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# Is the Current UN and US Policy toward Iraq Effective?

WILLIAM F. DONAHER and ROSS B. DeBLOIS

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"On a day like this day 10 years ago, evil and all those who made Satan their protector lined up in one place, facing those who represented the will to defend what is right. Iraq has remained, the people have remained, the army has remained. . . . Iraq has triumphed over the enemies of the nation." -- Saddam Hussein, 17 January 2001[1]

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More than ten years ago, President George Bush ordered US troops into the Persian Gulf in response to Iraq's invasion and occupation of Kuwait. At the end of the Gulf War in 1991, the United Nations imposed sanctions on Iraq--UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 661--which were to remain in place until the provisions of UNSCR 687 were complied with, mainly the certification that Iraq has destroyed all of its weapons of mass destruction. In 1991, the UN expressed grave concern over the humanitarian situation and proposed a number of measures that would allow Iraq to sell limited quantities of oil to meet the population's basic needs while the sanctions remained in place. Iraq refused all offers. Over the following five years there was widespread suffering, with food shortages, an absence of essential medicines, and a general deterioration in essential social services.[2]

In 1996, the UN established the Oil-for-Food program, which allowed Iraq to sell oil for the purchase of goods essential for the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people. Weapons inspections in Iraq, conducted by the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM), stopped prior to the December 1998 bombing of Iraq. Inspections have not been resumed, while sanctions and the Oil-for-Food program remain in effect.

Is this policy successful? Sanctions have kept Saddam "in his box," but the Oil-for-Food program has allowed him to blame the UN for doing little to stop the widespread suffering and deprivation of his people. In addition, Saddam has not allowed weapons inspectors inside Iraq for the last three years, and support for the economic embargo on the international front is wavering.

Now the situation is made even more complicated by the war on terrorism and Saddam's stated support for those who would harm the United States and the Western world. Still, President George W. Bush and his administration have an opportunity to revisit the policy toward Iraq and devise a strategy that will work.

This article reviews the current sanctions and Oil-for-Food policy in Iraq from both national security and humanitarian intervention perspectives. The article is organized into three main sections--a review of the background, an analysis of the current policy in terms of national security and humanitarian criteria, and a recommendation for future policy.

## Background

The comprehensive sanctions of UNSCR 661 were some of the strictest sanctions ever levied against a nation. In addition, in April 1991 the UN passed UNSCR 687, which required Iraq to destroy all weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and stop all research into WMD, and which subjected Iraq to monitoring and verification. Soon after the implementation of the sanctions, the UN sent a mission to Iraq, which reported the makings of "an imminent [human] catastrophe . . . if minimum life supporting needs are not rapidly met." [3] It was not until May 1996, however, that Saddam agreed to the Oil-for-Food program when he accepted UNSCR 986. The start of the program was delayed another seven months until December 1996 while Iraqi officials argued over the terms of implementation.

Under the Oil-for-Food program, Iraq is allowed to sell oil for the purchase and import of food, medicine and medical equipment, and other goods for essential civilian needs. It is also allowed to import repair parts, equipment, and

materials for use in water sanitation, education, electricity, agriculture, and de-mining operations. UNSCR 1153 expanded the program to include repair to the civilian infrastructure and upgrading of the Iraqi oil infrastructure to enable it to pump the increased \$5.3 billion worth of oil permitted under the resolution.[4]

The proceeds from the sale of oil under the Oil-for-Food program are paid into a UN-controlled account and allocated as follows: 59 percent for humanitarian supplies in the center and south governorates of Iraq; 13 percent for supplies in the three northern governorates; 25 percent to the UN Compensation Fund for war reparations; 2.2 percent to the UN for costs associated with administering the program, and 0.8 percent for the administration of the commission responsible for disarmament.[5]

The program works through distribution plans, which detail all the goods that Iraq wishes to import for each six-month period. The plans are prepared by the Iraqi government and approved by the UN Secretary-General. The UN controls distribution in the three northern governorates; the Iraqi government controls distribution in the 15 governorates in central and southern Iraq.

Despite the Oil-for-Food program, serious deprivation and malnourishment remain a reality in Iraq (see Table 1).

Sector	Pre-War Before 1990	Post Oil-for-Food, After 1996	Remarks
<b>GDP</b>	3.510 (1988)	1.036 (1998)	US dollars per capita
<b>Electric</b>	8.9 mw	3.5 mw	From 126 power stations to an estimated 63
<b>Calories</b>	3.120 kilo	2.030 kilo	Per capita, per day
<b>Health Care</b>	97 percent urban 78 percent rural	unknown unknown	Hospitals have gone without repairs and maintenance. Communicable diseases are now part of an endemic problem.
<b>Mortality</b>			
Maternal	50 per 100,000 (1989)	117 per 100,000 (1997)	
Infant	64 per 1,000 (1990)	129 per 1,000 (1995)	
<b>Education</b>			
Enrollment	75 percent	53 percent	Primary/secondary
Illiteracy	20 percent	20 percent	
<b>Access to safe drinking water</b>	90 percent	50 percent, urban 33 percent, rural	

(Source: UN Security Council Humanitarian Panel Report, "Oil-for-Food," Annex II, 30 March 1999.)

**Table 1. Sector Data.**

Although reports vary, the analytical data here were presented by the UN's Office of the Iraq Program (OIP), and generally undersigned by a number of respected agencies. The OIP data include information from the UN Office of Humanitarian Coordination for Iraq, the United Nations Children's Fund, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and the World Health Organization, along with many others.

### *The Problem*

Today, Saddam Hussein's regime is still in power; it still remains a threat to the Iraqi people, to the region, and to the world. In the words of one appraisal, "Fortress Saddam is as impregnable as ever, despite a decade of US-led sanctions." [6] The Oil-for-Food program, the largest humanitarian program ever administered by the UN, has done little to stop the widespread suffering, deprivation, and malnourishment of the Iraqi people. [7] In the international court of public opinion, Saddam continues to use sanctions and the Oil-for-Food program to his benefit--at the expense of his own people.

The UN, and arguably the United States, responsible both for implementing sanctions and the humanitarian intervention program, face the reality that the Oil-for-Food program is in a quagmire. As stated by the UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, "The humanitarian situation in Iraq poses a serious moral dilemma for this organization. The UN has always been on the side of the vulnerable and the weak, and has always sought to relieve suffering, yet here we are accused of causing suffering to an entire population." [8]

The situation described by Secretary-General Annan is reflected in the current debate on the UN policy toward Iraq. On one hand, the program is evaluated by the US Administration and a number of prominent US think-tanks based on its success or failure in terms of national security. On the other hand, it is evaluated by the Red Cross, the World Health Organization, the World Food Program, and a number of other nongovernmental organizations based on its success or failure as a humanitarian intervention. Conclusions are based on the respective frame of reference, resulting in continuous polarization of the debate.

From the national security perspective, the US State Department is determined to continue sanctions to prevent the Iraqi regime access to resources that it would use to reconstruct weapons of mass destruction, coupled with the Oil-for-Food program to relieve the harm from sanctions on ordinary people. [9] In September 1999, the State Department reported, "Baghdad's refusal to cooperate with the Oil-for-Food program and its deliberate misuse of resources are cynical efforts to sacrifice the Iraqi people's welfare in order to bring an end to UN sanctions without complying with its obligations." [10] All problems associated with the suffering of the Iraqi people, according to the State Department, are attributable to Saddam Hussein's obstruction of the Oil-for-Food program, not UN sanctions.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and other humanitarian groups have a different perspective. UNICEF's Executive Director, Carol Bellamy, commenting on UNICEF's 1999 report on the increase in infant mortality rates in the center and south of Iraq, stated, "The survey's findings cannot be easily dismissed as an effort by Iraq to mobilize opposition to UN sanctions." [11] Denis Halliday, the former head of the Oil-for-Food program, puts it bluntly: "The Security Council has known full well for more than nine years of the famine and other deadly consequences of this UN economic sanctions policy." [12] The last two leaders of the Oil-for-Food program, Halliday and Hans von Sponbeck, blame UN sanctions: "Sanctions are starving to death 6,000 Iraqi infants every month, ignoring the human rights of ordinary Iraqis, and turning a whole generation against the West. . . . I no longer want to be part of that." [13] Halliday later said, "Through the deprivation that sustained sanctions have brought about in Iraq, we have the member states of the UN Security Council themselves undermining the human rights of the innocent and the blameless." [14]

The polarity of the debate, in part, is caused by evaluating the UN policy toward Iraq on two different criteria--national security and humanitarian intervention. As much as possible, we must work toward a comprehensive policy that meets both goals. Politics and humanitarian intervention cannot be separated in this context.

### **Analysis of Current Policy**

The UN and US policy toward Iraq is outlined in a number of UN resolutions and the Iraq Liberation Act of 1998. A summary of their content is in Table 2.

#### **Current Policy Summary**

##### **UNSCR 661 (1990)**

- Establishes comprehensive economic sanctions on Iraq, except for supplies intended strictly for medical purposes and, in humanitarian circumstances, foodstuffs.
- Prevents imports into other states of all commodities and products originating in Iraq.
- Prevents any state from making available funds or any other financial or economic resources in Iraq.

##### **UNSCR 687 (1991)**

- Requires Iraq and Kuwait to respect international boundary.

- Requires Iraq to unconditionally accept destruction of all WMD and means of producing WMD.
- Subjects Iraq to monitoring and verification (inspections have not been conducted since 1998).
- Requires Iraq to not acquire or develop nuclear weapons or nuclear-weapon usable material or subsystems, research, development, or manufacturing facilities related to nuclear weapons.

**UNSCR 986 (1995) - Oil-for-Food**

- Allows for a specified amount of oil to be sold in exchange for humanitarian supplies, controlled by the UN, as a temporary means to stop the suffering of the Iraqi people (there is currently no cap on the amount of oil).
- Requires 30 percent of the money to be used for war reparations (reduced to 25 percent in 2000).
- Requires Iraq to fulfill requirements in other resolutions, i.e. UNSCR 661 and 687.
- Program has been extended to date and expanded to include other materials for development of the Iraqi infrastructure.

**Iraq Liberation Act (1998)**

- Calls for efforts to remove the regime headed by Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq.
- Promotes the emergence of a democratic government to replace the regime.
- Provides assistance valued at \$97 million which includes money for grants to Iraqi opposition groups doing radio and television broadcasting, and supports military education and training for such organizations.

**Table 2. Current Policies.**

The UN and US national security objectives for Iraq are limitation of proliferation, reduction of WMD, containment, the removal of Saddam Hussein, regional stability, and sustainable international and domestic support.

*Proliferation and Containment*

Sanctions have been extremely effective in limiting the proliferation of Saddam's conventional army. Iraq is still the largest conventional power in the Gulf region, and its history of arms imports must be kept in mind. The UN resolutions and cease-fire accords resulting from the Gulf War cannot provide any lasting basis for preventing all military exports to Iraq, and neither can arms control agreements on supplier regimes. Present international accords will allow the sale and transfer of significant amounts of biological, chemical, and nuclear technology that can be used to build weapons of mass destruction, once Iraq "complies" with the key sanctions now affecting it. Some nations or individual companies will always be willing to deal with Iraq on a covert or overt basis. To them, there is no difference between guns and butter, and any easing of civil economic sanctions will inevitably give Iraq some aid in strengthening its military capabilities.[15]

The economic sanctions in place undoubtedly limit Saddam's ability to develop and obtain weapons of mass destruction. Sanctions restrict the amount of money Baghdad can obtain from oil sales and place the disbursement of those funds under UN supervision. Yet as of October 1998, UNSCOM could not verify Iraq's contentions that it had destroyed critical components of its missile program--550 mustard-gas shells, 500 chemical and biological bombs, and substantial amounts of biological and chemical weapons material.[16]

What progress there has been in degrading Iraq's unconventional weapon capabilities, moreover, has come through UNSCOM and not the sanctions. UNSCOM's presence diverted Iraqi resources from developing more WMD to hiding what they already had. International sanctions are hardly a foolproof means of disarming Iraq. But if the major threat to American interests from Iraq is WMD development, then it is much better to have UNSCOM (or something like it--i.e., the UN Monitoring, Verification, and Inspection Commission [UNMOVIC]) without sanctions than to impose sanctions without UNSCOM.

A related aspect, the geographic containment of Saddam Hussein and his military machine, has been one of the highlights of the current sanctions program. Any movement of Saddam's military force is closely monitored daily by intelligence personnel located at Headquarters, US Central Command (CENTCOM). But even though Saddam may currently follow a more cautious approach, he possesses the capability and the willingness to threaten regional stability, which will continue to have important implications for the deployment of US forces.

### *Removal of Saddam Hussein*

The subject of removing Saddam Hussein from power has been raised many times since the invasion of Kuwait in August 1990. The United States undoubtedly has an entire family of war plans to deal with the CENTCOM area of operations. In addition, the United States has the military forces capable of decimating Iraq's current conventional forces. But there may be no war plans that specifically address the removal of Saddam.

Saddam does not have a safe haven or retreat to flee to, much as Idi Amin did to Saudi Arabia in 1988. Because of this fact, a defeated and destroyed Iraq would be the end of Saddam and the cronies who populate his inner circle and cling to him for their survival. In his book, *The American Way of War*, Professor Russell Weigley states that unconditional surrender is the way America has characteristically fought and won its wars.[17] Since the end of World War II, the United States has veered far from this strategy. But in any future attempt to defeat Saddam Hussein, unconditional surrender would be the only course of action that would be effective.

The one major ingredient for a successful forced removal of Saddam is missing, however: the political will of the Administration, the Congress, and the American people for an operation of this nature. All would have to be united in support for such an action. General Anthony Zinni, former CENTCOM Commander in Chief, stated in his farewell address published in the US Naval Institute's *Proceedings*, "In removing Saddam, we try to get the results on the cheap." [18]

A takeover by Iraq's opposition parties seems extremely unlikely. The most credible groups in this mix of opposition are the Kurds, the Shiites of various hues--including liberal democrats and secularists, moderate Islamists, and Islamic fundamentalists--and Sunni Arab nationalists. They could succeed only if they formed a lasting coalition that would constitute a dramatic break with Iraq's 70-year history of domination by the center and Sunni Arabs.[19]

### *International Support for Sanctions in the Face of Suffering*

"Sanctions fatigue" has set in throughout the world community, including in the United States. Multilateral support for the current sanctions regime is weakening. China, Russia, and France, three UN Security Council members, favor easing or ending the sanctions as a precursor to the gradual reintegration of Iraq into the international community. This trend could be costly to the United States in its effort to maintain international support for the sanctions. Without an overtly aggressive act by Iraq (e.g., another invasion of Kuwait or the use of weapons of mass destruction), it is likely that the sanctions regime will gradually be reduced.

The Oil-for-Food resolution, UNSCR 986, requires among other stipulations that humanitarian goods be distributed equitably throughout Iraq and that further deterioration in the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people and infrastructure must be stopped. Unfortunately, neither goal has been achieved.

Indeed, sanctions have had the perverse effect of increasing Saddam's hold on power. The Iraqi government controls the distribution of goods in the center and southern regions of the country. This has bolstered the regime, triggered greater immigration, and retarded the emergence of a middle class and civil society. This last effect is highly prevalent and extremely noticeable in Iraq.[20]

Interviews with two reporters from *U.S. News & World Report* who traveled throughout Iraq in July 2000 verified widespread poverty among Iraq's middle class.[21] Doctors and teachers, considered the elite members of the Iraqi society prior to the Gulf War, are forced to work second and third jobs to supplement their income. The reporters remarked that the United States continues to support crippling economic sanctions on Iraq that have not weakened Saddam's hold on power. From a security perspective, the sanctions have prevented Saddam from reconstructing his

WMD program (although some believe that he could reconstitute his capability relatively quickly if all controls are lifted). From a humanitarian perspective, however, the social disintegration brought on by the sanctions contributes to the tragedy among Iraq's people. It also diminishes the already slim chance that internal Iraqi discontent could be converted into a sustained popular rebellion: people consumed with finding their next meal do not have the time to overthrow dictators.

No one knows with any precision how many Iraqi civilians have died as a result of the economic sanctions, but various agencies, including the UN, have estimated that the sanctions have contributed to hundreds of thousands of deaths. By 1998, Iraqi infant mortality had reportedly risen from the pre-Gulf War rate of 3.7 percent to 12 percent. Inadequate food and medical supplies, as well as breakdowns in sewage and sanitation systems and the electrical power systems needed to run them, reportedly have caused an increase of 40,000 deaths annually of children under the age of five and 50,000 deaths annually of older Iraqis.[22]

Some casualty estimates have been questioned because they rely on Iraqi reports, and the government of Iraq clearly exaggerates its losses in the hope that sanctions will be removed. On the other hand, the estimates may be low in some respects. In particular, many infant deaths may go unreported because ailing babies are not taken to hospitals now clearly incapable of saving them. The UN also suspects that many deaths go unreported so that survivors can collect an additional food ration.

Unsurprisingly, Saddam has not cooperated to allow the sanctions to stop nor even acted to contain the deterioration of Iraq, regardless of the human cost. Saddam has been wary of infringements on Iraqi sovereignty, including the presence of arms inspectors and other outsiders whose activities might undermine his weapons programs or even his survival.[23] Accordingly, we should note that it is Saddam's policies, not those of the sanctioners, that are at the center of Iraq's problems. As Christopher Wren reported to the UN on 19 October 2000, Tun Myat, the new administrator of the program and successor to Hans von Sponeck, said, "Although the distribution system ranked among the world's best, the lot of ordinary Iraqis has failed to improve because their living conditions remain mired in chronic deprivation." Additionally, the Oil-for-Food program forces Baghdad to purchase all of its goods outside of Iraq, thus doing nothing to rebuild and develop its shattered economy and infrastructure. Lastly, despite more Oil-for-Food goods entering the country than ever before, massive unemployment and poverty persist.

## **Recommendations**

In the case of Iraq, all the available policy options have potential negative outcomes. No policy can avoid the contradictions inherent in choosing between the near-term security provided by sanctions and containment, and the resulting costs in terms of Iraqi revanchism and human suffering. As Anthony Cordesman has observed, "In terms of the Oil-for-Food deal with Iraq, we have applied a broad, legalistic restriction, rather than focusing tightly on sensitive items. The end result is that we appear to be the cause of the hardships of the Iraqi people, and give Saddam Hussein aid in undercutting sanctions." [24]

The UN is still committed to a policy of sanctions, but it is clear that there no longer is international unity in pursuing this policy, and there is little meaningful chance of forging lasting consensus among the Western, Gulf, and other nations on any new policy. The United States can influence the policies of other states, and may be able to shape much of the outcome of debate within the UN, but it cannot count on the full support of even many of its allies. Policy discussions regarding Iraq will inevitably become more adversarial as nations increasingly become divided over the enforcement of sanctions and the level of military containment.

Ten years of the repressive regime of Saddam has shown us one thing--we have to deal with him. The Iraq Liberation Act, arguably an overt declaration pushing for covert action which calls for the overthrow of Saddam, serves no purpose and only buttresses the passionate allegations of an unbridled arrogance on the part of the United States. The continued use of sanctions further fuels this fire.

Yet, most will agree that Saddam Hussein represents "a threat to international peace and security," a description used in many UN Security Council resolutions. The threat is Saddam Hussein's regime, not Iraq, but how do we frame our policy accordingly? How do we stop Iraqi suffering under this regime? Should we?

We propose as the principal alternative to economic sanctions an agenda best described as "conditional engagement." This would blend a mix of narrow sanctions coupled with political and economic interactions that are limited and made conditional on specified behavioral changes. Specific policy recommendations are listed in Table 3. Without question, they are easier to state than to achieve.

### **Policy Recommendations**

- Lift all economic and political sanctions in return for Iraqi compliance with the terms of the UN cease-fire, requiring full Iraqi compliance in providing reparations and the recognition by Iraq of its new borders with a sovereign Kuwait.
- Keep in place sanctions that prevent the import of any items to enhance or grow the Iraqi military machine and WMD program. Restrict flow of technology that can be applied to WMD. Develop an export control process that limits Iraq's importation of specific goods..
- Allow unlimited production of oil while diverting a sufficient amount of money to pay applicable war reparations (Kuwait, etc.).
- Permit foreign countries to enter into Iraq to fulfill contracts for business within the country, especially the United States. Believe in the positive influence of private investment, that companies help advance their social, political, and economic institutions.
- Insist on the insertion of UNMOVIC to monitor the WMD program within Iraq. In addition, if UNMOVIC is allowed to enter country, no-fly and no-drive zones will be lifted.
- Grant amnesty for everyone in the Iraqi government (except Saddam) when a new regime comes to power.
- Support Iraqi territorial integrity and unity (to dispel the belief we want to break it up).
- Establish UN human rights monitors.
- Flood Iraq with humanitarian goods. Provide a specified amount of money to the ICRC, or any other objective nongovernmental organization, for humanitarian goods and distribution, to include infrastructure (hospital, water and sanitation, etc.).
- Increase, reenergize diplomacy (preventive, forward-thinking).
- Rescind the Iraq Liberation Act. Get out of internal politics in Iraq.
- Promote America's central themes--democracy, freedom, human rights.
- Win the "public relations" battle against Hussein. Increase diplomacy with allies.
- Require full accountability of all Kuwaiti prisoners of war from the Gulf War.
- Require Iraq to renounce any territorial claim to Kuwait.
- Allow Iraqi citizens to study abroad.

**Table 3. Policy Recommendations.**

Simply maintaining economic sanctions in Iraq is counterproductive to the long-term goal of retaining US influence in the region. Sanctions and the Oil-for-Food program have had two main effects: (1) they have allowed Saddam Hussein to use them as a propaganda tool against the United States, thus developing within Iraq a generation of hatred toward the West which we will have to deal with for years to come; and (2) although sanctions may have limited proliferation of WMD in the past, without the inspection process in place, there is no assurance for the future or even the present.

Economic sanctions and the Oil-for-Food program have created the effect of bolstering Saddam's authoritarian society. By creating scarcity, the Iraqi government is better able to control the distribution of goods. Innocents have been harmed and killed, the regime has been strengthened, and the middle class and civil society have been weakened. By shifting the blame for sanctions to Saddam Hussein and by offering massive shipment of humanitarian aid without



compensation, we can effectively limit what Iraq can import and still alleviate the human problem.

In the Arab world, the United States is perceived as having lost the propaganda war with Saddam Hussein. Arabs throughout the Middle East believe that America's continued support for economic sanctions against Iraq is the cause of suffering and deaths within the Iraqi population. By lifting the economic sanctions--including the Oil-for-Food program--the responsibility falls back onto the shoulders of Saddam and his government to feed the Iraqi people, thereby robbing him of his greatest propaganda tool against the UN.

At the same time, it is extremely important to keep in place those military sanctions that prevent the import of any items that enhance or grow the Iraqi military machine and its WMD program. Additionally, restrictions and monitoring should be placed on any technology that Iraq attempts to export. The insertion of UNMOVIC to monitor the WMD program within Iraq is critical. And, obviously, Saddam's acquiescence in this regard is problematic. Restrictions associated with the no-fly and no-drive zones should be removed once Iraq agrees to monitoring.

The current condition of the Iraqi military, coupled with the forward presence of US military forces, will prevent it from conducting any sort of power projection quests for several years. As mentioned earlier in this article, the movement of Iraqi military forces is closely monitored to ensure they are contained. To enhance regional stability, firms from foreign countries should be allowed to enter Iraq to fulfill contracts for business within the country--especially firms from the United States. The positive influence of private businesses would help advance Iraqi social, political, and economic institutions.

Additionally, the United States should unequivocally state its support for the territorial integrity of Iraq, thus dispelling any belief or misconception in the Arab world of our desire to break up Iraq.

A major war, over ten years of sanctions, numerous coalitions, and the Iraq Liberation Act have failed to remove Saddam from power. Indeed, our policies have strengthened his ironclad hold on his country. Saddam Hussein is not going away, and we need to get out of the internal politics of Iraq. The Arab world, according to Lawrence Pope, former Ambassador to Chad, believes that the United States and Israel are determined to maintain Iraq as a collapsed state for as long as possible.[25] Rescinding the Iraq Liberation Act would bolster our standing within the Arab world, where there is no support for the removal of Saddam. Finally, the West needs to abandon unrealistic demands for war-crimes trials, instant democracy, and short-term human rights objectives.

International support for the continuing of the status quo decreases by the day. Many Arab countries expressed their dismay at not being contacted prior to the latest round of bombings near Baghdad. Currently, only one other country flies aircraft alongside the United States to enforce the no-fly and no-drive zones. If a US aviator is shot down and captured, American support for our activities would be called into question and place the Bush Administration in a quandary, especially now that our primary focus is on Afghanistan. Our own military personnel are fatigued from numerous rotations to the Gulf and now face heightened concerns about terrorist attacks.

## **Conclusion**

Economic sanctions in Iraq are not working. Unarguably, the sanctions have contained Saddam's military, but are economic sanctions the only way we can achieve this end? The consequences of ten years of sanctions include pushing the dictator closer to his people, and posing a threat to our future interactions with Iraq and our presence in the region.

The widespread use of economic sanctions constitutes one of the paradoxes of contemporary foreign policy. Sanctions are frequently criticized, even derided. But, fortunately or unfortunately, sanctions have become one of the tools of choice for the United States in the post-Cold War world. Sanctions in the case of Iraq are being employed by the United States to halt the proliferation of WMD and to continue to punish Iraq for its invasion of Kuwait in August 1990. Additionally, economic sanctions provide a visible and less expensive alternative to military intervention--and an alternative to doing nothing.

Even when comprehensive and enjoying universal international backing, however, economic sanctions have failed to dislodge Saddam or any of his lieutenants from power within Iraq. Instead, ten years of economic sanctions have created a humanitarian disaster in Iraq rivaling that of many third-world African countries. Almost five years of the

Oil-for-Food program have failed to stem this tide of suffering.

Economic sanctions should focus on those responsible for the offending behavior that stimulated the sanctions in the first place. Secretary of State Colin Powell's trip to the Middle East earlier in 2001 highlighted the failure of the economic sanctions and the need to refocus the allied efforts against the leadership of Iraq and away from the Iraqi people. However, his proposal to contain the smuggling of Iraqi oil (and other goods) by requesting the sealing of borders with countries such as Syria and Jordan is impossible. These countries can ill afford to turn away profitable business with a neighbor, nor is the United States willing to pay Jordan over \$300 million per year to close its border with Iraq. Additionally, the smuggling of Iraqi oil through the Persian Gulf has continued for almost ten years, and the efforts by allied navies to enforce the Maritime Intercept Program will not magically halt it.

It is increasingly clear that the West and the southern Gulf states need to end the economic sanctions and treat them as a different issue from seeking changes in the Iraqi regime and military containment. Saddam has few friends, but international support for economic measures whose net impact has dramatically punished the Iraqi people has been steadily eroding. Sanctions have had high humanitarian costs, and it is far from clear that they can ever force a change in Iraq's government. The economic sanctions and UN Security Council resolutions are dividing Western and Arab nations over Iraq, they are almost certainly making Iraq's population more hostile to the West and other moderate states, and their long-term costs will far exceed any short-term benefits.

The answer is not only to simply lift economic sanctions. Any peace between Iraq and Kuwait will not be an easy one. The UN should not only insist that Iraq accept the UN Security Council resolutions that will prevent Iraq from rapidly recovering its capability to deliver weapons of mass destruction, the UN should also insist on obtaining firm Iraqi recognition of Kuwait's sovereignty and new border. Similarly, the UN needs to press for a clear autonomy arrangement that protects Iraq's Kurds.

Kuwait and Saudi Arabia also need to fully come to grips with their demands for repayment of debt and reparations. The West needs to abandon unrealistic demands for war-crime trials and the rapid development of democracy and human rights. There are disturbing parallels between the kind of peace the UN has enforced on Iraq in terms of sanctions, potential war-crime trials, reparations, and loan repayments, and the kind of peace the allies forced on Germany after World War I. Once again, the West and the southern Gulf need to remember that it is more important to make history than to remember it. Not every tragedy needs to have a second act.

The humanitarian crisis in Iraq is real. Regardless of who is causing it, the West is being blamed for it. As Anthony Cordesman has written, "The suffering caused by UN sanctions is creating broad Iraqi resentment of the US, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia [and the] resulting revanchism may well survive Saddam Hussein, and could play an important role in shaping Iraqi politics and actions for several decades." [26]

The United Nations and the United States are in a no-win situation with Iraq. If Saddam violates any of the numerous Security Council resolutions, the sanctions will be maintained. If Saddam abides by all of the resolutions, we will not trust him, and the sanctions still will be maintained. The Iraq Liberation Act of 1998 sent a clear message to Saddam--we will not stop pressuring Iraq until he is gone. [27]

A new policy toward Iraq is needed, one with commonsense criteria and reasonable objectives. Ending economic sanctions, maintaining "smart" sanctions on items that will enhance or grow Iraq's military and technology that can be used for WMD, and establishing a policy of "conditional engagement" would meet our national security objectives. With economic sanctions ended, the UN can begin to alleviate the humanitarian crisis in Iraq without being seen as causing the suffering. After the lifting of economic sanctions, Iraq may be open to additional humanitarian assistance and to oversight by humanitarian organizations.

The time for a new, clear policy toward Iraq is now. From our perspective, we are worse off today with regard to Iraq than we were ten years ago. Saddam Hussein maintains his brutal dictatorship and an entire population is learning to hate the West, specifically the United States. If we maintain the current policy, what would we expect to change?

We should remove economic sanctions that mainly affect the well-being of the Iraqi population, limit proliferation by establishing "smart" sanctions on military and technology items that could be used for WMD (and act swiftly and

decisively when those sanctions are breached to maintain US credibility), and begin to win the propaganda war at all levels by engaging Iraq at every opportunity. In addition, we must renew our coalition-building activities. The United States plays an essential leadership role in forming and maintaining these critical relationships. This is the way to develop a strategic direction whereby we may shape events.

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## NOTES

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