STRATEGIC EFFECTS OF THE CONFLICT WITH IRAQ: THE MIDDLE EAST, NORTH AFRICA, AND TURKEY

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FOREWORD

War with Iraq will signal the beginning of a new era in American national security policy and alter strategic balances and relationships around the world. The specific effects of the war, though, will vary from region to region. In some, America's position will be strengthened. In others, it may degrade without serious and sustained efforts.

To assess this dynamic, the Strategic Studies Institute (SSI) has developed a special series of monographs entitled *Strategic Effects of the Conflict with Iraq*. In each, the author has been asked to analyze four issues: the position that key states in their region are taking on U.S. military action against Iraq; the role of America in the region after the war with Iraq; the nature of security partnerships in the region after the war with Iraq; and the effect that war with Iraq will have on the war on terrorism in the region.

This monograph is one of the special series. SSI is pleased to offer it to assist the Department of Army and Department of Defense in crafting the most effective strategy possible for dealing with the many consequences of war with Iraq.

DOUGLAS C. LOVELACE, JR.
Director
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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR

Dr. W. Andrew Terrill joined the Strategic Studies Institute in October 2001, and is SSI's Middle East specialist. Prior to his appointment, he served as a senior international security analyst for the International Assessments Division of the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL). In 1998-99, Dr. Terrill also served as a Visiting Professor at the U.S. Air War College on assignment from LLNL. He is a former faculty member at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia, and has taught adjunct at a variety of other colleges and universities. He is a U.S. Army Reserve lieutenant colonel and a Foreign Area Officer (Middle East). Dr. Terrill has published in numerous academic journals on topics including nuclear proliferation, the Iran-Iraq War, Operation DESERT STORM, Middle Eastern chemical weapons, and ballistic missile proliferation, terrorism, and commando operations. Since 1994, at U.S. State Department invitation, Dr. Terrill has participated in the Middle Eastern Arms Control and Regional Security (ACRS) Track 2 talks, which are part of the Middle East Peace Process. He holds a B.A. from California State Polytechnic University and an M.A. from the University of California, Riverside, both in Political Science. Dr Terrill also holds a Ph.D. in International Relations from Claremont Graduate University, Claremont, California.

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Conclusions:

A U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq will place popular pressure on a number of moderate Arab states to reduce high profile military cooperation with the United States.

Following a war, Saudi Arabia will probably seek to reduce substantially or eliminate the U.S. military presence in the kingdom due to a more limited regional threat and the domestic difficulties with a U.S. presence.

Other Arab nations may continue to cooperate with the U.S. militarily but seek to do so with reduced visibility following an Iraq war.

Radical Middle Eastern states are deeply concerned about a U.S. presence in Iraq but will probably be constrained from opposing it through subversion due to fear they may become a future target in the war on terrorism.

The politically powerful Turkish military will seek to ensure that U.S.-Turkish ties will remain intact despite disagreements over Iraq.

Israel will consider using an invasion of Iraq to expel Palestinian Authority (PA) officials, increasing Arab speculation about U.S.-Israeli coordination against the Arab world. The likelihood of Israel expelling PA leaders will depend upon how the Israelis perceive Washington will respond to such an act.

Regional Overview.

The populations of the Middle East and North Africa are among those groups most likely to become uncontainably angry and violent over any U.S. invasion of Iraq, prompting their governments to seek political and military distance from Washington. The best case for the United States in the event of an Iraqi invasion would be a rapidly passing storm of popular anger that has no lasting influence. This alternative is not likely. The worst case would be an angry radicalization of Arab politics which leaves the United States with a huge number of new enemies in the region and widely legitimizes the concept of global anti-U.S. terrorism, including attacks against civilians. Under these circumstances, many local governments would have to consider ways in which they might limit political and military cooperation with the United States or at least further reduce the visibility of such cooperation. Moreover, this worst case analysis may be closer to the expected outcome unless the United States wages a short war with few civilian casualties followed by a well-managed occupation that is welcomed by the Iraqi population.

Even in the most extreme cases of popular anger, it is doubtful that friendly and moderate Arab governments would fall in the immediate aftermath of an invasion, but it is likely that the long-term viability of these governments will be wounded by a pro-U.S. record and especially by any pro-U.S actions taken during the invasion. Also, since Islamic militancy is now widely seen as the most effective way of opposing the United States, militant groups in many Arab countries would probably be strengthened by a rise in popular anger generated by a U.S. invasion and occupation.

The factors that will be most important for minimizing an angry response across the Middle East include: (1) acquisition of a U.N. Security Council Resolution authorizing the use of force, (2) targeting regime infrastructure while minimizing collateral damage, etc., and (3) a rapid and decisive effort to remove U.S. troops from Iraq and leave

a stable and prosperous government in place. The Arab World is also maintaining that Saddam is currently operating in good faith, so continuing publicity for strong public proof that Iraq systemically has violated U.N. resolutions on disarmament would also help minimize wartime political fallout. A bloody war will bring out the true depths of Arab emotions on these issues.

Additionally, many, if not most, Arabs currently regret the Arab support provided to the United States in defeating Saddam in 1991. A straightforward interpretation of this campaign is almost nonexistent in the Arab World. Rather, overwhelmingly popular conspiracy theories suggest that Saddam was tricked into invading Kuwait by the United States, which wanted an excuse to attack and humiliate a rising Arab leader. Many Arabs who supported the United States in 1991 feel guilt about their actions and are determined not to be too easily led by the United States in this new situation.

Under the best of circumstances, the U.S. message justifying the invasion of Iraq will be lost and distorted by many Arab audiences who will obtain the majority of their news from a skeptical Arab media. Civilian casualties will be exaggerated, and fabricated charges of war crimes can be expected, as occurred with the Israelis in Jenin in 2002. The worst anti-American propaganda will find a receptive audience, and many of the actions that Saddam did to bring this war on himself will be minimized by at least some Arab states. This situation will dramatically increase the possibility of anti-U.S. agitation and terrorism throughout the region, and perhaps reaching once again into the U.S. heartland.

Key Moderate Arab Nations.

Moderate Arab nations have been placed in a particularly difficult position by the current crisis. In 1990, Islamic jurists in Egypt and Saudi issued *fatwas* that sanctioned the use of foreign troops to liberate Kuwait. No

such justifications exist at this time, and the need for military action against Iraq, as noted, is widely doubted in the Arab World. Most moderate Arab states therefore have been weighing carefully the costs and benefits of cooperating with the United States during an upcoming war, while considering any possible middle ground that will allow such cooperation without offending domestic public opinion. Postwar Arab cooperation may be more likely since this can be justified as a response to Iraqi needs for humanitarian help and postwar security.

Saudi Arabia is one of the most important U.S. allies, and its behavior will influence the behavior of a number of Arab states. The strength and resilience of the Saudi monarchy is subject to tremendous disagreement among Middle Eastern scholars. The regime should certainly survive the immediate aftermath of an invasion of Iraq, although anger over this issue could fuse with other popular concerns to become regime-threatening at a later point. Such concerns include widespread corruption, poor economic planning, and the inability of the monarchy to halt a declining standard of living. A basic characteristic of the current regime is that it is controlled by a relatively pro-Western elite ruling anti-American masses. The fear of significant popular anger and increasing government dissent will thus be a significant consideration for the Saudi rulers, and strengthen Saudi resolve to stay out of the war in any visible way.

In the aftermath of a U.S. victory in Iraq, the Saudis will look for ways to reduce or eliminate the U.S. military presence in the Kingdom. Previously, Riyadh has reluctantly accepted the problem of domestic dissent over this issue due to concerns about the threat from Iraq and, to a lesser extent, Iran. After a war, the Saudis will probably assume that they can be protected adequately from Iran (with which they have no direct border) or other regional threats without a significant U.S. military presence in the Kingdom. Anti-American emotions within the Kingdom may also increase during the war should U.S. military

conduct become controversial within the Arab World. Such controversy would add urgency to Saudi interest in reducing U.S. military presence.

Saudi leaders are mindful of their current extremely strained relations with the United States, and the public statements by some pro-war U.S. commentators about the need to extend democratic government from Iraq to Saudi Arabia. This situation may give them pause about pushing too forcefully for a U.S. withdrawal for fear of further alienating Washington and losing influence with the U.S. Government. Nevertheless, Saudi leaders profoundly fear domestic unrest and will accept a further battering of U.S.-Saudi relations, if this is seen as the alternative to domestic crisis. If serious domestic unrest results from the war, the Saudis will pressure the United States to withdraw its forces soon.

Another important U.S. ally is Egypt, although the aid granted to Egypt over the past several decades has bought little good will. Rather, a surprising level of hostility and distrust exists in that country. This mistrust is nurtured by middle class suspicions that the United States seeks a weak, dependent, and grateful Egypt that is willing to bend to the will of the Israelis. It is also quite stunning how popular Egyptian bin Laden lieutenant Ayman Al-Zawahiri has become in Egypt in intellectual and Islamist circles. Bin-laden himself has strong street appeal in some of Egypt's more impoverished neighborhoods. In response to anti-U.S. opinion, Egyptian leaders maintain that U.S. ties are important to help manage and moderate U.S. power. The Egyptian government is, nevertheless, loath to be seen as comprised of U.S. followers.

Egyptian leaders, like the Saudis, have counseled strongly against a war. Unlike Saudi Arabia, however, the Egyptians greatly depend on U.S. economic aid and thus have special reasons not to offend the United States too deeply. Moreover, Egyptian President Mubarak dislikes Saddam Hussein, and the pro-government media strongly

maintains that Egypt should not suffer for Saddam's follies. Pro-government sources consistently maintain that Egypt has done a great deal to avert war, while Saddam, through stubborn arrogance, has gone out of his way to incite it. Therefore Saddam is portrayed as possibly meeting a fool's end despite Cairo's best efforts to prevent conflict. Street demonstrators and radical students are only contributing to the possibility that Egypt will suffer a crippling halt of U.S. aid in order to support Saddam's foolishness.

The Egyptian leadership thus seems poised to continue long-term cooperation with the United States, including some military and intelligence cooperation. Intelligence sharing along with logistical support for U.S. forces will probably continue as usual after any U.S-Iraqi war. It is also likely that Egypt will consider placing some of its own forces in Iraq as peacekeepers should the U.N. so request. This action can be presented as an effort to speed the departure of U.S. troops and return sovereignty to Iraq.

The Jordanian leadership is probably more frightened of a war than any of Iraq's other neighbors. With a depressed economy, 30 percent unemployment, a large number of refugees, and a huge youth bulge, there is no shortage of frustrated, unhappy people who may be tempted to go into the streets when the invasion starts. Moreover, the Palestinian two-thirds of the Jordanian population consider Israel a more important threat than Iraq. These Jordanian-Palestinians are already passionately unhappy with U.S. policy, and massive demonstrations in Jordan are probably inevitable. Severe violence and widespread rioting are much less likely. Should Israel take advantage of the U.S. invasion to act against the Palestinians or the Lebanese Hizballah, popular anger will deepen. Also, any war, but especially a long war, threatens to disrupt Jordanian fuel needs which are currently met by Iraq.

Jordan's response to a war and its aftermath will be problematic. Amman greatly depends on U.S. aid and is expected to become more dependent as a result of the loss of

Iraqi oil. The Jordanians will consequently need to seek more help from the United States and the Gulf Arabs. Saudi oil may become particularly important to the Jordanians as oil supplies from Iraq are disrupted. King Abdullah will, to the greatest extent possible, seek to retain good ties with both the U.S. and the Gulf Arabs while managing domestic public opinion. Long-term U.S.-Jordanian military cooperation will continue once a stable postwar government is in place in Iraq, and domestic passions in Jordan become calm. Jordan will nevertheless continue its policy of seeking to keep a low public profile for its cooperation with U.S. forces. The Jordanians will also prefer exercises and interactions with small numbers of elite forces (such as U.S. special forces) rather than large numbers of more visible conventional forces.

The most visible Arab backers of the United States are Kuwait and Qatar. Anger at Saddam in recent months has been escalating from its already high levels due to the Iraqi dictator's aggravating half apology over the 1990 invasion and the continued issue of unaccounted Kuwaiti prisoners of war. Saddam's linking of his apology to an appeal to Kuwaiti citizens to oppose their government's policy of supporting the U.S. presence in their country was particularly insulting. Kuwait called the action a declaration of war, and short-term Kuwaiti cooperation with the United States seems assured. Longer-term U.S.-Kuwaiti cooperation will probably survive the Saddam regime, since the Kuwaitis will not assume that any post-Saddam Iraqi governments will inevitably be friendly to them and since Iraqi designs on Kuwait pre-date Saddam. Even Islamists in Kuwait have sometimes favored a U.S. presence, although this approach may erode over time.

If the war and occupation go well and clearly benefit the Iraqi population, Qatar will probably seek to continue with strong U.S. military ties. Qatar traditionally has been more concerned about Iran than Iraq and therefore is unlikely to become complacent about security in the aftermath of an

Iraqi defeat. Additionally, Qatar has sometimes had a tense relationship with Saudi Arabia, and would like to be able to call for U.S. support in the event of future Saudi bullying. Moreover, Qatar sits atop some of the largest natural gas reserves in the world and could clearly benefit from a powerful ally ready to protect Qatar's territorial integrity.

Yemen, which is currently cooperating with the United States in the war on terrorism, would face severe public pressure to halt all support for the United States in the aftermath of an Iraqi invasion. Yemen is already a reluctant ally whose cooperation is based primarily on fear of U.S. actions if Sanaa does not support the war on terrorism. Nevertheless, a U.S. invasion of Iraq may make it politically impossible for any Yemeni government to engage in high profile cooperation with the United States on terrorism related issues. Unmanageable terrorism against the government by significant elements of a well-armed Yemeni population will become a serious possibility if Sanaa fails to distance itself from U.S. actions. Unpublicized cooperation is, nevertheless, likely to continue as the Yemeni government seeks to insure that it is not labeled as a rogue state supporting terrorism.

Oman has been a valuable ally for both the United States and U.K. and has also been able to resist the excesses of Arab nationalism on a variety of occasions. It is likely that the U.S.-Omani relationship will withstand the storm of an Iraqi invasion, and access to Omani airport, seaport, and military storage facilities are expected to continue in a post-Saddam Middle East. Elsewhere, the United Arab Emirates will probably not suffer for its military ties to the United States since these ties are more modest and confined to such links as naval visits, use of port facilities, and some modest pre-positioning of military supplies.

Bahrain, conversely, has extensive military ties to the United States as well as a restive Shi'ite population that has been known to become enraged over Arab nationalist as well as Bahraini issues. The Bahraini monarchy may therefore

face popular pressure to reduce ties to the United States in the aftermath of an Iraqi invasion. While it is possible that the king would yield to such pressure, this is unlikely. Bahrain is vulnerable to pressure from a variety of regional states, including Iran and Saudi Arabia, and would not wish to sacrifice its influence with the United States except under the gravest of circumstances.

Other moderate Arab regimes in North Africa, such as Morocco and Tunisia, will probably face significant amounts of anti-American agitation on the streets without any serious long-term consequences for either the relevant governments or U.S. ties with those governments.

Radical Arab States and Iran.

Elsewhere in the Middle East it is likely that various radical regimes, including Syria and Iran, will allow but control anti-U.S. demonstrations by their populations. Both nations are, nevertheless, currently on their best behavior due to a fear that the War on Terrorism will expand to include them in the near future. Therefore it is likely that they will be reluctant to do anything to help the Iraqis in a serious way such as allowing the transit of weapons through their countries. It is also possible that behind-the-scenes intelligence cooperation between the United States and these countries could continue as both Damascus and Tehran seek a hedge against the possibility of U.S. military action against them.

Most Iranians detest Saddam, but they also fear a U.S.-dominated Iraq. Additionally, the widespread Arab view that Iraq is being attacked by the United States as a partial favor to the Israelis is of concern to Tehran. Iran is frequently and accurately described by Israeli sources as a greater threat to their country than Iraq. If the United States is attacking Iraq as a favor to Israel (according to the logic of Middle Eastern radicals) then where does that leave Iran? At a minimum, the United States might seek to destroy key Iranian nuclear and defense facilities in the

aftermath of a struggle with Baghdad—particularly if the struggle goes well for the United States and the idea of preemptive war becomes more widely accepted. The Iranians hope that a U.S.-Iraqi conflict will end in such a way that the United States has little appetite to continue on to other countries.

Syria is concerned about a U.S. intervention, but is not prepared to sacrifice much to help Iraq. The Syrian leadership has strongly criticized the Arab World for refusing to move beyond "theoretical" plans to prevent the war and to take more tangible action. Such "action" would mostly consist of moderate Arab states refusing to cooperate with the United States on Iraqi issues. The Syrians are clearly suggesting that the moderates are partially responsible for the possible occupation of Iraq, and such criticism will undoubtedly increase should a U.S. invasion take place. In raising their rhetoric, the Syrians will also note their much invoked self-designated role as the spokesmen for Arab nationalism. Syrian criticism of other regimes, nevertheless, probably will be viewed as nothing more than a manageable irritant by these regimes. Likely it will have only a limited effect on most moderate regimes as they consider the pros and cons of future U.S. military cooperation issues.

Libya is strongly opposed to a U.S. occupation of Iraq, and the Qadhafi regime often feels a need to be especially critical of anything viewed as tainted by colonialism. Despite these concerns, Qadhafi also dislikes Saddam Hussein and recently referred to him as irrational (despite the irony of Qadhafi making such a remark). Libya also feels deeply vulnerable to a U.S. invasion since its military is weak and its reputation with the United States is abysmally low. Moreover, Libya has relatively little influence with other Arab populations. Thus, Libya will probably engage in steady but controlled criticism of the United States, and this criticism will be of almost no interest to Arabs outside of Libya.

Israel and Turkey.

Israel strongly favors a U.S. attack on Iraq, although the Israeli leadership also recognizes that their country may be attacked as a result of such a strike. Most Israelis would rather deal with such an attack now, rather than in the more distant future when they believe Saddam may be stronger. Additionally, many Israelis appear to have embraced the theory that the United States can install a pro-Western democracy in Iraq which will then serve as a model to undermine the current regimes of other Arab countries. According to this speculation, Arab democracies will be more accepting of Israel and less sympathetic to the Palestinian point of view. The reason that many Israelis believe in such unlikely eventualities is that their country is currently under siege by suicide bombers. The fantasy of relief from such a burden is easy to surrender to under such dire circumstances.

Israeli actions during a U.S.-Iraq war also will have an important effect on how the region responds to a U.S. attack. Allegations of U.S.-Israeli intrigue permeate the Arab media, and any actions hinting at anti-Palestinian coordination will further anger the region's population. Such actions might include the expulsion of leading Palestinian Authority figures from the Palestinian territories, a sustained military offensive against these territories, or an action that would not involve the Palestinians, a military offensive against Hizballah in southern Lebanon. Moreover, Israelis would feel severely tempted to take such measures as their population is currently desperate for any type of response to the Palestinians that hints at restoring normalcy to daily life. Any disruption of U.S.-Arab relations resulting from these actions will probably be viewed as a bonus by the Likud government.

The Turkish leadership is opposed to a war with Iraq, and Turkish public opinion consistently has run over 80 percent against. These high negative numbers are not solely

based on political factors. Turkey lost $100-150 million in annual income as a result of the 1991 Gulf War due to the closure of two key oil pipelines across that country.

Turkey, nevertheless, wishes to be seen as a reliable NATO ally by the United States and also wishes to have a voice in determining the future of Iraq should the Saddam regime be removed from power. For these reasons, the Turkish leadership has been looking for the absolute minimum cooperation with the United States that is necessary on this issue to prevent a decline in the relationship. They are also seeking as much aid as possible for the help they do offer. In the aftermath of a U.S. invasion of Iraq, Turkey will probably continue to seek ways to consolidate good relations with the United States while making a simultaneous effort to avoid the appearance of excessive complicity in supporting a U.S. invasion. The Turkish military will remain the ultimate decisionmaker on the future of U.S.-Turkish military ties and to the extent possible will seek to keep these ties intact.

Conclusion.

The prospect of a U.S. invasion of Iraq is wildly unpopular throughout most of Middle East and will be especially problematic for moderate Arab states with U.S. ties. These governments will face the danger of a long-term erosion of domestic public support and a short-term eruption of popular anger, which they should be able to manage. U.S.-Arab military ties will suffer but not collapse. One of the most serious regional results of a U.S. victory in Iraq will probably be a near-term Saudi effort to reduce or eliminate the stationing of significant numbers of U.S troops in the kingdom. The possibility that moderate regimes will be weakened for some time as a result of U.S. actions also suggests that most aspects of U.S. military cooperation with these regimes will come under more frequent and agonizing scrutiny. Nevertheless, the relationship with the United States is too important for these states

to relinquish and important military cooperation will continue with a variety of states.

Additionally, the United States must continue to value and consolidate its security role in a post-Saddam Middle East. This presence will help control potential aggressors such as Iran and will allow the United States to respond to internal or external threats to Middle Eastern energy sources. U.S. ties to key Middle Eastern governments will also be necessary for joint cooperation in the ongoing war against anti-Western terrorists and most especially al-Qaida. U.S.-Middle Eastern ties may focus increasingly on elite troops, anti-terrorism training, and other forms of cooperation below that of stationing large elements of conventional forces in Arab countries.

Nevertheless, some states such as Qatar and Kuwait may seek the continuing presence of U.S. forces in their countries, and such requests should not be dismissed due to the collapse of the Saddam Hussein threat. Middle Eastern energy remains vital to the West, and to remove U.S. forces from that theater now may tie Western hands in a future crisis. Moreover, ongoing Middle Eastern instability seems likely as a variety of countries cope with rapidly expanding youth populations, a dearth of employment opportunities, potential rising of Islamic movements, and chronically dysfunctional economies. Ideally, the United States should help friendly states address these problems, while recognizing that future threats are likely even if their exact source is uncertain.

In struggling to maintain important ties, Washington must balance its need for long-term partners with some near-term understanding when friendly Arab states criticize any U.S. military occupation of Iraq. Criticism of a U.S. military occupation of any Arab country is inevitable, and U.S. policymakers must not overreact to such disapproval. Rather calm, methodical rejection of hyperbole will be appropriate.

Some Arab states (notably Egypt) take pride in their ability to influence the United States, and strong, visible military-to-military contacts remain especially important in times of crisis. Additionally, visits by top Arab policymakers to the United States allow these individuals to claim U.S. ties are paying off because the Arab point of view is being represented in Washington. You are "with us or against us" rhetoric was exceptionally useful in dealing with al-Qaida terrorists, but is not appropriate to apply to Arab allies who have differences with the United States over Iraq.

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