash in Iraq. Saddam Hussein is condemnable in many ways and there is a need for structural changes and democratisation in the Arab world, but the way the Bush Administration wants to tackle the problems could prove to be very costly for all involved. It could plunge the region into deeper volatility and instability.

Bush's 'old war' national security doctrine

PETER VAN NESS

The horrific attacks by fundamentalists wielding box-cutters on 11 September 2001 proved beyond question that the greatest national security threat to the United States, the world's sole remaining super-power, was not from states—'rogue' or otherwise—but from non-governmental militants engaged in so-called asymmetric warfare, or what Mary Kaldor calls 'new wars'.[1] How ironic it is, then, that after a year of waging his 'war on terrorism', President George W. Bush remains committed to fighting state-to-state 'old wars', rather than attempting to deal with the 'new wars' that actually threaten the nation. There is a fundamental disconnection here between the threat and what the Bush Administration proposes to do about it.

Bush insists that the United States should maintain permanent military superiority over any and all other nations in the world, and has announced that the US will make pre-emptive or first-strike assaults against any country it deems to be threatening to it or its allies, with or without the endorsement of the United Nations. Such US doctrine places the entire rest of the world in the position of either strategic dependents of the United States, or potential adversaries confronted with what realist theorists would call a permanent 'security dilemma'. As the President likes to say, 'you are either with us or with the terrorists'.

His intent is to intimidate anyone who would even consider taking on the United States, but the result will be to humiliate and to enrage legions of people, reacting to what they see to be US presumption, selfishness and arrogance. Some will see it as blatant US aggression, analogous to the notorious aggressions of the past. Bush and his hard-line advisors (Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz and Richard Perle) propose to defeat terrorism by fighting state-to-state 'old wars', utilising the most high-tech military means—including nuclear weapons, as confirmed by the Administration's Nuclear Posture Review, leaked to the press in March 2002.[2]

Nuclear weapons and B-2 bombers against a handful of religious zealots armed with box-cutters! There seems to be something terribly wrong with such a logic. For example, how does President Bush

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[1] Mary Kaldor, *New and old wars: Organized violence in a global era* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999). The bombing in Bali on 12 October 2002, so costly in Australian and Indonesian loss of life, confirms the nature of the terrorist threat.

[2] Excerpts from the version of the Nuclear Posture Review that was leaked to the press on 15 March 2002 can be found at<http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/policy/dod/npr.htm>.

propose to defend the country against another cadre of militants who might plan to smuggle a 'suitcase bomb' armed with a nuclear device into one of America's major cities, and detonate it remotely—while the Administration is assembling its high-tech armada in the Persian Gulf to invade Iraq? In light of the present anarchy in Afghanistan, how much chaos is an American invasion of Iraq likely to create in the Middle East, an area already traumatised by the endless blood-letting in Israel and Palestine? And how many thousands of new terrorists would a US victory against Saddam Hussein be likely to create?

Moreover, it would be utopian folly to expect, following the fall of Saddam Hussein, that a US-sponsored alternative regime in Baghdad might serve as a model of democracy for the Islamic world. Today, America is best known in the Middle East for its unstinting political and material support for the draconian policies of Ariel Sharon. Until there is a mutually acceptable agreement negotiated between the Palestinian and Israeli authorities, the United States will lack the the moral authority to play any positive role in the Middle East.

Finally, how will the country pay for the President's expensive invasions—new weapons systems, new military bases abroad, new missile defences, and new 'failed states' to repair? After passage of President Bush's promised tax cut and the bursting of the high-tech bubble in the US economy, there are many fewer tax dollars available to pay for weapons and overseas adventures. Moreover, the Administration has made other costly commitments: to homeland defence, helping New York City to recover, bailing out the airline industry, and rebuilding Afghanistan. Earlier projections of federal budget surpluses have disappeared, and a decade of substantial budget deficits is already expected. The Bush strategic doctrine increasingly looks more like what Paul Kennedy has called 'imperial overstretch'[3] (when a great power's military ambitions begin to exceed its economic capacity to support them) than a positive design for a viable new world order.

BUSH'S STRATEGIC DESIGN

One reason for the disconnection between the real threat and Bush strategic thinking is that the Administration came to power in January 2001 with a strategic design already in mind. The strategy was rooted in conservative thinking popular during Ronald Reagan's presidency, and had been spelled out in papers published by conservative think-tanks like the Heritage Foundation and the Center for Security Policy, and by Bush during the 2000 presidential election campaign. In this sense, the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington in September have been

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[3]   Paul Kennedy, *The rise and fall of the great powers: Economic change and military conflict from 1500 to 2000* (New York: Random House, 1987).

used by the Administration to help legitimate strategic initiatives that were already planned by the Administration long before 9/11. Emphasis on homeland security and the war against Al Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan obviously were prompted by the terrorist attacks, but the Administration's basic worldview and strategic priorities were already in place, well before 9/11.

Bush has staffed his Administration with conservative Republicans, who, especially on defence and security issues, have articulated a hardline, unilateralist design. Their strategic priorities include: missile defence, withdrawal from the ABM Treaty, creation of a hi-tech military with overwhelming scope and power, placing 'national interest' first and foremost, and the revitalisation of the US nuclear weapons industry. Their worldview is a combination of a manichean ideology about good and evil, and a realist commitment to the construction of such over-whelming material capabilities (military, economic, and technological) that no other state would dare to confront the United States. However, the terrorist attacks in September shattered the illusion of US invul-nerability, and the Administration is still trying to work out how to respond to a threat posed by fundamentalist suicide-bombers armed with box-cutters.

The Bush proposals for building a multi-faceted missile defence sys-tem provide a good example of the Administration's 'old-war' approach to the terrorist, 'new war' threat. In the weeks after 11 September, analysts speculated that the Bush commitment to missile defence would drop precipitously among the Administration's security priorities for what seemed to be three good and sufficient reasons. First, the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon (as well as the subsequent anthrax attacks) demonstrated just how useless and inap-propriate missile defence would be as a defence against terrorist attack. Missile defence would not have helped a bit. Instead, it looked like a new Maginot Line against the real threats to US security. Second, the cost was prohibitive. After passage of President Bush's US$1,700 billion tax cut, homeland security and the other expensive weapons systems sought by the Administration would appear to demand higher priority than missile defence for federal government appropriations. Third, most of the European allies in addition to Russia and China had either opposed missile defence or at least appeared very sceptical about developing and deploying such a system. After 9/11, the support of all of these countries appeared vital for the American effort to build a broad political coalition against international terrorism, so it was expected that the Administration would back off from missile defence and particularly from its commitment to abrogate the ABM Treaty in order to maintain their support.

But, instead, the President pointed to missile defence as a key element in his war on terrorism; in December, he gave notice to the

Russians that the US would withdraw from the ABM Treaty, and six month later, in June 2002, the Treaty was dead. In January 2002, the Administration created a new Missile Defense Agency and, in June, began construction at Fort Greely in Alaska on missile silos and communication facilities for a missile defence facility—despite the fact that testing was incomplete and the technology was as yet unproven. Their apparent objective at Fort Greely was to have a facility nominally operational before the next presidential elections to be held in November 2004. In Bush's proposed Department of Defense budget of US$379 billion for 2003, $7.8 billion is designated for missile defence.

The President's first major speech on security issues, presented to the National Defense University in Washington on 1 May 2001, more than three months before 9/11, set the stage for what was to come. 'This is a time for vision', said the President, 'a time for a new way of thinking; a time for bold leadership'. Despite the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Berlin Wall, he observed, 'this is still a dangerous world, a less certain, a less predictable one. More nations have nuclear weapons and still more have nuclear aspirations'. He described these rogues as 'some of the world's least responsible states … for whom terror and blackmail are a way of life'. The President's world was one of good and evil, good guys and bad guys.

Pointing specifically to Saddam Hussein, Bush argued that 'today's tyrants are gripped by an implacable hatred of the United States of America. They hate our friends, they hate our values, they hate democracy and freedom and individual liberty. Many care little for the lives of their own people. In such a world, Cold War deterrence is no longer enough'. We must 'move beyond' the ABM Treaty, Bush insisted, and build effective missile defences to prevail against such a threat.

This was the Bush worldview four months before 9/11. After the terrorist attacks, Bush elaborated on these themes, denouncing an 'axis of evil' in his January 2002 State of the Union address, and calling for a doctrine of pre-emption against threatening tyrants in his West Point commencement address later in June.[4]

UNDERSTANDING AND MISUNDERSTANDING POWER

The Administration's leading hardliners see themselves as experts in the use of power. Their statements often suggest that foreign leaders, especially the Europeans, are 'a bunch of wimps', whereas they themselves really understand power and how to apply it effectively. Their calculations are classic realist (material capabilities, self-help strategies, and zero-sum thinking). In their view, security can only be achieved

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[4] All of President Bush's speeches can be found at the White House website <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/>.

through overwhelming power, not by means of international regimes or treaties. Adversaries must be either intimidated or defeated by superior military power.

The irony, in my opinion, is that they have only a very limited understanding of power, principally material power and its high-tech, 'revolutionary in military affairs' or RMA applications. What they fail to understand are the vital cultural and moral dimensions of power, how authority is won and lost, what motivates individuals to risk (or even to sacrifice) their lives for a cause that they believe in. The hardliners are convinced that their cause is just (good versus evil), but they fail to see how violations of America's own principles (for example, holding some 600 prisoners from 48 countries for over a year without charge or trial in Guantanamo Bay) can undermine the legitimacy of their 'war on terrorism'.

The classified Nuclear Posture Review, and the Administration's National Security Strategy, published in September 2002, spell out in detail the Administration's 'old war' strategy.[5] The Nuclear Posture Review puts forward a nuclear war-fighting strategy, proposing the use of nuclear weapons in combination with other, high-tech conventional weapons, even against non-nuclear countries. It identifies seven countries as potential nuclear targets—China, Russia, Iran, Iraq, North Korea, Syria and Libya—and cites three areas of potential conflict in which the US might choose to use nuclear weapons: in the event of a North Korean attack on South Korea; if Iraq attacked Israel; or if China used force to try to regain control over Taiwan. The old nuclear 'triad' of land, air, and sea-based nuclear weapons is to be maintained, but an additional new triad is proposed to complement it. The new triad is comprised of an 'offensive strike leg' (nuclear and conventional); 'active and passive defences' (principally missile defences); and 'a responsive defense infrastructure' which calls for the revitalisation of the US nuclear weapons industry to produce new types of weapons (like the so-called 'bunker-buster') which may well require the resumption of nuclear testing and an end to the 1992 US moratorium on nuclear testing. The principal additional factor envisaged in the September strategy document is a commitment to pre-emption, or first-use of this unprecedented military might.

If successfully implemented, this doctrine would permit the United States to intervene with impunity, using nuclear weapons if it chose to, against any country in the world except Russia. Russia still has sufficient nuclear weapons to deter the US, and to overcome any

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[5] The full text of 'The National Security Strategy of the United States' is available at <http://www.nytimes.com>, 20 September 2002.

conceivable missile defence system. This is the Bush design to defend American security and to defeat international terrorism.

CONCLUSION

There is no easy formula for protecting a modern, industrialised country against terrorism. The list of potential terrorist targets boggles the mind: nuclear power plants, water supplies, computer systems, and the bombing of civilian targets. Both the anthrax attacks in October 2001 and the sniper murders this year in the Washington, DC metropolitan area demonstrate how one or two committed people can terrify and confound the capital city of the most powerful nation in the world. The greatest potential threat to the United States is that terrorists might smuggle a nuclear or biological 'suitcase bomb' into the country and explode it.

The use of legitimate force to deter and to apprehend terrorists in combination with improved intelligence and better policing obviously are all important. Yet the threat of terrorism from Islamic fundamentalists is essentially a political problem. This is a battle for hearts and minds as much as it is one of effective law enforcement. The fullest possible international cooperation and assistance from Islamic countries is vital to identify and to isolate terrorists, and to interrupt the recruitment of new militants. A negotiated conclusion to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict could provide a vital component for such a political approach.[6]

Terrorists will not be deterred by the formidable array of weaponry planned by the Bush Administration—they have no state to defend, no civilian population that might be held hostage to a threatened US nuclear attack. Moreover, the more unilaterally the US operates and the more over-extended it becomes, the more vulnerable a target it will become for terrorists.

In the early months of his Administration, when asked to explain why he had rejected one after another of the major international treaties and regimes to which the United States had been a party, President Bush responded that such agreements were 'not in America's national interest'. He failed to understand the wisdom of Kofi Annan's earlier observation that '[a] new, broader definition of national interest is needed in the new century, which would induce states to find greater unity in the pursuit of common goals and values. In the context of many

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[6] Rarely mentioned in official US assessments of the Middle East is the fact that Israel itself is a covert nuclear weapons power with an arsenal of an estimated 75 or more nuclear weapons. 'Israeli nuclear forces, 2002', *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists,* 58(5) September/October 2002, pp. 73–5. Israel is also the largest recipient of US aid in the world, enjoying some 30 per cent of the total US foreign aid budget, an average of US$3 billion a year since 1987.

of the challenges facing humanity today, the collective interest *is* the national interest'.[7]

A unilateral military attack on Iraq will not increase the security of the United States against terrorist attack. The leaders of the so-called 'rogue states' are some of the longest in power in the world, and thus far they have been successfully deterred from using weapons of mass destruction against Western allies.[8] Yet the President threatens to attack in the name of peace.

Nelson Mandela concludes 'the attitude of the United States of America is a threat to world peace … [America] is saying … that if you are afraid of a veto in the Security Council, you can go outside and take action and violate the sovereignty of other countries. That is the message they are sending to the world. That must be condemned in the strongest terms'.[9]

I agree.

[7]   Kofi A. Annan, 'Two concepts of sovereignty', *The Economist*, 18–24 September 1999, pp. 49–50.

[8]   North Korea has complicated the US rationale for an attack on Iraq by its admission that it has a program to enrich uranium to make nuclear weapons and by estimates that Pyongyang had already built at least one or two nuclear weapons. Why then, critics ask, would it be so imperative for the US to make war against Iraq but not against North Korea? See <http://napsnet@nautilus.org> for an excellent collection of commentaries on the strategic implications of the North Korean revelation.

[9]   Nelson Mandela in an interview with *Newsweek*, 10 September 2002, <http://msnbc.com/news/-806174.asp?cp1=1>. Tony Judt makes a related observation: 'What gives America its formidable international influence is not its unequaled capacity for war but the trust of others in its good intentions. That is why Washington's opposition to the International Criminal Court does so much damage. It suggests that the US does not trust the rest of the world to treat Americans fairly. But if America displays a lack of trust in others, the time may come when they will return the compliment'. Tony Judt, 'Its own worst enemy', *New York Review of Books,* XLIX(13) 15 August 2002, p. 16.

America's options: Practicalities and politics

Hugh White

The key facts about the problem posed by Iraq are not really in dispute. Iraq has an arsenal of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and a substantial program to develop more. That program is a significant concern for international peace and security, especially in the Middle East. It may become the source from which WMD pass into the hands of terrorists. And because the program is conducted in contravention of United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions, it is a problem for the UN's credibility, and thus for the orderly management of the international system.

From the prominence given in the current debate to dossiers of information about Iraq's WMD which have been published by governments and think-tanks, one would think that these simple factual issues were the key to our choices about Iraq. But they are not. The debate is not about whether Saddam Hussein has WMD and is building more. We all know he is. The debate is about what to do about it.

The Bush Administration has characterised that choice as being one between action and inaction. Others call it a choice between war and peace. But neither phrase is right. It's a choice between two different types of action, both of which would require the use of force. Let's call them Option A and Option B.

THE OPTIONS

Option A has become pretty familiar in the past nine months. It entails military operations against Iraq designed to depose Saddam Hussein, destroy the Baath regime, and replace it with a democratic and co-operative government. There is no need to rehearse the arguments in favour of this course of action. They have been exhaustively canvassed. Suffice to say that this option offers the prospects of a decisive and permanent solution to the problem of Iraq's WMD, and more generally to the threat posed by Saddam Hussein to the peace and stability of the Middle East.

Option B has received less attention, although it has always been there. It involves the return of UN inspectors and the resumption of the program to dismantle Iraq's WMD begun in 1991 under UNSC Resolution 687. Iraq's record of obstruction means that to be effective this option must involve a tougher inspection regime than was undertaken under 687, and much tougher than the new UN Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) arrangements agreed in December 1999 under UNSC Resolution 1284. It would also require the credible threat, and probably the occasional use, of substantial armed

force, to secure Iraq's compliance. Even with such muscular backing, Option B does not promise a quick and clean solution. Iraq's WMD would still take years to find and destroy. Iraq would be continually seeking to undermine and frustrate the process. The UN and its members would need to keep up the pressure relentlessly for years, with a consistency that the UNSC has rarely if ever shown in the past. And of course even then Saddam Hussein would still be in power.

When put like this, it is hardly surprising that some in the Bush Administration have favoured Option A—the quick, clean, sure option—over Option B, which is the slow, uncertain, ambiguous option. But of course this is only half the story. Every policy choice balances effectiveness against cost and risk. Option A wins hands down on effectiveness, but how does it rate on cost and risk? This is where the military, diplomatic and political practicalities intrude in the debate.

OPTION A

One of the strangest things about the debate over Iraq this year—both in the US and elsewhere—has been how little attention has been paid, at least until recently, to the military practicalities of the issue. That has been the result of two factors. First, we have all become used to saying that the US has a historically unique preponderance of military power. We have got out of the habit of examining the real nature, scope and limits of that power, and instead assume that, militarily, America can do whatever it likes. Second, we have become used to saying that, after the terrorist attacks of September 2001 (9/11), America will be free from all the traditional constraints, both domestic and international, on the use of its power in responding to any challenge to America's security.

Both of these sets of ideas are true in part, but neither is true absolutely. American power, and American willingness to use its power, are both in many ways greater than they have ever been before. But they are not unlimited, and the limits need to be gauged in assessing the practicability of different options for dealing with Iraq. To put it simply, with all its power, America has no low-risk, low cost military means to achieve Option A. And the risks and costs of the military campaigns that would be required for Option A may well be higher than the American people are prepared to tolerate to meet the Iraqi threat. Let me explain these propositions in more detail.

It's a big mistake to underestimate US military capabilities. Sceptical pundits have been proved wrong repeatedly as America's forces have risen to a wide range of challenges from the Gulf War of early 1991 to the Afghanistan campaign of late 2001. But we need to be careful not to fall into the opposite error too. The risks and costs of a proposed military campaign need to be weighed on the basis of the characteristics of the proposal itself, not just on the basis of previous successes.

Iraq is not Kosovo or Afghanistan. The removal of Slobodan Milosevic was a serendipitous byproduct of a campaign of military pressure which worked because Milosevic was, rightly as it turned out, sensitive to the threat to his popularity in Serbia posed by sustained allied bombing and the loss of support from Moscow. Afghanistan's Taliban were defeated by their traditional internal adversaries, supported and motivated by a modest but effective air campaign.

The invasion

Option A involves a full scale invasion. Saddam Hussein might be removed at any time by internal forces, but to be sure of his removal, and to control the kind of government that takes over from him, requires the destruction of Iraq's armed forces, and the dismantling of its regime. No one has undertaken an invasion of this kind and on anything like this scale since World War II. It would be the biggest and by far the most demanding military campaign undertaken by the US since Vietnam, dwarfing everything except the earlier Gulf War against Iraq in 1991. And it is a much more demanding proposition even than the liberation of Kuwait, because it requires not just the expulsion of Iraq's forces from Kuwait's small territory, but securing control of a large country and destroying a large army.

Of course an invasion might end up being a pushover. Optimists in the US point out that the Iraqi Army might give up, and that along with the civil population it might welcome US forces as liberators. This is a clear possibility, but it is only that. Equally they might fight hard and well, with committed civil support. It is hard to imagine Iraqis love Saddam Hussein much, but they might hate and fear an American invasion more.

Okay, suppose they fight. Are Iraq's forces capable of standing up to America's? Not in the open. The lesson of the Gulf War in 1991 is clear: no army can resist US air power if its units are concentrated in open country poised for combat. In fact America is even better placed now than it was ten years ago to conduct the kind of massive air campaign that won the last Gulf War in 1991. But Saddam Hussein knows that: he has probably learned the lessons of the Gulf War too. So Iraq will not even try to assemble its forces to fight America's army in the field.

But Saddam Hussein has other options, and he has probably learned other lessons. In particular he may have been paying a lot of attention to the lessons of Kosovo. That air campaign was originally targeted at the Serbian army units in Kosovo. After weeks of sustained bombing, Milosevic's forces were hardly touched. They survived because they were dispersed and hidden. Kosovo showed that American air power today can hit anything it can find, but finding targets can be very hard unless forces are out in the open. A simple shed can protect a tank from American airpower.

If Iraq's forces fight, they will fight in the cities, and especially in Baghdad where both buildings and civilians provide a measure of protection against American airpower and reduce some of America's other advantages. This will not come as a surprise to US commanders; they worked out years ago that US preponderance in open country would mean that major battles would in future be fought in cities, and they have put a lot of work into perfecting techniques for urban warfare.

America's forces have absorbed many of the lessons of *Blackhawk Down*. And war in cities would be tough on Iraqi troops as well. Fighting isolated actions in small groups would put huge strain on the discipline of individual soldiers and the quality of junior officers. Many no doubt would fail the test. But if Iraq's forces mostly fight well to defend their capital, the battle for Baghdad would be the hardest thing America has asked its forces to do since Vietnam, and the casualties could be, by modern standards, very high.

America has probably never been as casualty-averse as many observers think, and 9/11 has no doubt reduced that aversion still further. But high casualties increase the political and strategic costs of any military campaign, particularly when there is scope for debate about how central that campaign is to the country's direct and immediate security. So the battle for Baghdad will be weighing heavily in the calculations of those assessing the costs and benefits of Option A.

Many in the Pentagon, especially it seems the senior civilians, have been searching for a concept of operations that would achieve the results of an invasion without the need to deploy large forces and risk large casualties. They came into office with this Administration planning to 'transform' the US military into a lighter, more agile force able to achieve big results quickly by using smaller resources more intelligently. No doubt a lot of effort has gone into testing 'light' options for the removal of Saddam Hussein, and it may be that one or other of them might work.

But the uniformed advice will be cautious. Deeply ingrained in the US military culture is the idea that risk is reduced by the application of massive forces to the task. The 'transformed' force that US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld hopes to build might be able to invade Iraq with less than 100,000 troops, but the force he actually has today would be much more comfortable with twice that number. One argument they will use is likely to be decisive—that the larger the US forces Iraq faces, the more probable it is that Iraq's own forces will collapse rather than fight.

Option A needs the commitment of big forces. How big? I would be surprised if the US was prepared to launch a full scale invasion with less than 200,000 ground force personnel deployed in the theatre. That is a lot of people, especially when you recall that America's army has

shrunk since the last Gulf War. Washington now has only ten active service divisions, plus the equivalent of three marine divisions. A full scale invasion would require almost all the high-readiness forces America has at its disposal, and would leave it without forces to meet, for example, a crisis on the Korean Peninsula.

And of course, under Option A, America would be fighting without the blessing of the UNSC. It would be going pretty much alone. Only the UK and Australia have suggested they are likely to commit forces to operations which do not have UN backing. Britain might be able to send 20,000 troops, but British Prime Minister Tony Blair might face a party revolt if he tries, and any Australian contribution would be very small. Maybe Turkey would come along once the decision was made, but its help would come at a big price in relation to Turkey's interests in the future of the Iraqi Kurds.

Finally, in addition to the scale and risks of the conventional fighting in Iraq itself, there are dangers that Saddam Hussein could respond to an invasion by using his WMD against US forces or US friends in the region, or launch terrorist attacks in the US or elsewhere. A cornered dictator is a dangerous thing.

But of course America would win, eventually. So let's assume it all goes well, and that within say six weeks of launching an invasion, US forces have captured Saddam Hussein and his key supporters, destroyed Iraq's armed forces, and occupied Iraq, including Baghdad. What then?

The occupation
The key to Option A is to replace Saddam Hussein with someone better. Nothing would be achieved by simply removing him and seeing another member of his regime take over. America needs not only to destroy Saddam Hussein, but to supervise his replacement. That is a very demanding task, because there is no acceptable alternative government to whom power could be handed. The Administration now seems to have given up hoping that Saddam Hussein's exiled opponents might form the basis of a viable new government in Iraq. Indeed they now seem to accept that America will have to govern Iraq as an American protectorate for some years at least. There have been reports that a US military governership, *a la* General Douglas Macarthur, is being contemplated.

Tough job. First task would be to find all those WMD. In the chaos of a post-invasion Iraq, there would be nothing to stop Saddam Hussein's WMD being given or sold to anyone who drives a truck up to one of the warehouses where they are stored. Iraq's WMD are undoubtedly more secure and less likely to fall into terrorist hands under Saddam Hussein than they would be in the chaos that followed his downfall. And it might take America weeks or months to find out where all the WMD are and secure them.

Once that's done, just keeping the peace would be a major problem. Even if Iraq's armed forces and supporters of the Baath regime are quickly subdued, there are likely to be serious insurrections as Kurds in the north and Shi'ites in the south try to separate themselves from the Sunni domination they have suffered in parts of Iraq. America would need to suppress such separatism. It would have very strong interests in keeping Iraq together, for fear of offending the Turks in relation to the Kurds, and to prevent Iran gaining influence in the Shi'ite-dominated south.

But even if the peace can be kept, the challenge of building a new government for a unified Iraq on democratic principles would be very grave. Iraq is the most secular and 'Western' society in the Arab world, but Option A would still require America's proconsul to inculcate a new and alien political culture. That has hardly ever been achieved before. Comparisons with the rebuilding of Germany and Japan understate the scale of the task. In Japan, for example, Macarthur had the Emperor as a focus of legitimacy and loyalty.

Even if democracy can be promoted as a political philosophy, it would be a major task to create effective government. The numbers would be against one, for a start, because a majority of the population are Shi'ite. It would take elegant drafting to produce a democratic constitution for Iraq which did not deliver the country to a Shi'ite majority sympathetic to Iran. America is hardly likely to want to invade Iraq, only to offer it to Iran on a plate. Indeed there is a real risk that America, once it took responsibility for governing Iraq, would find it impossible to establish an Iraqi government that would reliably protect America's interests in the region.

There may be answers to all these problems, but no one knows what they are or if they will work. Washington would need to plan on keeping a major peacekeeping force, perhaps as many as 100,000 troops, in Iraq for many years. And there is little chance that America's allies would help. So the occupation phase is a major element of the costs and risks of Option A.

The diplomatic risks
Of course there are other risks as well. One is the impact of a US invasion of Iraq on other countries in the Middle East. The potential for negative responses from the 'Arab Street' have been discounted, perhaps understandably: there have been so many previous alarms which have not materialised—at least in the form predicted by the pessimists. And some US policy makers argue that Arab support for US plans will emerge once the die is cast; they read the chorus of anxiety from Iraq's neighbours as no more than routine expressions of Arab solidarity for domestic consumption, to be quietly put aside once the action starts.

That's what happened before when the US and its allies talked about using force against Saddam Hussein. But this time may be different, for two reasons. The first is political: Iraq's Arab neighbours fear that a long-term US presence as the occupying power in Iraq would severely destabilise regional and domestic politics. American allies like Saudi Arabia probably fear that with Iraq as a base, America would not need them, and may indeed push them hard to undertake the kinds of radical democratic reform that would spell the end of their regimes. Such a prominent US presence in the Arab world may radicalise domestic opposition and put them under pressure from the other side as well.

The second reason why Arab anxiety about Option A may run deep is economic. The claim by some who oppose war in Iraq that oil is a key US motive is almost certainly wrong. But that does not mean that a long-term US occupation of Iraq would not have an impact on the oil market. It certainly would. Iraq's 110 billion barrels of oil reserves are underdeveloped at present, but under US occupation that would quickly be remedied, if only to relieve US taxpayers of the cost of Iraq's liberation and transformation into a democracy. Within a few years Iraq could challenge Saudi Arabia as the biggest producer in OPEC (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries), and under US control they could undermine OPEC's price regime and hold down oil prices on a long-term basis. Good for the West, bad for the Gulf states. The economic impact would amplify the political anxieties outlined above. Taken together, they give the Gulf states good reason to worry. And these worries need to be taken into account when evaluating Option A.

So do the worries of America's allies, and its colleagues on the UNSC. The Bush Administration has adopted a robust approach to alliance management, and has made it plain that nervous allies will not exercise a veto over US action. Nonetheless allies are important to America, and the Administration will need to give some weight to the consequences of Option A for its alliances. The level of unease in Europe is notorious: less attention has been paid to the unprecedented coolness with which Japan is approaching the prospect of a US invasion of Iraq. Some of the objections raised by US allies and others to Option A are a little fatuous, but others are serious, reflecting many of the practical concerns that I have mentioned in this article.

Looking ahead, US allies are legitimately concerned that if the US gets bogged down in Iraq, it will be less capable of responding to crises elsewhere in the world, and may start making unwelcome and realistic demands of support in Iraq. There is a touch of doublethink in some US approaches which seem to suggest that allies have an obligation to support unilateral US initiatives. That cannot be so; either American policy is unilateral or it is alliance-based, not both at once.

The domestic politics

It is in the light of all these risks and costs that one needs to evaluate whether Washington is really prepared to go ahead with Option A. For Bush the critical issue is not whether he gets support when the troops go in—of course he will. The question is whether that support will last as the cost, scale and duration of the commitment become clear. In particular, he will focus on how voters would feel about Option A on the first Tuesday in November 2004, when he hopes to be running for his second term.

The omens are not good. If the fighting goes well, or Iraq collapses without a fight, Bush might hope that by the next presidential election America would have settled into the long and thankless task of governing Iraq, with a garrison of up to 100,000 troops. If it goes badly, he might have lost several thousand young men and women along the way. Either way he will have few allies supporting him. The Middle East may be in meltdown. And there will be no end in sight.

He will not be able to say he wasn't warned. Behind the superficial consensus over the (much watered-down) Congressional resolution authorising the President to use force in Iraq was an active and partisan debate in which Bush's political opponents expressed serious reservations about Option A. They will be well-placed to exploit any problems Bush has if he pushes ahead with that option.

The most corrosive questions so far have been those that question whether Iraq is really the most important issue on America's security agenda right now. Why is Saddam Hussein more of a problem than North Korea, for example? Why is he more of a problem than Osama Bin Laden? Why can't he be contained by deterrence, as he has been these past ten years? These doubts about the need to take on the risks and costs of Option A have only been increased by the way some Administration figures have broadened the rationale beyond the urgent imperative to neutralise Iraq's threat. They hold out a grand, or grandiose, vision of Iraq as the first of a series of Arab dominoes which would fall to democracy once a foothold in the Arab world is established in Iraq. This kind of talk would not sound too smart if and when America woke up to the real costs and risks of Option A. It would amplify the sense that the Administration had led the US off in an ill-considered adventure that was not essential to America's most urgent security concerns.

Even in post 9/11 America, the politics of all this must look pretty unattractive to the hard men in the basement of the White House who plot the Administration's political strategy. It is a measure of how much America *has* changed that Option A is even being considered; under normal circumstances it wouldn't get a hearing. But the evidence is lacking to show that American politics have changed so drastically that

the voters will support a large, open-ended and solitary commitment to invade and occupy a country whose priority in American security concerns is open to debate.

All this explains why there has evidently been a very active and at times acrimonious debate in the Administration about the viability of Option A. The nature of that debate has been shrouded by the fact that one side—Option A's supporters among Pentagon civilians—have been vocal, while those with reservations have been more discreet. The debate could not have dragged on so long were it not for the odd alignment of forces in the Administration. The White House, including the President, appears frankly rather weak, allowing debates to rage around without defining the limits of credible policy. The Pentagon civilians are at least superficially strong, and the Joint Chiefs are rather weak; their doubts and reservations about Option A have been aired, but have hardly registered against the muscular and well-publicised self-confidence of Secretary Rumsfeld and his team. And then, over in the State Department, sits America's most revered military figure, Secretary Colin Powell—a model of taciturn discretion. It's not surprising that the signals can be hard to read.

The strongest argument advanced by those who believe that the US will launch Option A is that President Bush appears so heavily committed to it that he would commit political suicide if he backed down now. Certainly he is in an uncomfortable position, having apparently raised the idea of Option A early in the year before he knew whether it was a practicable proposition. And ever since he has kept the idea alive without really arguing for it. Only in September did he start to put the case, and even now he has only explained why he wants to remove Saddam Hussein, not how he plans to do it.

Nonetheless Bush can still walk away from Option A. In fact walking away from it is less risky for Bush than pushing on with it. As a Republican, he will hardly have to worry that a Democratic contender in the 2004 Presidential race will win by accusing Bush of being too soft on Saddam Hussein. He is much more likely to lose to a Democrat who argues that Bush had rushed America into an unnecessary war which has bogged down and was costing American lives and credibility. So for Bush, the politics of backing down is safer than the politics of bogging down. Option A would be a vote winner if, and only if, the job was as good as over by November 2004. No one can offer Bush any level of confidence that it would be.

OPTION B

This is where Option B comes in. It is slow, uncertain, and messy, but it carries many fewer risks than Option A, and still offers a real prospect of dealing with Saddam Hussein's WMD. It is much less likely to get rid of Saddam Hussein himself. By opting for Option B, Bush would

have to forgo the hope of early regime change. He would of course continue to advocate regime change as US policy—but so did Bill Clinton before him.

Option B is not a recipe for peace. Armed force would need to be threatened, and probably used, to make it politically credible and strategically effective. The details of how that would work still need to be worked out, but with the fear of Option A still in the background, Iraq is not likely to need too much persuasion to cooperate. In fact historians might judge that Option B was only viable because of the environment built up by American advocacy of Option A.

Both options have their part to play in addressing the real problem of Saddam Hussein's WMD. But if I was a betting man I'd put my money on Option B. It is simply more cost-effective.

Strategic aspects

PETER C. GRATION

INTRODUCTION

A highly unusual feature of the present situation is the months of public discussion on whether or not the US and its allies should make a pre-emptive strike on Iraq. A feature of pre-emption is normally surprise, but in this case there is no chance of strategic or possibly even tactical surprise.

The decision to go to war, particularly to start one, is one of the most serious a government can take, setting in train events that may result in tens, perhaps hundreds of thousands of deaths, cause enormous destruction, and often leading to strategic consequences unforeseen at the time.

President Jacques Chirac has said, 'Let us give peace a chance. War is always the worst solution'. I agree and we should therefore applaud and support strongly the present US attempts to work through the United Nations (UN), and hope for a genuine outcome. We should also welcome more recent statements from President George W. Bush that war would be a last resort.

Nevertheless there are disturbing indications that the US may have already decided on war with Iraq, with or without the UN, and with or without allies. The US Congress has given the President the green light to go ahead, and there has even been public discussion on the nature of the occupation force and who should lead the new Iraqi government. Popular opinion in the US appears to support a war, although there have been demonstrations against it across the country and elsewhere in the world, including here in Australia.

Be that as it may, the Australian government has not yet made up its mind on participation in a war, and to this extent an airing of the strategic facts and options is worthwhile. I want to address four matters: the new US national security policy; the rationale for war, and the strategic objectives; likely outcomes; and options.

THE NEW US NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY

I put this first because war on Iraq would be the first practical implementation of recently announced changes in US national security policy, and the case for and against war should be seen in the light of the new policy. This has changed from the containment and deterrence used successfully through 40 years of the Cold War to an open-ended doctrine of the right to pre-emptive strike if the US perceives a threat developing to its global supremacy.

This change seems to strike at the very heart of efforts to create a rules-based international order. It means that the system of global security built since World War II around the UN and its Security Council (imperfect as they may be) goes out the window. It signals that unprovoked offensive military action is permissible if it is directed against something that looks like it might develop into a threat. If this becomes acceptable international behaviour, then the world will become a much less stable place. Countries in areas of tension may feel free to take pre-emptive action, without the international restraints on the use of force that have become customary through the UN. The UN itself would become marginalised, like the League of Nations before World War II.

The other alternative—that there is to be one set of rules for the US and another for the rest of the world—I simply reject.

There is evidence that this change in policy is not a new development since the events of 11 September 2001 (9/11), but had its origins in a policy document for the post-Cold War period developed in 1990 under the then Secretary for Defense Dick Cheney, but never adopted until now.

GROUNDS FOR WAR: STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The public case for war is centred on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and the threat they pose to the world. President Bush, in his statement following Congress's giving him authority to go to war, included the line 'Saddam Hussein and his outlaw regime pose a grave threat to the region, the world and the United States'. Certainly a pretty comprehensive threat! Previously the President had said, 'We will not live in fear', suggesting he saw a real and present danger from Iraq.

There is also an element of urgency built in, with images of Iraq acquiring more WMD with each passing day, and particularly with exaggerated statements on the imminence of Iraq acquiring a nuclear weapon. As far as I can see, the best estimate for this is two years in the unlikely event that they can obtain fissile material, and five years if they can't. This hardly requires immediate action.

I think we can accept that Iraq has numbers of WMD, and has programs to develop them further. But how real a threat do they pose, and is it enough to warrant going to war? In my view, the answer to the first question is not much, and to the second, no. The threat is being much exaggerated. Consider these factors.

Iraq is not the only country with WMD—indeed the US has more than anyone. Does the US propose to invade all the others? Why has Iraq suddenly become a greater threat to the US and the world than it was in say 2000 or 1999? Accepting that Saddam Hussein has WMD, he has tactical but no strategic delivery means. The 20 SCUDS (range

650 km) he is said to retain pose a psychological but not a credible military threat to the region. Warheads without delivery means are not a credible military capability. Furthermore, biological weapons have a short shelf life, and like chemical weapons are very tricky to use tactically.

Even if Saddam Hussein managed to explode a nuclear device in the next few years, this would not make Iraq a nuclear power. Delivery means, a stockpile of weapons, and command and control systems are all needed as well.

Saddam Hussein has been contained and deterred from using his WMD (like the Soviet Union, China and North Korea before him), and there is no reason why containment and deterrence should not continue to be effective. The exception when the weapons might be used could be as a desperate last gesture by Iraq in self-defence against a US or Israeli attack, when the Iraqi leadership realised they were facing extinction.

It is simply incredible to suggest that a decrepit desert state such as Iraq, still battered from the Gulf War, poses a threat to the only global superpower, let alone to the world. Ah you say, but you are missing the main point. Saddam Hussein's regime could make the weapons themselves or the technology behind them available to terrorists to use against the West. Perhaps, but he has no record of doing so, and there are formidable technical and logistic obstacles to terrorists using these weapons against targets half a world away. I believe the risk is low.

I conclude from this that the real threat from Iraq's WMD is being greatly exaggerated, and that threat can continue to be contained and deterred. While the world would be a better place if Iraq did not have WMD, there is no imperative for immediate action, and insufficient grounds to go to war.

OTHER POSSIBLE GROUNDS FOR WAR

If that is so, is there another unstated agenda driving the US to war? I don't know, but there are some possibilities. On the US domestic front, there is a continuing and understandable drive for vengeance and retribution for the horrors of 9/11, that has not been satisfied by the operations to date in Afghanistan. Saddam Hussein and Iraq make easy targets to hate, although there is no evidence of any link with Al Qaeda or 9/11, despite strenuous efforts to find one. An emphasis on war provides a diversion from domestic economic woes, and the Congressional elections provided an advantage for the incumbent government of a 'war' election.

On any rational assessment these issues either individually or collectively do not seem to be sufficient grounds to warrant launching a war, and we must look further. Let us therefore shift our focus to the

grand strategic level. Here we find a more plausible concept if we look at what would be involved in bringing about the Iraqi regime change said to be necessary to achieve disarmament. In a nutshell, regime change would require invasion and installation of a puppet regime (or perhaps even direct American rule) that would have to be supported by a US occupation force, probably for years.

For the hawks in the Bush Administration, such a situation could have considerable attraction, relating to a grand strategic design for the Middle East, and going well beyond any concern over WMD or even Iraq. Consider these outcomes. Recalling that both the President and Vice-President are 'oil men', the US would be in the box seat to dominate Iraqi oil, Iraq having the world's second largest proven reserves after Saudi Arabia. Again it may be oil interests that will eventually attract French and Russian support in the UN. Both these countries have oil companies and interests in Iraq, and they may respond to the blunt proposition that to go with the US now will ensure continued cooperation and access to Iraqi oil, and vice versa. Iraq would be eliminated as a threat to Israel, allowing the Sharon government to pursue its agenda with the Palestinians. The US would be well-positioned to contain Iran (another member of President Bush's axis of evil), and possibly even to target Iran as next for regime change, and the US would have a firm base in the region for whatever further strategic adjustments were intended.

This is no more than speculation on my part, but hawks in the US may see invasion of Iraq as an opportunity to impose a permanent and favourable peace on a troublesome and oil rich region. This would be 'Imperial America' in full swing. Others, including me, would see it as a dangerous fantasy that may well become mired in a clash between the Muslim world and the West.

OBJECTIVES

There have been various objectives stated, and the emphasis has waxed and waned depending on the domestic and international mood. Unconditional re-admission of UN inspectors was an early objective until this was trumped by Saddam Hussein's unexpected acceptance of this condition. Then it was the total disarmament of Iraq (presumably referring only to their WMD, but perhaps not), and then the assertion that this could only be achieved by regime change. Setting aside speculation about wider grand strategic objectives, I think regime change, implying killing Saddam Hussein, all along has been a central objective. The Presidential spokesman let the cat out of the bag when, discussing costs of the war, he said, and repeated, 'a single bullet could save us all this trouble'.

There are some disturbing matters of principle in this idea of 'regime change'. It is disturbing that the US is prepared to use its military might

to enforce its views on which regimes are acceptable around the world and which are not. It is also disturbing that, however much of a monster Saddam Hussein may be, the US is proposing to act arbitrarily as his judge, jury and executioner. Slobodan Milosevic at least has the benefit of a proper trial.

OUTCOMES

What will be the outcome should the US invade Iraq, with or without UN backing? The only certain thing is that once war is started, the outcomes may be quite unpredictable, and different to what is planned. Having said that let me offer some opinions.

There is little or no doubt that a US invasion of Iraq would be militarily successful—the only questions are time, casualties and cost. Iraq has a sizeable army of about 375,000 of varying quality, old equipment, questionable morale and probably insufficient logistic stocks for an extended campaign. The Iraqi Air Force is largely grounded and there is no navy to speak of. Much will depend on the army's will to fight, particularly the Republican Guard, and the attitude of Iraqi civilians. Unless the conflict widens, my guess is a few weeks for the initial seizure, with the possibility of guerrilla type resistance continuing thereafter. American casualties should be low, but Iraqi casualties, particularly civilians, are likely to be high, perhaps in the hundreds of thousands.

What is the prospect of the conflict spreading? The gravest concern would be that Israel stepped in, perhaps in response to a provocative act by Iraq. This would zionise the war and there would be a good prospect it could spread to the whole region.

Television images of the US beating up and then occupying a fellow Muslim country could be destabilising for the leadership of Muslim countries presently friendly to the West, such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan and Indonesia, as their leaders tried to balance the expectations of support by the US and its allies, against the fired-up anti-Western anger of their people. In the worst case this could unite the whole Muslim world against the West fulfilling Samuel Huntington's prediction of a clash of civilisations.[1] The impact on global oil supply and price, and hence on the global economy, could be disastrous.

The overall impact on global terrorism is hard to judge. Some observers believe that removing Iraq as a potential supporter and supplier could deliver a serious blow to global terrorism. Others, including me, take the opposite view that this action against Iraq could spawn a

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[1] Samuel P. Huntington, *The clash of civilizations and the remaking of world order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996).

whole new generation of suicidal terrorists targeting the US and its allies, and hence actually worsen our security situation.

A more optimistic view would be that the grand strategic aims I speculated on earlier would be achieved (control of Iraqi oil, removal of Iraq as a threat to Israel, positioning the US to contain Iran). For some short-term pain, this could present a one-off opportunity for the US to reshape the whole strategic geography of the Middle East. To repeat, I do not agree, and see this as a dangerous fantasy that could become mired in a clash between the Muslim world and the West.

Should the US (and its allies) go to war without the support of the UN, the UN would be marginalised, and the global security system in place since 1945 would be in serious jeopardy.

CONCLUSION

My central message is this. The best hope for global security and the war on terror is to pursue a rules-based international order based on the UN. There are no proven links between Iraq and international terrorism (Al Qaeda), and the threat from Iraq's WMD can continue to be contained and deterred. While it would be better that Iraq was stripped of its WMD, there are insufficient grounds to go to war to achieve this, and we should pursue, through the UN, the course of action involving the re-admission of inspectors.

If war were to eventuate, the outcomes are quite unpredictable, and in the worst case could see the Muslim world united against the West, and the threat from international terrorism worsened. On this basis, my preferred option is that proposed by France, namely to continue to act through the UN with a two phased approach. Inspectors should return, preferably with a strengthened mandate, and we should see what develops. If necessary, and as a last resort, a second resolution may authorise the use of force.

Should the US decide on a pre-emptive strike without UN backing, Australia will be in a difficult position in view of justifiable US expectations of a close and trusted ally, and the very 'up-front' statements from the Australian Prime Minister John Howard and his senior ministers. Nevertheless, I believe we should grasp the nettle and decline to participate.

The United Nation's role

Stuart Harris

In signing the Gulf War ceasefire following its defeat in 1991, Iraq accepted unconditionally the terms of Security Council Resolution 687, which imposed on Iraq a total ban on the production, existence and use of weapons of mass destruction and long-range (over 150 kilometres) ballistic missiles. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and a United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) were to implement the ban through on-site inspections of Iraq's biological, chemical and missile capabilities. Meanwhile Resolution 687 (which is still operative) maintained the sanctions that had earlier been imposed on Iraq. It provided that the sanctions would be lifted when Iraq had met the UN requirements.

IAEA and UNSCOM made substantial progress, despite considerable obstruction by Iraq. A growing series of Iraqi objections was ultimately followed, however, by UNSCOM's withdrawal in 1998 when Iraqi cooperation in any form ceased completely. Nevertheless, the Security Council did conclude that the bulk of Iraq's proscribed weapons had been eliminated, although important uncertainties remained particularly about chemical and biological weapons.

In the meantime, US and Britain have maintained air patrols over Iraq's no-fly zones. In addition, an intelligence centre near Baghdad was bombed in 1993 and, after UNSCOM withdrew from Iraq in 1998, Anglo–American aircraft took action against military targets in Iraq during Operation Desert Fox, angering some P5 members, France, Russia and China who, together with the US and Britain, make up the P5.

Why has the Iraq issue arisen again now? The link with the September 2001 (9/11) terrorist attacks has yet to be made. Debate basically rests on what has happened since 1998, with US President George W. Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair arguing that Iraq has resumed its weapons program and therefore immediate action needs to be taken. Other P5 members have different opinions. In part, the issue has emerged from the post 9/11 atmosphere but it was certainly on the Republican neoconservative agenda well before that. The 1993 bombing, for example, was in response to a presumed assassination attempt on George Bush senior when he visited Kuwait.

President Bush has said that he does not believe inspections work (I use the term inspections here to cover the whole implementation process). The question of regime change in Iraq—toppling Saddam Hussein—has remained on the neoconservative Republican agenda since 1991 and the Clinton Administration also said it sought that

objective although it did little about it. President Bush wants to do something about a change of regime in Iraq, but there is no legitimate UN basis for it. President Bill Clinton said that sanctions would not be lifted while Saddam Hussein remained in power (contrary to Resolution 687) and it was after this that Iraq's cooperation was finally withdrawn.

Will future inspections be more successful and, in particular, can the new UN Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) do a better job than UNSCOM? To find an answer, we need to look at why inspections were less than fully successful in the past.

Without denying in any way Iraq's duplicity in failing to comply with UN requirements, there were particular administrative and structural problems in the IAEA/UNSCOM design and processes. Some of these arose because, while the UN is not just a reflection of its members it does depend upon its members for implementation of its decisions—it has at best few resources. While initially, at least, the moral support for IAEA/UNSCOM was large, material support was not. The IAEA was given a budget of a quarter of what had been estimated as necessary. The inspection process also lacked security support when Iraq threatened the safety of inspectors.

The process gained only qualified support for surprise inspections so that Iraqi deception was made much easier. In particular, the issue of 'sensitive' sites (palaces) was not satisfactorily resolved, and remains ambiguous in the UNMOVIC charter.

There were problems of intelligence sourcing. Without a UN capability, the inspection process was dependent upon many other countries, most notably the US and to a degree Israel, for precise intelligence. Inspection team members reported back to their own governments about what they had seen in Iraq, which was extraneous to their inspection role. Iraq categorised this, with some justification, as spying. There were turf squabbles between IAEA and UNSCOM and, if Scott Ritter is to be believed, within the US intelligence community.

All of these factors gave Iraq the opportunity to use the UN as a theatre in which important public relations gains could be made among UN members, particularly Arab countries and some P5 members. Some problems have been overcome within UNMOVIC (for example, UNMOVIC inspectors are to be employed as UN officials) but not all.

In addition, there were structural problems. The inability of Security Council members, particularly of the P5, to sustain agreement among themselves politicised the inspection process. This ultimately undermined UNSCOM as well as the UN sanctions regime. Although there is now closer cooperation, differences are still substantial (France, Russia and China abstained on the UNMOVIC resolution) and the extent to

which agreement is maintained will determine the success or otherwise of UNMOVIC.

Domestic politics within each of the major parties was also a problem. In part this reflected concern about the humanitarian impact of sanctions, and also about intrusive inspections. Another important factor was the question of incentives for Iraq. However odious Saddam Hussein is, without some gain for Iraq, there is unlikely to be a compliant response. Initial cooperation from Iraq stemmed from the hope that this would lead to the lifting of sanctions.

With differences already emerging among the P5, Clinton's statement about sanctions remaining in place while Saddam Hussein was in power not only had no UN backing but contributed to the breakdown of relations in 1998. This clearly is relevant now. US insistence on a total regime change, including Saddam Hussein's departure (especially if linked with a war crime trial) can only ensure that compliance will be unlikely. In particular Saddam Hussein will need his weapons of mass destruction to defend himself and his regime against any potential attack.

There was no real military pressure maintained on Iraq during the inspection period and when Clinton seemed to relax, Iraqi recalcitrance increased. Such pressure would seem to be necessary. Whatever the view of the overall Bush approach to global strategy, the Iraqi move to accept a further inspection process seems to have been due to the threat of military action.

President Bush (and Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer) have said that this is a testing time for the UN. The somewhat 'unnuanced' argument is that if Iraq ignores UN resolutions, the UN will appear to be a 'paper tiger'. Of course, a range of other resolutions have been ignored as, for example, by Israel with its settlement activities in the occupied territories, with no similar evidence of concern.

P5 unity, however, is essential, otherwise Iraq can again play one off against the other, as it did in the 1990s. Yet the P5 members have a variety of different interests. Whilst Britain is already involved, the Blair dossier does not convince in terms of immediacy. China, France and Russia dislike Bush's rhetoric with its scant concern about the limits to which US power may be put. All three are worried about the US unilateral threat of military force outside the UN both because of the dubious principle involved in the overthrow of Saddam Hussein and a lack of conviction about the danger that Iraq poses. For Russia and China in particular it is a case of self-protection.

There are also differences in terms of expected outcomes. There is a fear of enormous long-term instability in the Gulf area following a military attack, especially if that military attack is without UN legitimation.

While Bush says a war on Iraq will help the war on terrorism, many believe it will generate more terrorism.

Whilst Iraq was able to play upon French, Russian and Chinese economic interests in the sanctions context, that effect has probably been exaggerated. There are differences in economic interests, however, and many of the Russian and French elite argue that US objectives are directed primarily to the control of Iraq's oil resources.

The real dilemma for the P5, however, is that without some agreement on Iraq, which necessarily involves conceding more than they would otherwise wish, and the US were to go it alone, the UN process will be greatly devalued, and that would devalue their individual memberships and the influence and status that provides. At the same time, if the US does not accept some compromise, but goes it alone with a pre-emptive strike and seeks to topple Saddam Hussein, this will also be bad for the US. President Bush and some of his colleagues with short memories may still not fully appreciate how important it has been in the past for the US to legitimate its actions through the UN and to gain much needed support and cooperation from others, in this case particularly Iraq's neighbours.

Unilateral US action would also substantially damage the whole system of global governance that is based on the rule of law. Although this is already somewhat diminished, it still remains generally important for the US, which in the past has been its important defender, as well as for the global community, which includes Australia. Therefore, a high cost would be paid for the international system based on the UN, for long-term instability in the Middle East (this after all was largely why the 1991 action stopped, rightly, where it did), and probably for the war on terrorism.

Without pressure on the US from the French, Russians and Chinese, the US would seek a solution that would be tough on Iraq but be unlikely to be effective. Yet, without some threat of direct US military action, Iraq may simply do nothing whilst the three P5 members play political games. Getting the balance right was presumably why it took so long to sort out the details of the new UN Resolution 1441.

What are the options? The first is to be clear on the objectives. Eliminating both Iraq's weapons and Saddam Hussein are incompatible goals. The objective has to be limited to removing Iraq's weapons, not removing its leader.

Second, there must be acceptance that inspections (including surprise inspections of sensitive sites) can work. Effective surprise inspections are not yet assured. Moreover, the burden of proof must be with Iraq to demonstrate compliance, not, as with UNSCOM, the reverse. However, to be effective, inspections may need to be accompanied by adequate

security, including against hostage taking, preferably by a UN unit which includes some Middle Eastern country participants.

Third, there must be acceptance of the need for 'sticks'. Sanctions were not sufficient as a stick because of the debate about the effect of sanctions on the Iraqi population, even though that effect was largely due to Saddam Hussein's decisions. The potential military threat that hung over Saddam Hussein until P5 differences emerged, ensured the relative success of inspections until 1998.

Fourth, the need for 'carrots' as well as sticks is important. If Iraq does comply fully and completely with inspections and continuing and effective monitoring, sanctions should be gradually lifted. Sanctions, however, should be made more effective. Moreover, the UN has still not framed a detailed weapons embargo program to be put in place when sanctions are lifted. Nevertheless, carrots and sticks worked better with North Korea in the 1990s than just sticks.

Fifth, this is a contest, not a cooperative enterprise. If Iraq is obstructive, military action should be possible. However, most countries will not now accept a US judgement alone on when that should be. Unless criteria for determining non-compliance are clear and not simply US determined, P5 unanimity is unlikely.

Sixth, there must be recognition that the Bush rhetoric of unilateralism, axis of evil and pre-emption has made it difficult to maintain the critical unanimity of the P5. Without P5 unanimity, Iraq can effectively undermine the UN position. Ideally some moderating US restatement would be helpful.

Contributors

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Keynotes