

“SADDAM IS IRAQ: IRAQ IS SADDAM”

by

Jerrold M. Post, M.D. and Amatzia Baram, Ph.D.

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Terrorism,” Before the Subcommittee on National Security, Veterans Affairs and International Relations of the Committee on Government Reform, Washington DC, September 24, 2002.

“Saddam is Iraq: Iraq is Saddam”¹

Jerrold M. Post, M.D.² and Amatzia Baram, Ph.D.³

Introduction

Identified as a member of the “axis of evil” by President George W. Bush, Saddam Hussein’s Iraq continues to pose a major threat to the region and to Western society. Saddam has doggedly pursued the development of weapons of mass destruction, despite U.N. sanctions imposed at the conclusion of the Gulf crisis. To deal effectively with Saddam Hussein requires a clear understanding of his motivations, perceptions, and decision-making. To provide a framework for this complex political leader, a comprehensive political psychology profile has been developed, and his actions since the crisis analyzed in the context of this political psychology assessment.

Political Personality Profile

Saddam Hussein, president of Iraq, has been characterized as “the madman of the Middle East.” This pejorative diagnosis is not only inaccurate but also dangerous. Consigning Saddam to the realm of madness can mislead decision makers into believing he is unpredictable when in fact he is not. An examination of the record of Saddam Hussein’s leadership of Iraq for the past 34 years reveals a judicious political calculator, who is by no means irrational, but is dangerous to the extreme.

Saddam Hussein, “the great struggler,” has explained the extremity of his actions as president of Iraq as necessary to achieve “subjective immunity” against foreign plots and influences. All actions of the revolution are justified by the “exceptionalism of revolutionary needs.” In fact, an examination of Saddam Hussein’s life and career reveals this is but the ideological rationalization for a lifelong pattern: all actions are justified if they are in the service of furthering Saddam Hussein’s needs and messianic ambitions.

Painful Beginnings—The “Wounded Self”

Saddam Hussein was born in 1937 to a poor peasant family near Tikrit, some 100 miles north of Baghdad, in central-north Iraq. But the central lines of the development of Saddam Hussein’s political personality were etched before he was born, for his father died of an “internal disease” (probably cancer) during his mother’s pregnancy with Saddam. His 12 year old brother, too, died (of childhood cancer) a few months later, when Saddam’s mother, Sabha, was in her eighth month of pregnancy. Destitute, Saddam’s mother attempted suicide. A Jewish family saved her. Then she tried to abort herself of Saddam, but was again prevented from doing this by her Jewish benefactors. After Saddam was born, on April 28, 1937, his mother did not wish to see him, strongly suggesting that she was suffering from a post-partum depression. His care was relegated to Sabha’s brother (his maternal uncle) Khayrallah Talfah Msallat in Tikrit, in whose home Saddam spent much of his early childhood. At age three Saddam was re-united with his mother. In the meantime, Sabha married a distant relative, Hajj Ibrahim Hasan.⁴ Hajj Ibrahim, his stepfather, reportedly was abusive psychologically and physically to young Saddam⁵ during the first several years of life, which are crucial to the development of a healthy self-esteem.

The failure of the mother to nurture and bond with her infant son, and the subsequent abuse at the hands of his stepfather, profoundly wounded Saddam’s emerging self-esteem, impairing his capacity for empathy with others, producing what has been identified as “the wounded self.” One course in the face of such traumatizing experiences is to sink into despair, passivity and hopelessness. But another is to etch a psychological template of compensatory grandiosity, as if to vow, “Never again, never again shall I submit to superior force.” This was the developmental psychological path Saddam followed.

From early years on, Saddam, whose name means “the One who Confronts,” charted his own course and would not accept limits. According to his semi-official biography, when Saddam was only ten years old, he was impressed by a visit from his cousin who knew how to read and write. He confronted his family with his wish to become educated, and when they turned him down, since there was no school in his parents’ village, he left his home in the middle of the night, making his way to the home of his maternal uncle Khayrallah in Tikrit in order to study there.⁶ It is quite possible that Saddam somewhat embellished his

story, but there is no mistaking his resentment against his mother and stepfather that emerges from it.

Khayrallah Inspires Dreams of Glory

Khayrallah was to become not only Saddam's father figure but also his political mentor. Khayrallah had fought against Great Britain in the Iraqi uprising of 1941 and had spent 5 years in prison for his nationalist agitation. He filled the impressionable young boy's head with tales of his heroic relatives, his great grandfather and two great uncles who gave their lives for the cause of Iraqi and Arab nationalism, fighting foreign invaders. He conveyed to his young charge that he was destined for greatness, following the path of his heroic relatives and of heroes of the Medieval Arab-Islamic world. Khayrallah, who was later to become governor of Baghdad, shaped young Hussein's worldview, imbuing him with a hatred of foreigners. In 1981, Saddam republished a pamphlet written by his uncle entitled *Three Whom God Should Not Have Created: Persians, Jews, and Flies*.

Khayrallah tutored his young charge in his view of Arab history and the ideology of Arab nationalism. Khayrallah himself did not join the Ba'ath party, but his worldview was close to its ideology. For the teen-aged Saddam, joining it in 1957 was thus a natural choice. Founded in 1940, the Ba'ath party envisaged the creation of a new Arab nation defeating the colonialist and imperialist powers, and achieving Arab independence, unity, and socialism.

Ba'ath ideology, as conceptualized by its intellectual founding father, Michel Aflaq, focuses on the history of oppression and division of the Arab world, first at the hands of the Mongols, then the Ottoman Turks, then the Western mandates, then the monarchies ruled by Western interests, and finally by the establishment of the "Zionist entity."

Thus inspired by his uncle's tales of heroism in the service of the Arab nation, Saddam has been consumed by dreams of glory since his earliest days, identifying himself with Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylonia (not an Arab, but seen by many in Iraq as such and certainly as a great Iraqi) who conquered Jerusalem and exiled the Jews in 586 B.C. Saddam was also fascinated by the exploits of Saladin (a Muslim Kurd regarded by many Arabs as an Arab) who regained Jerusalem in 1187 by defeating the Crusaders. But these dreams of glory, formed so young,

were compensatory, for they sat astride a wounded self filled with a profound self-doubt.

Saddam was steeped in Arab history and Ba'athist ideology by the time he traveled with his uncle to Baghdad to pursue his secondary education. The schools, a hotbed of a combination of Arab nationalism and Iraqi pride, confirmed his political leanings. In 1952, when Saddam was 15, Nasser led the Free Officer's revolution in Egypt and became a hero to young Saddam and his peers. As the activist leader of Pan Arabism, Nasser became an idealized model for Saddam, stating that only by courageously confronting imperialist powers could Arab nationalism be freed from Western shackles.⁷

At age 20, inspired by Nasser, Saddam joined the Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party in Iraq. In those days the party was still strongly pro-Nasser, seeing in him by far the most promising leader of the pan-Arab movement. Indeed, a few months after Saddam joined the party in Iraq, the Syrian branch turned to Nasser for a Syrian-Egyptian union and, upon his demand, even agreed to disband itself. In the 1960s relations between the resuscitated Ba'ath and Nasser deteriorated, and the United Arab Republic split up, even though both still claimed to believe in the unification of all the Arab states. But when Saddam joined the party all this was still unimaginable: Nasser was the hero.

Saddam quickly impressed party officials with his dedication. Known as a "street thug," he willingly used violence in the service of the party, and was rewarded with rapid promotion. Two years later, in 1958, apparently emulating Nasser, Army General Abd al-Karim Qassem led a coup d'état which ousted the monarchy. But unlike Nasser, Qassem did not pursue the path of pan-Arabism, and turned against the Ba'ath party. The 22-year-old Saddam was called to Ba'ath Party headquarters and given the mission to join a small team assigned to assassinate Qassem. The mission failed, reportedly because of a crucial error in judgment by the inexperienced would-be assassins. But Saddam's escape to Syria, first by horseback and then by swimming across the Tigris, has achieved mythic status in Iraqi history.

During his exile, Saddam went to Egypt where he completed his high school education and started to study law, receiving a small allowance from Nasser. While in Cairo, he engaged in illegal Ba'ath party activity there (the party had disbanded itself and was banned in the UAR). This won Saddam Nasser's wrath, but the Egyptian leader was keen to keep a

radical anti-Qassem activist on his side, and refrained from any harsh measures.

Saddam returned to Iraq after the Ba'ath took over in Baghdad in February 1963. In March 1963 the party came to power also in Damascus. In Baghdad, Saddam then became a middle-level operative in the party's security apparatus. Afalq, the ideological father of the Ba'ath party, admired young Hussein, but Saddam still had a long way to go to get to the top. In November 1963 the party lost power in Baghdad, and Saddam and his comrades were arrested, then released, remaining under surveillance. In July 1968 they came to power again through a military coup d'état.

Rivalry with Assad to be Supreme Arab National Leader

Rivalry over who is the true representative of the Ba'ath party and the rightful leading elite of the Arab world, the Ba'ath regime in Damascus or the underground party in Baghdad, emerged in 1966, but it reached a political crescendo soon after the Iraqi Ba'ath came to power for the second time in 1968. At first, this was a three-way struggle between Cairo, Damascus and Baghdad, but Abd al-Nasser's death in September 1970 left only two contenders.

Until Saddam became president, in 1979, this was a contest for legitimacy and Arab leadership essentially between an Iraqi duo: Vice President Saddam Hussein and his boss and distant relative, President Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr, on the one hand side, and President Hafez al-Assad in Damascus on the other. Afterward this became a more bitter and acrimonious sparring between Saddam and Assad. Some thawing in the late 1990s notwithstanding, the split and rivalry persisted until the death of the Syrian leader in 2000.

Back in July 1968, with the crucial secret assistance of military intelligence chief Abdul Razzaz al Naif, Saddam helped mount a successful coup in 1968. In gratitude for services rendered, within two weeks of the coup, Saddam had arranged for the capture and exile of Naif, and subsequently ordered his assassination. It is important to observe that Naif was ambitious, and that after he was ousted and exiled he was engaged in anti-regime activity. In 1970 Saddam ousted Minister of Defense Hardan Abd al-Ghafar al-Tikriti, another senior and an ambitious associate, and a year later he had him assassinated. In 1979 Saddam forced his senior partner, President Bakr, out of office and made himself

president. Three years later the elderly ex-president died, widely believed to have been poisoned by his young successor.

The ousters and later assassinations represent a recurring pattern where Saddam has turned on friends and broken commitments throughout his career. He has a flexible conscience: commitments and loyalty are matters of circumstance, and circumstances change. If an individual, or a nation, is perceived as an impediment or a threat, no matter how loyal in the past, that individual or nation will be eliminated violently without a backward glance, and the action will be justified by “the exceptionalism of revolutionary needs.” Nothing must be permitted to stand in “the great struggler’s” messianic path as he pursues his (and Iraq’s) revolutionary destiny, as exemplified by this extract from Saddam Hussein’s remarkable “Victory Day” message of 8 August 1990.⁸

This is the only way to deal with these despicable Croesuses who relished possession to destroy devotion . . . who were guided by the foreigner instead of being guided by virtuous standards, principles of Pan-Arabism, and the creed of humanitarianism. . . . The second of August . . . is the legitimate newborn child of the struggle, patience and perseverance of the Kuwaiti people, which was crowned by revolutionary action on that immortal day. The newborn child was born of a legitimate father and an immaculate mother. Greetings to the makers of the second of August, whose efforts God has blessed. They have achieved one of the brightest, most promising and most principled national and Pan-Arab acts.

Two August has come as a very violent response to the harm that the foreigner had wanted to perpetrate against Iraq and the nation. The Croesus of Kuwait and his aides become the obedient, humiliated and treacherous dependents of that foreigner . . . What took place on 2 August was inevitable so that death might not prevail over life, so that those who were capable of ascending to the peak would not be brought down to the abysmal precipice, so that corruption and remoteness from God would not spread to the majority . . . Honor will be kept in Mesopotamia so that Iraq will be the pride of the Arabs, their protector, and their model of noble values.

Capable of Reversing His Course

Saddam's practice of revolutionary opportunism has another important characteristic. Just as previous commitments must not be permitted to stand in way of Saddam's messianic path, neither should he persist in a particular course of action if it proves to be counterproductive for him and his nation. When he pursues a course of action, he pursues it fully; if he meets initial resistance, he will struggle all the harder, convinced of the correctness of his judgments. Should circumstances demonstrate that he miscalculated, he is capable of reversing his course. Yet, he sticks to his guns on the strategic level: he never gives up a dream. He will wait until circumstances change, and then he'll strike again. In these circumstances of a momentary reversal he does not acknowledge he has erred but, rather, that he is adapting to a dynamic situation. The three most dramatic examples of the revolutionary pragmatism and ideological flexibility concern his ongoing struggle with his Persian enemies.

Yields on Shatt al Arab To Quell the Kurdish Rebellion

In March 1975, Saddam signed an agreement with the Shah of Iran, splitting the disputed Shatt al-Arab waterway along the thalweg line, thus stipulating Iranian sovereignty over the Iranian (eastern) side. This he did in return for Iran's ceasing to supply the Kurdish rebellion. In 1970 Saddam signed an autonomy agreement with the Kurds, but in 1973 he declared that the Ba'ath party represented all Iraqis, that the Kurds could not be neutral, and that the Kurds were either fully with the people or against them.

In 1975 he destroyed the Kurdish autonomy and established a pseudo-autonomy, fully controlled from Baghdad.

In 1979 he made the same point in regard to the Communist Party of Iraq, with whom he had a common "Patriotic Front." "Are you," he asked them, "with us in the same trench, or against us?" Then he cracked down on them with full force, imprisoning, torturing and executing many. Indeed, this is another of Saddam's basic principles - "He who is not totally with me is my enemy."

By 1975, the war against the Kurds had become extremely costly, having cost 60,000 lives in one year alone. Demonstrating his revolutionary pragmatism, despite his lifelong hatred of the Persians, Saddam's urgent need to put down the Kurdish rebellion took (temporary) precedence.

The loss of the Shatt al Arab waterway continued to rankle, and in

September 1980, sensing Iran's military weakness as well as confusion in the Iranian political system, he declared the 1975 agreement null and void. Saddam then invaded Khuzistan-Arabestan province. There were additional reasons for the invasion: fear of domestic Shi'i unrest for one, but there may be little doubt that *revanche* was a major consideration. At first the Iraqi forces met with little resistance. However, following an initial success, Iran stiffened and began to inflict serious damage not only on Iraqi forces but also on the Iraqi cities. It became clear to Saddam that the war was counterproductive.

Attempts to End the Iran-Iraq War

In May-June 1982, Saddam's forces were beaten out of much of the areas they had occupied. He then reversed his earlier militant aggression and attempted to terminate hostilities, ordering a unilateral withdrawal from some other previously seized areas and offering a ceasefire. Khomeini, who by now was obsessed with Saddam, would have none of it, indicating that there would be no peace with Iraq until Saddam no longer ruled Iraq. The Iran-Iraq War continued for another bloody 6 years, taking a dreadful toll, estimated at more than a million casualties on the two sides.

In 1988, an indecisive ceasefire was agreed to, with Iraq sustaining a military advantage. Saddam may have been able to reach a peace agreement, but this would have necessitated a return to the 1975 agreement, including renewed recognition of Iranian sovereignty over the eastern side of the Shatt al Arab. Saddam refused to make this concession, indicating that he would *never* yield, and that he would *never* withdraw from some Iranian territory he still held.

Reversed Policy on Disputed Waterway

But revolutionary pragmatism was to supersede this resolve, for Hussein was planning a new war, against a new enemy. He desperately needed the 500,000 troops tied up on the Iraqi-Iranian border, and he was in dire need of strategic depth. On August 15, 1990, thirteen days after he conquered Kuwait and found himself facing an ominous American troop buildup, Hussein agreed to meet Iranian conditions, promising to withdraw from Iranian territory and, most importantly, agreeing to share the disputed Shatt al Arab waterway. *Never* is a short time when revolutionary pragmatism dictates, which was important to remember in

evaluating Saddam's vow of 1990 to *never* relinquish Kuwait, and his continued intransigence to Western demands.

Reversal of Hostage Policy

The decision to release all foreign hostages fits this pattern. As with other misdirected policies in the past, Saddam initially pursued his hostage policy with full vigor, despite mounting evidence that it was counterproductive. When it became clear to him that it was not protecting him from the likelihood of military conflict, as initially conceived, but was actually unifying the international opposition, he reversed the policy. The announcement followed an especially strong statement by Secretary Baker concerning the use of "decisive force," but the anger of his former ally, the Soviet Union, was undoubtedly important as well. Moreover, the timing was designed not only to play on perceived internal divisions within the United States but also to magnify perceived differences in the international coalition. As it turned out, releasing the hostages did not help, but it seemed like a good idea, and the chance that it would prevent the attack against him was sufficient for Saddam to do it.

Saddam's Psychological Characteristics: Malignant Narcissism

The labels "madman of the Middle East" and "megalomaniac" are often affixed to Saddam, but in fact there is no evidence that he is suffering from a psychotic disorder. He is not impulsive, only acts after judicious consideration, and can be extremely patient. Indeed, he uses time as a weapon.

While he is psychologically in touch with reality, he is often politically out of touch with reality. Saddam's worldview is narrow and distorted, and he has scant experience outside of the Arab world. His only sustained experience with non-Arabs was with his Soviet military advisors, and he reportedly has only traveled outside of the Middle East on two occasions, a brief trip to Paris in 1976 and another trip to Moscow.

Moreover, he is surrounded by sycophants, who are cowed by Saddam's well-founded reputation for brutality and who are afraid to contradict him. He has ruthlessly eliminated perceived threats to his power and equates criticism with disloyalty.

In 1979, when he fully assumed the reins of Iraqi leadership, one of his first acts was to execute 21 senior officials whose loyalty he questioned. The dramatic meeting has been captured on film of his senior officials in which the 21 “traitors” were identified while Saddam watched, smiling broadly and luxuriantly smoking a Cuban cigar. After the “forced confessions” by a “plotter” whose family had been arrested, the remaining senior officials formed the execution squads.

In 1982, when the war with Iran was going very badly for Iraq and Saddam wished to terminate hostilities, Khomeini, who was personally fixated on Saddam, insisted there could be no peace until Saddam was removed from power. At a cabinet meeting, Saddam asked his ministers to candidly give their advice, and the Minister of Health suggested Saddam temporarily step down, to resume the presidency after peace had been established. Saddam reportedly thanked him for his candor and ordered his arrest.

His wife pleaded for her husband’s return, indicating that her husband had always been loyal to Saddam. Saddam promised her that her husband would be returned. The next day, Saddam returned her husband’s body to her in a black canvas bag, chopped into pieces according to one story. This powerfully concentrated the attention of the other ministers who were unanimous in their insistence that Saddam remain in power.

Sometimes he wants frank advice, but it is difficult to tell when he truly means it. The prudent inclination is to give him the advice one believes he really wants to hear. When his mind is made up, he leaves no room for the slightest dispute. Thus, he is deprived of the check of independent counsel from his leadership circle. This combination of limited international perspective and a sycophantic leadership circle has, in the past, led him to miscalculate.

Exalted Self Concept: Saddam is Iraq, Iraq is Saddam

Saddam’s pursuit of power for himself and Iraq is boundless. In fact, in his mind, the destiny of Saddam and Iraq are one and indistinguishable. His exalted self-concept is fused with his Ba’athist political ideology. He believes Ba’athist dreams will be realized only when the Arab nation is unified under one strong leader. In Saddam’s mind, he is destined for that role.

Saddam’s grandiose self-image and self-absorption is so extreme that he has little capacity to emphasize with others. In many ways, he sees his

advisers and inner circle as extensions of himself. This bears on the special meaning of loyalty to Saddam. For Saddam, loyalty is a one-way street. He can turn abruptly against individuals of whom he has become suspicious despite their demonstrated total loyalty throughout their career. His fundamental distrust and wariness is so extreme that he is loath to trust anyone fully. He feels at ease only around people who owe their jobs and positions to him, and thus owe him great respect and loyalty, or people who belong to a population group in Iraq that cannot seriously aspire to power. To the first category belong people like his own sons but also the members of his security system whom he molded for many years in his own image, and who totally owe their careers and special advantages to him.

Saddam feels ill at ease around people with careers that were not developed under his patronage, and especially people with higher education and professional credentials. Exceptions to this are Tariq Aziz, Foreign Minister, who has a PhD from the University of Pennsylvania and Dr. Sa'dun Hammadi, Speaker of the Parliament, who has an MA from the University of Baghdad. Saddam is comfortable with these men because, in addition to being a Christian (Aziz) and Shi'ite (Hammadi), they totally owe their careers to him.

No Constraint of Conscience

In pursuit of his messianic dreams, there is no evidence he is constrained by conscience. His only loyalty is to Saddam Hussein. When there is an obstacle in his revolutionary path, Saddam eliminates it, whether it is a previously loyal subordinate or a previously supportive country.

Unconstrained Aggression in Pursuit of His Goals

In pursuing his goals, Saddam uses aggression instrumentally. He uses whatever force is necessary, and will, if he deems it expedient, go to extremes of violence, including the use of weapons of mass destruction. His unconstrained aggression is instrumental in pursuing his goals, but it is at the same time defensive aggression, for his grandiose facade masks underlying insecurity.

Paranoid Orientation

While Hussein is not psychotic, he has a strong paranoid orientation. He is ready for retaliation, and, not without reason, sees himself as

surrounded by enemies. But he ignores his role in creating those enemies, and righteously threatens his targets. The conspiracy theories he spins are not merely for popular consumption in the Arab world, but genuinely reflect his paranoid mindset. He is convinced that the United States, Israel, and Iran have been in league for the purpose of eliminating him, and finds a persuasive chain of evidence for this conclusion. His minister of information, Latif Nusayyif Jassim, who was responsible for propaganda, his Vice President, Taha Yasin Ramadan, his Deputy Chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council, Izzat Ibrahim, and more generally speaking, his internal security apparatus probably helped reinforce Saddam's paranoid disposition and in a sense are the implementers of his paranoia.

It is this political personality constellation of a messianic ambition for unlimited power, an absence of conscience, unconstrained aggression, and a paranoid outlook which makes Saddam so dangerous. Conceptualized as malignant narcissism, this is the personality configuration of the destructive charismatic, who unifies and rallies his downtrodden supporters by blaming outside enemies. While Saddam is not charismatic, this psychological stance is the basis of Saddam's particular appeal to the Palestinians who see him as a strongman who shares their intense anti-Zionism and will champion their cause.

Views Self as One of History's Great Leaders

Saddam Hussein genuinely sees himself as one of the great leaders of history, ranking himself with his heroes: Nasser, Castro, Tito, Ho Chi Minh, and Mao Zedong, each of whom he admires for adapting socialism to his environment, free of foreign domination. Saddam sees himself as transforming his society. He believes youth must be "fashioned" to "safeguard the future" and that Iraqi children must be transformed into a "radiating light that will expel" traditional family backwardness. Like Mao, Saddam has encouraged youth to inform on their parents' anti-revolutionary activity. As God-like status was ascribed to Mao, and giant pictures and statues of him were placed throughout China, so too giant pictures and statues of Saddam abound in Iraq. Asked about this cult of personality, Saddam shrugs and says he "cannot help it if that is what they want to do."

Probably Over-reads Degree of Support in Arab World

Saddam Hussein is so consumed with his messianic mission that he probably overestimates the degree of his support in the rest of the Arab world. He psychologically assumes that many in the Arab world, especially the downtrodden, share his views and see him as their hero. He was probably genuinely surprised at the fairly wide condemnation of his invasion of Kuwait. He was right, though, when it came to many Jordanians, Palestinians and Syrians.

Political Personality Shapes Leadership Style

Saddam's leadership and operating style can be summarized in what Regis Matlak has dubbed "Saddam's Rules for Survival":⁹

1. *Innocence is No Defense; Guilt is More Secure:* Although not necessarily the first recourse, Saddam has ordered execution of innocent officers to insure the removal of all coup plotters rather than be vulnerable to a residual threat. On the other hand, official complicity in crimes, that is to say "authorized" corruption, arbitrary arrest, and "official" torture and mutilation, are required to establish bona fides.
2. *Be Eternally Agnostic on Matters of Family and Loyalty:* For Saddam, it is an article of faith to be vigilant on appointments to coup-sensitive positions in his personal bodyguard and the broader palace-controlled personal, protective infrastructure.
3. *Never Trust a Fellow Conspirator.*
4. *Beware Dangerous Liaisons:* Saddam believes a coup plotter with luck and audacity is more likely to succeed than a conspirator with an extensive organization.
5. *Pre-empt the Building of Personal Power Bases or Political Factions, Particularly in Military and Security Organs:* Despite key assignments being restricted to family members and other members of the Tikrit power structure, Saddam does not permit a long tenure in any one position. Saddam views

the establishment of a single independent power base as a de facto challenge to his leadership.

6. *Disregard "Intelligence" at Great Peril:* Saddam takes seriously the human and technical information gathered from his pervasive intelligence and security networks. Saddam has also learned that acting on such intelligence with leniency has led the same conspirators to try again at a later time.
7. *Redundancy is "Security Effective," if not Resource Efficient:* There exist visible and shadowy organizational structures meant to pre-empt, control, or react to threats to regime stability. This security apparatus is well practiced at penetrating military and intelligence centered cabals.
8. *Trojan Horses and Other Deceptions:* Saddam is not content to pursue only those who actively plan his removal. He also seeks out those who *might be tempted* to join a coup conspiracy if given the opportunity. This is done both through setting up "disloyal" senior offices to gather potential coup plotters, as well as the "perceived" Trojan Horse where a friend or family member hears unfavorable commentary about Saddam or the regime and is unclear whether this is a regime test knowing that if it is and they don't turn the person they will pay the price.
9. *A Cult of personality and A Perception of Invulnerability:* Saddam and the regime have fostered a cult of personality. One of the primary objectives, at least for Saddam, is to create a perception that only Saddam can save Iraq from internal chaos, anarchy, and foreign encroachment; that Saddam and the regime are everywhere and all-powerful; and that it is futile to even think beyond Saddam. Saddam icons are located everywhere.
10. *Retribution is Good:* Individuals must know that there will be a high price to pay for taking action against Saddam. This characteristic is so strong in Saddam's operating style that it serves to define Saddam's response to betrayal or attack.

Saddam at the Crossroads

It is not by accident that Saddam Hussein has survived for more than three decades as his nation's preeminent leader in this tumultuous part of the world. While he is driven by dreams of glory, and his political perspective is narrow and distorted, he is a shrewd tactician who has a sense of patience. He is able to justify extremes of aggression on the basis of revolutionary, pan-Arab and anti-imperialist needs. Yet, if the aggression is counterproductive, he has shown a pattern of reversing his course when he has miscalculated, waiting until a later day to achieve his destiny. His drive for power is not diminished by these reversals, but only deflected.

Saddam Hussein is a ruthless political calculator who will go to whatever lengths are necessary to achieve his goals. His survival in power, with his dignity intact, is his highest priority. Soviet Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov, after meeting him in Baghdad during the Gulf War, suggested that Saddam was suffering from a "Masada Complex," which would cause him to jeopardize Iraq rather than compromise with other nations, preferring a martyr's death to yielding. This is assuredly not the case. Saddam has no wish to be a martyr, and survival is his number one priority. A self-proclaimed revolutionary pragmatist, he does not wish a conflict in which Iraq will be grievously damaged and his stature as a leader destroyed.

Moreover, Primakov summed up his visit to Baghdad stating that Saddam had a sense of confidence in his military due to the technical superiority of his land forces in the Iran-Iraq war.¹⁰ After all, Saddam reportedly felt that his chances of survival, even victory, or maybe a respectable draw, were excellent.

However, another aspect of a "Masada Complex" suits him well, that of frequently feeling that formidable hostile forces are besieging him. When he and his spokesmen argue that Iraq had little choice but to attack Kuwait in 1990, they explain that Kuwait had been conspiring with the U.S. to destroy Iraq, and an escape forward was the only way to save regime and country.

At the same time, however, Saddam also complained that the U.S. gave him a *carte blanche* to attack Kuwait, and when he took it at its face value the U.S. pounced on him.

However, one wonders, if he knew the U.S. was adamant about destroying him, how could he possibly believe anything they told him?

Should he not have suspected a trap in anything the Americans were telling him?

Saddam's advisors' reluctance to disagree with Saddam's policies contributes to the potential for miscalculation. Nevertheless, his advisors, by providing information and assessments, are able to make significant inputs to the accuracy of Saddam's evaluation of Iraq's political/military situation.

While Saddam appreciated the danger of the Gulf crisis, it did provide the opportunity to defy the hated outsiders, a strong value in his Ba'ath ideology. He continued to cast the conflict as a struggle between Iraq, leading the "Camp" of the decent and patriotic Arabs, the true Muslims and honest people in the world at large, against the United States. Further, he argued it as a struggle between the "Slave of God" Saddam Hussein versus the "Infidel" and "Imperialist" George Bush. When the struggle became thus personalized, it could enhance Saddam's reputation as a courageous strongman willing to defy the imperialist United States.

When President George H. W. Bush depicted the conflict as the unified civilized world against Saddam Hussein, it hit a tender nerve for Saddam. Saddam has his eye on his role in history and places great stock in world opinion. If he were to conclude that his status as a world leader was threatened, it would have important constraining effects on him. Thus the prospect of being expelled from the United Nations and of Iraq being castigated as a rogue nation outside the community of nations would be very threatening to Saddam. The overwhelming majority supporting the Security Council resolution at the time of the conflict must have confronted Saddam with the damage he was inflicting on his reputation as a leader, despite his defiant rhetoric dismissing the resolutions of the United Nations as reflecting the United States' control of the international organization.

Defiant rhetoric was a hallmark of the conflict and lent itself to misinterpretation across cultural boundaries. The Arab world places great stock on expressive language. The language of courage is a hallmark of leadership, and great value is attached to the very act of expressing brave resolve against the enemy, in and of itself. Even though the statement is made in response to the United States, when Saddam speaks it is to multiple audiences. Much of his language is solipsistic and designed to demonstrate his courage and resolve to the Iraqi people and the Arab and Islamic worlds. There is no necessary connection between courageous verbal expression and the act threatened. Nasser gained great stature from

his fiery rhetoric. Moreover, the fiercely defiant rhetoric was another indicator of the stress on Saddam, for the more threatened Saddam feels, the more threatening he becomes.

By the same token, Saddam probably hears the Western words of President Bush through a Middle Eastern filter. When a public statement of resolve and intent was made by President George H. W. Bush, Saddam may well have discounted the expressed intent to act.

This underlines the importance of a private channel to communicate clearly and unambiguously. The mission by Secretary of State Baker afforded the opportunity to resolve any misunderstandings on Saddam's part concerning the strength of resolve and intentions of the United States and the international coalition. There may be no doubt that, even though he refused to deliver President Bush's letter to Saddam, Tariq Aziz, who met with Baker in Geneva, delivered the message that the letter contained. Still, Saddam remained inclined to believe that the U.S. would not attack.¹¹ This, like his more general assessment that invading Kuwait was a safe bet, demonstrates Saddam's predilection for wishful thinking.

The Iran-Iraq War and Gulf Crisis Promote Saddam to World-Class Leader

Until he invaded Iran Saddam Hussein had languished in obscurity, overshadowed by the heroic stature of other Middle Eastern leaders such as Nasser, Anwar Sadat, and Ayatollah Khomeini. But, with the invasion of Iran, he assumed the role of the defender of the Arab world against the Persian threat "the Guardian of the Eastern Gate" of the Arab homeland. But when the war was over, his economy was in shambles, his population was seething as a result of a crisis of unfulfilled socio-economic expectations, and his prestige in the Arab world was lower than it had been before he invaded Iran. In the Gulf crisis, at long last, Saddam was exactly where he believed he was destined to be, a world-class political actor on center stage commanding world events, with the entire world's attention focused upon him. When his rhetoric was threatening, the price of oil rose precipitously and the Dow Jones average plummeted. He was demonstrating to the Arab masses that he is an Arab leader (qa'id) of historical proportions with the courage to defy the West and expel foreign influences.

Now that he was at the very center of international attention, his appetite for glory was stimulated all the more. The glory-seeking Saddam

would not easily yield the spotlight of international attention. He wanted to remain on center stage, but not at the expense of his power and his prestige. Saddam would only withdraw if he calculated that he could do so with his power and his honor intact and that the drama in which he is starring would continue.

Honor and reputation must be interpreted in an Arab context. Saddam had already achieved considerable honor in the eyes of the Arab masses for having the courage to stand up to the West. It should be remembered that, even though Egypt militarily lost the 1973 war with Israel, Sadat became a hero to the Arab world for his willingness to attack, and initially force back, the previously invincible forces of Israel. Qadhafi mounted an air attack when the United States crossed the so-called "line of death." Even though his jets were destroyed in the ensuing conflict, Qadhafi's status was raised in the Arab world. Indeed, he thanked the United States for making him a hero to the third world.¹² Thus, so too, Saddam could find honor in the 1990-91 confrontation. He could even sustain very heavy casualties, provided that the battle would end with a draw, or with a defeat that could somehow be presented as a draw. And a draw with the U.S. in itself would be a kind of victory.

Saddam's past history reveals a remarkable capacity to find face saving justification when reversing his course in very difficult circumstances. Insisting on total capitulation and humiliation could drive Saddam into a corner and make it impossible for him to reverse his course. He would only withdraw from Kuwait if he believed he could survive with his power and his honor intact.

By the same token, he would only reverse his course if his power and reputation were threatened. This would require a posture of strength, firmness and clarity of purpose by a unified civilized world, demonstrably willing to use overwhelming force if necessary. The only language Saddam Hussein understands is the language of power. Without this demonstrable willingness to use force, even if the sanctions were biting deeply, Saddam was quite capable of putting his population through a sustained period of hardship.

It was crucial to demonstrate unequivocally to Saddam Hussein that unless he withdrew, his career as a world-class political actor would be ended. The announcement of a major escalation of the force level was presumably designed to drive that message home. The U.N. resolution authorizing the use of force unless Iraq withdrew by January 15 was a

particularly powerful message because of the large majority supporting the resolution.

The message almost certainly was received. In the wake of the announcement of the increase in coalition force levels in November 1990, Saddam intensified his request for “deep negotiations,” seeking a way out in which he could preserve his power and his reputation. This, however, could only be achieved had he managed to pressure the United States to agree to leave a meaningful Iraqi presence in Kuwait, as well as to start pushing Israel out of the West Bank and Gaza.

Alternatively, both he and his lieutenants had to be fully convinced that if Iraq did not withdraw they would lose power in Baghdad or, at least, be on the brink of losing power. That President Bush sent Secretary of State Baker to meet one-on-one with Saddam was an extremely important step. Yet, even the Geneva meeting failed to convince Saddam that the U.S. would go to an all-out war. In the interim leading up to the meeting, and following it, the shrewdly manipulative Saddam continued to attempt to divide the international coalition.

Considering himself a revolutionary pragmatist, Saddam is, at heart, a survivor. Even if in response to the unified demonstration of strength and resolve he did retreat and reverse his course, this would only be a temporary deflection of his unbounded drive for power. It was a certainty that he will return at a later date, stronger than ever, unless firm measures were taken to contain him. This underlined the importance of strategic planning beyond the immediate crisis, especially considering his progress toward acquiring a nuclear weapons capability. If blocked in his overt aggression, he could be expected to pursue his goals covertly through intensified support of terrorism.

Saddam will not go down to the last flaming bunker if he has a way out, but he can be extremely dangerous and will stop at nothing if he is backed into a corner. If he believes his very survival and reputation as a world-class political actor is threatened, Saddam can respond with unrestrained aggression, using whatever weapons and resources are at his disposal, in what would surely be a tragic and bloody final act.

Why Saddam Did Not Withdraw from Kuwait

In the political psychology profile prepared for the congressional hearings on the Gulf crisis in December 1990, recapitulated above, it was observed that Saddam was by no means a martyr and was indeed the

quintessential survivor. The key to his survival in power for 22 years was his capacity to reverse his course when events demonstrated that he had miscalculated. We believed he could again reverse himself if he concluded that unless he did so his power base and reputation would be destroyed, and if by so doing he could preserve his power base and reputation.

How can it be, then, that this self-described revolutionary pragmatist, faced by an overwhelming array of military power that would surely deal a mortal blow to his nation, entered into and persisted in a violent confrontational course? Cultural factors probably contributed to his calculation and miscalculation. As pointed out above, Saddam may well have heard President Bush's Western words of intent through a Middle Eastern filter and calculated that he was bluffing. It is also possible he downgraded the magnitude of the threat, likening the threatened response to the characteristic Arab hyperbole. Even though he expected a massive air strike, he undoubtedly was surprised by the magnitude of the destruction wrought on his forces.

But more importantly, the dynamic of the crisis affected Saddam. What began as an act of naked aggression toward Kuwait was transformed into the culminating act of the drama of his life. Although he had previously shown little concern for the Palestinian people, the shrewdly manipulative Saddam had wrapped himself and his invasion of Kuwait in the Palestinian flag. The response of the Palestinians was overwhelming. They saw Saddam as their hope and their salvation, standing up defiantly and courageously to the United States to force a just settlement of their cause. This caught the imagination of the masses throughout the Arab world and their shouts of approval fed his already swollen ego as he went on a defiant roll.

Intoxicated by the elixir of power and the acclaim of the Palestinians and the radical Arab masses, Saddam may well have been on a euphoric high and optimistically overestimated his chances for success. For Saddam's heroic self-image was engaged as never before. He was fulfilling the messianic goal that had obsessed him--and eluded him--throughout his life. He was actualizing his self-concept as leader of all the Arab peoples, the legitimate heir of Nebuchadnezzar, Saladin, and especially Nasser.

His psychology and his policy options became captives of his rhetoric and self image. He became so absolutist in his commitment to the Palestinian cause, to not yielding even partially over Kuwait until there was justice for the Palestinian people, and U.N. resolutions 242 and 338 had been complied with according to the Arab interpretation, that it would

have been extremely difficult for him to reverse himself without being dishonored, and to lose face in the Arab world was to be without authority. Unlike past reversals, these absolutist pronouncements were in the full spotlight of international attention. Saddam had, in effect, painted himself into a corner. The Bush administration's insistence on "no face-saving" only intensified this dilemma.

Not only, then, had Saddam concluded that to reverse himself would be to lose his honor, but he also probably doubted that his power base would be preserved if he dishonorably left Kuwait. It is suggested here that, in his confused thinking, Saddam at the same time doubted that the U.S. would go to war at all, and he also believed that, even if the U.S. did attack, having no stomach for the heavy casualties, it would certainly sustain, it would stop its offensive and start negotiating. Moreover, Saddam also doubted that the aggressive intention of the United States would be limited by the border of Iraq. For years he had been telling his people that a U.S.-Iran-Israeli conspiracy was in place to destroy Iraq and remove him and his regime from power.

Earlier, Foreign Minister Aziz had indicated "everything was on the table," but by late December the semblance of diplomatic flexibility had disappeared, and Saddam seemed intent on challenging the coalition's ultimatum. Saddam, in our estimation, had concluded that he could not reverse himself and withdraw without being dishonored. He had concluded that he needed to risk entering conflict to demonstrate his courage and to affirm his claim to pan-Arab and Islamic leadership as well as to traditional Arab values of manly valor (*al-futuwwa*, *al-muruwwa*) and honor (*al-sharaf*).¹³

Saddam expected a massive air campaign and planned to survive it. In the succeeding ground campaign, he hoped to engage the U.S. "Vietnam complex." As he had demonstrated in the Iran-Iraq War, his battle-hardened troops, he believed, could absorb massive casualties, whereas the weak-willed United States would not have the stomach for this, and a political-military stalemate would ensue.¹⁴

By demonstrating that he had the courage to stand up against the most powerful nation on earth, Saddam's credentials as pan-Arab leader and a manly hero alike would be consolidated and he would win great honor. In the Arab world, having the courage to fight a superior foe can bring political victory, even through a military setback.

Sadat had won great honor in 1973 by his leading the attack against previously invincible Israel, even though Egypt lost the military conflict.

Indeed, his enhanced prestige permitted him to approach Israel as equal negotiating partner, and ultimately led to the Camp David Accords.

Saddam's political hero and model, Nasser, gained great honor for confronting the imperialists in the 1956 Suez campaign. Even though he lost militarily, politically he was the winner, and this is how history remembered him. In 1967 Nasser was totally routed, and this destroyed his reputation and started his way downhill, but Saddam was certain that this could not happen to him.

Saddam hoped to consolidate his place in history as Nasser's heir by bravely defying the U.S. and, if there was no other way, confronting the U.S.-led coalition. On the third day of the air campaign, his minister of information, Latif Nusayyif Jassim, declared victory. To the astounded press he explained that the coalition expected Iraq to crumble in 2 days. Having already survived the massive air strikes for 3 days, the Iraqis were accordingly victorious, and each further day would only magnify the scope of their victory.

It was revealed in January that under Saddam's opulent palace was a mammoth bunker, fortified with steel and pre-stressed concrete. The architecture of this complex is Saddam's psychological architecture: a defiant, grandiose facade resting on the well-fortified foundation of a siege mentality. Attacked on all sides, Saddam remains besieged and defiant, using whatever aggression is necessary to consolidate his control and ensure his survival.

Threats to Saddam's Survival After the Conflict

Iraqi domestic support for Saddam Hussein was drastically eroded after the Gulf War. By late 1996 a series of betrayals, failures and disappointments had left him in a more precarious domestic position than at any time since March 1991. A principle of Saddam's leadership that has always been true has, if anything, been intensified in the post-war period. In particular, ensuring his domestic stability and eliminating internal threats to his regime is Saddam's central concern, and, in a clash between his international position and internal security, internal security will win out. Moreover, precipitating international crises can strengthen

Saddam's internal position. The most damaging consequence of a setback internationally that proves him to be a failure as a leader is the consequent reduction in his internal prestige and threats to his regime's stability.

Five events could lead his power base to seriously question Saddam's ability successfully to lead Iraq:

- If Saddam's actions were to provoke the West to conduct a sustained powerful military campaign that destroyed important elements of his military power. This could happen if Iraq was unable to mend its fences with at least some of its Arab sisters, with Turkey and some great powers.
- If he could not demonstrate to his power base that he will soon be able to bring to an end, or, at least, to substantially erode the U.N. inspections regime and with it the oil embargo.
- If he were unable to guarantee the functioning of the national economy and to continue to support the relatively extravagant life style of his bodyguards and ruling elite.
- If he were unable to retain Iraq's WMD arsenal.
- If he were to lose the propaganda campaign he has waged within Iraq.

Accordingly, in addition to attempting to strengthen internal vulnerabilities, he also has worked assiduously to strengthen his international position, both with his "far abroad,"—Russia, France, and China—as well as his "near abroad," Middle Eastern neighbor states.

Weakened Military

Immediately after the conflict terminated in March 1991, the military, Saddam's major source of support, was gravely weakened, its once proud reputation as the most powerful military in the Gulf shattered, its ranks and material depleted, and its morale destroyed.

- Declarations of victory and medals distribution notwithstanding, the Iraqi armed forces, including the Republican Guard, became disillusioned with Saddam.
- The standard of living for soldiers had reached the lowest level ever. Logistical supplies were unavailable for the most part.

- They saw the no-fly zone over the north and south as humiliating. Moreover, Kurdish control over much of the north was a painful reminder that Iraq was powerless and at the mercy of the United States.
- The UN sponsored weapons inspections were a continuing humiliation and demonstration of Saddam's lack of control over Iraq's sovereignty. The sanctions were perceived as a serious detriment to the national economy and security.
- This, and the military defeat, led to a rising tide of desertions, which was one of the reasons for Baghdad's decision to demobilize units. The armed forces shrank from over one million to just over 400,000.
- The rising tide of disillusion and resentment led to repeated coup attempts.
- In March 1995, two regular army brigades suffered severe losses from clashes with Jalal Talabani's Kurds and The Iraqi National Congress (INC), further humiliating Saddam and the military.

Fractures in Tribal Loyalty

Within the larger Sunni tribal system there were signs of weakening solidarity. Of the five most important Sunni tribes, that had been the core of Saddam's support, and were in leadership roles throughout the military, four fell under suspicion.

A 1990 plot involved Jubbur members of the Republican Guards and regular army units. Jubburis live in Saddam's home-town, Tikrit, as well as south of Baghdad and south of Mosul. Officers of the 'Ubayd tribe, in and around Tikrit, were purged in 1993-1994, and very prominent members of another Tikriti tribe, the Jawa'inah, were purged in 1993 for an alleged plot. Al-Bu Nimr (of the Dulaym tribe) in and around Ramadi revolted against Saddam in 1995 and were crushed viciously by Udayy Saddam Hussein and his Saddam's Martyrs militia.

Frictions within Saddam's al-Bu Nasser tribe compounded problems. By late summer 1996 five "houses" within the tribe had grievances with Saddam or his family. Parts of the Majid branch were at odds with the dictator, including the Kamils, Saddam's paternal cousins and sons-in-law

whom his bodyguards gunned down soon after they returned from Amman, Jordan after having defected there in August 1995. Also having grievances were The Haza', the Ibrahim Hasans (Saddam's half brothers), the Bakrs (the extended family of the late president), and the Msallat (the extended family of Saddam's maternal uncle).

While Jubburis, Dulaymis and 'Ubaydis, as well as members of the partly alienated "houses" in albu Nasser continue to serve in Republican Guard and key security positions, they have been removed from the most sensitive positions and are closely watched. Overall, the threat of a large-scale tribal uprising remains remote, but when the regime is on the verge of collapse, many in these tribes and "houses" are likely to defect. When it comes to Shi'ite Tribes in the south, while many of them are collaborating with the regime, only few, if any, are fully committed. All are going through the motions of expressing unbound loyalty to the Historical Leader Saddam, but, at the first sign of disintegration, many will remain on the sideline to see where the wind is blowing and will easily switch sides. Many years of hardship in the volatile Iraqi countryside has taught them harsh lessons.

Fault Lines in the Family

Udayy Saddam Hussein

The temperament and unconstrained behavior of Saddam's elder son Udayy, born in 1963, has been a continuing issue. He has a reputation as the "bad boy" of Iraq, and is greatly feared among the population of Baghdad. He has been involved in several widely publicized incidents, but Saddam had regularly either overlooked Udayy's excesses, or, if the event was too public to ignore, dealt with it in the mildest of manner. In 1988 Udayy murdered Saddam's valet, Hanna Jojo, because the latter would not stop shooting in the air. Udayy was hosting Suzanne Mubarak, and the shooting interfered with the party. Udayy had had an account to settle with Jojo, who had facilitated a love affair between Saddam and Samirah Shahbandar, the wife of Nur al-Din Safi, an official in Iraqi Airways.

Eventually Saddam had her divorce her husband and marry him. The ex-husband was promoted to chairman of the board and general manager as a consolation prize. He also received an apartment in the luxurious 28

April housing complex near al_Karkh Quarter in Baghdad.¹⁵ In 1986 Samirah gave birth to Ali Saddam Hussein.

The whole affair angered Saddam's first wife, and maternal cousin, Sajidah to no end, and Udayy supported his mother in the dispute. Udayy beat the valet to death in full view of all the guests. As a result of this, Saddam jailed Udayy and put him on trial for murder but family members of the victim "pleaded for leniency" saying that Udayy's deed was "the will of God," and thus he ought not be punished. Saddam released and exiled Udayy to Switzerland, where he lived with his uncle. A few months later Udayy was declared *persona non grata* by the Swiss authorities because he attacked a Swiss policeman. Udayy returned to Iraq where he began reintegrating himself into the Iraqi power elite. He became the de-facto minister of youth, the czar of the Iraqi media and sports, and, in early 1995, his father allowed him to establish a militia force, Fida'iyyi Saddam (Saddam's Martyrs). This was a most unruly crowd, badly trained, poorly armed, and remarkably dilapidated, but they were his to play with.

In 1995 Udayy shot his maternal uncle, Watban Ibrahim Hasan, in the leg. Watban was at the time no less than the minister of the interior, in charge, among other responsibilities, of the police and General Security (*al-Amn al-'Amm*). The near-lethal confrontation was the culmination of at least two years of acrimonious political struggle, partly in the full glare of the Iraqi media, for prestige and power and, possibly, for wealth. This created a major crisis between Saddam and his half brothers, two of whom he had re-integrated into his security system only five-six years earlier, returning them to favor after they had been dismissed and were unemployed from 1983 to 1989.

The night before the Udayy-Watban shooting incident, General Hussein Kamil defected with his brother, Saddam, their wives, who were Saddam Hussein's daughters, and a few cousins. Hussein Kamil was, at the time, in charge of the formidable Military Industrialization Organization (MIO) and one of the people responsible for the fearsome Special Security Organization (*al-Amn al-Khass*, SSO) that was responsible for concealment of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). His brother was a colonel in the Special Republican Guard. Once in Amman they started a series of revelations regarding Iraq's weapons of mass destructions that created a major crisis between the regime and the U.N. The most important information revealed related to Iraq's biological weapons.

Uday was the main reason for this defection. Prior to the defection he threatened Kamil's life if the latter would not cease his attempts to re-take control over very lucrative assets Udayy had snatched from him while Kamil was recuperating from a brain surgery. According to some reports Udayy was also very involved—indeed central—in orchestrating the murder of Hussein Kamil and his brother after they returned in February 1996. There is no doubt however that Saddam ordered the murder of Kamil and his brother ensuring though that those who did the killing took responsibility for it. The most remarkable fact about the assassination was that members of the hit team were carefully chosen to represent the five generations of Saddam's khams.¹⁶ Saddam made sure that five generations of his family (Kamil was Saddam's cousin) would be involved in the murder, as this is the canonical structure of a tribal khams.

Saddam perverted the tribal code, though, because traditionally a khams never turns against its own members – the most it does is disassociate itself from the member. Additionally, Kamil's father was innocent because he never left Iraq, and so the blood feud should not have extended to him. Moreover, according to tribal custom, women are *never* involved in blood revenge, yet Hussein Kamil's sisters and other female members of his immediate family were also victims of the carnage. By making sure that so many members of the family were involved in the murders, Saddam deflected guilt from himself and so made it extremely difficult for an embittered extended family member to single him out as the target of a retributory blood feud.

Even before that, however, Saddam was outraged when he came to realize the havoc his elder son was wreaking on his political-security system. He dismissed Udayy of all his duties and even burned down a garage in the Presidential Palace compound housing a few of his son's most cherished, and expensive, vintage cars. This was the second time Udayy's recklessness placed his father at a disadvantage, but Saddam was, and apparently still is, unwilling to fully neutralize his elder son.

In December 1996 in an assassination attempt on Udayy, his car was raked with automatic gunfire. This left him bedridden for at least six months with both his legs paralyzed.¹⁷ By 2002 he seems to have recovered from most of the adverse effects of his injury. No less importantly, his father reinstated him in all his previous duties, including control over the Fida'iyyun, now a 20-30,000 strong force, better

equipped, and trained by the semi-professional General Muzahim Sa'b Hasan, a member of the clan.

One of the first things Udayy did once he was again the political master of a large militia was to turn on the weakest element in Iraqi society, women. As reported by a number of sources, some of them usually reliable, under his orders the Fida'iyyun started to round up young women accused of prostitution and behead them in public, usually near their own homes. This may be Udayy's way of absolving himself of widespread charges of wanton promiscuity and, at the same time, indulging in his usual sadism. Udayy's humanitarian organization has also specialized in cutting out tongues of people accused of slandering the president.¹⁸

Since 1998 Udayy has thus been free to sabotage his father's system for the third time. To limit his elder son's ability to do damage, however, and to humiliate him, Saddam promoted Qusayy, Udayy's younger brother, above him and implied in this way that Qusayy is the heir apparent.

Qusayy

While Udayy is part of Saddam's problem, Qusayy is part of the solution. As reported to one of the authors (AB), even as teenagers the two brothers were very different from each other. Udayy was out of control, widely flaunting his privileges, while Qusayy was disciplined and hard working. Saddam could not but notice it. Since 1989 Saddam has been preparing Qusayy for the duty of czar of internal security. To create a perfect team of security overlords, he asked his son to build the villa for the man who was then in charge of the security system, General Abd Hamid Mahmud (or Ihmid Hmud). The two got along very well, and today they are at the helm together.

They are in charge of the SSO, the most formidable of all Iraqi security bodies, and in charge of security inside all security bodies. They are in charge of the Himaya and the Special Republican Guard (SRG).

The president's security rests mainly on them, but they are also in charge of the more lethal links of Iraq's non-conventional weapons in terms of concealment and deployment. Qusayy and Mahmud must authorize any movement of any military unit. When Saddam gives the order to launch non-conventional missiles they will be the ones to do it, and there is a good chance they would. The SSO is the most disciplined organization in Iraq.

Qusayy is also the supreme authority when it comes to “prison cleansing,” the execution of hundreds of political prisoners to make room for new ones in Iraq’s crowded prisons. He is also the one who authorizes executions of military and security officers suspected of disloyalty. Since 2001, Qusayy has also been a member of the Regional Leadership of the Ba’ath party in Iraq, and Deputy Secretary of its important Military Bureau, the *al-Maktab al-‘Askari*.¹⁹ According to the constitution, the chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), who is also the president of the state, must come from among the RCC members, and RCC members must be coming from among the wider body of the party’s all-Iraqi Regional Leadership (RL). Thus, the promotion of Qusayy to the RL is to be seen as the first step toward his inclusion in the RCC and, eventually, his promotion to the RCC Chairmanship and President. According to unconfirmed reports, Udayy, too, presented his candidacy to the RL, but failed. If true, then his anger and frustration are likely greater than ever.

Strategic Shift

The family disarray culminating in Hussein Kamil’s defection and assassination, the decline of Udayy and of Saddam’s half brothers signaled a certain change of strategy. No longer could the loyalty of the extended family be unquestioningly relied upon. Rather, it was necessary to strengthen the Ba’ath party and rely more centrally on long standing party loyalists and on more distant members of the tribe, and the coalition of tribes. By 2002, the minister of defense is no longer a cousin. Rather, he is General Sultan Hashim al-Ubaydi from Mosul. The Minister of Oil is General Amir Muhammad Rashid al-Ubaydi. The director of Military Industrialization is Abd al-Tawab al-Mulla Huwaysh. All these jobs were held one time or another by either or both of Saddam’s cousins Hussein Kamil and Ali Hasan. The commander of the Republican Guard is General Sayf al-Din Fulayyih from the town of Rawa and a party old timer. The ministry of the interior, a very sensitive security duty that was held until 1995 by Watban, was given to an old party hand, Muhammad Zimam Abd al-Razzaq al-Sa’dun, a Sunni Arab but hailing from the Sa’dun clan of the south.

In a less formal fashion, Saddam also brought back into his political “kitchen” the most senior party member in Iraq, Dr. Sa’dun Hammadi, who, for many years, had been languishing in the political desert as

member, then Speaker of the National Assembly. Udayy and Qusayy, too, are sometimes summoned to the “kitchen.” Cousin Ali Hasan al-Majid is almost always there as well. But this inner circle is more balanced than before. In the first place, Ali Hasan is a party old timer. Secondly, other members are all old party hands: Tariq Aziz (whom Udayy had attacked viciously a few times before, demanding his ousting), Izzat Ibrahim, who since 1991 has been Deputy Chairman of the RCC, and Vice President Ramadan.²⁰

It should be emphasized that some distant cousins, and many tribe members and Tikritis are still placed in very important security positions, and they are indispensable as a security shield for the regime. However, save for Qusayy, the role of the extended family has clearly been reduced and the party old timers are becoming more prominent in the political arena and in the seam between the political and security realms, the ministries of defense and the interior.

To placate Udayy, in 2002 Saddam reportedly agreed to imprison briefly a few of the sons of some party luminaries, Tariq Aziz’s son being one of them. The reason was, apparently, corruption, but more likely it was their business competition with Udayy. But this did not change the overall picture. By mid 2002 Saddam relied on a more balanced party-Tikriti-tribe-family power base than in the early 1990s.

Redemption and Restoration of Morale Courtesy of the Kurds

In late August 1996 Saddam Hussein authorized elements of the Republican Guard to attack the Kurdish city of Irbil following the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK)’s securing of limited military assistance from Iran. The Guard smashed the PUK and the U.S.-backed INC, as well as some CIA operations in Kurdistan. The seizure of Irbil was a major success for Saddam.

This triumph, coming after a series of setbacks and reminders of their diminished status, restored the morale of the Republic Guard and their faith in Saddam. It demonstrated the regime was still very much in control and was a major power throughout the country. It also showed the fractioned nature and impotence of the opposition movements in Iraq and was a powerful demonstration of the risk of rising against Saddam.

This was a major turning point for the regime in terms of restoring its power position. Had the Guard not taken Irbil it is likely that Saddam’s support would be so undermined that his position would have been in

grave jeopardy. Now, however, Saddam could take the risk of accepting the humiliating UNSC Resolution 986.

U.N. Resolution 986

Facing an imminent economic collapse in 1996, Saddam was forced to accept U.N. Resolution 986, the so-called oil-for-food deal. This represented a great humiliation because it glaringly infringed on the national sovereignty of Iraq, and indirectly on Saddam's personal honor. Saddam also feared such a partial measure would undermine international pressure to lift all the sanctions imposed on Iraq following the Gulf War. As long as the suffering of the Iraqi people could be alleviated through the oil-for-food resolution, he feared the embargo might stay on forever.

Despite such fears, Saddam had no choice but to accept the recommendations of his economic advisers. On November 25, 1996, Iraq announced its acceptance of the Resolution. What made it possible for him to swallow this was the military success in Irbil, as well as the exposure of a military coup d'état and the execution of the revolutionaries. This increased his deterrence of further opposition actions in the country as a whole, and in the armed forces in particular. Whether or not the oil-for-food resolution was judged to be a humiliation, at least, he could reason, immediately thereafter none dared to try another coup.

These two events highlight Saddam's vulnerability in the summer of 1996. He needed a way to restore the Iraqi military, particularly the Republican Guard's, morale and to demonstrate his own strength and power among his own people.

Advantages from accepting Resolution 986 were considerable. The sale of oil greatly improved Iraq's international and regional standing. That the food and medicines distributed to the population alleviated the people's suffering was less important than the fact that, from now on, Saddam could save the sums he had had to spend on food for his impoverished people. The disadvantages were minor by comparison, for credit for the increase in supplies went mainly to the regime, not to the U.N. It did diminish the regime's ability to trumpet as loudly as before the suffering of the Iraqi people.

Thus it may well be that the crisis Saddam provoked with the U.N. in October-November 1997 over UNSCOM inspections may well have been prompted by fear that the humanitarian issue would no longer be an issue, and that the embargo would remain. In reality, the Iraqi regime still

trumpeted the suffering with considerable success, with the help of Western humanitarian groups.

Full cooperation with UNSCOM would be out of the question, for this would mean disclosing voluntarily his remaining advanced weapons technological secrets. Retaining a WMD program has always been central to Saddam's leadership concept. Thus, Saddam stuck to his twin goals to retain his WMD program and to get the embargo lifted.

Strengthening International Support

In the events leading up to the 1991 Gulf War, Saddam had been extremely isolated, misjudging the impact of his actions not only upon his Arab neighbors, the so-called "near abroad," but also on major international actors on whose support he had previously been able to count, especially Russia and France. Grandiose and assumptive, ethnocentric, and surrounded by compliant sycophantic advisers, he had regularly seriously miscalculated both the risks of his actions and the degree of his support. His foreign policy initiatives since have demonstrated a much surer and more sophisticated hand.

Petrodollars to Buy International Support

Since the end of the Gulf War and the establishment of the Northern and Southern No-Fly-Zones, Saddam's political priorities were, not necessarily in the following order, to end the embargo and to end the Western patrols over the zones. A lower priority was to reoccupy the autonomous Kurdish region. Since the George W. Bush administration came to office, Saddam's main priority shifted to the prevention of an American military offensive against him. A very important part of Saddam's campaign to achieve at least most of his priorities has been a diplomatic and economic "love offensive" directed mainly at his previous enemies. Faithful to his *modus operandi* inside Iraq, Saddam also has been adding threats that an attack on Iraq will meet with a ferocious reaction against American interests.²¹

The main tool in Saddam's "love offensive" has been Iraq's growing buying power as a result of the accumulation of petrodollars in Saddam's personal coffers and in Iraq's New York Security Council escrow account. Other tools, important as well, have been an ostentatious "return" to Islam

and high profile support for the Palestinian *intifadah* that erupted in September 2000.

The Near Abroad

In his diplomatic efforts towards the “near abroad,” Saddam has been quite effective. He has achieved a reduction of tensions with his lifelong enemy, Iran. He has accomplished a significant rapprochement with both Saudi Arabia and Syria, the latter especially significant given Syria’s recent membership in the U.N. Security Council. For economic and political reasons, even Jordan’s distance from and tensions with Iraq have been reduced. Saddam’s strong embrace and support of the Palestinian cause has been of great assistance in his courtship of these previous estranged Arab neighbors. Turkey’s economic losses because of the sanctions against Iraq, \$6-7 billion annually because of the embargo, coupled with their joint interests in countering their restive Kurdish populations, have led Turkey to resist actions that would magnify Iraqi-Turkish tensions. Recognizing these areas of joint interest, Iraq has intensively pursued a diplomatic offensive to draw Turkey closer to it and away from the United States.

Events of 1997-1998 continued to shore up Saddam’s position. While in the past Iraqi politics were driven primarily by internal politics and factors, it has been external factors that have begun opening up new opportunities for Iraqi policies and helped to ameliorate Saddam’s domestic problems. His immediate neighbors have had the greatest impact.

Syria

The most telling case in terms of Saddam’s *modus operandi* when he feels weak and under great threat is provided by his tremendous resolve to mend his fences with his oldest Middle Eastern rival, President Hafiz al Asad and his regime. The years 1997-1998 saw the beginning of a new relationship between the two countries. Saddam extended an olive branch to Asad and the latter reciprocated in kind. Although ties were mainly limited to economic and diplomatic areas, this relationship was the beginning of Iraq’s acceptance back into Middle Eastern politics.²²

In November 2000 Syria announced the establishment of full diplomatic relations with Iraq. Less than three months later, in early January 2001, Syria announced that “all Syrians can from now on travel to Iraq without any restrictions and all passports will not bear the ‘excluding

Iraq' sign."²³ By the end of January 2001 Vice President Taha Yasin Ramadan visited Damascus at the head of a large and very senior delegation, including the ministers of trade, foreign affairs, and transport and communication. They were received, first, by Prime Minister Dr. Muhammad Mustafa Miru, and later by President Bashar al Asad.

In the first meeting the Syrian Prime Minister made a very significant announcement, the full meaning of which started to unfold soon afterward, but by mid 2002 more could still be expected to be implemented:

"You will find in Damascus hearts that have been supportive of fraternal Iraq. The two countries are bound by historical, deep and continuous relations. We are bound by pan-Arab ties . . . Syria has much love and amity to Iraq . . . Syria is opposed to all forms of pressure and unjust siege imposed on dear Iraq. Syria is always prepared to extend all requirements of the fraternal Iraqi people, so that will be able to face the circumstances they are experiencing. Syria considers this a pan-Arab duty."²⁴

Syria's objection to the embargo was not new, but the speech was the official – if not explicit – announcement of the re-opening of the old Kirkuk-Banyas crude pipeline, as well as the re-opening of more-or-less regular civilian flights to Baghdad in contravention of UNSC resolutions.²⁵ Furthermore, Prime Minister Miru's promise to "extend all requirements" could easily be construed as a promise to smuggle military spare parts and technology into Iraq. Under President Hafiz al-Asad no such promises were ever made.

Upon Vice President Ramadan's visit the two countries signed a free-trade agreement. Ramadan, it should be remembered, was one of the most extreme anti-Syrian politicians in Baghdad during the previous three decades. According to the agreement, the mutual trade volume was to grow from \$500 million in 2000 to around \$1 billion in 2001.²⁶ By the end of February 2001, the Syrian minister of transportation, Makram Ubayd, and Minister of Communication, Muhammad Radwan, arrived at the head of a large delegation to Baghdad where they were to complete the discussions over the new economic agreements.

Not surprisingly, the Syrian ministers expressed the hope that "the unjust embargo would be lifted as soon as possible."²⁷ At the same time President Bashar Asad called for the lifting of sanctions imposed on Iraq,²⁸

and both countries agreed to set up a technical committee to study plans to construct a new pipeline between them.²⁹ The two countries also signed an agreement for bilateral cooperation on maritime, air and land transport, railroads, communications and information services. This included, among other issues, joint land transport and maritime transport companies.³⁰ According to some reports, in 2001 mutual trade actually reached almost \$2 billion.³¹ These reports seem inflated, but even if the trade volume reached only \$1-1.5 billion, most of it Syrian products sold to Iraq, this was of huge benefit to the Syrian economy.

In August 2001 relations were upgraded further by a visit to Baghdad of Syrian Prime Minister Miru. Large economic delegations continued to arrive in Baghdad from Damascus in 2002 as well, and by the middle of that year it was estimated that the annual value of trade exchange between the two countries would exceed \$3 billion.³²

Sometime in late 2001 or early 2002, Syria started a regular air service to Baghdad, in breach of UNSC resolutions. In June 2002 Iraq reciprocated by opening its air space for Iranian flights to Syria and in the opposite direction.³³ This could provide a new route for Iran to send weapons to Hizballah in Lebanon after Turkey started to cause difficulties. But this is not all.

Since November 18, 2000, the old Kirkuk-Banyas oil pipe line that had been shut down by the Syrians in April 1982 in order to cripple the Iraqi war effort against Iran was reopened. A few months earlier, in August 2000, a rail connection for smuggling Iraqi oil to Syria was opened. The old pipeline started delivering between 100-200,000 barrels a day.³⁴ On a number of occasions, President Bashar Asad promised the United States to put the controversial pipeline under the control of the U.N. This would have enabled the U.N. to supervise Baghdad's exports and place oil revenues from the pipeline under the control of the oil-for-food program, but Iraqi oil continued to flow to Banyas unsupervised at least until August 2002. To make detection more difficult, Syria has been using the Iraqi oil for its own consumption, selling Syrian oil abroad instead.³⁵

It has to be borne in mind that the late 1990s and the first years of the new millennium were typified by a deep economic recession in Syria. Thus, for example, its GDP growth in 1999 was negative: -1.8%, and in 2000 it rose to 2.5%, thanks to the rise in world oil prices and the injection of Iraqi oil, but even this growth was less than that of the population. In 1999 the gross national income per capita in current dollars was just

\$2,920. All exports were \$5.3 billion. An addition of close to \$0.5 billion was very, very substantial. Also, in 2000, Syria's external debt was \$25.6 billion, and debt service, \$344 million.³⁶

The illicit sales of Iraqi oil provided Asad's regime with urgently needed foreign currency, probably at the value of \$400 million annually. No less importantly, selling Syrian agricultural and light industrial products to Iraq at around \$1 billion annually in 2001 represented a huge boost to Syrian economy. To further cement the newly found friendship, in June 2002 Iraq sent large amounts of relief aid to Syria to help in the aftermath of a dam collapse, as well as medical teams. Iraq pledged continued support.

It is hardly surprising, then, that President Hafiz al-Asad and his successor son both chose to bury, even if only momentarily, the old rivalry with its twin Ba'ath regime from Baghdad. From Saddam Hussein's point of view this was no easier. While there is hardly any doubt that he remained extremely suspicious vis-à-vis his old nemesis in Damascus, and while it is quite possible that he still harbors a lust for revenge, political necessity overcame all other calculations.

Saddam needs to smuggle his oil abroad because this is the only way he can earn large sums for his own private coffers. Likewise, Saddam needs Syrian support against the USA and, if he will manage to improve relations sufficiently, he may even expect Syria to smuggle into Iraq essential spare parts for his aging military hardware and perhaps even non-conventional technology. This is a further demonstration of his ability to postpone his revenge and normalize relations even with bitter enemies, if "the exceptionalism of revolutionary needs" so dictate.

Iran

After taking power in 1997, Iranian president Khatami sought to improve relations with the U.S. and Saudi Arabia, something that worried Saddam a great deal. However, hindered by internal politics those relationships have not had the expected impact, which left more room for an improvement of Iraqi-Iranian relations.

Still, unlike the relatively smooth rapprochement with Damascus and Ankara, relations with Iran, while generally improving between 1991 and 2002 were still rather bumpy. This is not surprising. In the first place, eight years of war in which both sides lost hundreds of thousands of men and the propaganda attacks against the "hateful Zoroastrian Persians" were

no less vitriolic than those against Israel, a rapprochement could have been expected to face great difficulties.

Moreover, the Iran-Iraq War and the Gulf War left certain issues unresolved, and this made things far worse. In the first place, tens of thousands of Iraqi prisoners of war remained in Iran and a few thousand Iranian prisoners remained in Iraq. Secondly, Iran refused to return 148 Iraqi airplanes flown there during the Gulf War for shelter. Last, but not least, Iran supported, albeit in a limited fashion, the Shi'i anti-regime revolt of March 1991 and it has continued to support the Iraqi-Shi'i guerilla groups.

Iraq, for her part, has supported the Iranian anti-regime Mujahidin Khalq guerillas. Both guerilla bodies have been attacking government installations in the rivals' capitals and sometimes in other areas, especially in the Shi'i south. By mid-2002, neither side is ready to give up the terrorist/guerilla tool for fear that the other would retain and use it.

Having signed only a ceasefire agreement in 1988, it is surprising that a slow rapprochement has taken place at all. From Saddam's viewpoint, burying the hatchet with the Iranians has been a very high priority. Confronting both the Americans and British and the Iranians was something that Iraq could simply not afford. Also, Iranian cooperation over oil smuggling was very useful to Iraq. Finally, as long as mutual relations do not reach rock bottom, Saddam may reasonably expect that the Iranian support for the Shi'i underground will be limited. The aggregate result is a very baffling cocktail of mutual acts of sabotage, mutual verbal attacks, mutual calls for improving relations and occasional mutual visits of foreign ministers and other officials. There were a few fairly large-scale exchanges of prisoners of war, especially in 1998, and Iranian pilgrims have been allowed to spend a week in Iraq, visiting the holy places of Najaf, Karbala, and Kazimayn (a Baghdad suburb where two Shi'i imams are buried). This pattern started to develop in the late 1990s.³⁷ By mid-2002, things remained essentially the same.³⁸

Throughout the 1990s the Iranian regime was also opposed to an American presence in the Gulf as well as to American attacks against Iraq.³⁹ This was not out of sympathy for Saddam. Rather, it would seem that a weakened Iraq, somewhat isolated, is the preferred Iranian choice. Indeed, in street demonstrations, alongside the traditional shouting "Death to America" and "Death to Israel" the Iranian masses still shout, occasionally, also "Death to Saddam."

However, there were no terrorist activities from either side for a few months. When Saddam restrained himself for this short time and refrained from attacking Iran, from August 2000 to February 2001, no “death to Saddam” slogans were heard in Iranian public rallies. However, in April 2002 when Baghdad called for an oil embargo, Iran’s political and religious leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, urged all Islamic countries to suspend oil exports to the U.S. for one month. Baghdad actually suspended U.S. sales and Saddam complained that Iran failed to follow suit.

In 1980 Saddam Hussein could not have tolerated a twilight-type of relationship with Iran. Khomeini’s support for his domestic opposition was seen as intolerable. Yet, a decade later Saddam appears to have learned to live with such ambivalence.

Turkey

Turkey supported the international coalition against Iraq in 1991. Yet, Saddam was happy to cooperate with it a short while after the war over the smuggling of oil through southern Turkey. Turkish-Iraqi economic ties saw a quantum leap since December 1996. This was when Kirkuk oil started to flow again through the old pipeline and Turkey started to reap legitimate oil transit revenues. With the oil-for-food resources, Iraq started to purchase large quantities of Turkish products, and Turkish businessmen started to frequent Baghdad in large numbers.

Just before the invasion of Kuwait, Turkey’s annual exports to Iraq amounted to around \$400 million. In 2000 it reached already almost the same annual rate as in 1990, \$375 million, and in 2001 it almost doubled to \$710 million.⁴⁰ By the end of 2001 it was estimated that in 2002 Turkey would be exporting to Iraq products at a level of \$2 billion.⁴¹ Bear in mind that before the Gulf War, Iraq was Turkey’s number one trade partner. Not surprisingly, Turkish businessmen involved in trade with Iraq often voiced their protest against the international embargo and called upon their government to increase efforts to lift the sanctions.⁴² The government could hardly remain unimpressed.

Turkey’s strong ties to the United States and insistence on working with the U.S. on Iraqi matters are a great source of frustration for Baghdad. Turkish military forays into autonomous Iraqi Kurdistan, too, elicit bitter condemnations from Baghdad. Even though Saddam is no longer in control of Kurdistan, such forays are seen in Baghdad as

infringing on its sovereignty. Finally: the Iraqi regime is very critical of the strategic cooperation between Turkey and Israel.

At the same time, though, Saddam is aware that Ankara would like to have sanctions lifted because it too has suffered from the cut-off of trade and oil trans-shipment revenues from Iraq. He is doing everything in his power to wet the Turkish appetite, including an open call to breach the embargo. In 1997 the two countries signed an agreement to lay a 1,300 kilometer natural gas pipeline. Additionally, the Turks are deeply wary of the possibility that, if the Iraqi regime is toppled, the Kurds will declare independence. This will provide Turkish Kurds with a successful example and might result with a renewed Kurdish revolt. The Turks also are often unhappy with the indecisive way in which the Iraqi Kurds are stamping out the PKK, the Turkish Kurdish rebels in Iraqi Kurdistan.⁴³

Saddam is pragmatic enough to take full advantage of all these nuances. The lure of his business and the fear of Kurdish independence being his main charm points in Ankara, he is playing it up continuously.

Jordan

While it did not participate in the international anti-Iraqi war coalition and was unwilling to confront Iraq politically either, since the early 1990s Jordan has consistently distanced itself from Iraq. This it did in order to mend its fences with the U.S. and to make peace with Israel. This represented a major blow to Saddam's efforts to end his international isolation.

When Hussein Kamil defected in 1995 he went to Jordan, where King Hussein publicly supported the notion of a regime change in Iraq. This support for the Iraqi opposition, however, appears to have diminished significantly as Jordan remains heavily dependent on Iraq for cheap oil and trade.⁴⁴

By 2002 Jordan was carrying out regular flights to Baghdad four times a week, in breach of UNSC resolutions.⁴⁵ Jordanian "popular" delegations are visiting Baghdad regularly, and expressing support for Saddam and vitriolic criticism of the United States. It would seem, then, that much like Turkey, Jordan, too, is getting the best of both worlds. It keeps excellent relations both with the United States and Israel. Jordan receives U.S. economic aid; and thwarts, as best it can, Iraqi attempts to smuggle weapons through its territory to the Palestinians. There is no

recent evidence that they allow illicit goods into Iraq, and yet Jordan continues to receive cheap oil from Saddam and to trade with Iraq.

Saddam is fully aware of the Jordanian practice, but he does not seem to care. For him, Jordan is an important avenue to the outside world. Even more importantly, securing Jordan's objection to an American attack against him is now his top priority. Jordanian complicity with a U.S. offensive will mean his immediate demise, as it will provide the U.S. with the most effective bridgehead from where to launch the attack and prevent him from launching his own missiles against Israel.

Saudi Arabia

Until March 2002 the Saudis remained opposed to the Iraqi regime and moved to improve relations with Iran as a counter to Iraq in the region should the United States not be able to live up to its commitments of security, or should the Saudi regime be compelled to ask the American forces to leave the country.

The first deviation from this stance occurred in late 1997 and early 1998. Some Saudi newspapers started to call for leniency toward Iraq and against American attacks. In December 1997 Prince Abd Allah called upon the GCC states to "overcome the past with its events and pains."⁴⁶ This was interpreted as a call for a rapprochement with Saddam's Iraq.

Prince Abd Allah's mother hails from the Syrian-based Shammar tribe. He has always been closer to Syria than his half brother, King Fahd. This may have been one reason for his position. By late 1997 Iraqi-Syrian relations were already improving and a tilt toward Iraq was no longer seen in Damascus as a hostile move. The Crown Prince had to reverse his policy for a while due to pressures from the U.S. and Kuwait, but not for very long.

In March 2002, in the Beirut Arab Summit, Saudi Crown Prince Abd Allah hugged and kissed Izzat Ibrahim al-Duri, Saddam Hussein's Deputy Chairman of the RCC, in front of the world's TV cameras. This signaled the beginning of the end of more than a decade of bitter hostility. However, as early as January 2001 the Saudis already established a border crossing with Iraq and set up a trade office at Ar'ar in Northern Saudi Arabia. It expected to boost exports to Iraq to about \$600 million in 2001 from about \$200 million in 2000. The Saudis

have been exporting mostly western goods to Iraq, which left Saudi Arabia with a sizeable profit.⁴⁷

This could be one of the avenues through which Iraqi entrepreneurs imported illicit goods like expensive cars. Unlike other such avenues, however, at least this one did not serve to smuggle in tank and artillery spare parts. Since 1999 Saudi companies have been participating in the Baghdad International Fair.⁴⁸ Saudi Arabia, however, has not gone on record demanding an end to the embargo, and it continues to allow U.S. fighter planes to use its territory to patrol the Southern No Fly Zone. The Abd Allah-Izzat hug was not motivated by any economic considerations either. It would seem that the Saudis sought this way to secure an Iraqi commitment not to challenge Prince Abd Allah's Peace Plan at the summit. Possibly, they also chose to burry the hatchet with Saddam to placate a large anti-American constituency back home. The latter, rather than economic considerations, seems also to be the reason for the Saudi decision to deny the U.S. any use of its territory if it decides to attack Iraq.

Yet this again demonstrated Saddam's shrewd politics. He knew how to exploit his assets in the most effective fashion. He recognized the anti-American sentiment in Saudi Arabia. He also identified Prince Abd Allah's need to receive unanimous support in the Beirut summit and not to be embarrassed by any dissent. He exacted his price, a hug, but he, too, paid a price. The hug represented also Saddam's readiness to forgo past hates, and ostensibly, to forgive the Saudis their past "betrayal," when they supported the coalition against him in 1991.

Other Gulf States

In Spring 2002, the United Arabs Emirates (UAE) ratified a free trade agreement with Iraq that had been signed in November 2001. The most significant feature of this deal is that the six members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) will merge their markets into a customs union in 2003. This will give Iraq open access to the entire GCC market. By mid-2002 the UAE was already one of Iraq's biggest economic partners in the region.

The only Gulf state that, by mid-2002, was still hostile to Saddam's regime was Kuwait. Despite Iraq's alternating offers of "friendship" and undisguised threats, Kuwait has steadfastly refused to improve bilateral relations. In January 2002 Saddam offered to allow Kuwaiti officials to

visit Iraqi prisons to prove there are no Kuwaiti POWs being held. Kuwaiti officials refused and continue to be highly critical of the Iraqi regime. It seems that Kuwait is also sympathetic to the idea of an American-inspired violent regime change in Baghdad. If so, Kuwait is the only Arab state to support openly such a military operation.

Egypt

Egypt was the main Arab participant in the anti-Iraqi coalition of 1990-91. And yet, Iraqi-Egyptian relations started to pick up significantly the moment Iraq's buying power surged. Trade became meaningful again in 1999. In January 2001, Iraq and Egypt signed a free trade zone agreement. Indeed, 2001 saw such agreements signed between Iraq and most Arab countries. According to Iraq's Trade Minister, Muhammad Mahdi Salih, upon his visit to Cairo, the mutual trade in 2000 reached \$1.2 billion, triple the 1999 figure. The minister expressed the hope that in 2001 the volume would go beyond \$2 billion.⁴⁹

The Iraqi Minister of Trade, Saddam's chief economic adviser, is not a shy man. He made it very clear to the Egyptian media that "lifting [the] international sanctions imposed on Iraq will provide Egypt an opportunity to export further goods and products to the Iraq market, a matter that would lead to increasing the volume of trade between the two countries." The Iraqi Minister explained that when the embargo is lifted, Iraq's oil revenues would reach \$30 billion annually. This, he pointed out, was "a matter that would open the door for a real upsurge in trade between Egypt and Iraq." Egypt, he added, ranked first among Arab countries that have trade relations with Iraq. Egypt ranked fourth among Iraq's world trade partners after France, Russia, and China, in that order.⁵⁰

There was a political price to pay, and the Egyptian foreign minister Amr Musa was more than happy to pay it. While Egypt will not accept any infringement on Kuwait's sovereignty, he said, "It is in the interest of all Arabs to forget the past and turn a new chapter." Musa spoke also against any support for the Iraqi opposition and insisted that Egypt was keen on promoting relations between Iraq "and all Arab states." In other words, Egypt was willing to mediate between Iraq on the one hand, and Kuwait and Saudi Arabia on the other.⁵¹

Since 2000, large Egyptian delegations consisting of senior officials, sometimes cabinet ministers, and up to 200 businessmen each have been frequenting Baghdad. Egypt also organized an Exhibition of its products

in Baghdad. Not surprisingly, upon the opening ceremony Vice President Ramadan exacted the usual price when he subjected the Egyptian visitors to an attack on the U.S. “stupid administration” in his opening remarks.⁵²

The Far Abroad

Ultimately though, it was the Far Abroad that “came to Saddam’s rescue.” France, Russia, China, and more distant Arab countries, such as Egypt, were able to put pressure on the U.N., particularly the United States and Great Britain. These countries took up the fight that sanctions were hurting the Iraqi people more than the regime and that lifting sanctions was the only way to alleviate their suffering, creating a sense that Washington, not Iraq, was increasingly isolated.

- Russia continues to speak out against using force to bring about resolution to the Iraq situation.
- France continues to actively speak out against sanctions, even though it is more inclined than Russia to search for common ground with the United States.
- China opposes the sanctions, but is usually more passive than Russia and France.

His patient diplomacy towards Russia and France, both of which have significant economic interests in an Iraq freed of economic shackles, have permitted Saddam to challenge the UNSCOM inspections regime with relative impunity, knowing these Security Council powers could be counted upon to weaken reprisals against Iraq. China, too, has supported his beleaguered regime in international forums.

Buying Off Superpowers: Russia as an Example

Hardly did the oil pumps in Kirkuk started to send crude again through the Iraqi-Turkish pipeline to the Mediterranean port of Dortyol in December 1996, when Saddam Hussein probably realized the magnitude of his blunder in rejecting previous U.N. offers to enter into oil-for-food arrangements. The moment Iraq started again to sell oil on the world market and earn petrodollars, even though the money went into the escrow account in New York, it became a huge asset. Saddam could not order

everything he wanted since all Iraqi contracts have been monitored by U.N. Security Council 668 Committee.

For example, when Iraq ordered dual-use items, they were usually rejected by the Committee or placed on hold.

Still, Iraq was, and still is, at liberty to order humanitarian goods from whomever it wished. Very quickly this became Saddam's most important tool in his "love offensive" that was designed to buy off great powers as well as small and poor nations. One demonstration of the newly acquired Iraqi popularity was the Iraqi annual trade fair in the fall of 2000: some 1,450 firms from 30 countries, many of them in the West, laid out their wares there.⁵³

Even rich countries like France or major super powers like China and Russia could not ignore the lure of Iraqi buying power. It ought to be borne in mind that Iraq owes Russia at least \$7 billion, and France at least \$4 billion. An end to the embargo may mean that Iraq could pay it back. Iraqi sources made no secret of the fact that they were using this power to bribe the great powers and move them to support the Iraqi cause. When one power would balk and refuse to obey Iraqi instructions, senior Iraqi officials would openly threaten that state with economic retaliation. However, when it has come to clear cut violations of Security Council Resolutions, no country, including Russia and China, has dared so far to back Iraq against the United States.

The Iraqi buying power and promises for lucrative oil field development contracts seemed to be at least one of the reasons that persuaded Russia, France, and China to show a more sympathetic position to Iraqi demands at the U.N.⁵⁴ Indeed, in an anti-embargo gathering in Moscow, Yevgeny Primakov, a senior Russian Middle East expert, parliamentarian and ex-Prime Minister, made it very clear that "we would like Baghdad to create a regime of preferential treatment for Russian entrepreneurs."

A Russian foreign ministry spokesman disclosed that Russia's overall losses as a result of the Gulf crisis and embargo against Iraq amounted in mid-2001 to \$30 billion. Russia constantly has been pushing for, in the words of the foreign ministry "new approaches to the problem of Iraq."⁵⁵ Russia also objected strongly to the American patrolling of the no-fly zones in Iraq's north and south. Thus, for example, in January 2001, the Russian Foreign Ministry declared, "the establishment of the so-called no-fly zones over that country [Iraq] is absolutely illegitimate."⁵⁶ In

exchange for these sympathetic Russian positions the Iraqis gave them some lucrative contracts, including the development of large oil fields.⁵⁷

By 2001, not surprisingly, Iraq's leading trade partners were, in the following order: France, Russia, China, and Egypt.⁵⁸ By mid-August 2002, the world media gave wide publicity to a new economic agreement in the making between Russia and Iraq. In itself, it did not come as a surprise, but its order of magnitude was truly staggering: \$40 billion. The information came from the Iraqi Ambassador to Moscow, Abbas Halaf.

No doubt this was yet another Iraqi initiative designed to create tension between Russia and the U.S. and make it more difficult for the latter to attack Iraq, but the Russian government did not deny the information. The agreement reportedly is for five years and includes new cooperation in fields like oil, irrigation, agriculture, transportation, and electricity. According to American sources this deal represents a breach of the previously agreed international sanctions on Iraq.⁵⁹

Occasionally, the Iraqi government also threatened other European countries with economic retaliation if their position in the U.N. were not sufficiently pro-Iraqi.⁶⁰ Poland, too, was forced to change its position and criticized the U.S. and Britain for their no-fly-zone monitoring activities. Indeed, the Iraqi threats were so effective that it took no more than eight days to change the Polish position, after they had implied support for an American-British attack on Iraqi ground-to-air battles.⁶¹

There may be little doubt that the Iraqi tactic, combining punishment (that not always was needed) and temptation, has been quite successful. Even countries whose trade relations with Iraq were rather limited, like Switzerland and Norway decided to open special offices in Baghdad, clearly an important diplomatic achievement for Saddam.⁶²

Saddam's Propaganda Campaign in the USA

Already in the early 1990s Saddam realized that he could not rely on greed when it comes to persuading the U.S. administration to lift the embargo. There is little doubt that many American oil companies and business men would have liked to do business with Iraq, but American political inhibitions in that respect were so powerful that the only deals have been the legitimate ones, within the framework of the oil-for-food program.

However, very early on, Saddam identified a promising avenue in the United States. Rather than greed, in the United States it was more promising to turn to idealism. His propaganda machine has been using the

suffering of the Iraqi people as a political asset. A large number of well-wishing humanitarian organizations were caught in his net. Having allowed them to visit Iraq and often provide humanitarian aid, he took advantage of their fear that any criticism of his regime would result with denying entrance visas. Most humanitarian bodies also were ill prepared. They had very limited acquaintance with the Iraqi social, economic, and political system. Saddam thus managed to use them as his emissaries to the American public.

These delegations did not realize, or were unwilling to realize that most of the responsibility for the massive death and malnutrition of the children of Iraq was Saddam's. They reported the suffering, often greatly exaggerating it, taking the Iraqi propaganda machine data at face value, but they did not report the true reasons for it. Their conclusion was uniformly that the embargo should be immediately abolished.⁶³

Totally illogically, in an about face, Saddam also tried to lure into his camp the "America's impoverished citizens" by offering the American poor \$95 million in economic support.⁶⁴ The American public remained unimpressed. The surprising aspect of this generous offer was the fact that the humanitarian organizations working in Iraq ignored it, even though \$95 million could help many, many malnourished Iraqi children.

This offer exposed a very powerful characteristic in Saddam's personality. Saddam believes almost blindly in the power of money and economic incentives to win and secure the loyalty of his people. Money gifts and perks are as important in his system as is terror. Indeed, Saddam's system is defined by his own people as a combination of "terror and enticement" (al-tarhib wal-tarhib). Saddam's generosity at the expense of his people was repeated on a much larger scale when he also promised the Palestinians one billion Euro (around \$940 million) from the New York Escrow in support of the Intifadah.

Unlike the American public, however, the Palestinians, for whom such help was, obviously, far more meaningful, were filled with enthusiasm. It seems to have escaped them that this offer represented cynicism incarnate. Saddam was fully aware that the security Council could under no circumstances agree to such a request, because the Escrow was created in order to alleviate the suffering of the Iraqi, not the Palestinian people.

Busting the Embargo

After Saddam reversed his initial decision to reject U.N. Security Council Resolution 986, once the Iraqi oil started to flow again to the world's markets, the Iraqi president was under some pressure to demonstrate to his followers that the embargo, if not dismantled, was, at least, dissipating. Doing this took time, but Saddam and his advisors eventually proved their competence. The embargo's main purpose, to prevent Saddam from being the sole arbiter where Iraq's oil revenues would go, is still very much alive, but he managed to shatter some of its restraints.

Eroding the oil embargo has been done essentially on four different levels. By far the most important one was a substantial increase in the amount of oil smuggled out and sold illegally. The smuggling route through Turkey by tanker lorries has been functioning almost since the end of the Gulf War, but this was a limited avenue due to obvious logistical limitations.

Oil sales to Jordan, too, to the tune of around 100,000 barrels per day, started a short while after the Gulf War except that they were approved by the United Nations. The official reason provided was that this was the only way that Iraq could repay its national debt to Jordan of about \$800 million, but after a few years this debt was paid back in full, yet the arrangement continued.

By the late 1990s the Iraqi leadership felt the need to perform a quantum leap in its illicit oil sales. Indeed, this happened through two new avenues. One was the Syrian pipeline, and the other was a maritime route from a specially constructed oil terminal south of Basra through the Shatt al-Arab, hugging the Iranian coast within Iranian territorial water and then crossing the Gulf to the ports of the Arab Emirates.⁶⁵ By early 2001 the most reasonable assessment of how much the Iraqis were smuggling, excluding the U.N.-approved Jordanian part, came from Dubai and cited the quantity of 350,000 barrels a day. If this rate was to continue throughout the year, and the current prices for a smuggled oil barrel, around \$12, roughly half the world market price, was to remain the same, then the annual revenue that is expected to go into Saddam's private pocket is around \$1.5 billion.⁶⁶ This was, indeed, a quantum leap as compared to the assessment of Iraq's illicit revenues of \$600 million for the year 2000.⁶⁷

Another avenue through which Iraq managed to earn illegal petrodollars was through a surcharge of between 15-30 cents per barrel

that it forced its clients to pay even though this was in contravention of Security Council resolutions. The United States and United Nations made efforts to stop it but only with partial success. The international economic press reported that many companies were ready to pay the surcharge. Usually those were small intermediates that bought the Iraqi oil and resold it to the larger companies.⁶⁸

Iraq has been busting the embargo also in the realm of imports: from new cars and luxury goods to spare parts for Iraq's military. Finally, there are numerous reports that Iraq has bought legitimate goods but paid more than they were worth, the difference being handed back by the producers to Saddam's men. This, too, has gone into his private coffers.

It was just as important to the Iraqis to actually bust the embargo, as it was to boast about it. After all, importing illicit goods and illicitly selling oil to get the currency for it was only one, if very important aspect of the Iraqi policy. The other was to demonstrate it to their own people and to the world at large in order to boost domestic morale and, at the same time, dishearten the U.N. and the United States.

Thus, for example, Under Secretary of the Foreign Ministry Nizar Hamdoon said to a Western reporter in Baghdad in early 2001, "Many people and businesses [in the world] are doing business with Iraq regardless of the sanctions regime . . . Practically, the sanctions regime is crumbling."⁶⁹

The Palestinians: Every Suicide Bomber Is Protecting Saddam

In Saddam's eyes, the Palestinian intifadah that started in September 2000 is the best guaranty against an American attack, because it keeps the Arab world volatile, and threatens the moderate Arab regimes. The higher the flames, the more difficult will it be for the U.S. to attack him. As Saddam sees it, if, as a result of a large-scale Palestinian terrorist operation ("mega-terrorist operation," as it is called in Israel) the Israeli side will lose its inhibitions and perform a massacre, all the better for Iraq. Such an atrocity could guarantee American paralysis over Iraq for a long time. Seen from Saddam's viewpoint, the intifadah should continue indefinitely and even, if possible, escalate upwards.

This demonstrates again one of Saddam's most salient characteristics, namely his willingness to fight his battles at the expense of others, be it the Iraqi people or the Palestinians. In other words, Saddam is ready to fight Israel until the last Palestinian.

The ways in which he is trying to stoke up the glowing embers of the intifadah are varied. In the first place, Saddam is the only Arab and Islamic head of state who repeatedly, vociferously and unequivocally is promising the Palestinians to “liberate Palestine” for them “from the [Jordan] River to the [Mediterranean] Sea.” He is even more specific when he is promising to destroy the State of Israel and exile the Jews back to where they came from. No wonder that he is defined in Iraq as the Latter-Day Saladin who would liberate Palestine from the Jews the way his great predecessor liberated it from the yoke of the Christian Crusades.⁷⁰

Having made such a sweeping promise, Saddam feels that he feels that he has a right to demand of the Palestinians to continue the intifadah and even to upgrade it.⁷¹ Saddam has also been preparing the tool for the liberation of Jerusalem and Palestine: he has been establishing the Jerusalem Army (jaysh al-Quds). This is a twenty-one division strong army, which, due to its poor equipment and reluctant manpower, can never hope to liberate Jerusalem, or anything else, but it can serve as cannon fodder if the Americans attack Iraq.⁷²

But Saddam does not satisfy himself with bombastic promises and an army that will never arrive. Unlike his military, that is in terrible shape, his coffers are full. Thus, Saddam has been giving financial support to families that lost their sons or daughters in the Palestinian intifadah. At first those were sums of \$10,000 for each family that lost its son or daughter. Later families whose sons or daughters became suicide bombers started to receive \$25,000. The checks were handed over in small ceremonies by Saddam’s representatives, members of the pro-Iraqi Ba’ath party or of the pro-Iraqi Arab Liberation Front (ALF). On such occasions a poet would recite a panegyric praising Saddam, people would call for Saddam to bomb Israel, and certificates would be given to the families in addition to the check.⁷³

In addition, Iraq informed the Palestinian authority and public that it had asked permission from the Security Council to dedicate one billion Euros (around \$940 million) from its New York Escrow to the intifadah.⁷⁴

There are other forms of support that, while not substantial, are still serving Saddam’s propaganda machine. For example, a few of the intifadah wounded have been hospitalized in Baghdad.⁷⁵ Also, Iraq sent a number of lorries through Jordan and the Jordan River bridges to the West Bank full of humanitarian goods. Israel allowed these lorries to cross over.

It is hardly surprising, thus, that Saddam is highly popular with the Palestinians. As reported by a foreign correspondent, in one case he witnessed a mother of a young man who died in a confrontation with the Israeli troops shouted, “Saddam is the father of all the Arabs! He is the bravest example of how an Arab leader should be.” Palestinian babies are named after Saddam and people call upon him to strike at Tel-Aviv again as he had done in 1991 crying, “Dear Saddam, Hit, Hit Tel-Aviv! (Saddam ya habib, udrub udrub Tal-Abib).”⁷⁶

A “Return” to Islam As A Survival Technique

Since 1989-1990, Saddam Hussein’s image in Iraq, and in large parts of the Arab world, is no longer that of a secular leader. Personally he may very well be such. However, Saddam is a cynical politician. Sometime towards the later stages of the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988) he realized that there was a shift in the Iraqi public towards more religiosity. He also had to defend himself against Khomeini’s public accusations that he was an atheist (mulhid) and an enemy of Islam. This is when he started to employ Islamist rhetoric.

This rhetoric took a quantum leap immediately following the invasion of Kuwait and the beginning of the American troop buildup in Saudi Arabia. He realized that his only help can come from the Arab and Islamic world and he believed that this world was far more religious and fundamentalist than him and his regime. His analysis in that respect was essentially correct. Since August-September 1990, Saddam has been presenting himself as the Slave of God (Abd Allah) who knows what God wants of him, of the Iraqis, of the Arabs and Muslims. His whole speech style started to sound like that of a militant preacher (khatib) at a Friday sermon in the mosque.

Furthermore, he presented himself as a latter-day Mahdi who came to purge Islam and return it to its original pristine purity as it used to be during the Prophet’s day. Along the same line he promised to eradicate all corruption and destroy all the corrupt leaders of the Islamic world, headed by the Kuwaiti and Saudi (but also Egyptian, Syrian and other) ruling elites. He accused the Kuwaiti shaykh of unimaginable sexual corruption and committed himself to put it to an abrupt end. All this did not help him much militarily then, but he has continued along the same lines

undisturbed. His anti-American rhetoric is part of it and, more often than not, is using Islamic symbolism.

Why? Because even as early as 1990-91, this already won him tremendous admiration amongst Muslim fundamentalists in the Middle East. Probably the most interesting admirer he had was Shaykh Buyud Tamimi, leader of the Islamic Jihad Bayt al-Maqdas in Amman. This was, and still is, the most radical Islamist movement in Jordan. Shaykh Tamimi had attacked him during the Iraq-Iran War, but in 1990 he called him “the New Muslim Caliph Marching From the East.” There is no doubt that the shaykh was well aware that in his life style Saddam was not a religious man, but he believed that Saddam’s rhetoric was a good beginning and that eventually he would become a good Muslim. Furthermore, Saddam represented to him, and to many others like him, the military might of resurgent Arab Islam, whatever his personal conduct. Indeed, Saddam became an Islamist, at least rhetorically speaking, two or three years before Osama bin Laden did, and their styles are very similar.

But this is not all. In 1994 Saddam introduced into Iraq the Qur’anic punishment of severing the right hand for the crime of theft. He then added to it the amputation of the left leg in the case of recidivists. He forbade the public consumption of alcohol in Iraq. In the late 1990s he introduced the death sentence, in most cases by decapitation with a sword, for the “crimes” of prostitution, homosexuality, and providing a shelter for prostitutes where they can pursue their occupation. This has been implemented in most part without proper trial and already a few scores of young women have been beheaded in front of their homes.

On the cultural level a few million Qur’an books were printed in Iraq and given free and people are being forced to attend Qur’an courses in many walks of society, starting with schools. In the same vein, a law issued in the late 1990s made it possible to release Muslim prisoners who learned the Qur’an in jail.⁷⁷ Qur’an courses could be a very positive experience, except that compelling people to take them is a clear departure from the party’s old tradition of separation of state and mosque.⁷⁸

Since 1989, Saddam has demonstrated to one and all that he is praying five times every day like a devout Muslim. He will now stop government meetings and meetings with foreign diplomats, retire to another room, either pretending to pray or actually pray, then return to the meeting.

According to an extensive report by the prestigious *al-Sharq al-Awsat* that came out in five parts between January 6–10, 2001, the new emphasis on religious studies at all levels of education, including in universities has even been enhanced by the end of the 1990s to the extent that it reportedly “has disrupted the education program.” Women in Iraq are finding themselves, “under pressure to wear a veil.”⁷⁹ This report was corroborated by an independent report by the Associated Press in February 2002.

That the regime is using mosque preachers for anti-American propaganda is nothing new. Even the fact that all public ceremonies are opening with a prayer is no longer an innovation. But the fact that more and more female party members are donning the veil is indeed new. An Iraqi weekly magazine, *al-Zaman*, asked Iraqi actresses, “Why don’t you don the veil and pray?” If lamented that these actresses have been following “the suggestions of Satan,” with their “nakedness and hot kisses.” One can see more and more portraits of the president kneeling in prayer. The President of Saddam University for Islamic Studies, Muhammad al-Sa’id, praised the regime for “communicat[ing] the Islamic thought to people through television, radio, newspapers and seminars.”⁸⁰

Another component of the Islamization campaign is the construction of extravagant mosques. Thus, for example, Saddam Mosque, under construction since 1999 and located on the way to the International Airport, will be the biggest or second biggest in the Middle East after the one in Mecca. Saddam already has built the Mother of All Battles Mosque in central Baghdad, a very unusual architectural creation. Surrounding the dome are eight minarets. Four of them are shaped like Scud Missiles sitting on a launching pad, the other four like anti-aircraft guns.

Inside of the mosque lies a Qur’an inscribed, as reported, in the blood of the Iraqi leader. The visitors are told that Saddam donated no less than 50 pints of blood to write the holy book. Shaykh Qaysi, the mosque’s preacher, explained, “Our leader, the great believer, Saddam Hussein, always called on people to go back to religion and real values . . . He is our example, our school in religion and faith. Our great project now is to start teaching the sayings of the Iraqi president in universities.”

Western journalists report, however, that many Iraqis privately complain about the exorbitant amount of money invested in building these mosques.⁸¹ The mosque’s preacher must have been fully aware of the implication of what he said, namely, that Saddam is encouraging his people to see him as something between a Mahdi and a prophet.

Last but not least, the regime is worried about Shi'i loyalty in the case of a military confrontation with the United States. General religiosity that applies to both the Sunni and Shi'i creeds is believed to help, but Saddam feels the need also for some special gestures towards the Shi'a in particular. Most notably, since the rise of Ayat Allah Khomeini to power in Iran, Saddam "nationalized" the main Shi'i occasions and presented himself as the genetic offspring of the first and third Shi'i Imams, Ali and Al-Hussein, and of the Prophet.⁸²

In January 2001, Udayy Saddam Hussein declared that he is studying "Shi'ite rite in depth" and Shi'ite thinking in general, and he criticized his own ministry of religious endowments for not building enough mosques in the Shi'i areas.⁸³ It is not clear how helpful all these religious practices have been to Saddam, but they do show how flexible he is in his approach to his own ideology, tossing it overboard whenever expediency dictates.

At the same time, however, Saddam has not tossed overboard his associate and supporter of many years, the Christian Deputy Prime Minister, Tariq Aziz. Apparently, this would look like total capitulation to the Islamic fundamentalists, and this is where concessions stop. Also, there are Christians among his bodyguards. It would be a mistake to arouse their wrath. However, it should be remembered that loyalty with Saddam Hussein is a one-way street, and only those who are seen to be serving him with total loyalty will survive.

Why Weapons of Mass Destruction?

Beginning in 2001, apparently in response to the Bush administration's declaration of resolve to change the regime in Baghdad, Saddam started meeting regularly and publicly with his nuclear scientists. In these meetings he and his scientists have been dropping hints that can only be interpreted as intended to tell the United States that, in a case of an attack on Iraq, the latter may have some nuclear surprises up its sleeve. Thus, for example, when Saddam met with his Head of the atomic energy organization, Dr. Fadil Muslim al-Janabi and his men in February 2001, he told them, "the bottom line is to defend Iraq. In so doing, we defend the Arab nation. . . . We will never hesitate to possess the weapons to defend Iraq and the Arab nation."⁸⁴ In a similar meeting a few months later, Dr. Janabi made a pledge in the name of his

organization, “We swear to be a formidable force . . . in the service of Iraq and its proud people when the confrontation and noble battle against the Zionists and the Americans would start.”⁸⁵

It is very clear that to Saddam, the first reason for developing non-conventional weapons is to deter external enemies. Not only the USA is considered as an enemy. On Iraq’s Eastern front there is Iran, with a long history of confrontations and with three times Iraq’s population and territory. To the north there is Turkey, with a bigger population and land area, in possession of a much larger and better-equipped armed force. Iraq is locked in an unresolved dispute with Turkey over the water of the Euphrates. Indeed, in May 1990 Saddam threatened Turkey’s Prime Minister, Yilderim Akbulut, asserting that Turkey is exposed now that NATO has begun falling apart.

But Saddam’s *modus operandi* implies that such weapons are necessary also for domestic purposes, and for regional offensive purposes. In the first place, the use of chemical weapons against the Kurds, especially in March 1988, which caused widespread panic in Iraqi Kurdistan, proved to be an extremely effective weapon against an unprotected population. It is not far-fetched to suggest that, in the case of another wide scale Shi’i revolt in the south, a few chemical bombs or artillery shells on a densely populated area may be used to nip in the bud any popular revolt.

Biological and nuclear weapons are far less useful in a domestic context because they contaminate an area for a long time. Such weapons, however, are very useful for anyone aspiring to regional hegemony and international recognition as a great power. Indeed, in April 1990 Saddam already threatened Israel with annihilation, stating that, “I shall burn half of Israel,” an idea unthinkable without weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

There is every reason to believe that, when he has a number of nuclear weapons, he will be rattling them and offering every Arab and Islamic State that requested his protection the Iraqi nuclear umbrella. In fact, even before he became a nuclear power, Saddam already promised the Arabs such an umbrella against Israel and even promised Arafat to use the Iraqi missiles in order to push Israel out of Jerusalem and the Palestinian territories.

In a 1979 meeting between Saddam’s younger half brother, Watban Ibrahim Hasan, and Iraqi nuclear physicist, Ali al-Shaharastani, his sibling said that Iraq needed nuclear arms “to change the map of the Middle

East.” It is not clear what exactly this meant, but it could conceivably mean an Iraqi takeover of the Arab side of the Persian Gulf, and Iraqi leadership of the Arab world.⁸⁶ Finally, in his on-going quest for prestige and authority with his army officers, Saddam needs WMD to demonstrate to them that he has a decisive war-winning instrument. Saddam can be trusted to rub it into his officers’ heads that they are of secondary importance to his WMD in achieving military ends.

To Saddam, nuclear weapons, and WMD in general, serve as a double-edged sword that can cut both ways. First, for a person with the tremendous insecurities of Saddam Hussein, these weapons offer a kind of security that cannot be matched by any other way. Especially since his military was grievously wounded by the 1991 conflict, such weapons have become all the more important to him. Moreover, defying the international community on this matter is a regular reminder to the military that he has not and will not capitulate.

To make sure that these weapons are always at his disposal and can be used ruthlessly and indiscriminately without any qualms and inhibitions exactly when and where he wants them employed, he has placed them in the hands of the SSO under the control of his son, Qussay. The SSO is made up of the people who are closest to him by blood, indeed most of them hail from his own tribe, and they are regarded, together with the Himaya, as the most disciplined and obedient to him. In other words, these people, who will be the ones to initiate nuclear, biological, chemical, and/or radiological weapons use, are the closest to what one would see as an extension of Saddam’s self. After all, he has molded these people in his own image.

Weapons of mass destruction also provide Saddam with an extremely potent tool to fulfill what, in his own mind, is his manifest destiny. With them, he may be able to unify all the Arab lands under his leadership, to put Israel in its right place and to become a world leader no less important than any leader of the world’s great powers. Since 1990 he has also been aspiring to be recognized as the single most important Islamic leader. Is it any wonder, then, that Saddam has been so reluctant to part with his weapons of mass destruction, even though this obstinacy has cost him, between 1990 and 1997, at least \$100 billion and still limits him greatly in terms of his inability to control most of his petrodollars.

Weapons Inspections

Despite tactical retreats in Oct-Nov 1997, and Jan-Feb 1998, Iraq succeeded in winning important concessions on the sanctions front relating to weapons inspections. This was crucial in continuing to build Saddam's support among the Iraqi people. It was seen as a victory. The embargo is dissipating slowly, and yet Saddam did not have to give up his remaining weapons of mass destruction.

Today the Iraqi people have an improving standard of living, many aspects of the embargo are gone, Saddam has his WMDs, and his power elite feels more empowered, solidifying Saddam's position in Iraq.

Saddam's message on sanctions has changed over the years. While still defiant in the face of the west, he now claims that sanctions are a disaster, so full of holes there is no point in continuing with them. Sanctions fatigue is an argument commonly used by outside observers in support of lifting sanctions. Increasing international dissent on sanctions, by France, Russia, and China as well as by some Arab states, continues to strengthen Saddam's argument that there is no real point to sanctions anymore. Russian, French, and Arab pressures persuaded the United States not to adopt military measures to force Saddam to accept the weapons inspectors after they left in December 1998.

Following intense pressure from France, Russia, and China, a compromise was reached ultimately allowing Iraq to export as much oil as they wanted while the international community (ineffectively) continued to limit imports. This compromise has dramatically weakened the impact of the international sanctions.

Saddam, nevertheless, continues his propaganda by claiming that sanctions have seriously limited medical supplies to the Iraqi people resulting in untold deaths. Meanwhile, he continues to rebuild his military machine.

In the fall of 1997 U.N. weapons inspectors were refused entry to "presidential sites" on the basis that it would "impugn national dignity and sovereignty." Although weapons inspectors claimed that Saddam used these presidential sites as storage facilities for his WMD arsenal, there were no inspections. This defiance of the international inspection regime bolstered Saddam's image internally.

Indeed, when UNSCOM left Iraq in December 1998 and was not allowed back, this was a major victory for Saddam in the eyes of many Iraqis. The United Nations had been forced out of Iraq, and Saddam was

unscathed. Until forced to reverse policy in late 2002, the challenge to the UNSCOM inspections regime in particular had strengthened his internal support, diminishing the internal threat, as he demonstrated his ability to weaken and challenge the international coalition and still retain the coveted WMD program. The divisions within the United Nations that Saddam helped promote were so deep that Saddam concluded that he was essentially immune to U.N. reprisals for pursuing unconventional weapons programs. It may be no coincidence that since 1999 there have been no meaningful coup attempts. Officers who might have challenged a leader perceived to be a loser did not dare challenge a leader who challenged President Clinton for eight years and emerged victorious. The reimposition of inspections in 2002, under threat of war by the U.S. and U.K., may cause some Iraqis once again to reevaluate their support

Return to International Community / Change of Image

Saddam has continued to work to increase his standing in the international community, seizing on opportunities to change his image, including bolstering his image within the Arab community.

- In October 2000 a hijacked Saudi airliner landed in Baghdad. All passengers were released unharmed and returned to their home countries resulting in a great deal of international praise for Saddam Hussein.
- The offer in January of 2002 to allow Kuwaiti officials to inspect Iraqi prisons, which was turned down, was a calculated step to garner international favor.
- The unrest of the Palestinian people following Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount was another opportunity Saddam capitalized on. Saddam spoke out against the visit unlike many of his Arab counterparts who were hindered in doing so because of their relationships with Israel and the United States, earning him a great deal of admiration in the Arab world. Saddam has pledged \$881 million (USD) from oil revenues for the Palestinian people.
- In October 2000, signaling the change in Iraq's position in the Arab community, it was invited by the Arab League to

participate in their annual meeting for the first time since the invasion of Kuwait.

- In August 2000, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez bucked international convention and traveled to Iraq to meet with Saddam Hussein. He was the first head of state to visit Iraq since the Gulf War, again signaling Iraq's growing acceptance in the international community.
- As of January 2001 humanitarian flights began arriving daily from abroad. Iraqi airlines began operating (even in the no-fly zones), and oil-production recovered to pre-war levels. Food rations have increased, power cuts are less severe, drinking water and sewer services are dramatically improving.
- Baghdad International Airport re-opened in the Fall of 2000, another sign of normalcy returning.

The Use of International Crises: Sustaining Power and Weakening Internal Threats

Saddam has found that, in times of domestic unrest, international crises are helpful in his retaining power in his country, and allow him to stunt the growth of the internal opposition. Naturally, whenever he triggered an international crisis Saddam also believed that very quickly he would emerge from it not only intact but also victorious, with tremendous prestige and authority, at least in the Arab world. But even when this latter hope was dashed, he managed to pull through by switching his modus operandi from trouble-making to trouble-shooting.

This was the case in 1980, when he tried to solve the Shi'i problem by attacking Shi'i Iran. Even before that, in 1977, he tried to deflect Shi'i anger by accusing Syria of plotting to mass murder Shi'i pilgrims in Karbala. This brought relations with Syria to a new low.

In 1990 he invaded Kuwait in order to "escape forward" from a desperate economic crisis that resulted from a very dangerous crisis of expectations inside of Iraq. The paradox during the last few years is that over this time the foreign arena saved him from very serious domestic problems by eroding the embargo and giving him much diplomatic support. France, Russia, China and some Arab states have demonstrated

to one and all inside of Iraq that, to them, Saddam is a legitimate leader and that he is gradually winning the diplomatic battle against the U.S. This strengthened his position inside of Iraq.

In short, national emergencies he fabricated helped him a great deal in his efforts to terrorize his own population. It is not clear whether, had he known that the international crisis he was going to initiate would cost him years of hardship, he still would have initiated it. After all, years of hardship produce their own domestic dangers. Still, so far, whenever he grossly miscalculated the risk, he also managed to wriggle out of the danger zone he created for himself. This he did mainly through patient, pragmatic foreign policies that looked like the complete or partial reversal of his previous behavior of high stakes gambling. He relied on foreign countries, mostly Russia and France, but even the U.S. once, to save him, and he was never wrong. His string of foreign policy successes, while gradual and earned through patience and long-term planning, strengthened him domestically.

Even when he challenged a world power, he always managed to manipulate other major powers, and some Arab states, getting them to support him and prevent his downfall. For Saddam, success is not limited to the elimination of domestic opposition. Such elimination is only a precondition to achieve his great ambitions on the Middle East and world arenas. However, in order to be able to become a world class leader he needs, in the first place, to control the domestic scene, and in his mind control means absolute control, namely, the complete elimination of any opposition. In order to achieve that, Saddam has always been ready to confront anybody, including world powers.

Saddam has found that international crises are helpful in his retaining power in his country, and his string of foreign policy successes have allowed him to stunt the growth of the internal opposition. For Saddam, success primarily means strengthening his domestic position even if at the expense of his international position. The most damaging outcome of any crisis is one that shows him as a failure as a leader. Thus Saddam regularly promotes international crises to shore up his internal position.

While assuredly Saddam's position today is much weaker than it was on the eve of the invasion of Kuwait in 1990, he has demonstrated a more sophisticated leadership both in terms of internal security vulnerabilities, and in terms of diplomacy both with his Arab neighbors, the "near abroad" as well as with his "far abroad" and has accomplished a great deal to

reduce his vulnerabilities and to strengthen his position, both internally and internationally.

Conclusion

Saddam's survival in power is his continuing goal. There is no possibility that he would accept exile, one of the possibilities being discussed as of this writing. A life out of power is death for Saddam. A rational calculator who can bob and weave and is astutely Machiavellian he has shrewdly managed to sustain the loyalty of his military and to weaken the international opposition.

That he has been sophisticated and better attuned to the context of his leadership both internally and internationally does not however lessen a still persistent danger, that when Saddam is backed into a corner, his customary prudence and judgment are apt to falter. On these occasions he can be dangerous to the extreme, violently lashing out with all resources at his disposal. The persistent calls for regime change may well be moving him into that dangerous "back against the wall" posture.

The setting afire of the Kuwaiti oil fields as he retreated in 1991 is an example which might well be repeated with his own Iraqi oil fields, as if to say, "If I can't have them, no one will." Moreover, with his back to the wall it is probable he would attempt to use his chemical and biological weapons against Israel and against U.S. armed forces in the region.

The question then will be the degree to which he can continue to sustain the loyalty of his senior military commanders or whether they can be induced to disobey Saddam when placed in extremis in order to safeguard their own futures. The explicit statement of Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld suggests Iraqi military officers may be allowed to play a role in the reconstruction of a post-war Iraq, but if they become involved in WMD, all such bets are off. Similarly, President Bush's recommendation that senior military commanders disobey Saddam's orders is aimed at splitting Saddam from his senior leadership.

That he might lash out on the way out is not to imply that conflict should be avoided, for a nuclear-armed Saddam would in his estimation have taken a quantum leap in power, and his already swollen ego would be all the further enlarged. One could well anticipate a game of nuclear threats and counter threats within the region, especially towards Israel, as he did in 1990 when he threatened "to burn half of Israel." It is likely that

Saddam would attempt to dictate oil prices internationally and would likely enter a state of permanent nuclear brinkmanship.

Saddam can be expected to move with great vigor in his diplomacy to constrain his Near Abroad, his Arab neighbors and Turkey, from joining an opposing U.S.-led coalition, and to enlist support from his Far Abroad in weakening U.N. resolutions. The greater the degree that the conflict can be seen as Saddam versus the United States, the more he will use this to bolster his image in the radical Arab world for having the courage to confront the United States. On the other hand, he very much wishes to be seen as a respected world leader, and a broad coalition would dampen that possibility as well as having a decisive impact on his senior military leaders.

Of one thing we can be sure, this is not a man who will go “quietly into that good night, but will rage, rage, rage at the passing of the light.”

Notes

1. This assessment draws extensively on “Saddam Hussein of Iraq: A Political Psychology Profile” by Jerrold M. Post, M.D. presented in testimony to hearings on the Gulf crisis by the House Armed Services Committee, December 5, 1990 and the Foreign Affairs Committee, December 12, 1990, and *Building Toward Crisis: Saddam Hussein’s Strategy for Survival*, Amatzia Baram, 1998, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

2. Professor of Psychiatry, Political Psychology and International Affairs, The George Washington University, Washington, D.C.

3. Professor of Middle Eastern History, University of Haifa, Israel

4. The details of Saddam’s pre-natal and early childhood history are based on an extensive interview with Nasimah, an elderly member of the Jewish family that saved Sabha’s life and looked after her just before and after she gave birth to Saddam, conducted in Tel Aviv on February 2, 1991. These details were confirmed again by Nasimah’s son, Yigal, in a telephone conversation on July 1, 2002. For more details see a report by Peter Waldman of Amatzia Baram’s 1991 interview with Nasimah in *The Wall Street Journal*, February 7, 1991. Also: Amir Iskandar, *Saddam Hussein, Munadilan wa Mufakkiran wa Insanan* (Paris: Hachette, 1980), 15-19.

5. See, for example, Judith Miller and Laurie Mylroie, *Saddam Hussein and the Crisis in the Gulf* (New York: Times Books, 1990). Also: personal interviews. In an interview with his biographer, Saddam exposed his hate for his step-father that seems to corroborate these interviews. See Iskandar, *Ibid.*, 353.

6. *Ibid.*, 22-25.

7. For Saddam’s admiring, yet not un-ambivalent approach to Nasser, see Amatzia Baram, “Saddam Hussein and Nasirism”, in *Orient* (Hamburg), 3/2000, 461-472.

8. FBIS, Near East Report, 8 August 1990.

9. Matlak, Regis, *Inside Saddam’s Grip*. NSSQ. Spring 1999.

10. Yevgeny Primakov, *Voing Kotorvi Moglo ne Byt* (Moscow, no date), 32. Saddam has been reported to believe that the United States leaders, including President Bush in 1990, were adverse to taking major casualties and he depended on his forces in Kuwait to inflict enough casualties to make the U.S. sue for a compromise peace. See Avigdor Haselkorn, *The Continuing Storm* (New Haven, CT: Yale U. Press, 1990).

11. Based on an interview in 1999 in Washington, D.C. with a senior ex-UNSCOM official who, in his own turn, interviewed General Hussein Kamil in Amman. Kamil was with Saddam when the first bombs fell on Baghdad.

12. DeHart, James and Jerrold Post. *Responding to Qaddafi*. The Christian Science Monitor, January 7, 1992.

13. See Amatzia Baram, “Neo-Tribalism in Iraq: Saddam Hussein’s Tribal Policies 1991-96”, in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol 29 (1997), 13-14.

14. See Amatzia Baram, “Calculation and Miscalculation in Baghdad”, in Alex Danchev and Dan Keohane, *International Perspectives on the Gulf Conflict 1990-91* (NY-Oxford: St. Martin’s Press and St. Antony’s College, 1994), 44-46.

15. Al-Majalla (London), Sept 5-11, 1999, 31-41.

16. See Baram, op. cit., 15 for a detailed breakdown of the assassins and their family lineage.

17. For details see Amatzia Baram, *Building Toward Crisis: Saddam Hussein’s Strategy for Survival* (Washington, D.C., The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1998), 8-20.

18. For example, UN Economic and Social Council, Commission on Human Rights, 57th Session, *Questions of the Violation of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms ... Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Iraq, Mr. Andreas Mavrommatis* (N.Y.: 16 January 2001), 11. Mavromatis does not identify which internal security body is responsible, though, for the decapitations; but see *Le Monde*, April 3, 2001. For an account of the Feda’iyyin practice of cutting out tongues, and the RCC decree ordering the execution of “prostitutes” and homosexuals, and the decapitation of others connected with prostitution, see, Amnesty International, *Annual Country Report on Human Rights: Iraq*, May 2002, as quoted by The Washington Kurdish Institute, June 6, 2002 (www.kurd.org).

19. *Al-Hayat* (London), June 18, 2001, 2, in *FBIS-NES GMP20010618000048* , June 18, 2001.

20. For example, *Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Main Service* in Arabic, March 12, 2001, in *FBIS-NES GMP20010312000090*, March 12, 2001. And for more see Baram, *Building Toward Crisis*, 37-44.

21. For example: Saddam on Victory Day, Baghdad Radio, August 8, 2002; Taha Yasin Ramadan, Radio Baghdad, August 17, 2002.

22. For details of the period 1991-1998, see Baram, *Building Toward Crisis*, 87-96.

23. *Reuters* from Damascus, January 4, 2001.

24. *Damascus Syrian Arab TV-TV1* in Arabic, January 29, 2001, in *FBIS-NES gmp20010129000218*, January 29, 2001. Also *Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio* in Arabic, Jan. 29, 2001, in *FBIS-NES GMP20010129000105*, Jan. 29, 2001.

25. *Reuters* from Damascus, Jan. 4, 2001.

26. *HaAretz*, Feb. 1, 2001.

27. *Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Main Service in Arabic*, Feb. 28, 2001, *FBIS-NES Serial GMP 2001 0228000169*, Feb. 28, 2001.

28. *Reuters*, Feb. 28, 2001.

29. *AFP* from Baghdad, March 1, 2001.

30. *Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Main Service in Arabic*, March 1, 2001 in *FBIS-NES Serial GMP 2001 0302000013*, March 2, 2001.

31. *MENA Report.com*, May 27, 2002.

32. *Iraq Press*, June 25, 2002.

33. *Iraq Press*, June 3, 2002, in *WKI* (Washington Kurdish Institute), June 4, 2002.

34. *Iraq Press*, June 10, 2002 as reproduced by Washington Kurdish Institute, June 11, 2002. *Reuters*, March 7, 2001, Evelyn Leopold reporting from the UN. And see report by Peg Mackey from Dubai, *Reuters*, Feb. 14, 2001, according to which the oil flow to Syria was then 170,000 barrels per day. Also *AP* from Baghdad, January 23, 2001, in *WKI* (Washington Kurdish Institute), January 23, 2001.

35. Barbara Crossette, *The New York Times*, March 7, 2001. *AFP*, Brussels, Feb. 27, 2001.

36. The World Bank Group, Syrian Arab Republic Data Profile (<http://devdata.worldbank.org>) update April 2002; The World Bank Group, Syrian Arab Republic at a Glance (<http://www.worldbank.org>) update Sept, 20, 2001.

37. For details see, Amatzia Baram, *Building Toward Crisis: Saddam Hussein's Strategy for Survival* (Washington, DC, The Washington Institute, 1998), 97-108.

38. In 2002 the number of pilgrims allowed doubled to about 7000 a week when compared to 2001. This was still about ½ the number allowed in 1978, when mutual relations were at their best. See, *AFP*, June 28, 2001. See there also, visit of Minister of Culture Hamad Yussif Hammadi to Iran. And, for mutual sabotage, see for example a Shi'i attack in Baghdad reported by the Iraqi authorities and blamed on Iran. *AFP*, from Baghdad Nov. 25, 2001. Despite the accusations the two sides were still expressing a wish for improved relations and pilgrims were still allowed to cross the border.

39. See for example, Dr. Kazim Jalali of the Iranian Majlis, *Entekhab* (Tehran, Internet version) in Persian, Nov. 26, 2001.

40. *Turkish Daily News*, June 26, 2002.

41. *Anatolia*, Nov. 2, 2001.

42. *Turkish Daily News*, Jan. 24, 2001.

43. For details, see Baram, *Building Toward Crisis*, 109-122.

44 *Ibid.*, 123-136.

45. *Iraq Press*, June 3, 2002, in *WKI* (Washington Kurdish Institute), June 4, 2002.

46. *Jordan Times*, Dec. 24, 1997.

47. *Reuters*, Jan 24, 2001, in Washington Kurdish Institute, Jan. 24, 2001.

48. *UPI*, from Baghdad, June 24, 2002.

49. *Xinhua* (the official Chinese News Agency), Feb. 14, 2001, in Washington Kurdish Institute, Feb. 14, 2001. *MENA*, in English, Jan. 18, 2001, in *FBIS-NES- Serial GMP 2001 0118000178*, Jan. 18, 2001.

50. An interview by Salih to *MENA*, in English, Cairo, Jan. 18, 2001, in *FBIS-NES Serial GMP 2001 011 8000028*, Jan. 18, 2001.

51. *MENA*, in English, Jan. 18, 2001, in *FBIS-NES Serial GMP 2001 0118000172*, Jan. 18, 2001.

52. *Baghdad Republic of Iraq TV*, in Arabic, April 3, 2001, in *FBIS-NES Serial GMP 2001 0403000241*, April 3, 2001; *Xinhua*, April 2, 2001.

53. Jason Burke, *The Observer*, Jan. 21, 2001.

54. See for example Iraq's Trade Minister, Muhammad Mahdi Salih threatening France that "it will not be given preference in trade transactions...because of its support of the stupid anti-Iraq draft resolution on sanctions". On the other hand the minister promised that "Syria, Jordan, Turkey and Russia will be given priority...in the upcoming stage in appreciation of their stands rejecting the wicked US-British draft resolution". *Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Main Service in Arabic*, July 9, 2001, in *FBIS-NES Serial GMP2001 0709000143*, July 9, 2001. See also *Babil*, Internet version in Arabic, July 9, 2001, implied threat, urging China and France to reconsider their "opportunistic" position regarding the new sanction proposal in the Security Council.

55. *Associated Press*, from Moscow, April 9, 2001.

56. See Moscow's "extremely negative reaction" to these patrols, *Moscow Interfax in English*, reporting a foreign office communiqué, Jan. 30, 2001, in *FBIS-NES Serial CEP2001 013000 0151*, Jan. 30, 2001.

57. Note for example, Russian “penetration” into the West Qurna field, to the chagrin of the European powers. See Andrew Boroweic, *The Washington Times*, Jan. 18, 2001.

58. *Xinhua*, April 2, 2001.

59. *HaAretz*, Aug. 18, 2002, 1, 3.

60. See for example, threats by Baghdad’s *al-Thawra*, March 1, 2001: “The Italian Government must rectify its position of which we have taken note.” Denouncing the Italian Foreign Minister Lamberto Dini, the party daily added, “the stupid statement [by Dini] will affect relations between the two countries.”

61. See Trade Minister Muhammad Mahdi Salih announcing that Iraq is lifting the restrictions on imports from Poland after the Polish government modified its position on the US-British “aggression” against Iraq. Iraq had decided to stop its commercial dealings with Poland and Canada on Feb. 20, 2001. The Polish government “officially clarified...it does not support or back” the air patrols.. *Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Main Service in Arabic*, Feb. 29, 2001, in *FBIS-NES Serial GMP 2001 0228 000129*, Feb. 28, 2001.

62. For Switzerland, see *Reuters*, from Baghdad, Feb. 1, 2001; note Norway’s opening an embassy, an announcement by Foreign Minister Thorbjoen Jagland, quoted by Simeon Kerr *Countries*, Jan. 26, 2001, in *Washington Kurdish Institute*, (WKI @ Kurd.org), Jan. 26, 2001.

63. For an example of such a delegation, see details of a US Muslim delegation calling for the end of sanctions, *Dawn*, April 8, 2001. Other such groups are for example, Voices in the Wilderness, and even some UN agencies. For an analysis of the causes of the suffering and its results see Amatzia Baram, “The Effect of Iraqi Sanctions: Statistical Pitfalls and Responsibility”, in *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 54, No. 2, Spring, 2000, 195-223.

64. *AFP*, from Washington, DC, Jan. 17, 2001.

65. See for example, *AFP*, from Dubai, Feb. 5, 2001 quoting British officials in the Gulf.

66. Peg Mackey, *Reuters*, from Dubai, Feb. 14, 2001. The assessment was that close to 150,000 barrels a day went through Turkey, 170,000 barrels a day went through Syria and the rest through Iranian territorial waters and some illicit exports to Jordan. A somewhat more liberal assessment puts the Iraqi earnings from illicit oil sales at around \$2 billion. See *Financial Times*, Feb. 6, 2001.

67. *Reuters*, Feb. 6, 2001.

68. See *Financial Times*, Feb. 6, 2001.

69. *Toronto Star*, Feb. 3, 2001.

70. See for example, Udayy Saddam Hussein's aide, Dr. Adib Sha'ban interviewed by Qasim Bakri in Baghdad, *al-Tayyibah Panorama* in Arabic, Feb. 23, 2001, in *FBIS-NES Serial GMP 2001 0228000166126*, Feb. 28, 2001. And see, Major General Ibrahim Khalil Ibrahim, Commander of the Al-Aqsa Appeal Parade: *al-Jumhuriyya* (internet version) in Arabic, Jan. 3, 2001. And see Vice President Ramadan promising to "liberate" Palestine from "the River to the Sea." *Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Main Service*, in Arabic, Jan. 9, 2001, in *FBIS-NES Serial GMP 2001 0109000120*, Jan. 9, 2001. And for Saddam himself promising to evacuate all the Jews from Greater Palestine, except those who were there by 1948, *Baghdad Republic of Iraq, TV*, in Arabic, Feb. 6, 2001, in *FBIS-NEW Serial GMP 2001 0206000164*, Feb. 6, 2001.

71. See his speech at a cabinet meeting, *Baghdad Republic of Iraq, TV*, in Arabic Nov. 25, 2000, in *FBIS-NES Serial GMP 2000 1125000160*, Nov. 25, 2000.

72. See for example, *al-Qadisiyya* (internet version), in Arabic, March 12, 2001.

73. See for example, *Baghdad Republic of Iraq TV*, in Arabic, Feb. 9, 2001, in *FBIS-NES Serial GMP 2001 10209000194*, Feb. 9, 2001.

74. *AFP*, Jan. 24, 2001.

75. *The Christian Science Monitor*, Feb. 2, 2001.

76. See, for example, Nidal al-Mughrabi_reporting from Gaza, *Reuters*, Jan. 17, 2001.

77. *Al-Quds al-Arabi* (London), Jan. 10, 2001, 3, in *FBIS-NES-Serial GMP 2001 0110000146*, Jan. 10, 2001.

78. For more details see, Amatzia Baram, "Re-Inventing Nationalism in Ba'thi Iraq 1968-1994: Supra-Territorial and Territorial Identities and What Lies Below," in *Princeton Papers*, fall, 1996, Vol. 5, 29-56.

79. *Al Sharq al-Awsat*, January 6-10, 2001, Quoted by *FBIS-NES Serial GMP 2001 0119000060*, Jan. 19, 2001.

80. Mariam Fam, *AP* from Baghdad, Feb. 2, 2002. Others have made similar observations about more people frequenting mosques and more veils seen in the streets of Baghdad. See Kim Ghattas, *BBC*, April 25, 2002.

81. Kim Ghattas, *BBC*, April 25, 2002, and Hala Jaber, *Sidney Morning Herald*, Nov. 11, 2001.

82. See Baram, "Re-inventing Nationalism," *The Princeton Papers*, op. cit.

83. *Al-Quds al-Arabi* (London), Jan. 10, 2001, 3, in *FBIS-NES-Serial GMP 2001 0110000146*, Jan. 10, 2001.

84. *Baghdad Republic of Iraq TV*, in Arabic, Feb. 1, 2001, in *FBIS-NES Serial GMP 2001 0227000217*, Feb. 27, 2001.

85. *Babil*, (internet version in Arabic), July 8, 2001.

86. For details about Saddam's non-conventional strategy see, Amatzia Baram, "An Analysis of Iraqi WMD Strategy" in *The Non-Proliferation Review* (Summer 2001), Vol. 8, No. 2., 25-39.

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