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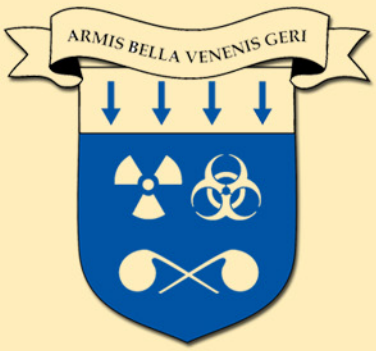

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US Air Force
Counterproliferation Center
Future Warfare Series
No. 17

CHAPTER 7

"Saddam is Iraq: Iraq is Saddam"[1] (Until Operation Iraqi Freedom)

Jerrold M. Post[2] and Amatzia Baram[3]

Introduction

Operation Iraqi Freedom ended the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein in the Spring of 2003 even though the Iraqi leader may still be alive and in hiding. Identified as a member of the "axis of evil" by President George W. Bush, Saddam Hussein's Iraq posed a major threat to the region and to Western society. Saddam is believed to have doggedly pursued the development of weapons of mass destruction, despite U.N. sanctions imposed at the conclusion of the 1991 Gulf War. To deal effectively with Saddam Hussein required clear understanding of his motivations, perceptions, and decision-making as well as his Iraqi strategic culture.

Political Personality Profile

Saddam Hussein, the former president of Iraq, has been characterized as "the madman of the Middle East." This pejorative diagnosis was not only inaccurate but also dangerous. Consigning Saddam to the realm of madness could have misled decision-makers into believing he was unpredictable when in fact he was not. An examination of the record of Saddam Hussein's leadership of Iraq for the past 34 years reveals a judicious political calculator, who was by no means irrational, but was 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 were justified if they were 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 severe 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 had married a distant relative, Hajj Ibrahim Hasan.[4] Hajj Ibrahim, his stepfather, reportedly was abusive both psychologically and physically to young Saddam.[5]

The first several years of life are crucial to the development of 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 step-father would have 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 10, 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 step-father 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 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 Saddam, joining 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 and 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 Party 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. In 1958, apparently emulating Nasser, Army General Abd al-Karim Qassem led a coup d'etat 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 lead 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 Party 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. Aflaq, 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'etat.

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 Party 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, and President Hafez al-Assad in Damascus on the other. This became increasingly bitter and led to acrimonious sparring between Saddam and Assad on the premise that there can be only one supreme Arab nationalist leader. In Saddam's mind, destiny had inscribed his name as Saddam Hussein. Some thawing in the

late 1990s notwithstanding, the split and rivalry persisted until the death of the Syrian leader in 2000.

In July 1968, with the crucial secret assistance of military intelligence chief Abdul Razzaz al Naif, the Ba'athists, with Saddam playing a key role, mounted a successful coup. In gratitude for services rendered, two weeks after the coup, Saddam 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. Later, in 1970, Saddam ousted Minister of Defense Hardan Abd al-Ghafar al-Tikriti, another senior and ambitious associate, and a year later 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 paradigm for the manner in which Saddam has rewarded incomplete loyalty or loyalty based on equality and the way in which he adhered to 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 was permitted to stand in "the great struggler's" messianic path as he pursued 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 were not permitted to stand in the way of Saddam's messianic path, neither would he persist in a particular course of action if it proved to be counterproductive for him and his nation. When he pursued a course of action, he pursued it fully. If he met initial resistance, he would struggle all the harder, convinced of the correctness of his judgments. Should circumstances demonstrate that he miscalculated, he was capable of reversing his course. Yet, he stuck to his guns on the strategic level: he never gave up on a dream. He would wait until circumstances changed, and then he would strike again. In these circumstances of a momentary reversal he did not acknowledge he had erred but, rather, that he was adapting to a dynamic situation. The three most dramatic examples of his revolutionary pragmatism and ideological flexibility concerned 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. He did this 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 with Iran null and void. Saddam then invaded the Khuzistan-Arabestan province. There were additional reasons for the invasion: fear of domestic Shi'ite 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 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 driven 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 other 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.

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. Saddam refused to make this humiliating 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.

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 was suffering from a psychotic disorder. He was not impulsive, only acted after judicious consideration, and could be extremely patient. Indeed, he has used time as a weapon.

While he was psychologically in touch with reality, he was often politically out of touch with reality. Saddam's worldview was narrow and distorted, and he had scant experience outside of the Arab world. His only sustained experience with non-Arabs was with his Soviet military advisors, and he reportedly only traveled outside of the Middle East on two occasions, a brief trip to Paris in 1976 and another trip to Moscow. Moreover, he was surrounded by sycophants, who were cowed by Saddam's well-founded reputation for brutality and who were afraid to contradict him. He ruthlessly eliminated perceived threats to his power and equated 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 of his senior officials in which the 21 "traitors" were identified while Saddam watched, luxuriantly smoking a Cuban cigar, has been captured on film. 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 seemed to want frank advice, but when those rare occasions arose it was difficult to determine if he really meant it or not, so the prudent inclination was to give him the advice one believes he really wanted to hear. When his mind was fully made up, he made it amply clear. On such occasions there is no room for the slightest dispute. Thus, he was deprived of the check of wise counsel from his leadership circle. This combination of limited international perspective and a sycophantic leadership circle sometimes led him to miscalculate.

Exalted Self Concept: Saddam is Iraq, Iraq is Saddam

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

Saddam's grandiose self-image and self-absorption was so extreme that he had little capacity to empathize with others. In many ways, he saw his advisers and inner circle as extensions of himself. This bears on the special meaning of loyalty to Saddam. For Saddam, loyalty was a one-way street. He could turn abruptly against individuals of whom he had become suspicious despite their demonstrated total loyalty throughout their careers. His fundamental distrust and wariness was so extreme that he was loath to trust anyone fully. He felt at ease only around people who either developed their career within his system and thus owed him great respect and loyalty, or people who belonged to a population group in Iraq that could not seriously aspire to power without his patronage. To the first category belong people like his own children, of course, but also the chiefs of his security system whom he molded for many years in his own image and, who totally owed their careers to him.

Saddam generally felt ill at ease around people with careers that were not developed under his patronage, and especially people with higher educational and professional credentials. Exceptions to this were Tariq Aziz, his 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 was comfortable with these men because, in addition to being a Christian (Aziz) and Shi'ite (Hammadi), they totally owed their careers to him.

No Constraint of Conscience

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

Unconstrained Aggression in Pursuit of His Goals

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

Paranoid Orientation

While Hussein was not psychotic, he had a strong paranoid orientation. He was ready for retaliation and, not without reason, saw himself as surrounded by enemies. But he ignored his role in creating those enemies, and righteously threatened his targets. The conspiracy theories he spun were not merely for popular consumption in the Arab world, but genuinely reflected his paranoid mindset. He was convinced that the United States, Israel, and Iran have been in league for the purpose of eliminating him, and found a persuasive chain of evidence for this conclusion. His minister of information, Latif Nusayyif Jassim, 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, were the implementers of his paranoia.

It was this political personality constellation-messianic ambition for unlimited power, absence of conscience, unconstrained aggression, and a paranoid outlook, which made 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 was not charismatic, this psychological posture is the basis of Saddam's particular appeal to the Palestinians who saw him as a strongman who shared their intense anti-Zionism and would champion their cause.

Viewed Self as One of History's Great Leaders

Saddam Hussein genuinely saw 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 admired for adapting socialism to his environment, free of foreign domination. Saddam saw himself as transforming his society. He believed 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 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 abounded in Iraq. Asked about this cult of personality, Saddam shruged and said he "cannot help it if that is what they want to do."

Probably Over-read Degree of Support in Arab World

Saddam Hussein was so consumed with his messianic mission that he probably over-read the degree of his support in the rest of the Arab world. He psychologically assumed that many in the Arab world, especially the downtrodden, shared his views and saw 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, Palestinian, and Syrians who did support him.

Political Personality Shaped 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 was 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 believed 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 did not permit a

long tenure in any one position … Saddam viewed the establishment of a single independent power base as a de facto challenge to his leadership.

6. *Disregard "Intelligence" at Great Peril*: Saddam took seriously the human and technical information gathered from his pervasive intelligence and security networks … Saddam 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. *Use Trojan Horses and Other Deceptions*: Saddam was 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 was 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 heard unfavorable commentary about Saddam or the regime and was unclear whether this is a regime test knowing that if it is and they don't turn the person in they will pay the price.

9. *A Cult of Personality and a Perception of Invulnerability*: Saddam and the regime fostered a cult of personality. One of the primary objectives, at least for Saddam, was to create a perception that only Saddam can save Iraq from internal chaos, anarchy, and foreign encroachment; that Saddam and the regime were everywhere and all-powerful; and that it was futile to even think beyond Saddam. Saddam icons were 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 was so strong in Saddam's operating style that it served to define Saddam's response to betrayal or attack.

Saddam at the Crossroads in the Gulf Crisis

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

Saddam Hussein was a ruthless political calculator who would go to whatever lengths necessary to achieve his goals. His survival in power, with his dignity intact, was 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 was assuredly not the case. Saddam had no wish to be a martyr, and survival was his number one priority. A self-proclaimed revolutionary pragmatist, he did not wish a conflict in which Iraq was grievously damaged and his stature as a leader destroyed.

While Saddam's advisors' reluctance to disagree with Saddam's policies contributes to the potential for miscalculation, nevertheless his advisors, by providing information and assessments, were 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 1990-1991 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, on the one hand, Iraq, leading the "Camp" of the decent and patriotic Arabs, the true Muslims, and honest people in the world at large, and on the other hand the United States, and even more personally as a struggle between the "Slave of God" Saddam Hussein versus the "Infidel" and "Imperialist" George Bush. When the struggle became thus personalized, it enhanced Saddam's reputation as a courageous strongman willing to defy the imperialist United States.

When President George H. W. Bush depicted the 1990-1991 conflict as the unified civilized world against Saddam Hussein, it hit a tender nerve for Saddam. Saddam had his eye on his role in history and placed great stock in world opinion. If he were to conclude that his status as a world leader was threatened, it would have had 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 was likely 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 stature 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 spoke it was to multiple audiences. Much of his language was solipsistic and designed to demonstrate his courage and resolve to the Iraqi people and the Arab and Islamic worlds. There was no necessary connection between courageous verbal expression and the act threatened. Nasser gained great stature from his fiery rhetoric. Moreover, fiercely defiant rhetoric was another indicator of the stress on Saddam, for the more threatened Saddam felt, the more threatening he became.

By the same token, Saddam probably heard the Western words of President George H. W. Bush through a Middle Eastern filter. When a statement of resolve and intent was made by President Bush in a public statement, 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.[10] This, like his more general assessment that invading Kuwait was a safe bet, demonstrated Saddam's predilection for wishful thinking.

The Iran-Iraq War and the 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. 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 socio-economic expectations, and his prestige in the Arab world was lower than it had been before he invaded Iran. In the 1990-1991 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 was 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 was 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.[11] Thus, 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 United States, 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 may have driven Saddam into a corner and made 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 understood was 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 from Kuwait, 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, 1991, 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 force level 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 was 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 would 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.

Why Saddam Did Not Withdraw from Kuwait

In the political psychology profile prepared for the congressional hearings on the Gulf crisis in December 1990, it was observed that Saddam was by no means a martyr and was indeed the quintessential survivor. The key to his survival in power was his capacity to reverse his course when events demonstrated that he had miscalculated. It was 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 in 1990-1991 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? 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.

The Culminating Acts of Drama of His Life

But more importantly, the dynamic of the 1990-1991 crisis affected Saddam. What began as an act of naked aggression toward Kuwait was transformed into a dramatic moment in 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 an 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 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. 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, and doubted that the border of Iraq would limit the aggressive intention of the United States.

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 into 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*).[12]

Saddam expected a massive air campaign and planned to survive it. In the succeeding ground campaign, he hoped to engage the United States "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 the heavy casualties it would certainly sustain. As protests mounted, the U.S. would stop its offensive and start negotiating, and a political-military stalemate would ensue, increasing his chances for a respectable draw.[13]

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.

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 1991, that under Saddam's opulent palace was a mammoth bunker, fortified with steel and pre-stressed concrete. The architecture of this complex was Saddam's psychological architecture: a defiant, grandiose facade resting on the well-fortified foundation of a siege mentality. Attacked on all sides, Saddam remained 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 previous time since March 1991. A principle of Saddam's leadership that had always been true was, if anything, intensified in the post-war period. Specifically, ensuring his domestic stability and eliminating internal threats to his regime was Saddam's central concern and, in a clash between his international position and internal security, internal security would win out.

Moreover, precipitating international crises could strengthen Saddam's internal position. The most damaging consequence of a setback internationally that proved him to be a failure as a leader would have been the consequent reduction in his internal prestige and threats to his regime's stability. Five events could have led his power base to seriously question Saddam's ability 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, indeed, has happened.)

- If he could not have demonstrated to his power base that he would soon be able to bring to an end or, at least, continue to erode the U.N. inspections regime and with it the oil embargo;

- If he had been unable to guarantee the functioning of the national economy and to continue to support the relatively extravagant life style of his body guards and ruling elite

- If he had been unable to retain Iraq's WMD arsenal; or

- If he had lost the propaganda campaign he was waging within Iraq.

Accordingly, in addition to attempting to strengthen internal vulnerabilities, he also 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 materiel depleted, 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 U.N. 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 once 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 (Saddam's elder son) 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, to which belonged the Kamils (Saddam's paternal cousins and sons-in-law, whom his body guards gunned down soon after they returned from Amman, having defected there in August 1995); 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 al-Bu Nasser continued to serve in Republican Guard and key security positions, they were removed from the most sensitive positions and were closely watched.

Overall, the threat of a large-scale tribal uprising remained remote, but when the regime was on the verge of collapse both in 1991 and 2003, many in these tribes and "houses" defected. When it comes to Shi'ite Tribes in the south, while many of them collaborated with the regime, only a few, if any, were fully committed. All were going through the motions of expressing unbound loyalty to the historical leader Saddam, but it was "loyalty at the barrel of a gun." At the first sign of disintegration many remained on the sideline to see where the wind was blowing and switched sides during Operation Iraqi Freedom once it was thought safe to do so. Many years of hardship in the volatile Iraqi countryside taught them harsh lessons and the need for caution.

Fault Lines in the Family

Udayy Saddam Hussein

The temperament and unconstrained behavior of Saddam's late elder son Udayy (born 1963), was a continuing issue. He had a reputation as the "bad boy" of Iraq, and was greatly feared among the population of Baghdad. He had 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, 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.[14] In 1986, Samirah gave birth to Ali Saddam Hussein.

The 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 at a party in honor of Suzanne Mubarak, wife of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. 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 and 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 then 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 (between 1983 and 1989 they were out of favor and out of jobs).

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 (WMD). Hussein Kamil's brother was a colonel in the Special Republican Guard. Once in Amman they started a series of revelations regarding Iraq's WMD that created a major crisis between the regime and the U.N. Their most important information related to Iraq's biological weapons.

Udayy 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 to Iraq in February 1996. There is no doubt, however, that Saddam ordered the murder of Kamil and his brother ensuring in the process 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 or lineage.[15] 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 kham. In so doing, Saddam deflected guilt from himself and made it extremely difficult for an embittered extended family member to single him out as the target of a retributory blood feud.

Even before this, however, Saddam was outraged by the havoc his elder son was wreaking on his political-security system. He relieved 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 unwilling to fully neutralize his elder son.

In December 1996 during an assassination attempt on Udayy, his car was raked with automatic gunfire, leaving him bedridden for at least six months with both his legs paralyzed.[16] By 2002, he seemed to have recovered from most of the adverse effects of his injury. No less importantly, his father re-instated 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.

From 1998 until his death in 2003, Udayy was free to sabotage his father's system for the third time. To limit his elder son's ability to do damage and to humiliate him, Saddam promoted Qusayy, Udayy's younger brother, above him and indicated that Qusayy was to be the heir apparent.

Qusayy

While Udayy was part of Saddam's problem, Qusayy was 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 help but notice it. Since 1989, Saddam had been preparing Qusayy for the duty of czar of internal security. Qusayy had worked closely with the former head of internal security General Abd Hamid Mahmud (or Ihmid Hmud). They were in charge of the SSO, the most formidable of all security bodies, and in charge of security inside all other security bodies, including the Himaya and the Special Republican Guard (SRG). The president's security rested mainly on them, but they were also in charge of the more lethal links of Iraq's non-conventional weapons in terms of concealment and deployment. Had Saddam given the order to launch non-conventional missiles they would have been the ones to do it, and there is a good chance they would have done so, since the SSO was considered to be the most disciplined organization in Iraq.

Qusayy was also the supreme authority for "prison cleansing," the execution of hundreds of political prisoners to make room for new ones in Iraq's crowded prisons. He also authorized executions of military and security officers suspected of disloyalty. Between 2001 and 2003, Qusayy was also a member of the Regional Leadership of the Ba'ath Party in Iraq,

and Deputy Secretary of its important Military Bureau (*al-Maktab al-'Askari*).[17] According to the constitution, the chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), who was also the president of the state, must come from among the RCC members, and RCC members must be from the wider body of the party's all-Iraqi Regional Leadership (RL). Thus, the promotion of Qusayy to the RL was probably the first step toward his planned inclusion in the RCC and, eventually, his promotion to the RCC Chairmanship and President, had the regime survived. According to unconfirmed reports Udayy, too, presented his candidacy to the RL, but failed. If true, then his anger and frustration were likely even greater. Ironically, the two brothers died together while on the run after the regime was toppled during OIF.

Strategic Shift

The family disarray culminating in Hussein Kamil's defection and assassination, together with 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 Ministers of Defense, Oil, Interior, the Director of Military Industrialization, and the Commander of the Republican Guards were no longer family members as in the past. At the end of the regime these sensitive positions were held by Ba'ath Party loyalists.

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, were sometimes summoned to the "kitchen," and Cousin Ali Hasan al-Majid is almost always there, but it is more balanced than before. This is due to the fact that Ali Hasan was a party old timer, and other members were all old party hands. These included Tariq Aziz (whom Udayy had attacked viciously a few times before, demanding his ousting), Izzat Ibrahim, who since 1991 was Deputy Chairman of the RCC, and Vice President Ramadan.[18]

It should be emphasized that some distant cousins, and many tribe members and Tikritis were still placed in very important security positions, and they were indispensable as a security shield for the regime. However, save for Qusayy, the role of the extended family had clearly been reduced and the party old timers were becoming more prominent in the political arena and in the seam between the political and security realms, the ministries of defense and the interior. Accordingly, by mid-2002 Saddam relied on a more balanced party, Tikriti tribe and family power base.

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 Iraqi National Congress (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 Republican Guard (and their faith in Saddam).

The success 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.

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. To Saddam, 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 it would undermine international pressure to lift the sanctions imposed on Iraq following the Gulf War.

Eventually Saddam had no choice but to accept the recommendations of his economic advisers. On November 25, 1996, Iraq announced its acceptance of the Resolution. Saddam's success in Irbil, combined with the

exposure of a military coup and the execution of the revolutionaries made the Resolution acceptable.

These events highlight Saddam's vulnerability in the summer of 1996. He needed a way to restore the Iraqi military morale and to demonstrate his own strength and power to 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 to Saddam than the fact that, from now on, he could save the sums he previously had to spend on food for his impoverished people. The disadvantages were minor by comparison, as 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.

It may be that the crisis Saddam provoked with the U.N. in October-November 1997 over UNSCOM or UNMOVIC inspections could 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 international inspections would be out of the question, for this would have meant disclosing voluntarily his remaining advanced weapons technological secrets. Retaining at least the perception of a WMD program was central to Saddam's leadership concept.

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 with regularity 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 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 had been a diplomatic and economic "love offensive" directed mainly at his previous enemies. Faithful to his *modus operandi* inside Iraq, Saddam had been adding threats that an attack on Iraq will meet with a ferocious reaction against American interests.[19]

The main tool in Saddam's "love offensive" had 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. Other tools, important as well, was an ostentatious "return" to Islam and high profile support for the Palestinian *intifadah* that erupted in September 2000.

The Near Abroad

Saddam was quite effective in his pre-2003 diplomatic efforts towards the "near abroad." He achieved a reduction of tensions with his lifelong enemy Iran, accomplished a significant rapprochement with both Saudi Arabia and Syria, the latter especially significant given Syria's September 2001 election as a non-permanent member of the U.N. Security Council. For economic and political reasons, even Jordan's distance from and tensions with Iraq were reduced. Saddam's strong embrace and support of the Palestinian cause was of great assistance in his courtship of these previously estranged Arab neighbors. Turkey's economic losses because of the sanctions against Iraq ($6-7 billion annually), coupled with their joint interests in countering their restive Kurdish population, regularly led Turkey to resist actions that would magnify Iraqi-Turkish tensions.

Recognizing these areas of joint interest, Iraq intensively pursued a diplomatic offensive to draw Turkey closer to it and away from the U.S. Significantly, Turkey refused the United States use of its territory, ports, or air space in Operation Iraq Freedom.

Syria

The most telling case in terms of Saddam's *modus operandi* when he feels weak and under great threat was provided by his tremendous resolve to mend his fence with his oldest Middle Eastern rival, President Hafiz al Asad and his son's successor 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.[20]

In November 2000, Syria announced the establishment of full diplomatic relations with Iraq. Less than three months later, in early January 2001, Syria announced "all Syrians can from now on travel to Iraq without any restrictions and all passports will not bear the 'excluding Iraq' sign."[21]

The two countries signed a free-trade agreement the result of which mutual trade volume was to grow from $500 million in 2000 to around $1 billion in 2001.[22] According to some reports, in 2001 mutual trade actually reached almost $2 billion.[23] 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. By the middle of 2002, it was estimated that the annual value of trade exchange between the two countries exceeded $3 billion.[24]

In November 2000, the old Kirkuk-Banyas oil pipeline, 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.[25] To make detection difficult, Syria had been using the Iraqi oil for its own consumption, selling Syrian oil abroad instead.[26]

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, those relationships have not had the expected impact, which left more room for an improvement of Iraqi-Iranian relations.

Since the two countries 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 had been a very high priority. Confronting the Americans, 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'ite 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 were allowed to spend a week in Iraq, visiting the holy places of Najaf, Karbala, and Kazimayn (a Baghdad suburb where two Shi'ite imams are buried).

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. Just before the invasion of Kuwait, Turkey's annual exports to Iraq amounted to around $400 million. In 2000, it reached almost the same annual rate as in 1990, $375 million, and in 2001, it almost doubled to $710 million.[27] By the end of 2001, it was estimated that in 2002 Turkey would be exporting to Iraq products to the tune of $2 billion.[28]

Turkey's strong ties to the United States and insistence on working with the U.S. on Iraqi matters were a great source of frustration for

Baghdad. Turkish military forays into autonomous Iraqi Kurdistan, too, elicited bitter condemnations from Baghdad. Even though Saddam was no longer in control of Kurdistan, such forays were seen in Baghdad as infringing on its sovereignty. Finally, the Iraqi regime was very critical of the strategic cooperation between Turkey and Israel. At the same time, though, Saddam was aware that Ankara would like to have sanctions lifted because it too suffered from the cut-off of trade and oil trans-shipment revenues from Iraq. He did everything in his power to whet the Turkish appetite, including open calls to breach the embargo. In 1997, the two countries signed an agreement to lay a 1,300 kilometer natural gas pipeline.

Additionally, the Turks were deeply wary of the possibility that if the Iraqi regime was toppled the Iraqi Kurds would declare independence. This might provide Turkish Kurds with a successful independence example and might result in a renewed Kurdish revolt in Turkey. The Turks were often unhappy with the indecisive way in which the Iraqi Kurds were handling the PKK.[29] Saddam used the lure of his business and the fear of Kurdish independence as his main charm points in Ankara, and he played them up continuously. This may have contributed to Turkey's decision not to cooperate with the United States in Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003.

Jordan

While it did not participate in the international anti-Iraqi war coalition and was unwilling to confront Iraq politically either, Jordan has since the early 1990s, consistently distanced itself from Iraq. It did this in order to mend its fences with the U.S. and to make peace with Israel. The result was 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.[30]

It would seem, then, that much like Turkey, Jordan, too, was getting the best of both worlds: it kept on excellent relations both with the U.S. and Israel, including receiving U.S. economic aid; it thwarted, as best it could, Iraqi attempts to smuggle weapons through its territory to the Palestinians; and there is no evidence recently that they allowed illicit

goods into Iraq. Still, Jordan continued to receive cheap oil from Saddam and to trade with Iraq. Saddam was fully aware of the Jordanian practice, but he did not seem to care. For him, Jordan was an important avenue to the outside world.

Even more importantly, securing Jordan's objection to an American attack against him was then his top priority. He rightly feared Jordanian complicity with a U.S. offensive would mean his own immediate demise, as it will provide the U.S. with the most effective bridgehead from where to attack.

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 Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states to "overcome the past with its events and pains."[31] This was interpreted as a call for rapprochement with Saddam's Iraq.

In January 2001 the Saudis had 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.[32] Saudi Arabia did not go on record demanding an end to the embargo, and it continued to allow U.S. fighter planes to use its territory to patrol the Southern no-fly zone. The latter, rather than economic considerations, seems also to be the reason for the Saudi decision to deny the U.S. land forces any use of its territory when the United States decided to attack Iraq.

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 Arab Summit and not to be embarrassed by any dissent. In March 2002, at the Beirut

Summit, Saudi Crown Prince Abd Allah hugged and kissed Izzat Ibrahim al-Duri, Saddam's Deputy Chairman of the RCC, in front of the world's TV cameras. This ended more than a decade of bitter hostility.

Other Gulf States

In Spring 2002, the 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 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 were no Kuwaiti POWs being held. Kuwaiti officials refused and continued to be highly critical of the Iraqi regime. It seems that Kuwait was also sympathetic to the idea of an American-inspired violent regime change in Baghdad.

Egypt

Egypt was the main Arab participant in the anti-Iraqi coalition of 1990-91. Despite this, Iraqi-Egyptian relations started to pick up significantly the moment Iraq's buying power surged. Trade became meaningful and in January 2001 Iraq and Egypt signed a free trade zone agreement. 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 hope that in 2001 the volume would go beyond $2 billion.[33]

The Iraqi Minister of Trade, Saddam's chief economic adviser, was 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 was 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 amongst Arab countries that have trade relations with Iraq. Egypt ranked fourth among Iraq's world trade partners [after France, Russia, and China, in this order].[34]

The Far Abroad

Ultimately, it was the "far abroad" that tried to come to Saddam's rescue. France, Russia, China (three of the permanent members of the U.N. Security Council which have the power of veto in addition to the United States and Great Britain) and more distant Arab countries, such as Egypt, were able to put pressure on the U.N., particularly the United States and Great Britain. Prior to Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003, 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 the suffering of the Iraqi people – creating a sense that Washington, not Iraq, was increasingly isolated.

- Russia continued to speak out against using force to bring about resolution to the Iraq situation.
- France continued to actively speak out against sanctions, leading a bloc of European opposition to U.S. military operations by threatening to veto strong resolutions in the U.N. Security Council.
- China opposed the sanctions, but was more passive than Russia and France.

Saddam's patient diplomacy towards Russia and France, both of which have significant economic interests in an Iraq freed of economic shackles, 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 supported his beleaguered regime in international forums.

Buying Off Superpowers: Russia as an Example

The oil pumps in Kirkuk had hardly started to send crude again through the Iraqi-Turkish pipeline to the Mediterranean port of Dortyol in December 1996 when Saddam Hussein realized the magnitude of his blunder in rejecting continuous U.N. offers to enter into oil-for-food arrangements. True, such arrangements were detrimental to Iraq's sovereignty, but there were other U.N. practices that followed the invasion of Kuwait that were far more damaging both to Saddam's pride and Iraq's sovereignty, a difference Saddam never fully grasped.

Saddam could not order everything he wanted. This was because all Iraqi contracts were monitored by U.N. Security Council 668 Committee, so when Iraq ordered dual-use items, they were usually rejected by the Committee or placed on hold. Still, Iraq was, 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 world superpowers 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.[35] Even rich countries like France and superpowers like China and Russia could not ignore the lure of Iraqi buying power. It is important to note 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 them back. Iraqi sources made no secret of the fact that they were using this power to bribe the superpowers and move them to support the Iraqi cause.

When one superpower would balk and refuse to obey Iraqi instructions (for example, Iraqi demands from Russia to start developing oil fields before this was approved by the Security Council), senior Iraqi officials would openly threaten that superpower with economic retaliation. When it came to clear cut violations of U.N. Security Council Resolutions, however, no country, including Russia and China, dared so far to confront the USA.

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.[36] 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."[37]

Russia also objected strongly to the American patrolling of the no-fly zones in Iraq's north and south. 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."[38] In exchange for these sympathetic Russian positions the Iraqis gave them some lucrative contracts, including the development of large oil fields.[39]

By 2001, not surprisingly, Iraq's leading trade partners were, in the following order: France, Russia, and China, followed by Egypt.[40] 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 at $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 was for five years and included new cooperation in oil, irrigation, agriculture, transportation, and electricity. According to American sources this deal represented a breach of the international sanctions on Iraq.[41]

Occasionally the Iraqi government also threatened other European countries with economic retaliation if their position in the U.N. were not sufficiently pro-Iraqi.[42] Poland, too, was forced to change its position and criticized the U.S. and Britain for their no-fly zone monitoring activities. 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.[43] There may be little doubt that the Iraqi tactic, combining punishment (that was not always needed) and temptation, was 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.[44]

Saddam's Propaganda Campaign in the USA

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 were legitimate ones, within the framework of the oil-for-food program.

However, very early on, Saddam identified a promising avenue in the USA. Rather than greed, in the U.S. it was more promising to turn to idealism. His propaganda machine used 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 in denial of 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.[45]

Busting the Embargo

After Saddam humiliated himself by reversing 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 great pressure to demonstrate 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—succeeded, but he managed to erode many other aspects of the embargo.

Eroding the oil embargo essentially was accomplished 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 had 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 these sales were approved by the United Nations. The official reason provided was that this was the only way Iraq could repay its national debt to Jordan of about $800 million. After a few years this debt was paid back in full. Still, the arrangement continued.

By the late 1990s, the Iraqi leadership felt the need to perform a quantum leap in its illicit oil sales. 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.[46] 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 continued throughout the year, and the current prices for a smuggled oil barrel (around $12, roughly half the world market price) remained the same, then the annual revenue expected to go into Saddam's private pocket was to be around $1.5 billion.[47] This was, indeed, a quantum leap compared to the assessment of Iraq's illicit revenues of $600 million for the year 2000.[48]

Another avenue through which Iraq managed to earn illegal petrodollars was through a surcharge of between 15-30 cents per barrel, even though this was in contravention of Security Council resolutions. The U.S. and U.N. made efforts to stop it but only with partial success. Iraq had been circumventing the embargo also in the realm of imports, from new cars and luxury goods to spare parts for Iraq's military. Finally, there were numerous reports that Iraq bought legitimate goods but paid more than they were worth. The difference was handed back by the producers to Saddam's men and went into his private coffers.

It was just as important to the Iraqis to actually bust the embargo, as it was to boast about it. It was also to boost domestic morale and, at the

same time, dishearten the U.N. and the U.S. 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."[49]

The Palestinians: Every Suicide Bomber Is Protecting Saddam

In Saddam's eyes, the Palestinian intifadah that started in September 2000 was the best guaranty against an American attack, because it kept the Arab world volatile, and threatened the moderate Arab regimes. He probably believed that the higher the flames, the more difficult it would be for the U.S. to attack him. As Saddam saw it, if, as a result of a large-scale Palestinian terrorist operation ("mega-terrorist operation," as it is called in Israel) the Israeli side may lose its inhibitions and perform a massacre, all the better, because such an atrocity might guarantee American paralysis over Iraq for a long time. Seen from Saddam's viewpoint, the intifadah should continue indefinitely. This demonstrated again what was 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.

Unlike his military, that was in terrible shape, Saddam's coffers were full prior to his regime's demise in 2003. Accordingly, he had 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 a 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.[50]

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.[51] There are other forms of support that, while not substantial, were still

serving Saddam's propaganda machine. For example, a few of the intifadah wounded were hospitalized in Baghdad.[52] 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, therefore, that Saddam was 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 who shouted, "Saddam is the father of all the Arabs! He is the bravest example of how an Arab leader should be." Palestinian babies were named after Saddam and people called upon him to strike at Tel-Aviv again as he had done in 1991: "Dear Saddam, Hit, Hit Tel-Aviv!" (Saddam ya habib, udrub udrub Tal-Abib.)[53]

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, was no longer that of a secular leader. Sometime towards the latter stages of the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988) he realized that there was a shift in the Iraqi public toward more religiosity. He also had to defend himself against Khomeini's public accusations that he was an atheist (mulhid) and an enemy of Islam. His religious rhetoric escalated immediately following the invasion of Kuwait and the beginning of the American troop buildup in Saudi Arabia. He realized that his only help could come from the Arab and Islamic world and correctly believed that this world was far more religious and fundamentalist than he and his regime.

Since August-September 1990, Saddam had 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. As early as 1990-91, this new rhetoric won him tremendous admiration among 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 Saddam "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 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 was implemented in most part without proper trial and scores of young women were beheaded in front of their homes.

Since 1989, Saddam demonstrated to one and all that he prayed five times every day like a devout Muslim. Frequently, he stopped government meetings and meetings with foreign diplomats, retired to another room, either pretending to pray or actually praying, and then he returned 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 universities, was enhanced by the end of the 1990s to the extent that it reportedly "disrupted the education program." That the regime used mosque preachers for anti-American propaganda was not new, or the fact that all public ceremonies opened with a prayer. But that more and more female party members donned the veil was indeed new. An Iraqi weekly magazine, al-Zaman, asked Iraqi actresses, "Why don't you don the veil and pray?" The magazine lamented that these actresses had 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."[54]

Another component of the Islamization campaign was the construction of extravagant mosques. For example, the Grand Saddam Mosque, under construction since 1999 and located on the way to the International Airport, was huge, second only to the one at Mecca in size. Saddam 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 the mosque lies a Qur'an inscribed, as reported, in the blood of the Iraqi leader. The visitors were 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, privately many Iraqis complain about the exorbitant amount of money invested in building these mosques.[55] The mosque's preacher must have been fully aware of the implication of what he said, namely, that Saddam was encouraging his people to see him as anything between a Mahdi and a prophet.

Last but not least, the regime was worried about Shi'ite loyalty in the case of a military confrontation with the United States. General religiosity that applies to both the Sunni and Shi'ite creeds was believed to be of help, but Saddam felt the need also for some special gestures towards the Shi'a in particular. Most notably since the rise of Ayatollah Khomeini to power in Iran, Saddam "nationalized" the main Shi'ite occasions and presented himself as the genetic offspring of the first and third Shi'ite Imams, Ali and Al-Hussein, and of the Prophet.[56] 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'ite areas.[57] It is not clear how helpful all these religious practices were to Saddam, but they do show how flexible he was in his approach to his own ideology, tossing it overboard whenever expediency dictates.

At the same time, however, Saddam did not toss overboard his old time supporter, the Christian Deputy P.M. Tariq Aziz. Apparently, this would have looked like total capitulation to the fundamentalists, and this is where concessions stop. Also, there are Christians among his

bodyguards and it would be a mistake to arouse their wrath. It is clear that loyalty was a one-way street and only those who were seen to be serving Saddam with total loyalty would 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 were dropping hints that can only be interpreted as intended to tell the U.S. that, in case of an attack on Iraq, the latter may have some nuclear surprises up its sleeve. 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."[58] 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, and when the confrontation and noble battle against the Zionists and the Americans would start."[59]

It is very clear that to Saddam, the first reason for developing non-conventional weapons was to deter external enemies. The USA is not the only 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, again much larger and with a much larger and better equipped armed forces. Iraq is locked in an unresolved dispute with Turkey over the water of the Euphrates. In May 1990, Saddam threatened Turkey's Prime Minister, Yilderim Akbulut, upon the latter's visit to Baghdad, Turkey was exposed, with NATO having fallen apart.

But Saddam's *modus operandi* implied that such weapons were necessary also for domestic purposes, and for regional offensive ones. 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 unprotected populations. It is not far-fetched to suggest that, in the case of another wide-scale Shi'ite

revolt in the south, a few chemical bombs or artillery shells on a densely populated area would nip in the bud any popular revolt.

Biological and nuclear weapons are useless in a domestic context because they contaminate the area for a long time. Such weapons, however, are very useful for anyone aspiring to regional hegemony and international recognition as a superpower. Indeed, in April 1990, Saddam threatened Israel with annihilation ("I shall burn half of Israel"), unthinkable without weapons of mass destruction. There is every reason to believe that, if Saddam ever had nuclear weapons to match those of Israel, he would have been rattling them and offering every Arab and Islamic State that would request his protection the Iraqi nuclear umbrella. In fact, even before he became a nuclear power, Saddam 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 meeting between Saddam's younger half brother, Watban Ibrahim Hasan, and Iraqi nuclear physicist Ali al-Shaharastani in 1979, the former told the latter 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.[60] Finally, in his ongoing contest for prestige and authority with his army officers, Saddam needed WMD to demonstrate to them how he can win wars literally single-handedly. True, one cannot win wars without an army, but the relative weight of the WMD component within the armed forces, especially if Iraq had become a nuclear power, was of the essence, and Saddam could have been trusted to rub it into his officers' heads.

To Saddam, to be understood to have nuclear weapons, and WMD in general, was considered important. Major leaders have major league weapons. Moreover, for a person with tremendous insecurities as Saddam, these weapons can offer security that cannot be matched by any other, a necessary deterrent, especially since the Iraqi military was grievously wounded by the 1991 conflict. Moreover, defying the international community on this matter was a regular reminder to the military that Saddam would not capitulate.

To make sure that these weapons were always at his disposal and could be used ruthlessly and indiscriminately without any qualms and

inhibitions exactly when and where he wanted, Saddam is believed to have placed them in the hands of the SSO. These were the people who are closest to him by blood (most of them hail from his own tribe) and who were regarded, together with the Himaya, as the most disciplined and obedient to him. In other words, these people, who would push the buttons, were the closest to what one would see as an extension of Saddam's self. After all, Saddam molded these people in his own image.

Weapons of mass destruction also could have provided Saddam with an extremely potent tool with which he believed he could fulfill his manifest destiny, i.e., 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 superpowers. Since 1990, he had also been aspiring to be recognized as the single most important Islamic leader. No wonder, then, that Saddam had been so reluctant to part with his WMD program, even though this obstinacy cost him, between 1990 and 1997, at least $100 billion, and thereafter still cost him in terms of his inability to fully control most of his petrodollars.

A nuclear-armed Saddam would have taken a quantum leap in power, and his already swollen ego would be 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 Saddam threatened "to burn half of Israel." It is likely that Saddam would have attempted to dictate oil prices internationally and would likely have entered a state of permanent nuclear brinkmanship.

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 was dissipating slowly, and yet Saddam did not have to be seen giving up his WMD. Before the regime's demise in 2003, the Iraqi people had achieved in Saddam's last year a better standard of living, many aspects of the embargo being gone.

Saddam's message on sanctions changed over the years. While still defiant in the face of the West, in his last years in power he claimed that sanctions were a disaster, so full of holes there is no point in continuing

with them. Sanctions fatigue was an argument commonly used by outside observers in support of lifting sanctions. Increasing international dissent on sanctions highlighted by efforts of France, Russia, and China as well as some Arab states to lift sanctions continued to strengthen Saddam's argument that there is no real point to sanctions by the late 1990s. For example, Russian, French, and Arab pressures prevented the U.S. from adopting military measures to force Saddam to accept 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 continued to limit imports (ineffectively). This compromise dramatically weakened the impact of international sanctions.

- Saddam continued his propaganda by claiming that sanctions seriously limited medical supplies to the Iraqi people, resulting in untold deaths. All the while, he continued 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 inspectors were not allowed back, this was a major victory for Saddam in the eyes of many Iraqi people. 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 U.N. 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 U.N. that Saddam helped promote were so deep that Saddam concluded he was essentially immune to U.N. reprisals for pursuing unconventional weapons programs, which became all the more important to him given the weakening

of his military in terms of personnel, conventional weaponry, and materiel. Since 1999, there were no meaningful coup attempts. Those 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 re-imposition of inspections in 2002, under threat of war by the U.S. and the U.K., may have caused some Iraqis once again to reevaluate their support.

Return to International Community / Change of Image

After the 1991 Gulf War, Saddam continued to work to increase his standing in the international community, seizing on opportunities to bolster 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 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, Iraq 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.

- In 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 increased, power cuts were less severe, drinking water and sewer services dramatically improved.

- 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 found that, in times of domestic unrest, international crises are helpful in his retaining power in his country, and allowed him to stunt the growth of the internal opposition. Naturally, whenever he triggered an international crisis, Saddam also believed 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'ite problem by attacking Shi'ite Iran. Even before that, in 1977, he tried to deflect Shi'ite anger by accusing Syria of plotting to mass murder Shi'ite 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 Iraq. The paradox during the last few years was 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 Iraq that, to them, Saddam was the legitimate leader and that he was gradually winning the diplomatic battle against the U.S. This strengthened his position domestically.

In short, emergencies Saddam 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. He did this 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 was not limited to the elimination of domestic opposition. Such elimination was only a pre-condition to achieve his great ambitions in the Middle East and world arenas. However, in order to be able to become a world-class leader he needed, in the first place, to control the domestic scene, and in his mind control meant absolute control, namely, the complete elimination of any opposition. In order to achieve this, Saddam was always ready to confront anybody, including world powers.

Saddam found that international crises were helpful in retaining power in his country, and his string of foreign policy successes allowed him to stunt the growth of internal opposition. For Saddam, success primarily meant strengthening his domestic position even at the expense of his international posture. The most damaging outcome of any crisis was one that showed him a failure as a leader. Thus, Saddam regularly promoted international crises to shore up his internal position.

While assuredly Saddam's position prior to Operation Iraqi Freedom was much weaker than it was on the eve of the invasion of Kuwait in 1990, he demonstrated a more sophisticated leadership both in terms of internal security vulnerabilities, and also diplomacy both with his Arab neighbors, the "near abroad" as well as with the "far abroad," and accomplished a great deal to reduce his vulnerabilities and to strengthen his position, both internally and internationally.

Conclusion

Saddam's survival in power was always his continuing goal. A life out of power was seen as akin to death for Saddam. A rational calculator who could bob and weave and was astutely Machiavellian, Saddam shrewdly managed to sustain the loyalty of his military and to weaken the international opposition for 24 years until Operation Iraqi Freedom ended his regime.

That he has been sophisticated and better attuned to the context of his leadership both internally and internationally does not lessen a still persistent danger, that when Saddam is backed into a corner, his customary prudence and judgment might have been apt to falter. On these occasions he could have been dangerous to the extreme, violently lashing out with all resources at his disposal. The persistent calls for regime change may have moved him into that dangerous "back against the wall" posture had not U.S. military strikes removed him from power.

The setting afire of the Kuwaiti oil fields as he retreated in 1991 is an example that might well have been repeated with his own Iraqi oil fields, as if to say, "If I can't have them, no one will."

The question then is the degree to which he continued to sustain the loyalty of his senior military commanders until Baghdad fell or whether they were induced to disobey Saddam when placed in extremis in order to safeguard their own futures. The melting away of this force in Iraq after several divisions of the Iraqi Revolutionary Guard were destroyed by allied bombing answers the question of regime loyalty. Once bloodied south of Baghdad, the rest of the force in Baghdad dispersed.

The explicit statement of Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld suggested Iraqi military officers could 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 were aimed at splitting Saddam from his senior leadership. The leafleting of the battlefield indicating that any commander who ordered the use of weapons of mass destruction would be held guilty under the war crimes act further consolidate the information operation.

At this writing, it is uncertain whether Saddam is dead or alive. It was thought that Saddam would not go down to the last flaming bunker if he had a way out, but that he could have been extremely dangerous and might have stopped at nothing if he was backed into a corner, if he believed his very survival as a world-class political actor was threatened. It was believed that Saddam could have responded with unrestrained aggression, ordering the use of whatever weapons and resources were at his disposal, in what would surely be a tragic and bloody final act.

But note the word "ordering." As noted above, the information campaign which attempted to split Saddam from his senior military leadership may well have led them to disobey his orders. Moreover, Saddam could not have used these weapons too early, for the disarray in the international community that he had fostered would surely dissolve, were he to reveal that he possessed these weapons. The success of the information operations campaign in concert with the rapid effectiveness of the U.S. air strikes in Operation Iraqi Freedom may well have blocked Saddam's capacity to escalate the war and employ possibly hidden weapons of mass destruction.

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 by one of the authors (AB) in Tel Aviv, 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 A.B'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. See Iskandar, 22-25.

7. For Saddam's admiring, yet 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. 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.

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

12. 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.

13. 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.

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

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

16. 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.

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

18. 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.

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

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

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

22. *HaAretz*, Feb. 1, 2001.

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

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

25. *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*, January 23, 2001.

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

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

28. *Anatolia*, Nov. 2, 2001.

29. For details, see Baram, "Building Toward Crisis," 109-122.

30. Ibid., 123-136.

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

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

33. *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.

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

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

36. 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 U.S.-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.

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

38. 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.

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

40. *Xinhua*, April 2, 2001.

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

42. 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."

43. 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.

44. For Switzerland, *Reuters*, from Baghdad, Feb. 1, 2001; Norway 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.

45. 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.

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

47. 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.

48. *Reuters*, Feb. 6, 2001.

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

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

51. *AFP*, Jan. 24, 2001.

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

53. See, for example, Nidal al-Mughrabi, reporting from Gaza, *Reuters*, Jan. 17, 2001.

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

55. Kim Ghattas, *BBC*, April 25, 2002. See also, Hala Jaber, *Sidney Morning Herald*, Nov. 11, 2001.

56. See Baram, "Re-inventing Nationalism," *The Princeton Papers*, Ibid.

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

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

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

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

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