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The Road to War with Iraq

The end of DESERT SHIELD/DESERT STORM was, in retrospect, only a partial victory for the U.S. and its Coalition allies. The cease fire at Safwan was quickly manipulated by the Iraqis for maximum advantage. The Kurdish and Shia uprisings were crushed with large loss of life by the Republican Guard. Saddam moved to consolidate power and survive at all costs – and he succeeded. With the narrow mission of liberating Kuwait achieved, regime change was considered and discarded due to the belief the Coalition would dissolve. Containing a weakened Iraq with sanctions and increased military presence in the Gulf was the chosen policy. The Iraqis, to the extent possible, rearmed and began their policy of evading sanctions, and attacking the Coalition at its weakest point, politically. The resulting twelve years would demonstrate Iraq's determination to escape the DESERT STORM's results – politically, economically, and militarily. Saddam apparently had made a strategic choice immediately following the 1991 ceasefire to not comply with the UNSCRs, and worked to evade all restrictions and eventually wear out international will to enforce them. Saddam's "cheat and retreat" policy resulted in a continuing series of international crises. (1994 Iraq troop movement response) OPERATION DESERT Iraq's refusal to cooperate with UNSCOM in 1998 began in January, when it barred further inspections by Scott Ritter's team. Despite expansion of the oil for food program to \$2.2B/year on 20 FEB, and an agreement between UNSC GEN Annan and Saddam 20-23 FEB, the crisis continued to escalate until DEC, when OPERATION DESERT FOX began 6-19 DEC. The Saudi leadership found itself extremely vulnerable to this criticism and was increasingly unwilling to publicly support the U.S. policy. A combination of propaganda, increasing Islamic fundamentalism, and terrorist attacks in the KSA (OPM 1995, Khobar Towers 1996) resulted in increasing restrictions of OSW operations, and U.S. combat forces in the Kingdom in general. The UN, on 17 DEC 1999 created UNMOVIC in an attempt to reestablish some sort of on the ground inspection regime, while reliving some of the regime's hold on the Iraqi people.

The U.S. was aware of these issues, and attempted to turn DESERT STORM's battlefield into diplomatic success at the Madrid conference, 1991 where we hoped to reach a final status on

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non-compliance with UNSCRs, links to terrorism, and anti-U.S./Western actions made the Iraqi regime a logical next step in the War on Terror.

GEN Franks was directed to begin planning for Iraqi regime change operations in early 2002. A review of 1003-98, the basic war plan, assumed U.S./Coalition forces would have widespread access and basing in the Gulf. It also planned for several hundreds of thousands of troops and hundreds of aircraft. Since the assumptions had been drawn up, the political situation had changed dramatically. The on-going, increasing violence in the West Bank and Gaza was being beamed nightly into Gulf living rooms. Emphasis on civilian casualties, brutality, etc., continued to radicalize Arab public opinion. Also, the impression among the Gulf Arabs that Afghanistan and the GWOT were a war on Islam increased their anti-Western attitude. The Gulf regimes are not responsible to their publics, but their inherent weakness forced them to respond to public opinion. As a result, Arab cooperation with the U.S. became more limited, secret, and difficult to obtain. As an example, Saudi Arabia made their already bureaucratic and complicated customs procedures even more difficult during 2001-02. OSW air craft were forbidden to fly with "offensive" weapons from Saudi soil or cross into Iraq from Saudi airspace. CENTAF found these restrictions not merely annoying. They increased risk to aircrews and impacted on the mission by funneling all missions through Kuwait. Attempts to change the restrictions through existing mechanisms, such as F2C2 and CDR, JTF-SWA failed. The Saudis had also declined to send an LNO to join the OEF Coalition.

Aware of these, and other similar, issues with Arab cooperation, GEN Franks instructed his planners to consider plans to overcome them. Mobilizing Arab support for regime change in Iraq was assumed to be difficult and requiring significant monetary and political costs. Both assumptions turned out to be correct. On the Arab side, as 2002 opened, the increasing U.S. rhetoric began to slowly sink in with Iraq's neighbors that the USG was serious. President Bush's State of the Union Address on 29 JAN 2002 declared that Iraq, Iran, and North Korea were an "Axis of Evil" that had to be confronted. The threat of WMD proliferating to terrorists from rogue states was unacceptable. Still, most of the GCC +2 countries attempted to publicly and privately convince the U.S. to maintain the status quo. During his trips to the Gulf, the Commander heard that solving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict should be the first priority. Saddam was a bad leader, but his removal opened up too many uncertainties and issues.

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Turkey and [1.4b] were critical, while southern operations depended on the support of the GCC countries, particularly Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

[1.4b] approval and participation was critical to the US war plan and required significant political capital and both economic and military aid to secure [1.4b] backing. POTUS and [(b)(6)] met several times in 2002-2003 with numerous follow-up visits to [1.4b] by senior U.S. officials and military commanders. Substantial economic aid, combined with millions of dollars of additional military hardware were required to secure [1.4b] support and participation. Obtaining [1.4b] support is illustrative of the multi-level, interwoven political, military, and economic efforts necessary. On 1 AUG 02, President Bush and [(b)(6)] [(b)(6)] met to discuss possible [1.4b] contributions to 1003V. From these initial meetings, CENTCOM dispatched a Wartime Requirements Survey team to [1.4b] on 14 AUG 02. This team met with the [(b)(6)], traveled throughout the country and spoke to numerous decision makers. The [1.4b] passed on \$3.3B of desired assistance for new weapons systems, oil and cash to help the economy survive the blow of a regional war. Based on the team's report to SECDEF, submitted 4 SEP 02, it appeared to senior leaders that [1.4b] participation was secured. Unfortunately, this assumption was only partially accurate, and led to a great deal of scrambling in December 02.

Kuwait was the "easiest" to bring on board yet it still required constant reassurance the USG would stay the course and not leave Kuwait alone with the job of rebuilding Iraq half-finished. Saudi Arabia's well-established displeasure with US Iraq policy was a fact and planning assumption limiting support to US operations against Iraq. Nevertheless, Saudi assistance and more importantly tacit approval, was highly desired by Washington and required much political and military hand-holding. POTUS meetings with the Saudi rulers, senior US visits to Riyadh, defensive measures to protect the Kingdom and Washington's contentious approval of redistribution of a Saudi request to relocate its F15s, were all necessary to secure Riyadh's participation and access. Turkey proved to be most enigmatic and unpredictable. In the end, Ankara proved unwilling to support US efforts against Iraq despite enormous political pressure and staggering offers of economic aid. However, Ankara—after securing US and NATO defensive assistance against missiles and WMD—did cooperate with the US in one critical area; Turkish forces did not enter northern Iraq in strength and trigger fighting with the

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access in the smaller Gulf states. Saudi objections would therefore be neutralized. Critical editorials and reporting about the Saudis began to appear with increasing frequency as another method of pressuring the Saudis to "put up or shut up." The result was further bureaucratic push back on the Saudis part with agreement at the very senior levels on the existence of the threat, but no meeting of the minds on necessary action.

Planning and information operations continued throughout JUL and AUG 2002. Carried on the front page, the various controversies kept Iraq at the center of public attention in the U.S.

1.4d

September was a crucial month. President Bush's address to the UN on 12 SEP 2002 challenged that body to confront the "grave and gathering danger" of Iraq or stand aside as the U.S. and likeminded nations act. Some U.S. military movements also became public during this time, such as moving an armored brigade equipment to Kuwait, three CVBG's were on station in the region, and asking permission to build B-2 hangers on Diego Garcia. In keeping with their pattern when threatened, the Iraqis invited Hans Blix for technical talks in Baghdad and stated it would accept UN inspectors on 17 SEP.

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They failed to understand the U.S. diplomatic and military signals. CCJ5 Plans and CCJ3 held initial talks with three of our country's most historically reliable allies, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Canada. in SEP 02. Initial coordination agreed upon the following contributions: United Kingdom a heavy armored division, an additional heavy armored brigade, Special Operations Force (SOF) units, air defense groups, Air Force fighter/attack/recon and bomber

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meetings resolved issues such as: Type and potential missions for forces; financial support necessary; strategic lift requirements; Acquisition and Cross Servicing Agreements (ACSA); and Status of Forces Agreements (SOFA). IC3 was the clearinghouse for coordination between forward component commands, SNRs, JCS, DOS, selective attaches, and the J5. IC3 handled coordination issues such as equipment shortages, training needs, medical personnel immunization requirements (PIR vaccinations), NBC, cultural/religious/linguistic issues, communications, command and control, housing, and supply/maintenance support. In some instances, potential assets had to be de-conflicted with ongoing OEF efforts. Other assets had to be respectfully turned away due to lack of need, lack of capability, political sensitivities, and/or cost of support. IC3 sought to achieve a seamless transition of coalition forces into the overall OIF effort. Requests for forces (RFF) were drafted, coordinated, processed and tracked to completion in order to ensure that the legal documents were in place.

In OCT 02, CENTCOM began formulating its input to a proposed FY03 Appropriations Bill. The Staff began compiling information to support additional funding in order to: 1) enable the prosecution of oncoming Iraqi operations and 2) improve execution of Operation Enduring Freedom. This resulted in the 20 Dec 03 proposal submitted to OSD Comptroller thru CCJ8 in early Jan 03. The key rationale for pursuing a foreign assistance piece of a supplemental appropriation--in order to essentially be quid-pro-quo for supporting the US-led Iraq Coalition--was, "when notwithstanding any other provision of law, and when the Armed Forces of the United States are engaged in combat operations, the President may authorize the use of funds appropriated for the operations and maintenance of the Armed Forces for any and all purposes necessary to conduct such combat operations. Such purposes include, but are not limited to, the provision of military assistance to friendly foreign and indigenous forces assisting or participating with the United States Armed Forces in combat operations and the provision of all forms of humanitarian assistance to civilian populations affected by the combat operations."

The GCC +2 did begin to read the U.S. correctly. Constant talks had been going on with the Saudis before the President's speech to the UN. The speech's directness and clarity apparently began to open up the Saudis to further cooperation with the U.S. None of this was easy or direct, however. Constant talks took place at all levels over myriad issues. For example, F2C2 met daily with the Saudis over customs and immigration issues. These talks were often contentious and difficult. Action Officers at all levels engaged their Saudi counterparts on

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adopted UNSCR 1441 which the Iraqis accepted on 13 NOV. The UNMOVIC and IAEA chairman visited Baghdad 18 NOV and inspections resumed on 27 NOV. There was no substantive progress on disarmament, a fact the USG continued to point out as NOV ended.

D/SECDEF Wolfowitz visited Turkey 3 DEC to secure access and received a non-committal response. [redacted] 1.4d

[redacted] 1.4d

[redacted] 1.4d CENTCOM

headquarters began [redacted] 1.4a

[redacted] 1.4a This was an invaluable preparation for the coming conflict. The 7 DEC Iraqi declaration to UNMOVIC of over 12,000 pages denied any WMD possession. After a quick review, Han Blix reported to the UNSC that Iraq had not provided enough evidence to create confidence that Baghdad had abandoned its WMD efforts.

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In his 29 JAN 03 state of the union address, President Bush left no doubt that time was running out for Iraq to comply and disarm. Saddam's regime apparently relied upon French, Russian, and Chinese demands for giving Iraq more time and an increased inspection regime. On 30 JAN 2003, the UK, Spain, Italy, Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Denmark, and Portugal publicly support U.S. Iraqi policy in a letter to the world. President Chirac of France responded with warnings of consequences for U.S. supporters. Diplomatic efforts were in high gear at all levels during FEB as the crisis deepened. SECSTATE's presentation on 5 FEB 2003 laying out Iraqi violations failed to convince audiences which had already made up their minds. Turkey's treatment at the hands of France, Germany, and Belgium when asking for NATO defensive planning was the first example. During the month, Iraq's supporters laid out their position: 14 FEB France and Germany presented a plan for an increased inspection regime; 16 FEB the Arab League foreign ministers met and called for an "Arab solution;" 18-19 FEB General Assembly open debate on Iraq found the majority calling increased inspections; 21-22 FEB Non-Aligned Movement supported Iraq and condemned the U.S.; and 24 FEB the French, Germans, and Russians called for more inspections. During all these confrontations, SECSTATE restated the U.S. position. Turkey's parliament delayed, and then refused U.S. ground forces access on 24 FEB. Despite all the support, UNMOVIC condemned Iraq on 27 FEB by stating, "Iraq still hasn't committed to disarming."

IC3 held initial talks with eleven more countries. Coordination with Bulgaria resulted in an Infantry and an NBC Company. Lithuania offered a Cargo Handling Team and a Medical Team. Norway made no firm offers. Portugal offered full Access, Basing, and Over-flight (A/B/O). Finland offered Phase IV assistance; the specific assets to be determined at a later date. Latvia offered an Infantry Company, explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) Team, SOF Platoon, and a Cargo Handling Platoon. The Philippines offered a Phase IV stability force and an 80 personnel Med/Dental unit. Estonia offered a light Infantry Platoon, a Cargo Handling unit and EOD personnel. Italy offered an Infantry Brigade. Kuwait and Qatar offered Infantry units in support of Peninsula Shield.

The Arab League summit in Cairo, 1 MAR, restated the need for an "Arab solution" and nearly fell apart over disagreements between Kuwait and Iraq. The Organization of the Islamic

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political capital reaped from this effort at coalition building can not be exaggerated. Continuing political-military engagement will be vital to the continuing war on terror and CENTCOM operations.

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