

Crisis with Iraq

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OPTION 1: Act Alone to Remove Saddam Hussein from Power and Eliminate His Weapons of Mass Destruction

Since the 1991 Gulf War ended, Saddam Hussein has shown that he is the same dangerous dictator that he was before the U.S.-led action against him. In fact, he has continued to amass weapons of mass destruction to use against his neighbors and our allies. These actions are in direct violation of the Gulf War cease-fire and cannot be tolerated. Since 1998, Saddam Hussein has consistently prevented UN weapons inspectors from completing their task of dismantling his nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons programs. His lack of real cooperation in the current inspections program is no exception. When he submitted an incomplete and misleading report to the UN Security Council in December claiming that Iraq has no weapons of mass destruction, it became clear that he is continuing to disregard international law. He has already used weapons of mass destruction against his own people and against Iran. He started two wars that ended up disasters, both for the countries attacked and for Iraq. He supports anti-Israeli terrorists. What's to keep him from passing off his weapons of mass destruction to Al Qaeda or other anti-US terrorist group? Enough is enough. He cannot be deterred or contained. It is time for the world's lone superpower to act preemptively - with or without the support of other nations. We should seize the opportunity to remove Saddam Hussein from power and wipe out his weapons programs. An all-out military effort will provide the opportunity to do what we did not do in the Gulf War - remove Saddam Hussein and make room for new leadership in Iraq.

Goals

- Destroy all weapons of mass destruction, cripple Iraq's capability to produce such weapons in the future, remove Saddam Hussein from power, and demonstrate to any other rogue states that such reckless behavior will not be tolerated.
- Send a message to other dangerous countries and terrorist groups that the United States is willing to carry the burden even when others flinch.

U.S. Policies to Achieve these Goals

- Launch a military campaign against Iraq, alone if necessary. While the campaign may start with air strikes, removing Saddam Hussein will likely require the use of ground troops as well.
- Encourage and support Iraqi resistance groups in their efforts to gain control.

Underlying Beliefs

- As the only remaining superpower, it is up to the United States to take the lead. A volatile dictator and his weapons of mass destruction threaten an entire region as well as U.S. security. We cannot leave this problem to a future administration; the risks will only get greater with time and the cost will only get higher. Although we may not be appreciated now for taking such a strong stand, we will be when our mission is successful.

- The principle of state sovereignty and non-intervention in the domestic affairs of other countries should not prevent the United States from eliminating tyrants who threaten us or the rest of the world. The time has come to make preemption the new norm for intervention.

Criticisms

- Acting unilaterally will undermine the process that is now in place for multilateral action to address the issue of potential weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.
- Acting unilaterally will harm the alliances necessary for the war on terrorism.
- Overthrowing a foreign leader would set a dangerous precedent whereas requiring him to live up to his international obligations is a normal expectation in today's interdependent world.
- There is no convincing proof that the threat is imminent. We should not race into unilateral action when there is time to work with the UN and its inspection process to address the threat.
- Unilateral military action to remove Saddam Hussein from power will cost the lives of many Americans.
- A unilateral military campaign will heighten resentment against Americans, making us more likely targets of terrorism at home and abroad.
- The resentment against a U.S. unilateral military campaign could destabilize other governments in the region (such as Pakistan or Egypt) and increase the possibility of one or more of these governments being toppled by extremists.
- If attacked, there is a danger that Iraq might use weapons of mass destruction against U.S. troops or other states in the region, in particular Israel.
- Military action will further destabilize a region already torn by violence and end any chance of success for the Middle East peace process.
- The financial cost of unilateral military action and of rebuilding Iraq after war would be enormous and could be better spent on helping the ailing U.S. economy or improving the condition of the world's poor.
- Military action against Iraq will harm innocent Iraqi civilians and worsen their already dire humanitarian situation.
- Interfering in the internal affairs of a sovereign state violates principles of international law that we support.
- International law prohibits the use of force except in self-defense or with UN approval.
- Removing Saddam Hussein does not settle the issue. There is no clear successor and the region could fall into chaos.

OPTION 2: Work with the International Community to Eliminate Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction

The Iraqi government is a rogue government that threatens its own citizens, the rest of the Middle East, and the world. Something must be done to stop Saddam Hussein's blatant disregard for international law and world safety. However, the United States should not take unilateral action that violates international law in order to force Saddam Hussein from power. Action taken against Iraq should be decided upon and enforced by the UN. After the 1991 Gulf War, UN inspectors did more to reduce Saddam Hussein's nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons programs through their work than did six weeks of massive bombing during the actual war. Saddam Hussein's 1998 decision to prevent the UN inspectors from continuing their work was in clear violation of the Gulf War cease-fire agreement and therefore of international law. The recent UN resolution - agreed to by Saddam

Hussein - for renewed inspections (including the right to question Iraqi scientists outside of Iraq) is a solid step in the right direction. The United States must stand with the world community in support of continuing UN weapons inspections. It is both unwise and unacceptable for the United States to act alone in deciding to take up arms against Iraq. The United States must continue to support and participate in the new weapons inspection process as defined in the recent UN resolution on Iraq, collaborate with the other members of the UN Security Council to determine whether Iraq is in full compliance with the resolution, and work together with the UN to establish a long-term policy toward Iraq. Any military action should only be entered into if other efforts to disarm Iraq fail and as a result of a new UN Security Council resolution.

Goals

- Work with the UN and within the boundaries of international law to identify and dismantle any existing Iraqi biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons programs and stop Iraq from threatening its neighbors or others.
- Strengthen the processes for regional and international cooperation on security issues.

U.S. Policies to Achieve these Goals

- Fully support UN efforts to interview Iraqi scientists outside of Iraq (as specified in the UN resolution) on the nature and location of Iraqi weapons programs that are in violation of international agreements.
- Be prepared to share our intelligence findings on the nature and location of Iraqi weapons programs to the extent necessary for successful inspections.
- Work with the members of the UN Security Council (particularly Russia, France, China, and Britain) to tighten controls (for example export, financial, and border controls) on Iraq. A willingness to compromise will strengthen the ability of the international community to cooperate in the future.

Underlying Beliefs

- Saddam Hussein is not only a threat to U.S. interests in the Middle East, but also a threat to international order. If we make it clear that we will not act alone, it will encourage other countries to come together to decide upon appropriate action to compel Iraq to meet international standards of behavior. We must place our trust in the international community.
- We are living in an increasingly interconnected world. It would be shortsighted to act in ways that would cause us to become isolated from the international community. We must consistently build the foundations of international cooperation if we are going to be able to address pressing international concerns such as terrorism.

Criticisms

- Saddam Hussein continues to work on his chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons programs while we waste time on weapons inspections that could take years to complete.
- As long as Saddam Hussein is in power, it will remain impossible to conduct effective weapons inspections in Iraq.
- Saddam Hussein's 12,000 page "declaration" submitted to the UN in December is only another example of his intent to continue to delay and to cheat as he did when the inspectors were there before.
- The UN has not proven effective in previous efforts to stop Iraq from producing weapons of mass destruction.
- Although inspections have begun, as the conflict heats up divergent political interests within the UN will prevent a unified and meaningful response to a real and present danger.

- Saddam Hussein has already used weapons of mass destruction against the Kurds of Northern Iraq and against Iran and won't hesitate to use them again. He is a terrible danger to all in the region and needs to be removed from power.
- Saddam Hussein intentionally fuels instability in the region by sponsoring terrorism against Israel. He needs to be removed from office if the Middle East peace process is to move forward.
- Appeasement has proven to be an ineffective way of dealing with dictators.
- There is no proof that the United States is imminently and directly threatened by Iraq or its weapons, so why should we make ourselves so visible right now?
- Focusing so much international attention on Iraq only serves to distract the world community from the real threat - sub-national terrorist networks.
- Any UN actions that include the United States will require significant U.S. involvement, which will heighten resentment in the region and put us at greater risk from terrorism or from unconventional counterattack.

OPTION 3: Reject War - at Least Now - and Continue to Contain and Deter Saddam Hussein

We have successfully contained Saddam Hussein for twelve years. We can continue to do so. A war with Iraq would not be a necessary war - at least not now, not yet. The issue is Saddam Hussein's arsenal - or potential arsenal - of weapons of mass destruction. Yes, Saddam Hussein used chemical weapons against his own people and against Iran. Both were unable to stop him. But he also had chemical weapons at his disposal during the first Gulf War and, even as his own army was being destroyed, he did not resort to using them against the United States or allied forces. The Soviet Union maintained a vast nuclear arsenal throughout most of the Cold War period but was deterred by the threat of retaliation from using these weapons or sharing them with allies or anti-West terrorists. So too, Iraq can be deterred from using its arsenal or passing such weapons on to terrorists. If our goal is security for the region and the world, the wisest course of action is vigilant containment of Iraq as long as it is under the leadership of Saddam Hussein. The current UN weapons inspections are one important step in this program. The weapons inspections that took place from 1991 to 1998 did more to reduce Saddam's arsenal than six weeks of bombing during the 1991 Gulf War. Only if Iraq departs from rationality and attacks another state or otherwise acts in a hostile fashion toward other states, should we consider war.

Goals

- Contain the threat from Saddam Hussein and deter his use of weapons of mass destruction.
- Contain the spread of weapons of mass destruction.

U.S. Policies to Achieve these Goals

- Provide strong U.S. support for the UN inspections.
- Make it very clear that we will counter with comparable force Ñ alone or with others Ñ any aggressive actions on the part of Iraq.
- Reinvigorate the Middle East peace process and end the conflict in Israel because stability in the region is critical.

Underlying Beliefs

- Saddam Hussein is a dangerous dictator but he is not insane. He will not use weapons of mass destruction unless he is provoked. Contrary to stopping Saddam Hussein from using his weapons of mass destruction, military action might cause him to use them.

- Deterrence works. It worked against the Soviet Union. It will work against Saddam Hussein.
- U.S. troops should not be put in harms way unless U.S. interests are directly and imminently threatened and there are no other options but to send them.

Criticisms

- Containment is not enough; if we do not take action to remove Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq, we or our allies will eventually become targets of his weapons of mass destruction.
 - Saddam Hussein has already proven that he is unwilling to accept meaningful weapons inspections in Iraq. His 12,000 page “declaration” submitted to the UN in December is a prime example of his non-cooperation. No amount of pressure, short of a military attack to remove him from power, will make any difference.
 - If the United States takes a leading role in containing Saddam Hussein, it will inevitably put us in the spotlight in the region and make it easier for him to stir up resentment against us among those in the region who already see the U.S. as an intruding force in their affairs. This will put us at greater risk from terrorism.
 - It is unrealistic to think that the states in the region will join the United States in any substantive way in a campaign to contain Saddam Hussein. They will feel too vulnerable to retaliation either from Saddam or from those in their own countries who oppose U.S. intervention in the region.
 - Deterrence depends on rationality. Counting on Saddam Hussein to act rationally may be a huge miscalculation.
 - Deterrence may not work. Saddam Hussein’s weapons could find their way into the hands of terrorists willing to use them.
 - Saddam Hussein has used chemical weapons in the past. Counting on him not to use them in the future would be a mistake.
- ^a Containing Saddam Hussein within Iraq will not do anything for his own people. He has already used weapons of mass destruction against the Kurds of Northern Iraq. He allows no dissent from his population. He is an obstacle to human rights and should be removed from power.

OPTION 4: Reject the Use of U.S. Military Force and Reduce our Foreign Policy Profile

Although the United States has interests in the Middle East, no vital ones are directly or immediately threatened by Iraq. Saddam Hussein is more of a threat to his neighbors than he is to us. We want to see Saddam Hussein’s biological, chemical, and nuclear capability (to the extent it exists) controlled. However, following the terrorist attacks of September 11, it would be unwise to take the lead on this issue. Our high-profile foreign policy programs have bred much resentment against us and created enemies who are intent on doing us harm. Expanding our international efforts now will only increase our vulnerability by increasing this resentment against us. We must lower our foreign policy profile and turn our attention to our own needs here at home, particularly homeland security. If we continue to single out Iraq, we run the risk of acting in opposition to most of the states in the region and fanning hatred of the United States. This will make us vulnerable to more terrorism. It also threatens the flow of oil to our country. While the UN has stepped in to take the lead in this crisis, we are seen as the leaders in this effort. We should step back from this issue and encourage the states in the Middle East to play a more active role in dealing with Saddam Hussein.

Goals

- Reduce our visibility in the region to avoid becoming a target of further terrorism and violence.
- Improve relations with Iraq's neighbors by focusing on the sources of Arab grievances: e.g. the presence of U.S. forces in the region and the role of the U.S. in the Israeli-Palestinian dispute.

U.S. Policies to Achieve these Goals

- Reduce the U.S. military presence in the Persian Gulf.
- Let other states in the region know we will support them if asked but that we will not take a leading role.

Underlying Beliefs

- Meddling in the affairs of other nations and peoples inevitably creates resentment against us.
- We should not send troops abroad or engage in air strikes unless the United States or its allies are under immediate threat and no other options exist to protect them.
- Military action might cause Saddam Hussein to use his weapons of mass destruction.

Criticisms

- If we do not take action to remove Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq, we or our allies will eventually become targets of his weapons of mass destruction.
- Any successful UN engagement in the Middle East is likely to be dependent upon support from the United States. If the United States backs out, then world security is jeopardized.
- It is unrealistic to think that the states in the region have the political will or the resources to take the leading role to address this issue. They will feel too vulnerable to retaliation.
- The United States cannot overlook the importance of Middle East oil. We need to maintain our military presence in the Persian Gulf region in order to protect our long term access to oil. Furthermore, taking the lead in removing Saddam Hussein from power will give us greater access to Iraq's vast oil supplies.
- If we do not take action, we will once again let this dangerous dictator walk away unscathed. Others will learn only one lesson: they can operate outside the rule of law and get away with it. In the post-9.11 environment, this position is irresponsible.
- After September 11, the way to reduce the threat of terrorism is to directly confront state-sponsors of terrorism like Iraq.
- Nations around the world count on the United States to contain threats to a region's stability. We cannot just walk away from our role as a force for world stability.
- Like it or not, as the most powerful nation on earth, the United States has the moral responsibility to confront threats to the safety of the world.
- Reducing our foreign policy profile and disengaging from international affairs will not solve any problems; it will only make them worse.