Nebuchadnezzar's Sphinx:

What have we learned from Baghdad's plan to take Kuwait?

BY

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Major Douglas V. Mastriano was the Distinguished Military Graduate at Eastern University, Saint David's, PA, and subsequently commissioned through the Reserve Officer Training Corps. Upon graduation from the Military Intelligence Officer's Basic Course in 1987, Major Mastriano was assigned to the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment in Nuremberg, Germany. He served as an Intelligence Production Chief and Electronic Warfare Platoon Leader. During this assignment, Major Mastriano operated near the Iron Curtain along West Germany's borders with East Germany and Czechoslovakia. With the end of the Cold War, Major Mastriano deployed with his regiment to Saudi Arabia to participate in Operation Desert Storm. He served as the Intelligence Officer (S2) for 4th (Aviation) Squadron, 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment. During the ground war, his squadron led the main attack against the Iraqi Republican Guards. The 2nd Armored Cavalry defeated elements of five Iraqi divisions after pitched battles, which included a fierce battle with a brigade of Saddam's elite Tawakalna Mechanized Division.

After Desert Storm, Major Mastriano attended the Intelligence Officer's Advance Course, the Post Graduate Intelligence Program and went on to serve as the Army Watch Officer in the National Military Joint Intelligence Center in the Pentagon. From there, Major Mastriano became an Army Intelligence Dissemination Officer at Fort Belvoir, Virginia with the mission of cutting through the bureaucracy to get intelligence to the commander. In 1995, he moved to the Defense Language Institute, Monterey, California and served as the Operations Officer (S3) of the 229th Military Intelligence Battalion and as the

Commander of Alpha Company. Upon completion of command, Major Mastriano attended the Command & Staff Service School at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He returned to Monterey in 1997, to serve as the Executive Officer of the two Middle Eastern Schools. The schools encompassed nearly 1,000 joint service members and civilian instructors.

In February 1998, Major Mastriano reported to the 3rd Infantry Division (Mechanized) at Fort Stewart, Georgia. He served as the Division Artillery Intelligence Officer (S2). In January 2000, Major Mastriano's unit began preparation for supporting Stabilization Force VIII & IX in Bosnia. His responsibilities included training several thousand soldiers in support of the deployment. In July 2000, Major Mastriano arrived at Maxwell AFB to attend the Air Command & Staff College and subsequently the School of Advanced Airpower Studies.

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ABSTRACT

What can we learn from an analysis of Iraq's strategy against Kuwait in 1990-1991 and how can we apply these lessons for possible future operations? Baghdad's invasion and occupation of Kuwait was a key component of an Iraqi endeavor to achieve regional hegemony and global economic importance. To retain Kuwait, the regime initiated a multifaceted strategy, which encompassed the integration of the diplomatic, informational, military and economic (DIME) instruments of power. This broad strategy was a diminutive time capsule where Iraq exercised nearly every stratagem at its disposal (in an eight-month period) to defeat the Coalition. Although the Iraqi undertaking failed, this epoch is a relevant study for strategists today. There are valuable lessons for the US to draw from a study of the strategies exercised by Iraq during the eight months that encompassed Operations Desert Shield and Storm. This chronicle offers examples on how Islamic regimes attempt to blunt US involvement in the region. The US must be aware of the strategies that Saddam Hussein employed to counter the US led Coalition in 1991, especially since we may revisit that nation. Learning from the experiences of the 1990-1991 confrontation with Saddam Hussein will equip the US with the capacity to anticipate and thwart the various strategies that Baghdad may use in future conflict.

CONTENTS

Illustrations

Figures

Problem Statement and Significance

Know the minds of the opposing generals in order to better divine their actions, to know how to force your actions upon them, and to know what traps to use against them.

Frederick the Great, *On The Art of War*

Why did Saddam Hussein invade Kuwait and then risk everything in a fight against the US led Coalition during Operation Desert Storm? Has the United States learned anything from this confrontation in anticipation of future operations against Iraq or other regimes in the area? This thesis suggests that there are valuable lessons for the US to extract from a study of Iraqi strategy during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Saddam's strategy during this epoch highlights a pattern of conflict and demonstrates how he uses Iraq's instruments of power to impose his will. The lessons are important especially considering that Iraq is implicated in the current US war against terrorism.

The eight-months encompassing Desert Shield/Storm (August 1990-April 1991) are important to analyze since it is a narrative where Baghdad exercised nearly every instrument of power at its disposal to thwart the US. It is likely that Saddam, and other Arab nations or non-state actors, will use similar strategies to thwart US operations in the region. Learning from our 1990-1991 confrontation with Saddam Hussein may assist the US in anticipating, countering and thwarting the various strategies that Baghdad (and other regimes) may use again in future conflict. Understanding these strategies is important and facilitates further victories in the region.

However, despite the importance of understanding Saddam's way of war, it is evident that US analysts have not derived many lessons from Iraq. After all, the US led

Coalition won such a decisive military victory, what is there to learn? General Norman Schwartzkopf's post war description of Saddam sums up the majority view reflected in American post Desert Storm literature: "As far as Saddam Hussein being a great military strategist, he is neither a strategist, nor is he schooled in the operational arts, nor is he a tactician, nor is he a general, nor is he a soldier. Other than that, he is a great military man."[1]

This is the prevailing view of Gulf War commentators. My thesis diverges with this assessment and suggests that Saddam's Gulf War strategy was comprehensive, deliberate and potentially fatal to the Coalition. The Coalition prevailed thanks, in part, to the astounding foresight of President Herbert Walker Bush and the fruits of the decade long Reagan military buildup. Nonetheless, in the long-view of history, Desert Storm was the anomaly for Iraq, since it was one of those rare occasions where Saddam was out-foxed. Baghdad may prevail, or extract a high cost from us next time with a similar "failed strategy" if we do not heed the valuable lessons from our experience and persist in the opinion that he is irrational.

Despite popular perception, Saddam's Gulf War strategy did encompass many sound and comprehensive features. However, because the defeat of the Iraqi military during the war was so decisive, there is a tendency for American analysts to ignore and even ridicule Saddam Hussein and, therefore not to earnestly scrutinize his war strategy. It is wrong to assume that since Saddam's strategy failed in 1991 it would similarly fail in a different situation. Completely rejecting the Iraqi threat in such a manner is dangerous and leads to the fatal snare of underestimating the enemy.

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[1] Roger Cohen, *In the Eye of the Storm*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1991), 293.

Introduction

What is important to me about Nebuchadnezzar is the link between the Arabs' abilities and the liberation of Palestine. Nebuchadnezzar was, after all an Arab from Iraq. Nebuchadnezzar was the one who brought the bound Jewish slaves from Palestine. That is why I like to remind the Arabs, Iraqis in particular, of their historical responsibilities. It is a burden that should not stop them from action, but rather spur them into action because of their history.

Saddam Hussein, *Saddam's War*

Nebuchadnezzar's Sphinx

This project's title, "Nebuchadnezzar's Sphinx" reflects the dilemma that we face in Iraq. Nebuchadnezzar was the ancient king of the Babylonian Empire who captured Jerusalem, destroyed the Jewish temple and deported the Jews in 597 BC. Saddam's dream is similar and includes dominating the region and trampling upon Israel just as Nebuchadnezzar.

In a similar line, there is a connection between the sphinx and Saddam Hussein. In Greek mythology, the sphinx offered the hero Oedipus a riddle. If Oedipus answered the riddle correctly, the sphinx would perish; if Oedipus answered incorrectly, Oedipus would die. That is our dilemma today. Where do we find the answer to the riddle of Saddam Hussein? I propose that a great deal of the answer to the Saddam riddle is found in recent history (specifically 1990-1991). Such is the purpose of this research project; to define the lessons of the Gulf War and propose answers on how to contend with Saddam and other renegade Islamic states.

Unfortunately, the vanquished usually learn more from history than the victors. This is especially evident in the US perception of Iraq after the decisive military victory of Desert Storm. There are undoubtedly countless reasons for US satisfaction in the conduct of the Gulf War. However, taken too far, this contentment may mature into arrogance in our own capabilities and disdain for the adversary's.

Baghdad's invasion and occupation of Kuwait was a key component of Saddam's aspiration to achieve regional hegemony and global economic importance. Invading Kuwait was the easy part. However, retaining this territory was a bit more complicated, especially as a massive Coalition arrayed itself against Iraq. Retreat was not an option for Saddam, so he launched a multifaceted strategy to safeguard his prize. This confrontation encompassed Iraq's diplomatic, informational, military and economic (DIME) instruments of power. This broad strategy was a diminutive time capsule where Saddam exercised nearly every stratagem at his disposal in an eight-month period to counter the Coalition.

Although the Iraqi undertaking failed, this epoch is a relevant study for strategists today. There are many lessons here for us to grasp. A number of the stratagems used by Iraq are typical of the diplomatic maneuvering that Islamic regimes throughout the region employ to blunt US intervention. Recent events highlight this. For example, the diplomatic bluster from the Afghan Islamic Taleban regime and Ossama bin Laden is reminiscent of similar rhetoric employed by Saddam back in 1990-1991.

Yet, images of the Iraqi Army's rout in 1991 are difficult to get around. Certainly, Saddam's military performance was feeble. However, it has been eleven years since Desert Storm and yet, Saddam Hussein is still in power. In more than a decade, the US has not offered a reasonable answer to the riddle on how to contend with this adversary. There is little doubt that Saddam took a calculated risk in Kuwait and failed. However, despite the overwhelming odds, Saddam survived the war against the Coalition, the Kurdish and Shiite rebellion, the No Fly Zones and a twelve-year economic embargo. Surely, it is time to develop the answer to the riddle of Saddam Hussein and to

break his reign of terror. This is why we must scrutinize the lessons of the Second Gulf War.[2]

This research project begins with a discussion of local background information and is followed up with a prescription detailing the components necessary to achieve victory in the region. Such a generalization or formulation of a strategy for the Middle East is reasonable to postulate due to the indigenous environment.[3] The Arab lands from Morocco to Iraq share a common ethnicity, religion and the same collective memory concerning the West (Christianity, Crusades, Colonialism, Western Culture, etc).

After relating a strategy to apply in the region, I discuss why Saddam invaded Kuwait and highlight what he endeavored to achieve by this. The diplomatic, informational, military and economic components of his strategy serve as the outline on the course of action Baghdad pursued and what the US can learn from how Saddam used his instruments of power. Basic in this approach is answering why a particular Iraqi decision or action is relevant to the US in a forthcoming war. Through this, we see the rhetoric and role of Islam in politics, the saga of the Arab-Israeli conflict, their long-view of history (with an obvious Islamic prejudice), Iraqi misinformation and Saddam Hussein's culture of revenge.[4]

Chapters three, four and five discuss Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Again, the DIME instruments of power approach are applied to these epochs. In this, we again see Islam and the Arab-Israeli conflicts as inescapable features of the Iraqi struggle

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[2] The First Gulf War encompassed the Iran-Iraq War of 1980-1988. The Second Gulf War started with Saddam's invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990 and ended with the Coalition victory of Operation Desert Storm on 1 March 1991.

[3] For the sake of simplicity, the term "Middle East" denotes Arabic/Islamic nations, which (in this paper) includes the long-established Near East nations of the Maghrib (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia), the Levant (Jordan, Syria, Lebanon), Iraq, Libya, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Qatar, and Oman.

[4] Laurie Mylroie, *Study of Revenge*, (Washington, D.C: AEI Press, 2000).

to prevail against the US. In addition, these chapters discern political balancing (Iraqi pleas for Soviet support), blackmail (Western Guests/hostages), Pan Arabism and the deliberate targeting of US vulnerabilities (the Arab Coalition members, US casualty aversion and Israel).

After describing the Iraqi approach to conflict, chapters six and seven underscore relevant lessons and applications for the US. Patterns of Iraqi politics and conflict are discerned and discussed for use against Iraq, or others in the region that we may face. In this manner, both the American and Iraqi strengths and vulnerabilities are highlighted.

Here the answers to the riddle are discussed from both the Iraq and American perspective. The findings provide the information and analysis needed to understand, anticipate and blunt the likely courses of action that Saddam Hussein and other hostile Islamic regimes in the region may follow.

<p align="center">**Chapter 1**</p>

Strategies to Win a War in the Middle East

Arab processes were clear, Arab minds moved logically as our own, with nothing radically incomprehensible or different, except the premises: there was no excuse or reason, except our laziness and ignorance, whereby we could call them inscrutable or Oriental, or leave them misunderstood.

<p align="right">T. E. Lawrence, *Revolt in the Desert*</p>

The international system's anarchy creates challenges for the US. Foremost among these is nation-state insecurity coupled with the pursuit of self-interest. States simply do not trust other states, especially powerful ones. This is manifest when they collectively attempt to limit US power. This occurred during the Korean War in 1950 after the successful American amphibious assault at Inchon, which put the North Korean army to flight. With American military victory came increased influence in the region. The perceived threat of having the US on Communist China's border and the imbalance it could produce compelled Beijing to react by sending Chinese troops into North Korea to restore the balance of power.[5]

A similar danger exists in the Middle East, especially as the US successfully prosecutes its war against terrorism. Our growing military presence equates to a tangible expansion of power, which perpetuates insecurity among lesser powers. One result of this is the US rift with Saudi Arabia. This is why the US must be judicious in the region since a poorly planned strategy may have grave ramifications.

<p align="center">**War and Defining Victory**</p>

War is an attempt by one country (in the traditional Westphalian sense) to compel another to do something it does not want to do by means of violent force. With this

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[5] Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1987), 17-40.

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framework, it is easy to define victory. The state whose demands are forced upon the other is the victor. However, this is not as straightforward as it appears since demands often change during war. The American Civil War illustrates this point. The war commenced with the stated intent of saving the Union. However, by 1862, freeing the slaves became a primary objective, especially after the Emancipation Proclamation.

Defining victory is at times perception based. Although the Coalition forced Iraq out of Kuwait in 1991, there is a perception in the Arab World that Saddam was not completely defeated; therefore, the US victory was incomplete. This view is linked to an implicit US objective of removing Saddam Hussein from power. Although not a stated policy, the allusion to it made it a de facto measure of US victory.

The DIME Theory

States use four instruments of power to win wars. These are the diplomatic, informational, military and economic (DIME) instruments of power. The outcome of war is only partially settled on the battlefield. How leaders manipulate the DIME plays a central part in determining the degree of victory or success on the battlefield. The DIME directly influences the composition of forces, time and place of the battle and the will of the country to continue to fight. The relative importance of each component of the DIME varies with the situation.

DIME – American Vulnerabilities

The US has substantial vulnerabilities in the Middle East, which can be exploited by an adept Arab leader shrewdly manipulating his DIME. The primary vulnerabilities include: a lack of permanent and adequate regional bases, casualty aversion and fear of causing excessive civilian casualties while waging a war. By focusing the DIME against these three vulnerabilities, the US can be thwarted.

Inadequate Basing. The US needs the support of Saudi Arabia and other states in the region to contain Iraq. With fewer bases, it is difficult for the US to isolate and attack Iraq. The key for Saddam, or other renegade leaders, is to convince Arab states not to permit the basing of US military personnel in their countries. This would significantly diminish US options. Although there are other avenues available to America, such as relying upon naval assets, the lack of regional basing would make it difficult to wage a robust military campaign.

Casualty Aversion. Some foreign states wonder about the number of casualties that the US can tolerate before losing its will to fight. The two points of reference for most Arab leaders are Vietnam and the 1983 United States Marine Corps barracks bombing in Beirut, Lebanon. These events are interpreted regionally as indicators that the US will not tolerate a long and costly campaign. Middle Eastern leaders can take advantage of this weakness by killing as many Americans as possible in a short period. The goal is to shock the US public and thereby break the national will to fight.

One way to do this is to increase the lethality and quality of the aggressor state's military. Another approach is to gather as many allies as possible to physically resist US intervention. Finally, the decisive answer for this dilemma is to develop weapons of mass destruction, explicitly a nuclear weapon capability or radiation bomb technology that is not just threatened, but used against troop concentrations or US civilians.

Fear of Civilian Casualties. The US is indisposed to shedding civilian blood during time of war. This aversion rose to prominence during the Vietnam War. What the US fears most from civilian casualties is bad press. Mass media dedicates significant time to reporting on the occasional errant US bomb. This loss of "innocent" life reduces the legitimacy of US action and puts pressure on the coalition to seek a speedy end to the conflict.

The target regime can exploit this vulnerability by welcoming the press to the sites where civilian lives were lost. An example of this is the 1991 US bombing of the Amiriya Shelter in Baghdad where bad press compelled the US to limit its attacks in Baghdad. The regime can increase civilian casualties by moving government and military functions into residential areas to further exploit this weakness.[6]

US Prerequisites to Regional Victory

In light of the US vulnerabilities mentioned above, the following five goals are necessary to accomplish our strategy in the Middle East. Although not comprehensive, they help the US to impose its will by isolating the target country. These elements help America to overcome the Middle East's unique geo-political and historical-cultural predisposition and are designed to circumvent anti-US balancing. The elements are:

1. Keep Israel out
2. Avoid unilateral action
3. Isolate the targeted regime
4. Understand and use ethnic disparity
5. Balance and include regional powers

These are based upon the divide and conquer concept. The idea is to prevent local states from cooperating with each other, which would increase the likelihood of them

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[6] William M. Arkin, "Baghdad: Urban Sanctuary in Desert Storm," *Airpower Journal,* (spring 1997).

unifying against US policy. At the top of the list is keeping Israel out of the conflict. If Israel enters a war, on the US Coalition side, it is certain that the US would find itself without important Arab allies. The five goals and their relevance are discussed below.

Keep Israel Out of the Conflict

The hostility directed against Israel is rooted in several factors, chief of which is religion. A non-Islamic state occupying Islam's third most holy city (Jerusalem) is a bitter pill for the Muslims. In addition to this, Israel is a distraction for states to divert their people from internal strife and poverty. Many Arab leaders fail to provide for the security and economic prosperity of their people. Israel is a useful diversion to funnel the disgust of the masses away from domestic turmoil and against an external enemy.

The most effective unifying force among the Arab states is their hatred of Israel. This rudimentary hatred explains why Saddam Hussein authorized SCUD missile (Iraqi al Husayn variant) attacks against Israel during Desert Storm. An Israeli retaliation against Iraq would have made Israel a de facto Coalition member and an ally of Saudi Arabia, Syria, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, etc. Saddam's strategy was to use Israel to fragment the Coalition, (the Coalition was a US center of gravity and vulnerability). The mere thought of an Arab state participating in an alliance with Israel remains loathsome. The US needs to weigh carefully how to conduct a strategy in the region and contemplate branches and sequels in the planning process on how to keep Israel out of a conflict even if it is attacked with weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

Avoid Unilateral Action

Unilateral US action reminds the region too much of their recent colonial past. This was a time when most Arabs were subject to the whims of a colonial power. Unilateral action also brings with it illegitimacy and falls prey to anti-American rhetoric. The typical anti-US bluster triggered by unilateral actions reaches back a thousand years

to assert that the US is on a crusade against Islam. The implication is obvious; true Muslims must unite in a Jihad against the Crusading American Christians.[7]

Pan-Arabism and Arab Unity are Islam Based. Unilateral US action also triggers a Pan Arab reaction. Pan Arabism rose to preeminence in the 1960's and suggests that there is only one Arab nation, which is rooted in Islam.[8] The Arab League is evidence of a latent desire by Arab states to further their common agendas. The chief hindrance confronting Pan Arabism is the unwillingness of Arab leaders to share power. Pan Arabism is not entirely dead and may become a concern if another 'Abd al-Nasir rises to power and is strengthened in the face of a common foe (i.e. a Western power waging war against Islam).[9]

Islam remains the biggest obstacle to American action in the region. It is the foundation upon which these societies are built and intrudes into virtually every facet of the lives of those living in the region. Islam spread by the sword of conquest defeating both the Byzantine and Sasanian empires. This triggered the forceful spread of Islam beyond the Arabian Peninsula across Zoroastrian (Persia) territory and enormous stretches of Christian lands (North Africa, Asia Minor, and the Middle East). Not only were people compelled to convert, but also a new way of life was imposed. With Islam came Bedouin Arabic culture and traditions. The most obvious manifestation of this was

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[7] Arab reference points are the Crusades, Israel and Western colonialism with Islam combating the West militarily and culturally. We hear much about the atrocities of the Crusades from Islamic scholars, but little on why the Crusades were launched (slaughter of Christian pilgrims, destruction of the Holy Sepulcher) or about the fate of the Christian populations that once existed in lands conquered by Islam. Local rhetoric portrays Muslims as innocent, even today (Although the existence of 1,500 mosques and Islamic centers in the US and the lack of any churches in Saudi Arabia contradicts this concept).

[8] Michel 'Aflaq developed the ideal of Pan Arabism in 1940 as the Ba'ath Party. Saddam Hussein befriended 'Aflaq during his exile in Syria in the early 1960s. Envisioning an Arab uprising, the Ba'ath Party promised to provide the leadership to defeat foreign colonialism and imperialism. The Ba'athist hoped that this uprising would inaugurate an era of Arab unity, socialism and independence dominated by an Arab leader. Saddam desires to be the Arab leader (Bullock, *Saddam's War*, xv, xvi, 38-45*)*.

[9] Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 403-412.

the need for converts to learn Arabic in order to communicate with Allah, read the Koran, to conduct commerce and to interact with the government. Indeed, "Islam altered the way in which people looked at the Arabic language. The [Koran] was the first book…written in Arabic, and Muslims believed it was the language in which it had been revealed…It was essential for those who accepted the [Koran] as Allah's word to understand its language."[10]

This tolerates little deviation and succeeded in uniting stretches of the globe with the same vision. Although there were epochs of relative tolerance, those who survived Islamic conquest (i.e. Assyrians, Armenians, Copts) incurred persecution, and suppression. This approach is supported in the Koran, Surah 9:29, where it states; "Fight those who believe not in Allah nor the last day…Nor acknowledge the religion of truth [even if they are] people of the Book, until they pay the Jizya [religious tax imposed upon Christian and Jews] with willing submission and feel themselves subdued."

Albert Hourani's seminal work, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, best describes the situation for non-Muslims. "[Christians] paid a special tax; they were not supposed to wear certain colors; they could not marry Muslim women; their evidence was not accepted against that of Muslims in law courts, their houses or places of worship should not be ostentatious; they were excluded from positions of power…even in the best circumstances the position of a minority is uneasy and the inducement to convert existed."[11] The Medieval inducements to encourage conversion still exist today in states, which have Islamic Law (Sharia) as their legal code. Appreciating this situation is

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[10] Hourani, 49.
[11] Hourani, 47.

relevant in grasping the worldview of Muslims and explaining why it is difficult for the US to operate in the region.

In addition to the Pan Arab appeal, there are also clannish considerations. In this part of the world, clannish ties remain important. This is especially true in regimes like Saddam's where loyalty is tied to blood relations. Despite the homage given to Arab unity and Islam, Saddam surrounds himself with hundreds of relatives.[12] Adding to the region's religious, tribal and ethnic complexity are the borders that encompass the modern Middle East. The borders do not follow tribal boundaries, were created by the French and British and were drawn arbitrarily after World War I.[13]

To overcome the threat of Pan Arabism and Islamic unity, multinational action is the best course for the US to pursue in advancing a regional strategy. The inclusion of Islamic, specifically Arab, states in a coalition provides legitimacy and blunts the predictable calls for Jihad against the US. Legitimacy is important for the US in two spheres: international and regional. Internationally, it is important to have the support of the United Nations Security Council (especially Russia, China and France). Unilateral action may cause a UNSC member to block UN support of the US. In the end, the US cannot achieve international legitimacy without first securing local legitimacy.

Gaining regional legitimacy is critical on the practical side to secure access to infrastructure (ports and airfields) and to gain host nation support. However, more importantly, Arab support prevents ethnicity and religion from uniting the region in an anti-US alliance. This is the divide and conquer approach to strategy.

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[12] Latif Yahia, *I Was Saddam's Son*, (New York: Arcade Publishing, 1997), 84-86, 170-171.
[13] The origins of the modern borders in the region are important in grasping the nature of the conflict we face. The appendix provides a synopsis on the history of these borders. Understanding the nature of the borders is fundamental in appreciating the insecurity and illegitimacy of several of the area's leaders. This appendix provides a historical overview of how the modern borders in the Middle East came into existence.

Isolate the Targeted Regime

Blocking a regime from outside support is the surest way to have a successful strategy. This is difficult to accomplish since it must occur internally (the regime) and internationally (the state). Internationally, we must isolate the state from any allies. This is particularly important for neighboring states, or those in a position to limit US access to the region.[14] Iraq's international position during Desert Storm illustrates this point. All of the adjoining states, save the Kingdom of Jordan, supported the Coalition's embargo (Iran by default). Jordan's tacit support of Iraq made it a conduit to circumvent the UN embargo with both food and military equipment.

Internally, the US must discover methods to isolate the regime from its people. This is a difficult endeavor since aggressive domestic intelligence agencies eliminate potential domestic adversaries. The key is finding vulnerabilities within the regime and exploiting them. For instance, a psychological operation may become successful in inciting domestic turmoil (such as a Kurdish revolt in northern Iraq). The imperative is to prove that the leader is illegitimate since he is an international pariah and a domestic failure by not providing for the basic needs and security of his people.

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[14] Examples of potential limits to US access include maritime chokepoints such as the Suez Canal (Egypt), the Straits of Hormuz (Iran and Oman) and Bab el Mandeb (Yemen).

Understand and use ethnic and religious disparity. The Middle East is not the monolith so many perceive. Although it is dominated by Arab Muslims, it also contains diverse religious, tribal, ethnic and economic conditions. These are vulnerabilities within the regimes. These divergences complicate the region significantly and give impetus to Byzantine politics.

Another feature of the divide and conquer approach is exploiting internal ethnic and religious disparity. The recent US experience with the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan highlights this point very well. The Tajik dominated Northern Alliance provided the bulk of the ground forces the US needed to end the government of the Pashtun led Taleban. Iraq provides some similar opportunities with its various minorities. Part of the reason for the US failure to eliminate Saddam is linked to our failure to work with Iraqi minorities to break the regime.[15]

Religious disparity. Two Islamic religious sects, Sunni and Shia, dominate the region with Sunni having the largest constituency. The rift began with the death of Muhammad in AD 632. This brought disagreements over who should become the next Islamic leader. Some claimed that only relatives of Muhammad were qualified, specifically, Muhammad's son-in-law Ali. These people became known as the Shiat Ali (Shiites) or the party-partisans of Ali. The majority of the Islamic world, however, believed that the Islamic

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[15] The relative situation of Iraqi minorities is more tenuous than that of the Afghan Northern Alliance. While the Northern Alliance was armed and equipped for war, such is not the case for most of Iraq's minorities. The only exception includes Iraq's Kurdish population. The US reluctance to strengthen Iraq's Kurds is because of Turkey, which also has a large Kurdish population. A Kurdish uprising in Iraq may spill over into Turkey. The Iraqi Kurds are also internally divided into various tribal groups each with their own agendas. The southern Iraqi Shi'ites have not garnered US sponsorship due to their affinity with Iran. The million strong Iraqi Christian Assyrians are not well organized.

Community (Sunna) as a whole should select the new leader, who need not have any blood relation to Muhammad. This group received the name Sunna or Sunni Muslims.[16]

All Arab states, save Syria, have Sunni leadership and a majority Sunni population .[17] Syria, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Iraq and Kuwait have large Shia constituencies. This is a source of instability, especially since Shia identity increased appreciably in the 1980s (after the 1979 Iranian Shia uprising). Iraq is an example of this. Although loyal during First Persian Gulf War (Iran-Iraq War), Saddam's Shiites fought for independence after the Second Persian Gulf War (Desert Storm).

Lebanon, Sudan, Iraq and Egypt also have large Christian populations. Egypt's Coptic Christians comprise about ten percent of the population and are severely oppressed. In Lebanon, the sectarian divergence led to a bloody civil war as Muslims sought to expand their influence in the nation. In Iraq, Christians are generally of Assyrian ethnic background and are not a significant threat to the Arab leadership in Baghdad (although greatly distrusted). There is also a large ethnic divide between Sudan's Arab Muslims and its African Christians, which produced a damaging sectarian based war. Such religious strife is a vulnerability for the US to exploit, if managed shrewdly.

Ethnic disparity. The ethnic diversity of the region is as complicated as the sectarian. Although Arabs dominate all of the states between Morocco and Iraq, some of the indigenous ethnic groups seek autonomy. The most well known are the Kurds, whose population extends into Iraq, Iran and Turkey. There is also a significant Berber minority population in Morocco and Algeria and a considerable number of African tribes in

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[16] Annis Shorrosh, *Islam Revealed*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1988), 35-39.
[17] Alawites, a minor Shia sect, are the religious affiliation of Syria's leadership.

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southern Sudan.[18] Again, understanding the ethnic discord of the region provides a look into local insecurities and a vulnerability to manipulate.

To secure victory, we must understand that the region's nation-states are not ethnically or religiously pure. Even Saudi Arabia, which boasts that it is 100% Islamic is vulnerable when you consider its Shia and large foreign worker population. Finding such divergences and exploiting them is effective in pursuing both a short and long term strategy. Obviously, this approach is wrought with danger and may backfire if not handled properly as demonstrated in 1991 when the US did not back Shiite and Kurdish uprisings following the defeat of the Iraqi military in Desert Storm. The US feared that a successful Shia uprising would create a partition of Iraq favoring Iran and a creation of a Kurdish state in northern Iraq weakening Turkish control over its Kurds. However, our inaction saved Saddam and his regime from collapse.

Although there are inherent dangers with using ethnic and religious instability, it is the surest method to weaken a regime. This approach does not normally produce quick results and may trigger a bloody backlash, especially if the particular minority group is not prepared for an insurrection. Dictators, such as Saddam Hussein, are sensitive about legitimacy since their states are built upon illegitimate European borders. Using minorities to advance a particular strategy exacerbates this insecurity.

Balancing and Regional Powers. Stephen Walt provides an explanation of what triggers alliances associated with an external threat. The explanation incorporates Balancing and Bandwagoning.[19] According to Walt, "balancing is defined as allying with others against the prevailing threat; bandwagoning refers to [the] alignment with the

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[18] Hourani, 434-440.
[19] Walt, 17-40. See *The Origins of Alliances* for a detailed analysis of these concepts.

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source of danger."[20] The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait created a dangerous situation for the smaller and weaker Arab Gulf States. It potentially placed Baghdad as an influential owner of extensive oil resources (by means of Kuwaiti oil reserves) and the region's dominant military power. The Gulf State leaders knew of Saddam's aspiration to become the leader of a Pan-Arabic State. This threat compelled the Arab Gulf States, particularly Saudi Arabia, to balance with the US against Iraq to restore the status quo.

As in Desert Storm, US success is hinged upon persuading local states to balance against regional threats. This is easier said than done since the friendly states must first believe that there is indeed a threat to their well being. Had the Iraqi endeavor to acquire and hold Kuwait succeeded, neighboring states might have been inclined to Bandwagoning with Iraq, for the sake of national survival.

The US must carefully balance and solicit the support of local powers to wage war. The regional powers include Egypt, Iran, Iraq and Saudi Arabia. It is not enough that America keep these states out of the conflict. To prevail, the US needs the participation and collaboration of at least one of them. Desert Storm succeeded so well, in part, due to the active support and participation of Saudi Arabia and Egypt against Iraq, with Iran uninvolved in the conflict (other than receiving over 100 Iraqi aircraft during the mass exodus of Saddam's air force).[21] The best way to coerce Post Desert Storm Iraq is through Iran, Iraq's mortal enemy. The US is not just balancing the powers

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[20] Ibid, 17.
[21] "Number and Type of Planes in Iran Reported," Baghdad Iraqi News Agency, *FBIS,* [*Foreign Broadcast Information Servic*e]. Report: Near East and South Asia, 12 April 1991.

but also preventing two or more of the regional powers from balancing in opposition to the US.[22]

The next crisis will encompass a more concerted Iraqi effort to isolate the US from the regional powers. It is unlikely that either Saudi Arabia, Iran or Egypt would join with Iraq in blunting a US attack against Iraq, however, their non-participation would greatly reduced the chance for American victory. This is not just because of the infrastructure and access to air and seaports that the US needs, but the legitimacy that is given to the cause when America has the support of an Arab power.[23]

A final danger resides in the perceived hegemonic power of the USA. Continual US interventions perpetuate insecurity and alienates formerly friendly states. This means that the more powerful America is politically and militarily, the more likely regional powers endeavor to see it defeated (to blunt its power). This makes it all the more important that the US secures local support before launching a decisive action.[24]

Conclusion

The region offers unique challenges to the US. Understanding these and manipulating them to our advantage is the key to success. The US ability to prevail depends on its capacity to divide and conquer. It is not in our interests for local states to unite against US interests. To check local unity, the US should keep Israel out of the conflict, avoid acting unilaterally, isolate the targeted regime internationally, regionally

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[22] Viewed on a global level, the US may be threatening states and will need local states to bandwagon with it.
[23] Richard B. Andres, "The Balancing Preference: Why powerful states win or lose militarized disputes," (PhD diss., University of California, Davis, 2001). Unilateral Soviet actions in Afghanistan highlight this notion. The non-support of Iran and the covert aggression of Pakistan created a foe, which Moscow did not overcome.
[24] Ibid, 7-17.

and domestically, use ethnic disparity against the regime and include regional powers. These are essential elements for American success.

The above explains how the US can advance its interests and objectives in the region. Daniel Byman and Matthew Waxman provide a glimpse into how an adversary may work against the US. Among the most important factors is the US ambivalence for paying he costs of war. Other vulnerabilities include the American preference for multilateralism, its intolerance for US casualties, an aversion to enemy civilian suffering, over-reliance on high-technology options and a commitment to international norms."[25]

However, September 11, 2001 may have reduced these vulnerabilities. The attacks on the US increased the US ability to accept casualties and enemy civilian suffering. The toleration for casualties and suffering is certainly coupled to the amount of evidence connecting a regime with terrorists. Regardless of the association of regimes or organizations to September 11, recent history illustrates that it is important to balance regional powers in the Middle East to advance US interests.

In the following chapters, I will discuss how Saddam Hussein exploited American vulnerabilities and how his instruments of power, under the DIME construct, illustrate a logical pattern. In this, it will be clear that Saddam was a rational actor with a coherent strategy to accomplish his strategy. Although his methods failed to achieve victory in 1991, it is clear that the manner in which he employed the Iraqi DIME succeeded in keeping him in power and gained broad sympathetic support from the Arab masses. From this, the US can learn valuable lessons about fighting a war in the Middle East and,

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[25] Daniel Byman and Matthew Waxman, "Defeating US Coercion," *Survival*, vol. 41, no. 2 (summer 1999), 107-120.

achieve a complete victory against any renegade Arab state that challenges the American

position in the Persian Gulf.

Chapter 2
Saddam's Second War

Diplomatic, Informational, Military and Economic (DIME) Prelude to War

Iraq's invasion of Kuwait was intended to correct the shortcomings produced by Saddam Hussein's failed invasion of Iran. Saddam needed to recover from the costly economic losses of the Iran-Iraq War. If successful, the occupation of Kuwait would not only give Iraq what it needed to recover from the eight year war, but to attain the dreams of international economic power and wealth.[26]

Iraq's road to war included a two-pronged strategy. Phase I applied the DIME to coerce Kuwait into surrendering to Saddam's demands. Having failed, phase II began, which was the invasion of Kuwait. The excuses Saddam used to validate the invasion were not enough for Baghdad to legitimately attack. Saddam needed Iraq's diplomatic, informational, military and economic (DIME) instruments of power to provide the justification necessary to achieve this strategy.

The invasion offers insight into how Baghdad manipulated its instruments of power to justify its actions. This is relevant today since it illustrates a pattern of conflict. We need to be aware of similar signals from Iraq, or other regimes, since it hints at when they are preparing to undertake an action. Regional powers have difficulty acting unilaterally since either global or other regional powers can move to blunt a particular strategy. To secure compliance, the aggressive power attempts to justify its actions through the diplomatic, informational, military and economic instruments of power to appease both local and global powers.

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[26] Ofra Bengio, *Saddam Speaks on the Gulf Crisis,* (Tel Aviv: Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, 1992), 11-15.

Saddam's strategy included three objectives: (1) regional economic hegemony, (2) restoration of his economy and (3) an "anschluss" to divert the attention of internal enemies (largely the Shiites and Kurds). The Iranian War depleted Iraq economically and financially. Kuwait was an easy solution to Iraq's woes. Kuwait would give Iraq vast oil wealth, secure access to the Gulf and provide enough economic power to elevate the country beyond regional status. Saddam's dream of becoming a modern Nebuchadnezzar was within grasp. He only needed to see if the US would oppose this action. The first signals to ascertain the US position on this matter came in the form of diplomatic warning signs.

Diplomatic Warning Signs

Saddam sent messages of his displeasure to Kuwait in early 1990. For Kuwait, the signals were confrontational. However, to the other Arab powers (Saudi Arabia and Egypt) Saddam promised a peaceful settlement. This divide and conquer plan worked. For the US, Iraq's signals were more ambiguous. In the end, Saddam needed to discern the US position on the Iraq and Kuwait quarrel before he could act.

Saddam versus Kuwait and Regional Arab Powers. Kuwait seemed ripe for the picking in early 1990. Saddam wasted little time declaring his ill will against Kuwait and gave them an ultimatum on how to peacefully solve the crisis. The demands were impossible for Kuwait to fulfill, which included payment of $2.5 billion for oil taken from the Rumailah oil field, relief from $10 billion worth of loans, and the surrender of Bubiyan and Warba Islands to Iraq.[27] Kuwait rejected the ultimatum. For Baghdad, this was Kuwait's only chance to avert war. Saddam's personal dislike of Kuwait was clear

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[27] Abdus Sattar Ghazali, "Why Iraq Wants Kuwait's Bubiyan Island?" *Defense Journal*, no., 1-2, (February 1991), 9.

with the following official statement, "[During] eight years of war, the Kuwait government had not extended a helping hand for Iraq… all assistance it offered was in fact loans…unlike other brothers who voluntarily helped Iraq out of their national commitment to an Arab country defending the nation's sovereignty and security."[28]

Sensing trouble, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak flew to Baghdad in July 1990 to secure a pledge from Saddam that he would not invade Kuwait.[29] To keep Egypt out of the conflict, Saddam made this promise to Mubarak. He repeated the promise to Saudi King Fahd and Jordan's King Hussein, even as thousands of Iraqi troops deployed along the Kuwaiti Border. Saddam's strategy was unmistakable: do whatever it takes to keep other regional powers out of the conflict.

Iraq versus the World. Saddam Hussein took a hard line against the US in early 1990 when he demanded the withdrawal of the US Navy from the Gulf. The anti-US rhetoric increased during the year and culminated with Saddam meeting with the US Ambassador, April Glaspie, for an consultation on 25 July 1990. After lecturing Ambassador Glaspie about the Iraqi claims against Kuwait, he received the answer he wanted from her; "...we have no opinion on the Arab-Arab conflicts, like yours with Kuwait."[30] This was what Saddam wanted to hear and issued orders for his military to attack Kuwait only one week later. As tensions increased, Iraq launched verbal attacks against Israel to divert the Arab world's attention. The rhetoric included a promise to burn half of Israel, a threat that triggered a group of US Senators to visit Saddam.

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[28] "No Foreign Power Can Protect Kuwait," Baghdad *AL-THAWRAH,* 25 July 1990, *FBIS Daily Report--Near East and South Asia*, FBIS-NES-90-144, July 26, 1990.

[29] Mustafa Bakri, "Saddam Sets 'Precondition' for Talks With Kuwait," Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic, 1200 GMT July 25, 1990, FBIS *Daily Report--Near East and South Asia*, FBIS-NES-90-144, July 26, 1990, 1.

Saddam was in his glory as several senior US Senators appealed to him to act with restraint.[31]

Informational

Saddam used mass media to send messages on the direction of Iraq's strategy. Such was the case before the invasion when Baghdad called Kuwait an illegitimate child of British Colonialism.[32] The Iraqi media also accused Kuwait of stealing Iraqi oil and territory by saying, "[Kuwait] took advantage of Iraq's preoccupation with [Iran] and trespassed upon Iraqi territory and oil fields, stealing its oil and setting up outposts and farms."[33] The Iraqi press even called Kuwait the worst thing possible in the Arab World, "[a] tool for the Zionist-American Conspiracy."[34] The atmosphere was set for war. Meanwhile, the Iraqi media highlighted Saddam's rage against Israel and attempted to draw popular Arab sympathy and to distract the Arab world from his real object-Kuwait.[35]

Saddam Hussein relies heavily upon a slanted view of history to justify his actions in the region. This same thought process applied to his claim against Kuwait, which he asserted was a historical piece of Iraq. Here is the history of the Iraqi claim over Kuwait: Tribes from the Arabian Peninsula settled near the present location of Kuwait City in the early 17th century. By the 18th century, these tribes signed a tripartite pact. This pact

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[30] In context, Glaspie wanted a peaceful Arab solution to this dilemma without US intervention. Christopher Ogden, "In From the Cold," *Time*, 1 April 1990, 36, and "Gulf Crisis Grows Into War With Iraq," *Congressional Quarterly,* 101st Congress, 2d session, 1990, 725.

[31] William P. Hoar, "Making of a Monster," *The New American*, vol., 8, no., 18, September 7, 1992.

[32] See Annex C for the context of the historical claim against Kuwait. This is important since illegitimate Arab leaders often cling to history to legitimize their illegal claims.

[33] "No Foreign Power Can Protect Kuwait," Baghdad *Al-THAWRAH*, 25 July 1990, *FBIS Daily Report--Near East and South Asia*, FBIS-NES-90-144, 26 July 1990.

[34] "Kuwait Called 'Zionist-American Conspiracy Tool," Baghdad *AL-JUMURIYAH,* 25 July 1990). *FBIS Daily Report—Near East and South Asia*, FBIS-NEA-90-144, 26 July 1990, 23.

[35] Yahia, 188-190.

included the Sabah, Jalahima and Khalifa families.[36]   During this era, the Ottoman

Empire claimed jurisdiction over Kuwait, but lacked the resolve and resources to exert

the energy necessary to impose Turkish rule over it. Largely due to Turkish indifference,

the autonomous Sheikdom of Kuwait was established in 1756.[37]

In the late 1800s, Great Britain established close relations with Kuwait. The

reason for this was to counter German and Russian activity in the region. The Russians

wanted a coaling station in Kuwait, while the Germans desired to build rail links across

the Middle East.[38]   On 23 January 1899, Britain signed a bilateral agreement with

Kuwait, which guaranteed British military support to defend Kuwaiti sovereignty in

exchange for control of Kuwait's foreign affairs. This treaty angered the Ottoman Sultan,

who declared that Kuwait was part of the Basra Province. Despite this proclamation, the

Ottoman Empire did nothing to challenge the UK.

Baghdad first asserted its claim over Kuwait shortly after Iraq gained

independence in 1958. However, fearing British action, Iraq did not threaten Kuwait

militarily. Iraq's claim resurfaced again after Kuwait received complete independence in

1961. Once again, British military might silenced Iraq. Baghdad made another claim

over Kuwait in 1973. Iraqi military forces began movement into Kuwait in anticipation

of annexing the country and actually seized several Kuwaiti border posts. However,

international pressure compelled Baghdad to withdraw its forces.

Despite a history that predates the existence of the country of modern Iraq,

Saddam resurrected Baghdad's claim over Kuwait in 1990. Once again, Saddam

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[36] "Kuwait: Facing Terrorist Challenges and Internal Entanglements," *Contemporary Mideast Backgrounder*
no., 246, May 1988, 6
[37] Karsh, 63.
[38] Abdus Sattar Ghazali, "Why Iraq Wants Kuwait's Bubiyan Island?" *Defence Journal,* 17, no. 1-2, February
1991, 10.

manipulated history (like his predecessors) to claim Kuwait as a "stray segment" of the

Basra Province (the province from whence the Ottoman Turks ruled this part of the

region). This assertion gave, what Saddam labeled a fraternal relationship with Kuwait

and therefore Iraq was obligated to "liberate" it from the emir.[39]
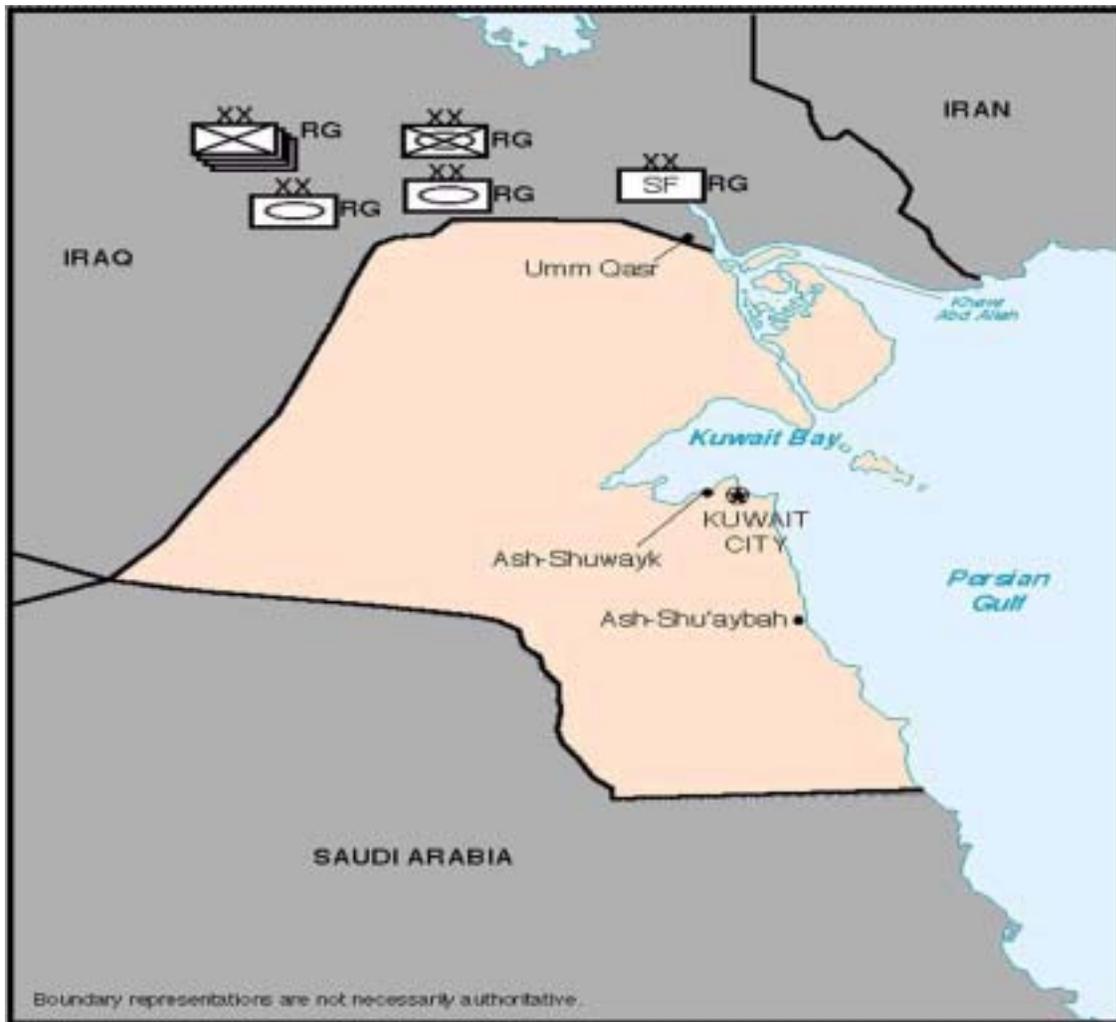
Figure 1. The Iraqi buildup along Kuwait in July 1990 included 140,000 troops under the guise of a routine training exercise. Source: *Conduct of the Persian Gulf Crisis*, Department of Defense. (Washington, DC: GPO, 1992), 7.

Military

Few Kuwaitis believed an attack was imminent despite the presence of thousands

of Iraqi military vehicles lining the highway leading into Kuwait. So effective was Iraqi

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[39] *Strategic Survey 1990-1991*, 5. Much like the claim that Hitler asserted over Czechoslovakia's Sudeten Germans. Nazi Germany used the liberation of these people as a pretext for war.

disinformation that one family from Kuwait City was told, while returning home from Mosul not to fear, since the Iraqis were on a training exercise. They noted how friendly the Iraqi soldiers were, even waving at Kuwaitis traveling along the highway.[40] Saddam himself even made his opinion clear on the matter of inter-Arab conflict, when he said, "An Arab country does not have the right to occupy another Arab country. God forbid, if Iraq should deviate from the right path, we would want Arabs to send their armies to put things right. If Iraq should become intoxicated by its power and move to overwhelm another Arab state, the Arabs would be right to deploy their armies to check it."[41] Despite the obvious signs, Kuwait took Saddam at his word.

Figure 2. Warbah and Bubiyan Islands blocked Iraqi access to the Persian Gulf. Saddam needed to control these islands to have more influencein the region. Source: *Conduct of the Persian Gulf Crisis*, Department of Defense, Washington, DC: GPO, 1992), 6.

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[40] Based upon discussions I had with Kuwaitis in Kuwait City, March 8, 1991.
[41] George Bush, "Taped Address to the Iraqi People," *US Department of State Dispatch*, 2 September 1990, 12.

Economic

The economy is vital to Saddam's ambition to hold power. Oil money permitted him to build an enormous military and to expand Iraq's industry. The vastness of Iraq's oil revenues is manifest; it produces 3.4 million barrels per day but only consumes 400,000. With this revenue, Saddam purchased over $10 billion of military equipment between 1985-1990, giving him one of the world's largest armed forces.[42] However, geography limited Iraq's economic and military influence in the Gulf. Saddam attempted to rectify this by attacking Iran to seize the eastern bank of the Shatt al Arab (the river dividing Iraq and Iran). Not only did Iraq fail to hold the eastern bank of the river, Iran also blocked access to it by scuttling ships in the thalweg (center of the river).[43] The Khor Abd Allah Estuary was Saddam's only alternative. However, Kuwait's Warbah and Bubiyan Islands block it. A survey commissioned by the United Kingdom in 1904 highlighted the potential of this area, saying, "…the [estuary] and…Bubiyan Island in possession of a single power, the anchorages below Um Kasr and Warba Island can…be…an impregnable harbor."[44] Saddam needed the northern half of Kuwait to propel Iraqi power into the Persian Gulf.

The Iran-Iraq War did more than block Saddam's access to the Gulf; it also broke his economy with $80 billion in debts, and made it impossible to maintain his million-man army.[45] Groups of discharged Iraqi soldiers were already causing trouble in some sectors of the country. Out of work, and impoverished, clusters of veterans used their

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[42] John Moore, *Crisis in the Gulf*, (New York: Oceana, 1992), 287.

[43] Yahia, 143-143.

[44] Ghazali, 10.

[45] Anthony H. Cordesman and Abraham R. Wagner, *The Iran-Iraq War*, vol. 2 of *The Lessons of War* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1990), 5.

military skills for crime. Such discord was a threat to the regime. The invasion would keep Saddam's troops occupied and reduce their threat to him.[46]

Economically, things became worse for Iraq. To find relief, Saddam asked the Gulf States forgive the $40 billion he owed them, but they refused. This triggered the devaluation of the Iraqi Dinar, food rationing, inflation and unemployment.[47] A drastic reduction in the military was not an option for Saddam, since he feared that more former soldiers could spark unrest. Kuwait appeared to be an easy solution to Iraq's economic and geographic woes. If the invasion succeeded, Iraq would secure nearly twenty percent of the world's oil reserves and become a global economic power.[48]

Conclusion

Saddam's pre-Desert Shield DIME reveals the many signals sent of his intention to invade Kuwait. His survival seemed at stake, especially when taken in the context of the moment in time. Coming out of his war against Iran, Iraq was broken economically and psychologically (over 500,000 dead Iraqis). Saddam needed a quick remedy to his precarious position, which an invasion of Kuwait might provide.

The DIME also offers a glimpse of Iraq's pattern of conflict. Before undertaking the Gulf War, Baghdad checked with the global power (the US). Today Iraq attempts to secure support from the UN, France, Russia and China. Either way, as a non-nuclear regional power, Saddam is not in a position to act unilaterally.

Monitoring the Iraqi press is critical to see the direction of its strategy since Saddam uses it to ready his people for action. Obviously, it is a daunting task to sort

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[46]Yahia, 174-175, 178-179.

[47] "Gulf Crisis Grows into War with Iraq," *Congressional Quarterly*, 101st Congress, 2d Session, 1990.

[48] Phil Kuntz, "Unstable Mideast Oil Supply Rocks the World Market," *Congressional Quarterly,* 5 January 1991, 22.

through the rhetoric to find the serious assertions that presage military action. However, the 1990 anti-Kuwait rhetoric preceded troop deployments along its border.

Dictators are illegitimate rulers and desperately need to justify their existence. Some do this through prosperity or economic development, while others seek to expand geographically. For Saddam, a faltering economy and dwindling prosperity put the regime at risk. The easiest course was to invade Kuwait. Saddam's actions against Kuwait follow a well-established pattern. His most important consideration is the survival of his regime. The second most important is the economy, which holds the key to realizing his regional aspirations. Although the immediate threat to his survival was remote, it existed, especially with the harsh realities of the economic downturn. Something had to occur to get the economy moving again.[49]

The application to us today is obvious. Instead of reacting to Iraq, we should analyze what is occurring among Iraq's diplomatic, informational, military and economic instruments of power. These help put the pieces together on learning the pattern of conflict and the direction of Iraqi strategy. Although not all encompassing, the DIME provides a useful device to see what Saddam Hussein is up to.

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[49] See *Conduct of the Persian Gulf Crisis*, Department of Defense, Washington, DC: GPO, 1992), 4-16 and John Norton Moore, *Crisis in the Gulf: Enforcing the Rule of War,"* (New York: Oceana, 1992), 3-143.

An ominous calm swept the region the day before the invasion. For Iraq, everything was prepared for the invasion. There was no turning back, since Saddam based all of his hopes on a quick invasion and occupation of Kuwait. So firm was his confidence, that he placed a phone call to Kuwait's Sheik Al-Jaber.

> Saddam: "How are you Sheik Al-Jaber?"
> Amir of Kuwait: "Praise be to Allah, I thank God."
> Saddam "Have you eaten dinner?"
> Amir: "I have eaten. I thank God because I am fine."
> Saddam: "God help you, the next breakfast you eat will no longer be in Kuwait."[50]

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[50] *"*Iraq," AU1202142591*, FBIS*, Hamburg, in German, February 1991.

Chapter 3

The Attack

We are going to expand the borders of Iraq…Nobody, either in Kuwait or anywhere else, has the right to rule the Kuwaiti people, because they are Iraqi people. The days of the sheikdoms are past.
        -General Abdul Karim Kassem, 1961 Leader of Iraq, *I Was Saddam's Son*

Military Instrument of Power – Lessons From the Invasion

Saddam needed a quick and decisive invasion of Kuwait. Although small, the Kuwaiti military could slow the Iraqi advance and give the US or Gulf Cooperation Council time to bolster Kuwait's weak military position. Baghdad combined the military with the diplomatic instruments of power to ensure that Kuwait was not prepared for an attack. After Saddam promised not to attack his Arab neighbor, diplomatic signals were issued suggesting that if Kuwait mobilized for war, Iraq would take this as a provocation.

When the first Iraqi soldiers crossed into Kuwait early on the second of August 1990, they were met with little resistance. The ruse worked; the Kuwaiti military was not deployed to meet the invasion with part of it even on leave (the leave was ordered as good will to reduce the tensions with Iraq). Despite their unpreparedness, portions of the Kuwaiti military did get into the fight. However, Saddam's objectives were achieved by 4 August. By then, the entire nation was under his influence. A review of the Iraqi invasion provides a look into the capabilities and vulnerabilities of the Iraqi Army.

The Invasion

The Iraqi army grew in the 1980s to one million men with 5,600 tanks, 513 attack aircraft and 160 attack helicopters. It emerged from the Iran-Iraq War as three different armies. At the center were the 100,000 men of the Republican Guards Forces Command (RGFC). These were the best trained, best equipped and most loyal. Next was the

regular army armored and mechanized units (who also proved to be tenacious fighters). Finally, there were the reserves, which was largely filled by the less loyal Kurd, Assyrian and Shia troops.[51]

The RGFC spearheaded the attack into Kuwait, followed by the regular army divisions. The RGFC used combined arms operations as they had against Iran during the Al Faw campaign. The plan encompassed having the Hammurabi Armored Division lead the attack, followed by the Tawakalna Mechanized and Madinah Armored Divisions.

The attack commenced at 0200 on 2 August along the Basra-Kuwait Highway. Using a combination of direct and indirect fires, the Hammurabi overran forward Kuwaiti positions, punched through a defensive line at Mutla Ridge and the Al Jahra Gap and pressed the attack into Kuwait City. By 0800, the Hammurabi cut off Kuwait City from the south. As the Hammurabi fought along its southern axis of attack, Iraqi commandos air assaulted into Kuwait City to seize the palace, the Amir and other key points. However, the resistance was heavier than expected, giving the Amir time to escape to Saudi Arabia. The escape of the Amir was a setback for Saddam. The regime hopped to capture him and keep him as a puppet ruler or to kill him.[52]

Long-range artillery, air strikes, attack helicopters and surface-to-surface missiles joined in to eliminate Kuwaiti defenses. The Hammurabi was joined by the 5th Iraqi Mechanized Division to eliminate pockets of resistance in Kuwait City. After the Hammurabi cut Kuwait City off from the south, the Tawakalna and Madinah divisions continued the attack south to sweep the area of resistance, seize the al Wafra oil fields and establish a hasty defensive line along the Saudi border. So complete was the attack,

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[51] Vox Militaris, "The First Fifty Days," *Army Quarterly and Defense Journal*, 1990, 391.
[52] Yahia, 194.

that General Colin Powell remarked, "[Iraq] conducted the Kuwaiti operation in a very professional manner. It's an army that is capable. They have had eight years of experience in war. They have the capability to invade Saudi Arabia…. That's what caused this problem that we now have."[53]

Capabilities as Illustrated by the Iraqi Invasion. The RGFC is capable of combined arms operations, as demonstrated not only in Kuwait, but also during the 1988 al-Faw offensive against Iran. This force works best in open terrain, uninhibited by cities or geographic restraints. The Iraqi version of combined arms warfare reflects the Soviet reliance upon artillery fires. They maneuver and defend by fires. Specially trained Iraqi special purpose forces, like the commandoes, are capable of unconventional warfare and air assault operations. This was manifest during the air assault into Kuwait City on the morning of 2 August. Some of these specially trained troops even operated covertly in Kuwait City before the attack.

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[53] "Excerpts From News Conference by Cheney and Powell," *New York Times*, 9 August 1990, 16.
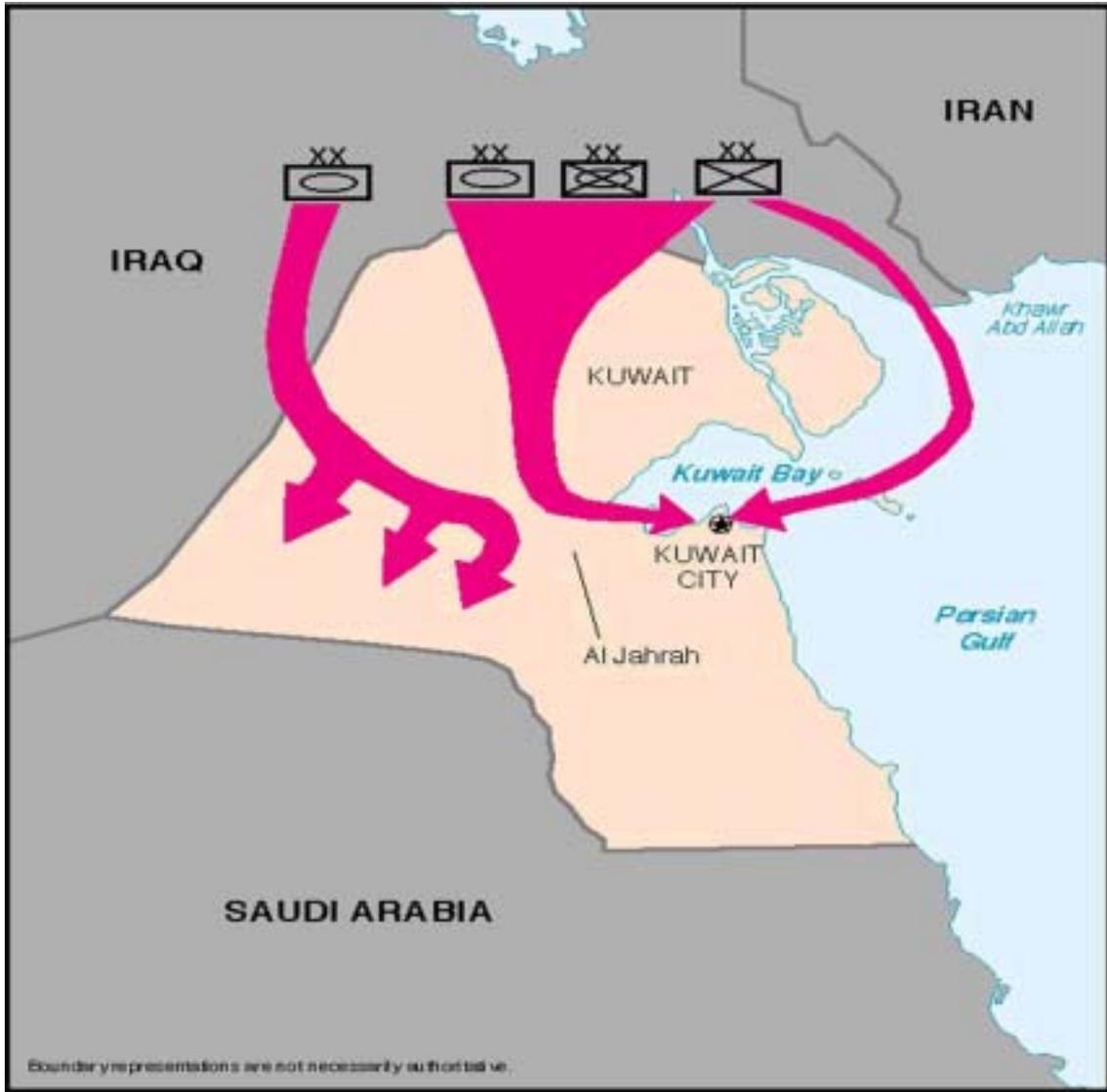
Figure 3. The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. The multi-divisional attack focused on seizing Kuwait and the major roads leading into Saudi Arabia. An Iraqi division also deployed to western Kuwait to guard the right flank of the attack. Source*: Conduct of the Persian Gulf Crisis*, Department of Defense. (Wash., DC: GPO, 1992), 7.

Logistics, Support and Equipment Reliability. The invasion also revealed weaknesses in the Iraqi military. Foremost among these was forward logistical support. This shortcoming was an outgrowth of the Iran-Iraq War, which equipped Baghdad with the ability to perform satisfactory support for internal lines of communication, but not for

exterior lines of communication. Iraq could not project logistics forward. This deficiency led to the roads into Kuwait being littered with derelict Iraqi tanks and armored personnel carriers. The bulk of these vehicles were loaded onto trucks and brought back to Basra for maintenance.

Iraq also relied upon foreign military technicians and advisors. There were 10,000 Russians alone performing this role. This became a tremendous liability when they departed Iraq during Desert Shield. Without these military experts, the reliability of some equipment came into question. In addition, the Iraqi Army spontaneously dedicated itself to looting Kuwait before the last shots were fired. This action broke down unit cohesion and further forestalled any larger plans Saddam may have had.[54]

These shortcomings saved may have Saudi Arabia from an Iraqi assault. Undoubtedly, the 140,000 men deployed to seize Kuwait were far in excess of what Saddam needed to secure it. Some postulate that this large force was meant to eventually press an attack into Saudi's Eastern Province giving Saddam Hussein a monopoly over even more of the world's oil reserves. Whatever the case, this was infeasible due to the logistical problems immediately experienced by the Iraqi armed forces during the invasion.

Conclusion

The RGFC and select army armored and mechanized divisions, were well trained. They were strong in limited combined arms operations, especially relying upon pre-planned artillery fires to achieve their objectives. However, limitations in logistics, reliance upon foreign advisors and the inability to sustain offensive operations proved fatal in the end. Despite this, the Republican Guards had the best Soviet export

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[54] Yahia, 59-60, 200-208.

equipment sold in the 1980s, which included modern Soviet military tanks, infantry fighting vehicles, artillery, air defense systems and aircraft. The Iraqi Army, at its core, included well-trained and well-equipped units, capable of limited offensive operations. However, they only fought either weaker states (Kuwait) or near-peers (Iran). They were not prepared to meet the challenges of fighting a multi-spectrum force like the United States Armed Forces.

Chapter 4

From Victory to Defeat – Iraqi Initiatives During Desert Shield

As for the men in Kuwait. It is not a matter of who has more weapons. The issue is who will be defeated and who has Satan on his side and who has God on his side.

Saddam Hussein, *Saddam Speaks*

The Instruments of Power

The response to the invasion of Kuwait caught Saddam off guard. Within a month, a coalition formed against Iraq that froze $30 billion in Iraqi assets, implemented a broad embargo and deployed US troops to Saudi Arabia. Even Baghdad's erstwhile companion, the USSR withdrew its 10,000 military advisors and technical experts. Saddam needed to break the mounting opposition.

A pattern of conflict emerges on how Saddam uses his DIME. The strategy encompassed dividing the Coalition through diplomacy, rallying Islamic-Arabic sympathy, making it too costly for the US to liberate Kuwait militarily and circumventing the embargo. Although these failed, they give insight into how Saddam uses his DIME. Why is this relevant? Saddam, and other rogue Islamic states, may use similar strategies to blunt the US. Strategists must perceive and preempt such patterns to defeat them.

Diplomatic

Again, Saddam, the illegitimate leader, confronts illegitimacy. Iraq's diplomatic instrument of power was used to acquire de facto legitimacy of the Kuwaiti occupation by dividing the Coalition and ending international recognition of the State of Kuwait. This included installing a puppet government, removing all foreign missions from Kuwait City and blackmailing the Coalition by using Western hostages.

Divide the Coalition Via Hostages.   Remembering the 1979 Iranian hostages crisis, Saddam endeavored to create a similar paralysis for the Coalition.   Baghdad's policy was to break the Coalition and deter war via blackmail when Westerners in Iraq and Kuwait were used as human shields.   They were deployed to Iraqi military installations, poison gas depots, airports, missile sites and nuclear facilities.[55]   The Iraqi policy stated, "If war [comes]...Iraq would lose sons, women and children and the aggressive counties would also lose their own men, women and children [which we hold in] our installations.   These people would be killed."[56]

Saddam first promised to free the hostages if the US withdrew its ground forces from Saudi Arabia.   This was the first of several instances where Iraq sought diplomatic linkage promising to do something in return for an advantage.   The hostage situation took many twists and turns.   Saddam first released the hostages from countries not "…dispatching forces…to the region."[57]   However, this did not lessen international outrage concerning his hostage policy, which even the UN condemned.

Baghdad next endeavored to use the hostages to influence France.   Before the war, France was an Iraqi arms supplier.   Using this relationship, Saddam released the French hostages in October 1990.   Even three French soldiers captured along the Saudi border were freed.   However, France remained in the Coalition.   Saddam next attempted to exploit opposition to war in the West, by releasing all foreign women and children and eventually all hostages (December 6, 1990), but even this did not break the Coalition.

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[55]   Using hostages as human shields goes back to the 12th Century when Islamic warrior Saladin tied hostages to fortress battlements to deter attacks. Charles Oman*, A History of the Art of War in the Middle Ages*, Vol 1, (New York: Burt Franklin, 1924), 231-333 for the military aspects of the Crusades.

[56]   Message, 292305Z August 1990, USCINCENT Daily News Summary, August 27, 1990.

[57]   "Austrians, Swedish, Swiss Allowed to Leave," 19 August 1990, *FBIS Daily Report--Near East and South Asia,* 20 August 1990, FBIS-NES-90-161, 14.

Saddam clearly stated his frustration over this failed policy; "The Americans are not the only people who are infuriated about [the hostages]. I am myself infuriated by [it]."[58]

Domestic US and EU Politics. In November 1990, forty-five US Democratic Senators and the European Union attempted to prevent President Bush from attacking Iraq. Saddam sought to exploit this opportunity by releasing the remaining hostages. Domestic US politics are seen as a weakness by dictators, which can be influenced or manipulated by them. So firm was Saddam's belief that he could undermine US resolve, that he said, "The decision of the Democratic majority in the US Senate, and the European Parliament...have encouraged us [and it] will have a major impact on world...and US public opinion...in restraining the evil ones [Bush, etc.] Who are seeking...war. Therefore I [release] all foreigners."[59]

Kuwait Ceases to Exist – Ending Political Symbols of Recognition. Saddam declared the annexation of Kuwait on 8 August 1990 and formally integrated it as an Iraqi Province. To gain de facto recognition of his claim over Kuwait, Iraq installed a puppet government, and ordered all diplomatic missions out of Kuwait City not later than 24 August. This became a cat and mouse game with diplomatic missions slowly starved out of the country. The UK and US remained until December and did not depart until the hostages were freed. This stratagem did not work well for Saddam since it portrayed him as the aggressor.

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[58] "INA Reports Saddam Interview With ABC," Baghdad INA, 17 November, *FBIS Daily Report--Near East and South Asia,* FBIS-NEA-90-223, 14.
[59] "Saddam Calls for Release of all Foreigners," Baghdad Domestic Service, *FBIS Daily Report--Near East and South Asia,* December 6, 1990, FBIS-NES-90-235, 13

Informational

The information war here is predictable, depicting the Islamic nations struggling against Zionism and Imperialism in order to turn the Arabs against the Americans. Even Ossama bin Laden used much of the same rhetoric. The Iraqi propaganda blitz focused on fracturing the Coalition to retain Kuwait. Islam was Saddam's best tool to create a cleavage between the Arab and American Coalition. However, this had little impact. Only his linkage of Kuwait to Israel struck a nerve among his Arab brethren. The following outlines the methods used by Iraq. The focus of the propaganda centered upon Islam to find legitimacy, as Saddam stated, "Because we are on the side of truth, then we are on the side of Allah, and because Allah is with us, then everything shall be in our favor, because no one can be defeated if Allah stood by him."[60]

Israel, Islam and Arab Brotherhood. The Arab-Israeli conflict is the most important issue among the Islamic masses since local leaders funnel hate away from their corrupt regimes against Tel Aviv. Saddam wasted little time manipulating the Islamic masses with his anti-Israel blitz. He invited Yasser Arafat to Baghdad only three days after the invasion of Kuwait to announce that he would withdraw after Israel left the West Bank (Judea-Samaria) and Gaza.[61] This gained popular support and international approval when French President Francois Mitterand accepted it. This diplomatic gambit had the effect Saddam desired, although the US quickly repaired the French split. Yet, Baghdad endeavored to rally Arab sympathy by continually making the following

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[60] Message, 301540Z October 1990, USCINCENT Daily News Summary, October 30, 1990.
[61] Efraim Karsh and Inari Rautsi, *Saddam Hussein* (New York: The Free Press, 1991), 228.

assertion, "Saddam Hussein is the knight and mujahid leader awaited by the Muslims in Palestine to liberate holy Jerusalem form the claws of Zionism."[62]

Baghdad also pledged to attack Israel if the Coalition attacked Iraq. This was to have Israel enter the war, making Israel a de facto Coalition member. This corresponded with the deployment of SCUD missiles to western Iraq. An Israeli strike against Saddam would result in the end of the Coalition, as evidenced by the words of Egyptian President, Hosni Mubarak commented, "we do not agree to any Israeli intervention under any circumstances... [If Israel attacks Iraq] we will immediately change our position."[63]

Similar doubts also plagued Syria, which committed a division to the Coalition. The lesson for the next war is to expect a more concerted effort to draw Israel into a war, in an effort to polarize the region along Arab and Western lines.

Arab Blood – Thicker than the Coalition? Saddam used ethnicity and religion to obtain support. His efforts paid off in Jordan, Yemen and Libya, but these offered little support other than embargo violations (Jordan) and lofty rhetoric (Yemen, Libya). Baghdad was isolated, because the key states, Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia were either in the Coalition or completely out of the crisis (Iran). Iraq needed the support of one of these to achieve tangible political power.

What about Saddam's wide support? Echoing popular sentiment, an Egyptian commented, "I have loved [Saddam] since I first heard about him…I wish there were three or four like him in the Arab world...I hope he takes Saudi Arabia…Saddam is defending Arab interests and showing that an Arab leader can…stand up against the

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[62] "Makes Statement to INA," Baghdad INA in Arabic, 25 September 1990, *FBIS Daily Report--Near East and South Asia,* 27 September 1990, FBIS-NES-90-188, 16.
[63] Message, 091947Z JAN 91.USCINCENT Daily News Summary, January 09, 1991.

region's enemies."[64] The local monarchs feared that an Iraqi victory and such popularity would cost them their thrones, or alter the balance of power. Saddam's pan-Arab strategy failed because of the threat he represented to the other Arab states if he was victorious. A bonafide Iraqi annexation of Kuwait would make Iraq the undisputed Arab power.

Disinformation

 The disinformation was designed to put the Arabs and the Americans at odds with each other. This campaign touched upon the same themes heard even today. Despite their repetitiveness, all too often the US is ill prepared to respond. Thankfully, regional leaders had more at stake in this fight and stood against Iraq. The following highlights some of the popular themes.

Christian Troops Occupy Holy Sites and Cause Strife. Saddam challenged the religious legitimacy of King Fahd since foreign troops were in Saudi Arabia.[65] Iraq also claimed that large demonstrations and riots erupted across Saudi Arabia to protest the presence of foreign troops in the Kingdom.[66] Pro-Iraqi radio in Amman further asserted that Arabs launched attacks against US troops in the region. Saddam also pledged to free Mecca and Madinah from the Christians and liberate Jerusalem from the Zionists.[67]

Jewish Troops in Saudi Arabia. Iraq claimed that the aim of the US was to occupy Saudi Arabia to protect Israel. The evidence for this was weak. The logic was that since there were Jewish soldiers in the American armed forces, must be fighting for

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[64] Tony Walker, "The Gulf," *World Press Review*, October 1990, *The Sydney Morning Herald.*
[65] "Arabic Flier Rails at US Infidels," *Washington Times*, November 28, 1990, 1.
[66] "Mecca Radio Reports Anti Government Statement," Holy Mecca Radio, 28 August 28, 1990, *FBIS Daily Report--Near East and South Asia*, 29 August 1990, 20.
[67] "Nation Will Liberate Holy Places, Jerusalem," Baghdad INA, 20 November 1990), *FBIS Daily Report--Near East and South Asia,* 21 November 1990. 32-33.

Israel and defiling Madinah and Mecca.[68] Vague allegations circulated in the Iraqi press that forty Israeli aircraft and army units were freely operating in Saudi Arabia. Lacking evidence of this assertion, Baghdad declared that these Israelis could not be found since they wore US uniforms and spoke English with American accents.[69]

American Troops and the Peace Movement? Iraqi disinformation took two directions with the primary effort portraying Americans as an affront to Islam. The second aspect targeted American morale directly via an AM radio broadcast as expressed in the following commentary, "The U.S. soldier also has his customs and traditions, which include drinking alcohol, eating pork and practicing prostitution, which conflict with our values and constitute an aggression and a belittlement of our Islamic religion."[70] Influencing Arabs to turn against the "immoral" US troops had the most potential. This even included an Iraqi statement that Egypt donated 10,000 women to have sex with the American troops and to infect Arabs with AIDS.[71] The broadcast attacking US military morale was too amateurish, but did encompass interesting aspects. Calling itself "The Voice of Peace," Baghdad broadcasted English AM signals into the northern portion of Saudi Arabia. Using 1970s music and Arab accented disc jockeys ("Baghdad Bob" and "Baghdad Betty") the Americans were told about Iraq's military prowess and that a war would be another Vietnam. Efforts to influence US servicemen redoubled at Christmas, claiming that Hollywood movie stars were sleeping with their wives. Below is a sample of the Voice of Peace:

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[68] "Minister Opposes US Use of Jewish Soldiers," Baghdad INA, 15 August 1990), *FBIS Daily Report--Near East and South Asia,* 16 August 1990, FBIS-NES-90-159, 18.
[69] "Iraqi Disinformation," United States Information Agency, January 16, 1991, 3.
[70] "Prostitution, AIDS Among U.S. Troops," Holy Mecca Radio, 29 August 29, 1990, *FBIS Daily Report-- Near East and South Asia*, 30 August 1990, FBIS-NES-90-169, 27. (See Figure 4, page 33).
[71] United States Information Agency, "Iraqi Disinformation," January 16, 1991, 4 and "Minister Says Aids Victims Among U.S. Troops," Baghdad Domestic Service, 20 August 1990, *FBIS Daily Report--Near East and South Asia*, 21 August 1990, 26.

You will go back home in coffins because Iraq is a hell of a power.

Arab Allies will turn guns on US soldiers instead of on Iraqi soldiers. Why did American soldiers come so far to die? Did you get any Christmas presents? Of course not, because you are here.

You're risking your life and wasting your time in Saudi Arabia. Craziness will affect US soldiers spending long periods of time in the desert.

Let us be frank. We tell you that the embargo will not affect us a bit. We could work and prepare food and stuffs for ourselves as our ancestors did 6,000 years ago.

*Even the Pope, John Paul II, prayed for peace in the Gulf during the Christmas ceremonies. So, **why the hell** does George Bush insist to wage a war? I'll tell you why. Because he wants you all dead, so that you don't go back and tell of your misery here which brings shame to him. Peace be upon you all.*

Every time the numbers of American forces increases, they become easy targets for the Iraqis, unfortunately.[72]

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[72] These are from a tape that I made of "The Voice of Peace" in December 1990, while in Saudi Arabia, during Operation Desert Shield.

Figure 2. (U) "Our holy things, our land, and our honor are in safe hands." US troops cavorting with alcohol and women in Saudi Arabia, while King Fahd expresses his approval. Note Star of David around neck of US soldier.

Alif Ba' (Baghdad)

Figure 4. Iraqi Propaganda. Depicts propaganda secured by the US Information Agency in March 1991 from an Iraqi newspaper. It depicts the typical anti-American Islamic attacks against the US (sex, booze and Zionism). In this, we see hedonistic American soldiers defiling Islamic holy land, while serving as proxies for Israel. Each of these embodies the usual propaganda designed to rally Arab and Islamic zeal against the US.

Meanwhile, US peace activists actually emboldened Saddam and promised to weaken US resolve. To him, it was Vietnam part two. US press coverage of the protests heightened Saddam's confidence that the US would not have the political will to attack Iraq. His belief in this increased as dovish Americans, like former Attorney General Ramsey Clark, made visits to Baghdad. This conviction grew when thousands marched in New York City and Los Angeles for peace and convinced Saddam that the US lacked resolve and had not yet recovered from Vietnam. His faith in being able to bend American will was evident, when he said, *"The [peace] demonstrations will prevent the [Bush] administration from continuing its current policy."*[73]

Military

The military instrument of power was the centerpiece of Iraqi strategy. The goal was to make it too costly for the US to attack Iraq. This encompassed sending several hundred thousand troops into the Kuwaiti Theater of Operations (KTO) and building elaborate World War I style defenses. Kuwait literally became an Iraqi armed camp. The purpose of this endeavor was to safeguard de facto Iraqi ownership of Kuwait and to deter an attack by threatening terrorism and the destruction of the very oil fields that the US was fighting for.

Fortress Kuwait. The Iraqi plan for Kuwait was to create a dense fortress of obstacles and troops, which would make any attack costly. If successful, the sheer size of this force would deter aggression. By mid January 1991, Saddam deployed half a million men, with 4,100 tanks, 2,580 armored personnel carriers and 2,830 pieces of artillery.[74]

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[73] "US Making Error," Baghdad INA, *FBIS-Near East and South Asia,* FBIS-NES-90-219, 12 November 1990, 34.

[74] *VII Corps (US) G2's Battlefield Reconstruction: The 100 Hour Ground War: How the Iraqi Plan Failed, VII Corps* G2, Stuttgart, Germany, 1991, 81. Released by Freedom of Information Act request through 3rd

The forces were arrayed in a tri-level defensive posture, designed to kill as many Coalition soldiers as possible. The front line infantry divisions used Soviet doctrinal defensive positions (triangular), and were largely Saddam's least reliable troops. In front of the first line of defenses was a series of obstacles, mines, oil filled "fire trenches" and wire designed to slow any attack. Known as the Saddam Line, any attackers venturing into these emplacements would be greeted by a torrent of artillery.

The second echelon encompassed a large mechanized and armored counterattack force, made up of well-trained regular army troops. Their mission was to counterattack against any penetration of the front line infantry. The third and final layer of Fortress Kuwait was Saddam's operational reserve, the Republican Guards Forces Command (RGFC). This force, comprised of Saddam's best trained and best equipped troops, could both counterattack against any Coalition penetration and lead a counter-offensive.

US Army, May 20, 1994. There is debate on the actual numbers of Iraqis in the KTO during the war. Most Iraqi units were under strength before the desertions of many Iraqis during the air campaign.
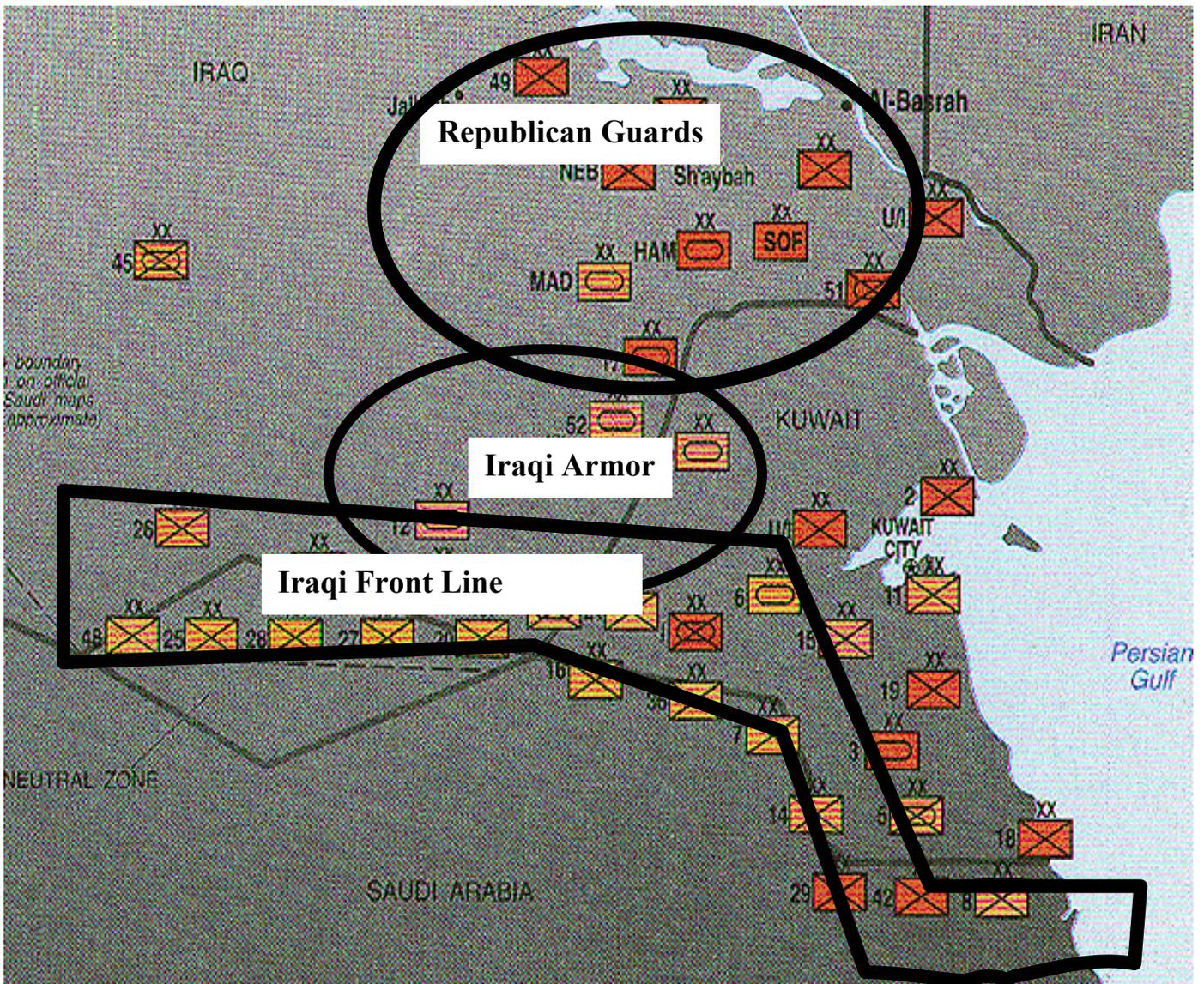
Figure 5. The Iraqi defense of Kuwait. The quality of Saddam's troops improves as you move into Iraq. Source: *Conduct of the Persian Gulf Crisis,* Department of Defense. (Washington, DC: GPO, 1992), 256.

Despite this impressive array, Iraq took two risks. First, Saddam left the western desert thinly defended, exposing his entire right flank. Iraq did not believe that an attack from the west was possible due to the sandy nature of the approach and the featureless terrain (making navigation difficult). Second, Baghdad committed about one-fourth of its

forces to guard the Kuwaiti coastline against an amphibious assault. These decisions fit well into the Coalition's plan.[75]

Elements of the Coalition predicted high casualties, because of the force assembled in Kuwait.[76] The wild card in all of this was whether Iraq would use chemical weapons since they had done so against both the Kurds and Iranians. The prevailing winds, which normally blow from Iraq into Saudi Arabia, added to the uncertainty by favoring Iraqi use of chemicals. Additionally, it was unclear if Saddam would succeed in garnering support from international terrorists. Although Iraq planned to use terrorism and met frequently with renowned terrorist cells, they lacked time to adequately plan and coordinate operations.

Fortress Kuwait made Saddam's pledge to retain Kuwait credible by making it too costly for the US to attack. By deterring an attack, he would gain de facto legitimacy and retain control of Kuwait. The threat that Fortress Kuwait posed was summed up by Soviet General Ivanovich Filatov, saying, "I am totally confident that the Iraqi forces will gain victory over the American forces and the forces allied with them... The weapons possessed by the Iraqis, including tanks, are better than the American ones...the Iraqi infantry corps and their equipment are [also] better than…Americans... The US soldiers will refuse to fight because they do not have the will to fight or the will to wage a battle, whereas the Iraqi soldiers have the resolve to defend their homeland. This resolve will benefit the Iraqi troops."[77]

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[75] *Conduct of the Persian Gulf Crisis*, Department of Defense, Washington, DC: GPO, 1992), 245-260.

[76] Congressional projections estimated that the US would suffer 3,000 casualties, 200 tanks and 100 aircraft as a direct result of combat against the Iraqi Armed Forces.

[77] "Visiting Soviet Military Expert Comments," Baghdad Domestic in Arabic, 23 February 1991, *Foreign Broadcast Information Service-Near East and South Asia*, 25 February 1991, 40.

Economic

The freezing of $30 (US) billion in Iraqi assets and the UN economic embargo was a problem for Saddam since invading Kuwait was to ameliorate Iraq's economic situation. However, the embargo shook the Iraqi economy and stalled growth. By January, the embargo stopped 90% of Iraq's imports and 97% of its exports, while Jordanian smuggling did little to help.[78] Because of this, his economic instrument of power played a minor role in the crisis. He had to break the embargo to succeed.

Part of his plan was to break the embargo with a "peace ship." The ship, *Ibn Khaldoun*, carried food, Arab women and children. After making publicized stops across North Africa, Sudan and Yemen, it proceeded to the Gulf. The "peace-ship," entered the Gulf in December and made way for Iraq. The ship's captain refused to respond to the requests by the Coalition to allow inspectors aboard and continued towards Iraq. It looked like Saddam may have won a victory. However, on 26 December 1990, Coalition naval forces stopped the ship and blocked it from entering Iraq.[79]

Saddam's only real economic instrument was oil and he promised to destroy both Kuwaiti and Saudi oilfields if the Coalition attacked.[80] Baghdad went on to promise free oil to nations sympathetic to his plight, especially the third world countries. However, his appeal did not reach those who could do anything about the embargo. In the end, Saddam's economic instrument of power was the feeblest.

Some relief from the embargo was the Iraqi looting of Kuwait. Immediately after the invasion, Iraq unleashed its forces to systematically strip Kuwait of everything of

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[78] US Congress, House, *Crisis in the Gulf: Sanctions, Diplomacy and War,* 101st Cong., 2d sess., 4-6, 12-14, 17, 19, 20. HASC no., 101-57, 113.
[79] Moore, 198, 265.7
[80] Not only did Iraq ignite nearly 600 oil wells during the war, it dumped 470 million tons of Kuwaiti oil into the Gulf, making an oil spill 42 times the size of the 1989 Exxon Valdez spill. John Moore, *Crisis in the Gulf*, (New York: Oceana, 1992), 4.

value. This included $4 billion in gold bars, eighteen months supply of food (to sustain

the Kuwaiti population), 50,000 automobiles and medical and military equipment.[81]

Despite this, Saddam thumbed his nose at the Coalition and the embargo and stated that,

"The Iraqis are ready to eat soil and not bow their heads to the aggressive invaders... The

next months and years will prove…that all estimations made on the basis that the

blockade can subjugate the Iraqis are incorrect and baseless."[82]

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[81] *Gulf War Airpower Survey*, Vol 1., Washington, DC, GPO, 1993), 60-61.
[82] "INA Reports Saddam's Meeting with Families," Baghdad INA, 28 August 28, 1990, FBIS-NES-90, August 28, 1990, 28.

Figure 6. Arms that the embargo did not stop. The author took these photographs during Operation Desert Storm. It depicts an array of Iraqi ammunition stamped with the seal of the Kingdom of Jordan. Jordan was a way for Iraq to bypass the embargo before Desert Storm and illustrates the danger of not completely isolating a regime.

Summary

Saddam's obsession to legitimize the seizure of Kuwait encompassed the employment of all the instruments of power available to him. Foremost among these was using the military to visibly show Iraq's resolve in fighting for Kuwait and followed by a

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massive disinformation blitz designed to turn Arabs against Americans. The strategy was sound and could have been fatal to the US. Thankfully, it seemed that each course of action backfired on Baghdad. This was largely due to the support the US had from local Arab powers, such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Had these not been a part of the Coalition, the Iraqi plan would have enjoyed much more success.

The issue of Iraqi hostage-taking is tenuous. If Iraq uses hostages again, Saddam will not release them to win the gain the support of international community. He only released the hostages in December 1990 because of the broad international condemnation he suffered. The ploy did not work. He stated in January 1991, when asked about the failed hostage taking policy, "We do not regret a decision we made because we make decisions only when we are convinced. However, had we kept the 5,000 Westerners and Japanese in Iraq, would Bush have struck Baghdad?"[83] He regretted releasing them and may yet believe that he will prevail next time with this type of blackmail. As a revenge based society, this is rational. It was a novel idea to manipulate the commitment of various nations, especially France. Releasing the hostages made US targeting of Iraqi installations a lot easier with no fear of killing innocent Westerners.[84]

This illustrates how an Islamic dictator could respond to foreign threats, which includes employing everything from ethnicity to religion as tools to turn the masses against the US. Again, none of these approaches are new. Each time the US is actively engaged in the region, the same rhetoric is used. The bluster is heartfelt and predictable, which the US must always be ready to preempt. The best method to prevail against such

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[83] Bengio, *Saddam Speaks on the Gulf Crisis*, 182.
[84] Danspeckgruber, 70.

an adversary is to have at least one regional power allied with the US. Such an alliance is

crucial in taking the edge off the rhetoric.

Chapter 5

Operational Defeat – Desert Storm

There is a popular belief that the Iraqi units simply threw up their hands in despair. Although, this is true of some front line infantry divisions, it is not true of the heavy divisions…[who] put up a fight.
-VII (US) Corps Battlefield Reconstruction

Operation Desert Storm was Saddam Hussein's biggest miscalculation. Iraq's biggest blunder was trusting that "Saddam Line" was so formidable that it would deter a Coalition attack. Like a modern version of the legendary Maginot Line, this barrier stood as a deterrent against an American attack. The idea for the Saddam Line came from the Iraqi experience in fighting the Iranians between 1980-1988. This was Iraq's fatal error, believing that the manner in which they fought Iran would likewise suffice against the Americans.

Few preparations were made to protect Baghdad from an air attack. When American aircraft arrived over Baghdad on January 17, 1991, they were greeted by a well-lit city, which remained so until the power grid was destroyed. By the end of the first wave of air attacks, the Iraqi infrastructure and military suffered gravely. This created a lot of friction that made it difficult for Saddam to run the war. After the shock wore off, the regime believed that Iraq could hunker down until the ground war and then punish the Coalition forces severely. However, when this did not materialize, Saddam launched an attack to draw the Coalition into a premature ground war at Khafgi. After the Khafgi defeat, there was little remaining for Saddam to do but to wait for the ground attack and to hope that he had sufficient forces remaining in the KTO to chastise the Coalition.

The Instruments of Power

Saddam continued to use Iraq's instruments of power to moderate the Coalition's attack and to keep Kuwait as an Iraqi province. Among the instruments of power, the informational served Saddam the best. The favored method was using a combination of Islam and ethnicity to divide Arab and American. Saddam also used propaganda to depict Iraq as the victim of American imperialism and focused on Iraqi civilian casualties to highlight American brutality. Ironically, the theme of American cruelty resounded well, despite Saddam's history of abusing Iranians, Kuwaitis, Kurds and Shiites. The Goebelian method used to transmit this false information was so insidious that the Arab masses seemed to believe it, thereby increasing their hate for America.

Diplomatic Instrument of Power

Diplomatically there were no surprises during this phase of the conflict. Baghdad continued to link its claim over Kuwait with the Arab-Israeli conflict and sought international sponsored peace seemingly in an effort to appear less the aggressor. Of all of the peace offers, the mid-February bid engaging the USSR as the peace broker was the most sincere offer, since Iraq's army was taking a beating in Kuwait. However, it was not as serious as many post Desert Storm writers purport.[85] It was merely another Iraqi delaying tactic and an attempt to have the international system pressure the US to stop the war. Saddam did not show any signs of really wanting to withdraw the army from Kuwait until after the Republican Guard's Tawakalna Mechanized Division was defeated at the battle of 73rd Easting. After this decisive battle, Saddam announced the unilateral

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[85] Some authors, such as retired USAF Colonel John Warden, with an obvious airpower bent, assert that the Iraqi peace offer before the ground war was sincere and prompted by the "decisive nature" of the Coalition air campaign. However, a careful reading of the Iraqi ceasefire proposal suggests the contrary. Iraq's offer of peace was conditional and did not accept the numerous United Nations Resolutions condemning Baghdad's invasion of Kuwait. The Iraqi proposal was nothing more than an effort to secure the pre-Desert Storm status quo, with Iraq retaining Kuwait.

withdraw of his army from Kuwait, but by this time it was too late, the bulk of his forces were already overrun or falling back to Basra.

The reason for his subsequent acquiescence (and acceptance of all Coalition ceasefire demands) was the precarious position Saddam found himself in after the war. The defeat and disintegration of his army put him personally at risk. He needed to save what was of his armed forces to solidify his power base and to counter the Kurdish and Shiite uprisings. Before the defeat of the Republican Guards, most Iraqis believed that Saddam would somehow find a way out of the war. An Iraqi brigade commander emphasized this belief when he said, "[Saddam] is a gambler. He was certain that you would not attack, and if you did, it would be only by air."[86]

Informational

The informational instrument of power remained Saddam's most effective and succeeded in portraying Iraq as the victim of American aggression. The appeal resounded especially deep with the Arab and Islamic masses, which readily accepted this message. Iraq skillfully manipulated several consequences from the air campaign to add substance to the allegations, all of which followed the usual pattern of Americans and Zionists conspiring to destroy the Islamic nation. Even as the propaganda spewed from Iraq, Saddam used the restrictions placed upon to USAF on bombing Baghdad to shelter his vital infrastructure from attack.

Iraq Exploits Predictable US Air Strikes

What is the meaning of striking at residential areas, places of worship, and bridges in Baghdad? Why [does President Bush] and his administration officials

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[86] *VII Corps (US) G2's Battlefield Reconstruction,* 24.

run away from the fighting in the operations field and resort to striking at these civilian targets?[87]

The American way of war is predictable. Foremost is the pledge not to bomb "civilian targets." This includes not only avoiding religious and historical sites, but also residences, schools and markets. A goal of American targeting is to avoid producing civilian casualties. Four events during Desert Storm highlight this hypersensitivity. These included:

1. 23 January "baby milk" factory bombing
2. 25 January F-15E SCUD hunters strafe traffic along the Baghdad-Jordan Desert Highway (mostly embargo violators)
3. 4 February An Nasiriyah bridge, which killed a few civilians (because a missile launched by a British Tornado missed its target and struck residences)? Schwartzkopf limits further attacks near populated areas to prevent further civilian losses.
4. 13 February Al Firdos (Amiriya) Shelter bombing.

Each of these events brought with it a series of predictable events. First, Iraqi propaganda exaggerated the killing, followed by wide press coverage and then international condemnation. The US responded to each of these by restricting US targeting, especially after Al Firdos, which limited further bombing in Baghdad.[88]

The American hypersensitivity worked into the Iraqi plan. "Senior Iraqi officers [moved] their command posts into schools because they knew American warplanes "are not targeting civilian sites."[89] This meant that the safest place to conduct operations was in a mosque, school or residence. Saddam himself spent many nights among the local residents.[90] This US hypersensitivity about civilian casualties is an enormous weakness that Saddam exploited during Desert Storm and will do so again in the next conflict.

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[87] "Baghdad Radio Denounces Bush For 'Crimes," Baghdad Domestic Service, 12 February 1991, *FBIS Daily Report--Near East and South Asia*, 13 February 1991, FBIS-NES-91-030, 22.
[88] William M. Arkin, "Baghdad: Urban Sanctuary in Desert Storm," *Airpower Journal,* spring 1997.
[89] Message, USCINCENT Daily News Summary, 5 February 1991.
[90] Latif, *I Was Saddam's Son*

Expect Iraqi High Value Targets to largely locate among the populace the next time. We should also anticipate the possibility that the regime will even kill its own people or destroy its own mosques and then blame the US. Such self-inflicted destruction would be believed by the Arab world and turn their attitude against the US.

Israel, Arab Unity and Scuds

The most dangerous Iraqi strategy was drawing Israel into the conflict by firing 40 Al Husayn and Al-Hijarah modified SCUD[91] missiles against it (46 were also launched against Saudi Arabia).[92] The goal was to provoke an Israeli retaliation and then alienate the Arab Coalition members from the US. Had Israel retaliated, there were questions whether Syria and Egypt would have remained in the Coalition. This illustrates the depth of the hate shared against the common enemy, Israel. The Iraqi message on this was the same: "Saddam will enter Jerusalem and conquer it on the back of his white horse.... The Jews have started to see their state vanish…and here is Saddam making the unity of the faithful who are proud of their religion and message."[93] Although this Islamic propaganda failed to take root during Desert Storm, the recent struggle between Israel and the Palestinian Authority has deepened the animosity. This means that this message will enjoy more success next time Saddam is facing an American attack.

In 1991, the principal impediment for convincing the Arab masses of his sincerity in his noble anti-Israeli cause was to the illegitimacy of his claim (conquering Arab Kuwait) and the shrewd policies followed by the Bush Administration. Saddam may have enjoyed better success with WMD, which was expected (although the fear of

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[91] This missile has a range of 600 and 750 kms respectively, *Conduct of the Persian Gulf War*, 14,165.
[92] Watson, 224, 225.
[93] "Islamic Leader: Saddam Will Enter Jerusalem," Baghdad Domestic Service, 11 February 1991, *FBIS Daily report--Near East and South Asia*, 12 February 1991, FBIS-NES-91-029, 31.

American and Israeli nuclear retaliation may have balanced that threat). Despite the outcome, Israel will be a vital part of any future Iraqi strategy or counter strategy.

Military

Ten days into the war, the Coalition declared air superiority, at the cost of thirty-three Iraqi aircraft. Having failed to challenge the Coalition air forces, the Iraqi air force hunkered down in reinforced bunkers, but found that even these were not safe from Coalition guided munitions.[94] In reaction to the destruction of their hardened aircraft bunkers, Saddam ordered his fleet to seek refuge in Iran. By February, 115 Iraqi military and 33 civilian aircraft landed on Iranian airfields, where the pilots were interned and the aircraft added to the Iranian inventory.[95] By putting hopes on deterrence, Saddam surrendered the initiative and lost the opportunity to use his air force to inflict casualties on the Coalition. The lesson for Iraq is not to hold aviation assets back for a future and unknown great battle.

Whither Terrorism? It is difficult to understand why Iraq failed so miserably with terrorism. Although there were several attacks against US interests in Turkey, the threat of terrorism did not manifest itself. Saddam did align with several terrorist organizations and planned to use them to undermine the US and to attack its vital interests. These included Abu Tariq's Intelligence and Security Apparatus, Abu Tayeb's Force 17 (Arafat), Hawari's (Abed al Hamid Labib) Special Operations Group, Abul Abbas' (Muhammad Ziban Abbas) Palestinian Liberation Front, Abu Nidal's (Sabri al-

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[94] *Gulf War Air Power Survey*, 10-19.

[95] In the 1980s, Saddam dispersed his aircraft to other neutral territories in Kuwait, Jordan and Saudi Arabia when it suffered serious losses from the Iranians. See *Gulf War Airpower Survey*, Vol 2. Washington, DC, GPO, 1993), 63 and "Number and Type of Planes in Iran Reported," Baghdad INA, *FBIS Daily Report--Near East and South Asia*, 12 April 1991, 26.

Bana) Faction and Abu Ibrahim's (Hussein Amri) 15th May Group.[96] Of these many terrorist cells, only the Philippine group succeeded. Fortunately, their bomb detonated prematurely, while enroute to the US embassy in Manila. The lesson for Saddam is to use terrorism more scrupulously, since it is a proven weapon against the US (USMC barracks in Lebanon, October 1983). The next conflict will encompass better-planned operations to undermine the US.

Umm al-ma'arik (mother of all battles?). On 29 January 1991, Iraq launched what was to be a three-division attack into Saudi Arabia. This attack was Baghdad's answer to enduring two weeks of Coalition air attacks. The plan was to throw the Coalition off balance and give Saddam the initiative by drawing the Coalition into a premature ground battle. Only then could Saddam hope to bleed the Americans and compel Washington to sue for peace.[97] The official Iraqi statement on the attack made the purpose clear: "The army will soon begin the march toward the liberation of Saudi Arabia. The Americans would be taught a lesson by being made to swim as floating corpses in rivers of their own blood."[98]

The plan would have enjoyed greater success in September 1990, but it was too late now. In fact, the attack on Khafgi and south of Wafra made it easier for the Coalition to destroy the Iraqi divisions since they were now out in the open.

The Khafgi and Wafra failure deprived Iraq's Army of the initiative and forced it to wait for the Coalition ground attack. Locally, Saddam's army did all it could to protect itself from air attack, to include pouring fuel on their armored vehicles and igniting it during air attacks and burning objects next to their vehicles, to make them appear

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[96] "Terrorist Armies Backing Iraq," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 29 September 1990, 559
[97] Danspeckgruber, 67.
[98] "Saddam Projects Undiminished Resolve to Fight Long War," FBIS, 6 February 1991.

destroyed. Even decoys were set up to draw air power away from the army elements.[99]

No matter how thorough these self-protection endeavors were, there was little they could

do in the vast stretches of empty desert to hide from overhead observation.

Despite these counter-measures, losses mounted. However, there was hope for

Saddam that the size of his army, combined with the Saddam Line would cost America

too much to prevail in liberating Kuwait. Nevertheless, even this proved a false hope. In

the end, the lessons of Khafgi are not to give the US the initiative and that the army

cannot endure a US air campaign. The frustration and helplessness felt by the Iraqi army

during the air campaign is highlighted by this quote from a brigade commander:

"Sometimes I would look up at the A-10 as he made his run and ask aloud, 'why don't

you visit the 48th Division or the 80th Brigade."[100]

The Collapse of the Iraqi Army

*I stood and looked to the west and all I could see for as far as one could see were
tanks and more tanks; tanks everywhere.[101]*
<div align="right">Iraqi Brigade Commander from the VII Iraqi Jihad Corps</div>

*You attacked us with the same NATO force that was designed to attack the entire
Warsaw Pact, and the entire earth shook.[102]*
<div align="right">Iraqi Division Commander from the VII Iraqi Jihad Corps</div>

Although Khafgi failed, Saddam still had a large military in the Kuwaiti Theater

of Operations. "Fortress Kuwait" (after failing in deterrence) was created to kill

Americans and thereby give Saddam the basis to claim some kind of military victory. It

is now too easy to write off such thoughts, knowing now the ultimate outcome of the war.

However, the elements twice conspired against Saddam to frustrate his plans. The first

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[99] *VII Corps (US) G2's Battlefield Reconstruction*, 65.
[100] Ibid, 97.
[101] Ibid, 126.
[102] Ibid, 104.

occurred on G Day minus one (February 23, 1991) and the second was late on G Day plus two.

On G-1, the prevailing winds, which normally blow from Iraq (Northwesterly) into Saudi Arabia, completely switched direction. This happened as the first US tanks from the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment (2 ACR) entered Iraq at 1330 hours. The winds remained "contrary" over the battlefield until 0800, 28 February, the moment that the ceasefire went into effect. If Saddam planned to use chemical weapons, they would blow back into the ranks of Saddam's troops.[103]

The second incident of providential timing occurred at the battle of 73rd Easting.[104] In Soviet fashion, Saddam arrayed his least loyal forces forward, with the better troops further back. When the war began, the front line Iraqi troops crumbled quickly, helped in part by their composition (a lot of Iraqi minorities). However, the regular army armored and mechanized divisions and Republican Guards were a different story altogether. These forces fought as long as resistance was fruitful. Immediate and massive surrenders among these did not happen until after a brisk battle.

The 12th Iraqi Armored Division serves as an example of this. During the ground war, the 12th managed to move from its position in the Wadi al Batin westward and against the flank of the US VII Corps. This Iraqi maneuver nearly cost me my life and coincided with the decisive battle of the US VII Armored Corps against the RGFC at 73 Easting. However, despite the Iraqi eagerness to fight, even the weather conspired against them. The battle is described below:

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[103] Ibid, 56.

[104] Rick Atkinson, *Crusade,* (New York: Mifflin, 1993), 440-445. The battle's name is from the 73rd north-south grid line where it took place. Roughly at coordinates PU7302 (100 kilometers west-northwest of the al Jahra Gap).

At 0730 on G Day plus two (G+2, February 26, 1991), the 2d Armored Cavalry Regiment's Aviation Squadron advanced to make contact with the Iraqi Tawakalna Mechanized Division, which was backed by elements from the 12th and 52nd Iraqi Armored Divisions. As the 2d ACR's Cobra attack and Kiowa observation helicopters (belonging to 4th Aviation Squadron) swept forward, the Iraqi tanks fired upon them. These helicopters suppressed the Iraqis with close air support and artillery fires even as the three regimental ground squadrons advanced to assume the battle (with forty-five M1A2s Abrams tanks and forty-five M2A2 Bradleys each).

By 0800, the ground squadrons closed on the Iraqis and prepared to assume the battle from 4th Aviation Squadron. As the helicopters prepared to hand the battle over to the tank and scout squadrons, the weather suddenly changed. A violent windstorm appeared, bringing 40 knot winds and a combination rain and sand storm. Visibility instantly was reduced to 50 yards in some battle areas.[105] This was the second time that the weather miraculously intervened to favor the Coalition.

It was impractical for anyone to fight under such adverse conditions, however the Iraqi Republican Guards vigilantly manned their T-72s, waiting for a fight. As the battle began, "[the Tawakalna's 9th Armored Brigade] was amazed that it would be attacked during a rainstorm with blowing wind."[106] Unlike their colleagues in Kuwait, these soldiers intended to fight. As the Iraqis checked their tank gun sights, they could see nothing, and apparently felt that they could stand down until the storm passed, believing that no one could see through the airborne moisture and sand particles.

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[105] Vince Crawley, "Ghost Troop's Battle at 73 Easting," *Armor* (May-June 1991), 10.
[106] *VII Corps (US) G2's Battlefield Reconstruction*, 119.

Despite the conditions, the US cavalry squadrons could see the Iraqi tanks through the storm. One Iraqi tank platoon leader, Lieutenant Saif ad Din, described the battle. As he waited for the storm to end, suddenly one of his T-72 tanks exploded violently. Then another tank to his left had the turret blown off. He desperately tried to identify the location of the American tanks, but could not. Despite his willingness to fight, he could not fight that which he could not see and ordered his men to get out of their tanks to seek refuge in a nearby sand bunker.[107]

The storm's timing was miraculous. These Iraqis were willing to fight, and many did, despite their grave disadvantage even as the 2d ACR was numerically outnumbered three-to-one. As the storm tapered off, the Iraqis did fight back, but were consistently thrown back. Waves of Iraqi armor tried to punch through the Regiment but were defeated by a combination of close-air support, direct and indirect fires. By evening, the Regiment pushed out to the 73rd Easting, having broken the back of the elite Tawakalna Mechanized Division. As one captured Iraqi Battalion commander commented about the battle, "I went into Kuwait with 39 tanks, after 37 days of bombing, I still had 32. After twenty minutes against the Second Armored Cavalry Regiment, I had none."[108]

Later that day, the 1st (US) Infantry Division assumed the battle against the Tawakalna Mechanized Division. After the Tawakalna was finished off, the 1st Infantry pressed forward to the east toward a piece of high ground along the Iraq-Kuwait border called objective Norfolk. The Iraqi 37th Armored brigade (12th Armored Division) was positioned along this terrain, poised to repel them. These Iraqi soldiers learned a valuable

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[107] Robert Scales, *Certain Victory*, (Fort Leavenworth, KS: 1994), 291. Information also derived from notes written by H.R. McMaster, the Eagle Troop Commander, 2nd Squadron, 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment, written following the battle in February 1991.
[108] Darrell Cochran, "Destruction in the Desert," *Soldiers,* February 1992, 40.

lesson from the air war and kept their engines off at night. They understood that US aircraft easily targeted a warm vehicle. This became a problem for the 1st Infantry Division.

It was night when the 1st Infantry reached Objective Norfolk. The Iraqi 37th Brigade was hunkered down and had their engines off. When the 1st US Infantry arrived, they quickly engaged and destroyed the Iraqi tanks that were "hot." All of the" cold" Iraqi tanks were by-passed and assumed already destroyed. Once the Iraqi commander realized that US tanks were in his lines, he ordered his soldiers to open fire.

By now, Iraqi and US tanks were mixed together. Most of the Iraqi tankers kept their vehicles off and engaged the US forces manually. The battle turned into a fierce contest as the Iraqis refused to surrender. Joining the struggle, dismounted Iraqi soldiers used anti-tank RPG missiles. The fighting was in every direction with anti-tank missiles and small arms lighting the sky. Finally, at 0230, the battle ended with over 60 Iraqi tanks, and nine US armored vehicles destroyed.

Meanwhile, to the north, the US 1st Armored Division pressed the attack against other Republican Guards units. In the fighting, the 1st Armored lost two tanks and destroyed twenty-one T-72s and twenty-two BMPs. The Adnan Republican Guard Division attempted to stall the US advance and launched an attack into the 1st US Armored Division's northern flank, but was repelled by artillery and Apache strikes.[109]

This was the worst day for the Iraqi Army in the KTO. There was a complete rout in Kuwait proper, and then the spectacular defeat of the Tawakalna added to the misery. Trying to save the beleaguered remnants of his army, Saddam announced a withdrawal from Kuwait. Except for the 17th, 10th and 52nd Armored Divisions, and the Republican

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[109] Steve Vogel, "Metal Rain," *Army Times*, September 16, 1991, 16.

Guards, his forces were not withdrawing from Kuwait, but retreating. Saddam attempted to claim a sort of victory by saying, "On this day, our valiant armed forces will complete their withdraw from Kuwait...Shout for victory, O brothers, shout for your victory and the victory of all honorable people, O Iraqis. You have fought 30 countries and all the evil and the largest machine of war and destruction in the world that surrounds them."[110] CENTCOM announced that Iraq lost 3,300 tanks, 2,100 armored personnel carriers, 2,200 pieces of artillery and 31 Iraqi Divisions totaling 86,743[111] Iraqi soldiers captured by the Coalition. This was indeed a very one-sided victory.

Despite the mythology that came out about the war, Saddam's reliable troops did fight. The lesson for Saddam is not to hinge the defense on unreliable units and to more aggressively use the RGFC and regular armored/mechanized forces. Despite their desire to fight, many of the circumstances were out of their control (i.e. the weather).

In the end, Saddam underestimated US resolve and committed several tactical errors that spelled defeat for his army. The first was leaving one-third of his army deployed along the Kuwaiti coastline to repel an anticipated USMC amphibious landing. The second was leaving the western Iraqi desert relatively unguarded. As one dismayed Republican Guards Captain exclaimed during Desert Storm; "Why are you [in Iraq]? You are cheating; you were supposed to go through Kuwait through all the ditches and minefields that we set up. We don't know why you are here, it is not fair."[112]

Iraq also failed in its doctrine. Saddam intended to fight the same type of war he fought against Iran. He was not ready for the aggressive maneuvering found in the US

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[110] Saddam Hussein, *Vital Speeches of the Day*, February 26, 1991, 326-327.
[111] The US captured 63,948 Iraqis, 16,921 by the Arab Coalition forces, 5,005 by the UK and 869 by the French.
[112] James Blackwell, "Georgia Punch," *Army Times,* 2 December 1991, 22.

air-land battle doctrine. The Iraqi plan was based on another false assumption that the battle would be in Kuwait proper and not in Iraq. This left the western desert wide open for an American flanking attack.[113] In the end, Saddam's methodology was tied up in a faulty analogy. He constantly spoke about Vietnam and the similar fate that the US would face in Iraq. However, this rationalization ignored the geographic and political differences of his country.

Economic

Saddam lacked economic influence due to the embargo. His only recourse was to use oil to both pollute and bolster the defensive belt (with oil based "fire" trenches). When reality set in, Saddam ordered the destruction of the oil wells and 700 were set ablaze.[114] If Iraq could not have the oil, no one would. This explains why there was no serious effort made by Iraq to serious effort to resolve the crisis before the war.

Summary

Saddam's instruments of power waned considerably during this epoch of the crisis. When Desert Storm began, events moved too fast for the dictator to keep up. However, in typical style, Hussein displayed resiliency and resolve even as his regime crumbled around him. Perhaps Saddam was merely out of touch with what happened to Iraq. Whatever the reason, he apparently believed his own propaganda, which kept him focused on his primary objectives, remaining in power. His actions suggest that there is nothing more important to him than being Iraq's dictator.

Iraq's most formidable weapon was the informational. In particular, depicting the US as cruel in its air campaign resounded among his Arab supporters and did compel the

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[113] *VII Corps (US) G2's Battlefield Reconstruction*, 13.
[114] Saddam ordered a scorched earth policy for Kuwait when it was clear that he may loose his grip over it. Claudia Farkas Al Rashoud, *Kuwait: Before and After the Storm*, (Barcelona, Spain: 1992), 114.

US to limit its targeting. This increased the regimes survivability and provided de facto safe havens for vital Iraqi nodes. Expect Iraq to position more of its vital centers among the populace, in schools, mosques, churches and historical sites to both prevent targeting and to produce civilian casualties to bring severe international criticism against the US. As for surrendering the initiative, Desert Storm will be the last time Saddam hinges his strategy upon a defense based on the performance of less reliable units. Future Iraqi operations will attempt to keep the US off balance through combined misinformation and military operations.

Back to the Future – Survival and Alienation

Everyone will remember that the gates of Constantinople were not opened before the Muslims in the first struggling attempt.[115]
>   Saddam Hussein, announcing the retreat from Kuwait, *Saddam Speaks*

Since Desert Storm, Saddam has focused upon two goals, (1) shoring up his control over Iraq and (2) returning Iraq to its former strength. Standing in the way of these objectives is the US. To break the impasse, Saddam is following the path with the most promise, Islam and Pan-Arabism. The method is to depict the US as waging war against Islam by starving the Iraqi people through a decade old embargo. This approach has elevated Saddam in status as a folk hero and hailed him as the only Arab leader standing against the US. Despite the condition of his country, Saddam is poised to twist defeat into victory by outlasting the US foreign policy directed against his regime. The ultimate plan of his strategy is to alienate the US from the Arab world.

Aftermath of the war

Saddam readily accepted the Coalition conditions set forth in the Desert Storm ceasefire out of pure necessity. The defeat of the Iraqi military put him in the weakest position he experienced since seizing power in 1979. Immediately after the war, the Kurds in the north and the Shiites in the south each sought to carve out their own niche in Iraq. The prognosis looked grim for Saddam even as the rebels seized fifteen of Iraq's eighteen provinces.[116] However, he shrewdly positioned the surviving elements of his RGFC around Baghdad and then moved against the south and the north to regain control of the nation.

Thousands perished in the civil war that followed, with the UN ultimately establishing the Northern and Southern No-Fly Zones to limit Iraqi action against the ethnic and religious minorities. Despite this, Saddam prevailed in his counterrevolution and solidified control over most of the nation. Only the Kurds secured a semi-

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[115] Bengio, *Saddam Speaks on the Gulf Crisis,* 211.

[116] Khidhir Hamza, *Saddam's Bombmaker*, (New York: Simon & Schuster 2000), 252.

autonomous region, although tribal infighting prevented the Kurds from breaking free from Saddam's influence. US failure to substantively aid the Kurds and Shiites after Desert Storm made them feel abandoned and tricked by America and led to the demise of their fight against Saddam.[117]

After Saddam regained control of Iraq, he went on to test American resolve. This included several Iraqi feints against Kuwait, sparking the deployment of US military assets to the region. It appeared that Saddam enjoyed compelling the world's hegemonic military power to react to his gambits against the tiny emirate. These efforts did not come without cost and triggered a series of US retaliations, especially as it related to his refusal to cooperate with the UN special inspection teams. The reason for these confrontations was that Iraq could not surrender its WMD to the UN and retains them to counter Iran defensively and for some future expansionist program offensively.[118] To achieve his wider Nebuchadnezzar like aspirations, Saddam needs WMD. Saddam acknowledged the importance of Iraq's nuclear weapon program when he referred it as the "equalizer."[119] Without a chemical, biological or nuclear program, Iraq is little mare than a third rate power. Iraq's DIME provides the key to Saddam's aspirations.

Diplomatic

China, Russia and France are the new lynchpins in Saddam's endeavor to end the embargo and to repair the damage done to his military in 1991. The embargo is enemy number one for Baghdad and has effectively frozen the military's growth and recovery, which is about three-quarters of its pre-Desert Storm condition. Saddam promises to spend billions of dollars on new arms from China, France and Russia, if only they will

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[117] Hamza, 30.
[118] Mylroie, 133-142
[119] Hamza, 237.

use their position on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to end the embargo. These nations have used their position to pressure the US, thus far unsuccessfully, to curtail the embargo.[120]

Informational

The informational instrument of power is Saddam's instrument of power par excellence when he portrays the US as an imperialist power. As he asserted, "The United States has taken over the role of the European colonists following World War II."[121] This type of disinformation feeds into the paranoia of the Arab world and is readily accepted as fact. Using such rhetoric, Saddam remains extremely popular among the Arab masses with Iraqi policy making other Arab powers seem weak and illegitimate when they support the US.[122]

Prominent among Saddam's successes is his portrayal of Iraq as the victim of US militarism. Such rhetoric is enthusiastically received among the masses, which are all too eager to find a foreign devil to blame for their own economic and cultural ills. What they do not choose to remember are Saddam's own abuses against the Kurds and Shiites or that he lavishly spends billions on new palaces, while allowing, his people to starve. Such is the irony of a region that does not rationally scrutinize the propaganda of the Iraqi dictator and whose collective memory is so selective.

In addition to the US, the other target of convenience for Iraqi propaganda was the UN inspection teams, who were eventually portrayed as American puppets. Although the UN teams managed to stall several of Iraq's WMD programs, they did not achieve

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[120] Ibid, 335-337
[121] Bengio, *Saddam Speaks on the Gulf Crisis*, 45.
[122] Ibid, 45

their charters, with Saddam securing a minor, but significant victory by their departure from Iraq in 1998.

The manipulations of the region's emotional religious issues are also serving Saddam well. As usual, the role of Christianity versus Islam is a favorite topic. During the late 1990s, Iraq made a clear switch with this approach. At first, it seemed that Baghdad endeavored to influence Arab leaders to alter their pro-US position through pressure from the masses and reminders about Islamic tradition and history. Having failed, Baghdad eventually called upon the Arab world to violently oust King Fahd and President Mubarak for their friendship with the "Christian" US. Such rhetoric highlights a degree of Iraq's impatience and frustration over the stalemate.[123]

Military

The Iraqi military, although a shadow of its previous glory, retains enough strength to suppress domestic enemies and to deter Iran. Saddam needs to rebuild it from the destruction of Desert Storm to provide the muscle he requires to impose his will upon the region. It was the military, especially the Republican Guards, which kept the regime from collapsing into the abyss during the dark days of the 1991 Shia and Kurd revolutions. Although the loyalty of the regular army is frequently questioned, Saddam is in enough control to remove any viable threats from the ranks, real or perceived.[124]

It is this same force, despite its equipment shortfalls, that led to the continued presence of US troops in the region and in Kuwait itself. After several Iraqi "moves" toward Kuwait in the mid-1990s, the US eventually decided to not only place a brigade's

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[123] "Nation Will Liberate Holy Places, Jerusalem," Baghdad INA, 20 November 1990), *FBIS Daily Report-- Near East and South Asia,* 21 November 1990. 32-33.

[124] Anthony H. Cordesman, "The Military Balance in the Gulf and the Threat from Iraq," Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), May 2000, 17-28.

worth of equipment in Kuwait, but to permanently deploy over 1,000 US Army soldiers there.[125]

More evidence is also becoming known concerning Iraq's alignment with Islamic terrorists. Although not conclusive, such a move would not be completely out of character for the regime, which is seeking any avenue to weaken US influence. Such an alliance with terrorists also displays some impatience with the decade long containment of Iraq by the US. Finally, there is uncertainty about the status of Iraq's WMD programs. His chief atomic scientist confessed that Saddam would have used the bomb on Israel had it been ready during Desert Storm (and if he felt directly threatened).[126]

Economic

The economy is the source from which Saddam Hussein hopes to finance his dream of becoming a modern day Nebuchadnezzar. After the war, the regime moved quickly to rebuild as much of the economy as possible. Only one-year after the Gulf War, Iraq reopened the Mina al Bakr sea terminal, the Khor al Zubayr and the Umm Qasr ports, restored 75% of the country's electricity, 50% of its water supply and rebuilt 85% of its oil industry. One hundred and twenty of the 134 destroyed bridges were also rebuilt.[127]

However, the embargo prevented any real economic growth and seemingly stifled Iraq's domestic sanitation, triggering high infant mortality, inflation and rampant unemployment with the Kurds and Shiites feeling the gravest impact. Even in economic despair, Saddam managed to punish his domestic enemies. Regardless of these small

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[125] Cordesman, "The Military Balance in the Gulf," 37-67.
[126] Hamza, 18.
[127] Simon Edge, "Iraq: Turning Humiliation on its Head," *Middle East Business Weekly*, 24 January 1992, 14.

domestic victories, the embargo must end in order for Baghdad again to attain the regional power it once held.

Summary

Regardless of Iraq's economic and military situation, Saddam will do whatever necessary to protect himself and his regime from both domestic and international threats. Baghdad's failure to break the embargo and the continued US activity in the region is a dilemma for Hussein. He needs both to vanish in order to achieve the influence he once enjoyed in 1990. As of now, the embargo and containment of Iraq has frozen its economic development and left his army at a dismal readiness level.

These challenges have not stopped Iraq from influencing the people of the Middle East. Foremost of his achievements is remaining a local folk hero for continually standing against the tide of US policy. Although this has come at a cost, Iraqi propaganda is finding a sympathetic and large following across the Middle East. The unfortunate thing about the success of Iraqi propaganda is not how unbelievable the data is, but the associated desire of many Third World states (especially Islamic) to see the US fail. Continued US victories increase US power and influence, making the states feel less secure. Perhaps this explains the declining Saudi Arabian support of American policy.

In the end, Iraq has a long view of history, as it is so apt to remind the West. Saddam would have us believe that time is on his side. Although that is true to a certain extent, he probably never believed that the containment of Iraq would last as long as it has. This weighs heavily upon him and increases the chances that either a domestic or foreign rival may some day arise to challenge his precarious position.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

The future belongs to us. A victory for the United States is not realistic. To win, the United States has to win on three fronts: to defeat the Iraqi army, then crush the Iraqi economy and finally destroy the Iraqi regime...just one victory will not be enough.

<div align="right">

Saddam Hussein, *FBIS Daily Report*

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What have we learned from Desert Storm? As we have seen, Iraq's instruments of power (diplomatic, informational, military and economic) are the tools that Saddam uses to achieve his national objectives. Each instrument plays a role in keeping Saddam in power and provides the impetus needed to pursue a particular strategy. In the current state of affairs, Saddam's stalwart instrument of power is informational combined with the diplomatic. Since Desert Storm, Baghdad has masterfully used propaganda, wrapped in Islamic clothes, to present Iraq as a victim of American imperialism. Such rhetoric finds willing reception among the disenfranchised Islamic masses in the region and causes even once friendly Arab states to limit their support of US foreign policy.
For now, the embargo has relegated Saddam's economic and military instruments of power to a lesser role. However, these are critical to Saddam's survival and the tools to fulfilling his transnational ambitions. The vast economic (i.e. oil) resources in Iraq will provide the money Baghdad needs to rebuild the Iraqi military and revitalize the Iraqi economy. Some analysts speculate that it will only take Saddam two years to rebuild his military and infrastructure to pre-Desert Storm levels once the embargo is lifted. After this, Saddam will again look beyond his borders to physically impose his will upon others, especially Kuwait. Perhaps a concerted WMD threat, namely nuclear, would alter America's ability to contain Iraq.

Lessons from Desert Storm

What have we learned from Desert Storm and Iraqi policy? Most obviously, Saddam Hussein's foremost objective is his personal survival as Iraq's dictator. Everything else, even the nurture of his people, is subsidiary to this. By using Iraq's instruments of power, he will pursue any policy or strategy necessary to facilitate this aim, in spite of the cost to Iraq. Unfortunately for the US, Saddam usually pursues this goal in a deliberate Machiavellian manner and is seldom reckless. This pursuit, combined with a longer view of history, which is more patient than the US, generally

puts time on his side. However, he is not always patient in his approach and has sought immediate remedies to his national ills. His invasions of Iran in 1980 and Kuwait in 1990 bear this out, finding both stalemate and defeat. The lessons of these events are that when Saddam loses patience, he is susceptible to mistakes.

The lessons from Desert Shield and Storm include:

1. **Instruments of power – illustrate Saddam's intentions -** Saddam shrewdly manipulates diplomatic, informational, military and economic instruments of power to further his aims. These send clear signals on what he hopes to accomplish.

2. **Impatience puts Saddam at risk -** Time is generally on Iraq's side. However, Saddam is most vulnerable when he runs out of patience. Both Desert Storm and the invasion of Iran in 1980 highlight this.

3. **Islam and Pan-Arabism as a challenge to the US -** Islam and Arab nationalism are two potentially dangerous trends. The US fails to grasp the depth of these, especially Islam and the hatred it produces against US action in the region. We need to be aware of the gross anti-US rhetoric, no matter how unbelievable, and understand that there are many who readily accept it as truth.

4. **Israel as an Arab Battle Cry –** Hatred of Israel is the single most unifying factor in the region. Unilateral US action against an Arab state is difficult to justify and even more so if Israel joins in (i.e. retaliatory strike).

5. **Need an Arab friend -** The US needs a strong and regionally powerful Arab ally to legitimize action in the area. This blunts the typical anti-US rhetoric and reduces the believability of the US acting as an imperial western power.

6. **Iraqi Army not incompetent –** The one-sided Desert Storm victory myth about the quality of the Iraqi military is fallacious. The facts illustrate that the victory was not "easy." Even when facing massive odds, elements of the Iraqi military stood and fought in pitched battles. A ground campaign against Iraq must contend with an Iraqi army that has elements (RGFC and Regular Army heavy units) that will resist until the means to do so are exhausted.[128]

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[128] *VII Corps (US) G2's Battlefield Reconstruction*, 9.

7. **Beware of providing sanctuary** – Predictable and safe air campaign planning will provide Saddam Hussein with the sanctuary he needs to survive US air campaign. The US needs to be cognizant of this dilemma and not give Saddam the safe havens he needs to survive the next war.

8. **Saddam does not fully understand his adversary** – Saddam Hussein consistently underestimates and understates the nature of the threat he confronts in the US. He has been consistently wrong about American resolve and commitment. This underestimation is among his greatest flaws and is the primary reason why he has not broken the containment of Iraq during the last decade.

9. **Ethnic and religious discord to break the regime** – Ethnic and religious differences are the best way to undermine and even oust Saddam Hussein. Our failure to exploit this failing allows Saddam to remain in power. We must use these if we intend to facilitate political change in Iraq.

10. **Revenge based foreign policy** – Saddam Hussein embodies what we know of Iraq. As such, any impediment for Iraq is taken as a personal attack upon him. He punished the Kurds and the Shiites for their disloyalty, attacked Iran for their long history of antagonism toward Arabs, planned an assassination of President Bush in 1993 and continues to threaten Kuwait (i.e. the 1994 feint). For Saddam, no bad deed will go unpunished, no matter how long it takes. As the Arab adage says, "Beware of the patient man's rage."[129]

11. **The Terrorist Connection** – Terrorism is the one method that Saddam sees he can use to strike at the heart of the West since it can bypass the military and take a war right to the American public. The wide terrorist connection that is growing under Baghdad's tutelage is the best way to extract revenge against the American people that so decidedly crushed his military and thrust him out of Kuwait. [130] The Islamic terrorist connection includes a broad network of anti-US and anti-Israel groups.[131] Terrorism is more likely to achieve a degree of success than another conventional war.

12. **Coalition Members – Vulnerable Center of Gravity** – Saddam understood that America's Coalition partners were not all equally committed to the liberation of

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[129] Ibid, 126.
[130] Laurie Mylroie, *Study of Revenge*, (Washington, DC: AEI Press, 2000).
[131] John Moore, *Crisis in the Gulf*, (New York: Oceana, 1992), 13-15.

Kuwait and actively sought to divide them. For example, Baghdad used its connection with France to secure empathy. Although this approach failed in Desert Storm, signs of weakness were manifest among the Coalition as evidenced by France's lukewarm post war support and conciliatory relationship with Iraq.[132] Everything from slanted press reports to government officials aggressively attempting to have the US unilaterally end the air campaign (Italian Foreign Minister Giani de Michelis, 15 February 1991) gave Saddam hope that a split might occur. Combine this with the limitations that Arab Coalition members imposed upon US strategy (Egypt declared that it would not enter Iraqi territory, while Syria threatened to become an enemy if Israel joined the foray against Iraq) and it is easy to see the many weak points in the Coalition.[133] This emboldened Saddam to cling to the hope of a long and bloody ground campaign so that Coalition members would eventually pressure the US to end the war.[134] Whether acting out of jealousy, religious concerns or national interests, America will have difficulty waging a prolonged campaign against Iraq and maintaining a stolid Coalition.

Instruments of Power – the Keys to the Kingdom

> *Saddam's instruments of power are the means to impose his will. Obviously, by monitoring these, the US can gage the direction of Iraqi policy and the depth of seriousness associated with it. Saddam Hussein masterfully manipulates each of the instruments to accomplish a particular aim. Diplomatically, Saddam is willing to make any pledge or promise, without the intent of living up to it, if such an action will further his ambitions. We saw in the aftermath of Desert Storm that Iraq agreed upon all the terms of the ceasefire. However, in hindsight, it is clear that Iraq had no intention of living up to its promises of cooperation and began resisting UN disarmament inspections only sixty days after it signed the agreement. The ceasefire was only agreed upon to give Saddam a free hand to combat the Kurds and Shiites, which were a direct threat to his regime. Once they were taken care of, the ceasefire agreement was invalid in his eyes.*

Internationally, we have seen that Baghdad combines the diplomatic with the informational to portray Iraq as a victim of Western imperialism, an image that finds

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[132] Message, *USCINCENT Daily News Summary*, 4 November 1990. Also, see reports issued on 5, 7, 8, 9, 10 November. Saddam used the hostages to leverage concessions from Coalition members. As European and Japanese national leaders arrived in Iraq, Saddam rewarded them by releasing hostages. It would have been a lot harder for the US to wage war against Iraq if Coalition member citizens died in the air campaign. European and South American support was lukewarm at best.

[133] Message, *USCINCENT Daily News Summary*, 12 November 1990 and 3 December 1990.

[134] "De Michelis Pledges Effort to Stop Raids on Iraqi Cities," FBIS *Daily Report--Near East and South Asia,* 15 February 1991.

ready acceptance in the third world. This triggers a kind of balancing against the US with Russia, China, France and even Saudi Arabia opposing US policy. These fear rising US power in the region as a threat to their interests, a fear that Saddam understands and exploits.

The informational instrument of power is Saddam's most effective since it has a broad appeal among the masses. The power of Iraqi Islamic propaganda is so lethal largely because the US does not understand it. It is hard to believe that so many accept outright Iraqi lies especially when so much factual evidence refutes the misinformation. However, many in the region see the US as the aggressor *and as the religious enemy*. The only problem with Iraq's propaganda is that it takes a lot of time to affect change in the region, since the leaders are either monarchs or dictators. The Iraqi rhetoric is acting like termites against the other Arab leaders, draining them of legitimacy and portraying them as puppets of America, causing them to waiver in their support. The following quote from an US Army intelligence agency illustrates our predicament; "Regional [Arab] nations supporting the UN sanctions are key in neutralizing Iraqi psychological operations (PSYOPS) as they must take the lead, particularly on such sensitive issues as Islam and Arab nationalism, where outside spokesman would not have credibility. If Iraqi propaganda is not countered effectively, the impact of Iraqi PSYOPS could result in a much stronger anti-US atmosphere in the region. Such PSYOPS may be difficult to reverse even if Iraq is defeated."[135]

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[135] Cigar, Norman, *"Iraq's PSYOPS War: Targeting the Arab World."* US Army Intelligence Agency, October 1990. Document ATC-WP-2540-165-90. Released by Freedom of Information request 2 April 1993.

The military instrument is the true muscle of Saddam Hussein's regime. It is the force that keeps him in power and gives him the ability to impose his will. Its weakened nature has not reduced his resolve use it to accomplish national aims. This, combined with the oil based economy is all Saddam needs to secure his power base and to again pursue the dream of becoming a modern day Nebuchadnezzar.[136]

Great Underestimation of the US

O brothers, you know that the air force cannot settle a ground battle, regardless of the sophisticated weaponry. This is the rule governing all conventional and liberation wars. The Vietnamese people were the last to confront this capability.[137]

Saddam Hussein

He [Saddam] kept telling the Iraqi people that air power had never won a war in the history of warfare and the Americans would never have the nerve to engage the Iraqi Army on the ground.[138]

Iraqi Brigade Commander

Saddam greatly underestimated the US on several counts. First, he did not anticipate a strong American response to the 2 August 1990 invasion of Kuwait and believed that the specter of Vietnam would prevent US military action. Then he failed to accept the reality of a Coalition offensive to deliver Kuwait from Iraqi occupation, even as 500,000 "enemy" troops deployed against him in a six month long build up. After this, Saddam underestimated American resolve and did not expect the containment of Iraq to last over a decade past Desert Storm.

Finally, he failed to grasp the different nature of warfare that the US conducts. The Iraqi defense of Kuwait did not contend with the Air-Land Battle Doctrine concept of being able to outmaneuver Iraq's defenses. Saddam apparently believed that the threat

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[136] Cordesman, "The Military Balance in the Gulf," 29-35.
[137] Ofra Bengio, *Saddam Speaks on the Gulf Crisis*, 142.
[138] *VII Corps (US) G2's Battlefield Reconstruction*, 25.

he faced from the Iranian military was analogous to the one he faced against the United States. He could not have been more wrong.

Saddam Hussein's gross underestimations of the US have cost Iraq dearly. Despite this, it is unclear that Saddam yet accepts the level of US resolve in containing him regionally and internationally. This is Saddam's biggest weakness for America to exploit since he seems to believe his own propaganda.

Beware of Islamic Pan-Arab Rhetoric Against Unilateral US Action.

The principal threat to American interests in the Gulf is our ignorance of the deep impact that Islamic propaganda has. Despite the predictability of the anti-US Islamic rhetoric, it consistently catches the US off guard either because we do not understand it or believe that the propaganda is too unbelievable to find acceptance. Despite this, the inflammatory remarks are believed locally. We need to proactively anticipate and refute the disinformation now more than ever and appreciate the depth of its impact.

The best way to refute the Islamic propaganda is to have a strong Arab ally, such as Egypt or Saudi Arabia fighting along side us. Having such an ally dulls the impact of the religious based misinformation. This is why the calls for an anti-US jihad did not resound deeply during Desert Shield/Storm. The legitimacy of the Islamic centered anti-US rhetoric was not credible since Saudi Arabia, Egypt and other Arab states fought along side the US. These Coalition members literally counter-balanced the Islamic propaganda. Conversely, unilateral action, such as Desert Fox, illustrate the danger of taking on an Arab state without Arab support. The following quote from Saddam highlights our quandary: "If Arab members of the Coalition perceive the prolonged presence of US and foreign forces as the more ominous threat to the region, they will

abandon the Coalition and turn to assist "a wronged Arab brother."[139]   Saddam summed

up his desire for Arab unity when he said, "All of us are strong as long as we are united,

and all of us are weak as long as we are divided. Then we will see how all of us will

reach safe shores, God willing, so we can take off together on the road of stability and

prosperity…We will also see how Satan will grow weaker wherever he may be and the

evil will depart our homeland and nation."[140]

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[139] Susan D. Coronis, "Gulf Crisis: Cracks in the Allied Coalition and Options for Saddam," US Army
ITAC, November 29, 1990. Released by Freedom of Information request April 2, 1993.
[140] Ofra Bengio, *Saddam Speaks on the Gulf Crisis*, 43.

Israel – the Lynchpin

The US absolutely must keep Israel out of any future conflict in the region. Despite the many differences and divergences among the Arab states, their shared hatred of Israel is the single most influential force because it combines both Islam and ethnicity. As Desert Storm highlights, Iraq will go to great lengths to draw Israel into a conflict. Expect concerted efforts beyond conventional Al Husayn missiles the next time to trigger an Israeli response.[141]

An Israeli military response during a war would greatly undermine the US strategy. Even now the US is attempting to garner Arab support for future military action against Iraq. The support is weak at best. If the US attacks Baghdad with lukewarm Arab support and then Israel participates as well (such as a response to an Iraqi chemical warhead), the US will find itself surrounded by adversarial Arab states.

Use Ethnic and Religious Differences

One immense tool at America's disposal is Iraq's ethnic and religious factions. The tribal differences in Afghanistan ably illustrate how useful it is to use tribal/ethnic differences within a nation to further the US national objective. This is not a new phenomenon, but was a factor that even helped the Crusaders one thousand years ago. As Charles Oman wrote in his seminal work, *A History of War in the Middle Ages,* *"*Stated broadly, the problem which was started in 1096 and lasted till 1291, was whether [the West], with [its] military customs and organization… would prove strong enough to make a permanent lodgment in the East or perchance to make good the whole of the ancient losses which Christendom had suffered at the hands of the Saracen and Turk from

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[141] Mylroie, 133-134. Mylroie asserts that Saddam had twenty-five Scud systems dedicated to launching biological and chemical munitions against Israel and Saudi Arabia if the regime was directly threatened by US ground troops moving against Baghdad.

the days of Heraclius to those of Romanus Diogenes…But in the thirteenth as in the twelfth century, the dissensions of the Mohammedans were the salvation of the [West]."[142] Iraq is not free from this ethnic and religious diversity and is comprised of Arabs Kurds and Assyrians ethnically and Sunni Muslims, Shiite Muslims and Christians religiously. Saddam's support comes from the Sunni Arab population centered in Baghdad. This means that the US can find numerous allies in the Kurdish north and Shiite south.

Unfortunately, the US has shied away from using these weaknesses against Saddam due to their impact upon the status quo. A Kurdish state in Iraq would embolden the Kurdish separatists in Turkey just as a southern Iraqi Shia state would likely be friendly to Iran. However, the time for such caution is gone. Saddam remains in power because of our desire to maintain the nation-state status quo. The best way to rid Iraq of Saddam is to undermine his state by using these disenfranchised groups to our advantage. Such an option is what he fears the most since it is the most threatening to his regime. America will find adept fighters and eager volunteers from these groups, who need only clear leadership and direction to succeed in wresting control away from Saddam. This would find ready acceptance in other high threat states, such as Iran, where there are also an abundance of dissatisfied ethnic minorities (Azeri, Baluchi, Kurd, etc).

Iraqi Army - Not Quite the Joke We Believed

Despite its defeat in 1991, the Iraqi Army was not the completely inept force we now believe. Yes, the front line infantry did collapse, but these were comprised of the reserves and the very ethnic and religious minorities that Saddam cannot rely upon.

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[142] Oman, 233, 264.

However, the bulk of the regular army mechanized and armored units, and the Republican Guards fought, despite insurmountable odds. Many of these troops managed to rally in sharp-pitched battles, despite being overrun and frequently out-maneuvered. The lesson for the US is to expect any ground offensive against Iraq not to be without significant resistance, especially in the cities. Such resistance will increase as we approach Baghdad where most of his loyal supporters are centered. The Sunni minority sold their souls to support the regime. The collapse of the regime would trigger a hefty purge of sorts, something that Saddam's Sunni supporters understand and fear.

The weaknesses for the US to exploit encompass the army's vulnerability to air attack, ineffectual logistics and poor maintenance. Much can also be made of the psychological advantage that the US has from the 1991 victory, which must still be fresh in the minds of those Iraqi troops on the receiving end of US military might. Despite this, the US should not expect a replay of 1991 for several reasons. First, much of the existing US force structure was deactivated in the 1990s. On the army side, one entire heavy armored corps no longer exists (the US VII Corps which spearheaded the attack against the Republican Guards in Desert Storm). The best method to make up for these challenges is to equip and organize an ethnic or religious based force to fight alongside the US.

Don't be Predictable & Expect Civilian Casualties

> *...The Republican Guard and regular armored forces were safe from air attack once inside Basra [to avoid civilian casualties].[143]*
>
> Certain Victory: The US Army in the Gulf War

> *[Baghdad] residents no longer had to fear attacks during normal working hours. At night, their homes remained free of attacks, because F117s attacked only office buildings and bunkers.[144]*

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[143] Robert Scales, *Certain Victory*, (Fort Leavenworth, KS: 1994), 315

Saddam's biggest strength in fighting the US is its aversion to killing civilians. This provides Saddam with sanctuary for his regime's essential infrastructure. To protect the regime, important functions will be located among the masses, near schools and even in mosques. The US needs to understand this and not hesitate to target locations that Saddam is using even if there will be unintended consequences and casualties. This is not to say that the US should intentionally kill innocents. The goal is to keep that at a minimum, but not to hesitate to strike at locals where the regime is hiding. A safe and predictable air campaign will not work in the next war against Saddam Hussein. He knows how we use air power and the limitations we impose on ourselves. These he uses to his advantage and to our demise.

Summary

Saddam Hussein is an illegitimate dictator, whose precarious position frequently compels him to take extreme action. However, this is not a sign of irrational behavior, but a means he uses to remain in power, which is his most important objective. With this in mind, any competitors, real or perceived, are summarily dealt with. Adding to the challenges he faces within are the ones without, namely the US containment of Iraq. Until the embargo is lifted, he cannot again launch forward on his life-long dream of expanding Iraq's position economically or militarily. The embargo and the US need to go.

Despite Saddam's precarious dilemma, what has the US learned from the decade old confrontation with him? What is evident is that Saddam is a shrewd Machiavellian

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[144] *Gulf War Airpower Survey,* Vol .2, (Washington, DC: GPO, 1993), 221.

leader focused upon surviving and then imposing his will upon the region. When the US confronts Iraq the next time, we need to seriously contemplate the lessons of our last war against Saddam Hussein. Failure to do so will leave us vulnerable to a political or military defeat and not provide the sphinx with the correct answer.

Appendix
Illegitimate Borders

The Ottomans dominated most of the Arab world after the 1400s. However, by WW I, the Empire was greatly reduced because of European expansion. In 1914, Ottoman territory encompassed Anatolia, Asia Minor (modern day Turkey) and portions of the Arabian Peninsula (modern day Syria, Israel, Kuwait, Jordan, Iraq and part of Saudi Arabia).

The fate of the Ottoman Empire was sealed during WW I, when it sided with the Central Powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary). Occupying positions along the Suez Canal and the Bab el Mandeb (Yemen), the Ottomans were in a position to threaten vital British trade routes to India. The British launched a series of attacks up the Tigris-Euphrates River Valley and along the Dardanelles (Gallipoli) to forestall this.

The British also encouraged Arab rebellion against the Ottomans. The most successful came through the 1915-1916 McMahon-Hussein Correspondence. These letters, from the British High Commissioner of Egypt (McMahon), encouraged Hussein, the Hashemite Sharif of Mecca, to revolt against the Ottoman. If he did rebel, the British promised Hussein his own state.[145]

Meanwhile, British Ambassador Sir Mark Sykes and French Foreign Minister Francois Picot conspired to divide the Ottoman Empire. The accord was the Sykes-Picot Agreement, which the 1920 San Remo Treaty ultimately codified. Sykes-Picot created the modern borders of Iraq, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. France secured administration

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[145] Hourani, 207-208, 316-317.

over Syria and Lebanon, while Great Britain took control of Iraq, and Jordan. As a reward for revolting against the Ottomans, London installed Faisal as the Jordanian King.

The borders caused problems for these states, especially for Iraq by ignoring tribal/cultural rivalries and territorial disputes by placing the ethnically and religiously diverse Ottoman Provinces of Baghdad, Basra and Mosul into one state. The north brought the ethnically diverse Kurds, and Christian Assyrians with it, while the south encompassed a large Shia majority. The problem increased when the UK placed Sunni King Faisal in power (Sunni population is centered around Baghdad). The ethnic and religious demographics of Iraq highlight the problem. Ethnically, Iraqi includes; 73% Arab, 17% Kurdish and 10% Assyrian-Turkic people groups. The religiously division is 50% Shia, 40% Sunni and 10% Christian.[146]

Iraq's First and Second Gulf Wars are linked to the European designed borders. In addition to the ethnic and religious mix comprising Iraq, the other problem was access to the Persian Gulf and the Arab population in Persia. Sykes-Picot only granted twenty-six miles of coastline. Control over the Shatt al Arab waterway (border between Iran/Persian and Iraq) was shared by Iran and Iraq, which further reduced Iraqi access to the Persian Gulf. However, using the Shatt as a natural boundary for Iraq also left large groups of Arabs under Persian control further exacerbating the problem.

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[146] Mosul Province encompasses millions of Kurds. These Kurds (as well as those in modern Turkey) secured promises from the Europeans in the 1920 Treaty of Sevres for independence. However, Kurdish independence lapsed after Mustafa Ataturk seized power in Asia Minor and conquered Kurdish territory. Neither France nor Great Britain desired to go to war over this issue. Britain also needed to retain their Iraqi Kurds as outlined by Sykes-Picot when oil was discovered around Mosul. "Republic of Iraq*," Defense & Diplomacy* 3, no. 2 (February 1985), 29

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