

The United States and Coercive Diplomacy

edited by Robert J. Art
and Patrick M. Cronin



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UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE
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Coercive Diplomacy against Iraq, 1990–98

JON B. ALTERMAN

IRAQ HAS BEEN A RATHER PECULIAR FOE of the United States. Badly mismatched in terms of population, wealth, military strength, or almost any other conceivable measure, Iraq seems poorly positioned to win any confrontation. Equally unclear is why Iraq would want to provoke a confrontation with the United States. There is no ideological imperative to do so, and the countries arguably share an interest in a constant and stable flow of oil out of Iraq and its oil-rich neighbors.

How much more puzzling, then, that Iraq has emerged as one of the longer-running security challenges for the United States and battlefield opponent for U.S. military forces. For the past twelve years, U.S. officials have tried, with varying degrees of international cooperation and with varying degrees of success, to use the theories of coercive diplomacy to counter Iraqi threats. The success of such a strategy is unclear, because it is impossible to know what Iraq might have done had the United States pursued another strategy. But two things are relatively clear. The first is that the outcome of the past twelve years—no serious attack by Iraq on its neighbors and no substantial gains in its nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons programs—would have been one of the more optimistic predictions of Iraqi behavior in the early 1990s. The efforts of the past twelve years have not all been in vain. Equally important, though, another twelve years

of the same policies could scarcely be expected to produce similar results. By the first years of the twenty-first century, sanctions were visibly fraying, as international resolve diminished and Iraqi officials became increasingly adept at circumventing restrictions on their country's income and spending. A new strategy would need to be found.

This chapter concentrates on episodes in the 1990s in which the U.S. government attempted to use coercive diplomacy against Iraq. Such a policy took place in the context of a broader policy of containment and deterrence—a policy that enjoyed far wider international support than U.S. efforts to coercively induce specific Iraqi actions. This chapter seeks to understand how coercive diplomacy might have been applied better in the years following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. It also seeks to explain how the United States should approach its future policy toward dilemmas like those posed by Iraqi behavior in the period under study.

The chapter concludes that several aspects of the Iraqi case made it a poor candidate for coercive diplomacy after the early 1990s and that the appropriateness of such a policy only declined over time. These aspects include but are not limited to the drawn-out nature of the conflict, the relatively large number of confrontations, the nature of the target regime, limited will in the United States for coercive measures, and the difficulties of coalition maintenance.

Few of those factors, however, were predictable from the outset. In addition, U.S. policy toward Iraq was particularly burdened by an expanding set of increasingly ill-defined goals. It is far easier to use coercive diplomacy to achieve a limited, positive outcome in the short term than to manage a number of competing goals over more than a decade. The passage of time undermines both coalition maintenance and resolve at home, which in turn make application of a coercive diplomacy strategy extraordinarily difficult.

The coercive diplomacy discussion in this chapter deals primarily with the period from August 1990 to December 1998. Before August 1990 U.S. policy was to engage Iraq, not coerce it. Iraq had seemed to emerge contrite from a long and bloody war with Iran, and “the widely shared view in the international community was that Saddam Hussein was following a more moderate path.”¹ After December 1998

U.S. policy was not to coerce the regime in Baghdad but rather to remove it. That month, high-ranking U.S. officials announced that a primary goal of U.S. policy was to achieve “regime change” in Iraq. Given the repressiveness of the regime at home and its isolation abroad, regime change would seem to represent a death sentence for Baghdad’s brutal leaders. Although Alexander George notes that regime change is a potential goal of coercive diplomacy, it is hard to imagine that he is referring to cases in which regime change would almost certainly be suicidal for the current leadership. In such conditions, it seems impossible to construct a set of consequences more dire than removing the leadership from power.²

The round of coercive diplomacy that ended with a U.S.-led military attack in March 2003 confirms the difficulty of coercing regime change in cases like Iraq. The Bush administration, however, avoided many of the pitfalls outlined in this chapter by keeping diplomatic confrontations focused and limited in time.

IRAQ AND COERCIVE DIPLOMACY

George envisions three possible goals for coercive diplomacy: to use the threat of force or limited force to persuade an adversary to “stop short of the goal” of an action currently under way; to persuade the adversary to undo an action already carried out; and to achieve “a cessation of the opponent’s hostile behavior through a demand for change in the composition of the adversary’s government or in the nature of the regime.”³ From 1990 to 1998 the United States sought explicitly to use the threat of force or limited force to achieve the first two goals. While changing the regime in Baghdad was a desire of the U.S. government throughout that period, its efforts were generally directed not so much at persuading the Iraqi government to be more inclusive or to change its nature as at removing the government itself.

The episodes of coercive diplomacy did not occur in isolation but rather were one tool among many that the United States employed. In that regard, U.S. ambassador April Glaspie’s widely criticized demarche to Saddam Hussein a week before Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait was diplomacy, but it does not appear to have been coercive. According to Iraqi transcripts of the discussion, which the State Department

reportedly has not contested, Glaspie expressed her concern over the situation on Iraq's southern border but never threatened any sort of military, economic, or political response if Iraq were to cross into Kuwait.⁴

By contrast, Operation Desert Storm was coercive, but it was not diplomacy. While a great deal of diplomacy went into assembling a coalition of a score of countries to confront Iraq, on the Iraqi end the war was a pure exercise of overwhelming military force. The allied forces did not fight a "limited war" with the goal of liberating Kuwait; rather, allied forces continued to fight the Iraqi army in retreat, although they did stop short of destroying the Republican Guard or marching on Baghdad. In this, pressure from Arab (and especially Saudi and Egyptian) coalition allies strongly influenced U.S. government decision making. The peace that emerged was not so much negotiated as accepted by the Iraqis, and it amounted to acceptance of relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

Desert Shield and Its Aftermath

From August 2, 1990—the day the Iraqi army invaded Kuwait—until the bombs began falling on January 16, 1991, it was not clear that force would be required to coerce Iraqi troops into withdrawing.⁵ Indeed, at the time of the Iraqi invasion U.S. policy had been leaning the other way, favoring engagement with Iraq rather than sanctions against it. National Security Directive 26, signed by President Bush on October 2, 1989, called for expanded "economic and political incentives for Iraq" and concluded that "normal relations between the United States and Iraq would serve our longer-term interests and promote stability in both the Gulf and the Middle East."⁶ Although the actual aid extended to Iraq was relatively meager—mostly in the form of Commodity Credit Corporation guarantees and Export-Import Bank development loan credits—the gestures were enough to set off alarm bells in Congress. In the first half of 1990, the administration curtailed its courtship of Iraq, partly in response to congressional pressure and partly in response to Iraq's weapons development efforts and its open threats directed at neighboring states.

The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on August 2 forced a complete rethinking of U.S. policy toward Iraq. George Bush was a former permanent representative to the United Nations and a dedicated inter-

nationalist, and his first instinct was to build an international coalition. He called his ambassador to the United Nations, Thomas Pickering, immediately upon learning of the invasion and urged him to try to convene an emergency meeting of the Security Council to condemn the Iraqi move. Bush's early tilt toward the United Nations paid off with the rapid adoption of sweeping UN sanctions against Iraq just four days after the invasion. In addition, Bush rapidly built up allied (and especially American) forces in the Arabian Peninsula in the weeks and months following. Under Operation Desert Shield, more than forty thousand U.S. troops were in place in the region within a month of the Iraqi invasion, and four hundred thousand were in place by November 1990.

George Bush's actions in the weeks immediately before the invasion do not appear to represent an application of coercive diplomacy. As Iraqi troops and materiel gathered on the Kuwaiti border in July 1990 the U.S. government heeded the advice of its allies to tread softly and not aggravate the situation.⁷ Whether or not a demonstration of force could have deterred Saddam Hussein from invading Kuwait is unclear, but the United States clearly chose not to try. Of course, Saddam's invasion was not completely predictable, and U.S. action must be seen within the framework of the prevailing uncertainty of the time.

Following the invasion, the coercive elements of U.S. policy took some time to fall into place. National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft asked his senior Middle East aide on the National Security Council (NSC) to draft an "overview memo" in the immediate aftermath of the invasion. That memo advised, "We don't need to decide where to draw any lines just yet, but we do need to take steps—moving forces, pressing allies and reluctant Arabs, etc. that would at least give us a real choice if current efforts fall short."⁸ The clear implication is that the United States began to deploy troops more to preserve U.S. options than to provoke a precise Iraqi response, which an orthodox application of coercive diplomacy would require. In this way, U.S. actions were along the lines of one of George's alternative nonmilitary strategies, namely, "buying time to explore a negotiated settlement."⁹

One might make the case that the UN sanctions played a role in convincing Saddam to stop short of moving from Kuwait into Saudi Arabia.

As such, the UN sanctions (which the United States took the lead on imposing) would represent a successful use of coercive diplomacy because the target state stopped short of its goal. Such a case is tenuous, however. Although U.S. officials clearly feared an Iraqi invasion of Saudi Arabia, there is no evidence in the public domain to suggest that such an invasion was in the offing.¹⁰

Interestingly, Secretary of State James A. Baker III explicitly states in his memoirs that the U.S. government's actions in August 1990 were intended "to deter an Iraqi move into Saudi Arabia . . . [and undo] Iraq's invasion of Kuwait by the pursuit of a policy of *coercive diplomacy* against Saddam Hussein" (emphasis added). As envisioned by Baker, carrying out such a plan meant "we would begin with diplomatic pressure, then add economic pressure . . . and finally move toward military pressure by gradually increasing American troop strength in the Gulf."¹¹

Although it may be only a question of nuance, Baker's conceptualization of coercive diplomacy differs from Alexander George's in this instance. Baker emphasizes a "ratcheting up" process, a sort of "try-and-see" approach to tactics other than war, while retaining war as an ultimate possibility. Although Baker clearly targets Iraqi behavior, he does not actively seek to understand the motivations behind that behavior. George's concept of strategic diplomacy, however, is carefully constructed around the idea of understanding one's adversary. George suggests that policymakers attempting to apply coercive diplomacy need to accomplish four tasks: assign values to the variables in the coercive diplomacy model, settle on what variant of coercive diplomacy to pursue, replace the assumption of a "rational" opponent with an empirically derived model, and take contextual variables into account.

The key in all of this is to understand how the adversary perceives his interests. The task is hard enough with most adversaries, but when one comes from a cultural, familial, and political background as foreign to most U.S. analysts as Saddam Hussein's, the task is even harder. One cannot know at this point what U.S. government assessments of Iraqi intentions, likely reactions, and pressure points had been, or how the Bush administration used such assessments. Yet the memoirs of U.S. officials suggest they gave greater emphasis to building an anti-Saddam

coalition and to following a try-and-see approach than to calculating how key pressure points might persuade Saddam to disgorge Kuwait.

Diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict took center stage in November, when the Soviet Union emerged as a key intermediary between the United States and Iraq. Efforts to bring Iraqi foreign minister Tariq Aziz to Washington and send Baker to Baghdad foundered on disagreements over agendas, dates, and participants. As late as January 9 Baker met with Aziz in Geneva and attempted to deliver a letter of warning from George Bush to Saddam Hussein.¹² Aziz read the letter and refused to convey it on the grounds that its tone was “contrary to the traditions of correspondence between heads of state.”¹³

While U.S. and allied threats to Saddam Hussein before the outbreak of war were not specific, their tone was clear. Bush’s letter of January 9 stated baldly, “What is at issue here is not the future of Kuwait—it will be free, its government will be restored—but rather the future of Iraq. . . . Iraq cannot and will not be able to hold on to Kuwait or exact a price for leaving.”¹⁴ It is possible that Iraqi officials judged that the threats of the United States and the international community were not credible. It is also possible that they believed that the costs of complying with those threats—in terms of both international prestige and domestic politics—outweighed the costs of non-compliance. In any event, the United States and its allies appear to have delivered the threat of the use of force clearly.

As U.S. military capabilities in the region expanded into the winter, U.S. policy began to look more and more like an application of coercive diplomacy. The demands were clear, and the threat was direct, credible, and potent. The decision facing Iraqi officials—withdrawal or war—grew more stark, and while they chose the latter, it was not because of a lack of evident allied resolve.

When the threats were not heeded, allied forces began a month-long air campaign with approximately one hundred thousand sorties, followed by a 100-hour ground war. There are varying estimates of Iraqi casualties, ranging from twenty-five thousand to as many as one hundred fifty thousand. Iraq also lost a sizable portion of its weaponry, and when the dust settled, only 15 percent of its electrical grid was still operational.¹⁵

This last episode, Operation Desert Storm, represents not coercive diplomacy but pure coercion. Unable to win Iraqi withdrawal through diplomatic activity, sanctions, or threats, the United States and its allies took to the battlefield and won decisively. Rather than serve as a successful model of coercive diplomacy, Operation Desert Storm was intended in part to build credibility so that the next adversary might prove more susceptible to similar ultimata in the future.¹⁶ What was not anticipated was that the target of such ultimata would again be Saddam Hussein and that the confrontation would follow right after the end of the war.

One can speculate endlessly about why coercive diplomacy failed to win Saddam's withdrawal from Kuwait. Absent much better information than exists about Iraqi internal decision making, hard and fast conclusions are difficult. One possible conclusion is that coercive diplomacy failed because Saddam Hussein simply miscalculated the likelihood of massive military action or the outcome of such action. Given what we know about his impatience with conflicting views, it is certainly possible that he blundered into war. If that is the case, it is unclear what the United States or its allies could have done to improve Iraqi analysis. Iraqi decision making is a notoriously closed process, and individuals' efforts to influence it are carried out at their peril.

Another possibility is that Saddam Hussein concluded that he would pay the greatest price if he succumbed to U.S. and allied threats. Because Saddam had been so bold in his proclamation that Kuwait was part of Iraq, he may have judged that his internal position would be untenable if he were to collapse in the face of foreign pressure. If that were the case, Saddam would have been susceptible to U.S. carrots that would have supported his internal position in exchange for retreating from Kuwait. Were one to adjudge that Saddam's overriding interest was to stay in power, a U.S. policy that preserved his ability to stay in power if he withdrew immediately from Kuwait and threatened his power were he to remain there might have dislodged Iraqi troops without firing a shot. Such a policy, though, may have been anathema to the Bush administration. As the crisis continued there were signs that a key Bush administration goal was,

in fact, to end the regime, making such offers out of the question. The administration's "nightmare scenario" appears to have been partial Iraqi compliance with coalition demands, which would have undermined coalition resolve to go to war.¹⁷

Safe Havens (1991)

In the days following the official end of hostilities in the Gulf War, uprisings began in the Kurdish north and the Shiite south of Iraq. Inspired in part by George Bush's admonition to "take matters into their own hands," local militias began to take on government forces.

The uprisings posed a quandary for U.S. policymakers. In one respect, anything that created problems for Saddam was good. But the separatist movements were also deeply problematic for the United States and its allies in the region. Turkish officials were reportedly concerned that Kurdish separatism in Iraq would spill over into the Kurdish regions of Turkey; U.S. officials and some regional allies were also concerned by the possibility that Iranian-backed Shiites in the south could form a breakaway alliance with Iran. Uprisings in both regions raised the possibility that the United States would be drawn into an open-ended war with Iraq immediately after war had just ended. Such a war would have had a difficult time finding public support in the United States. Finally, U.S. decision makers wanted Iraq weakened but not destroyed so that it could remain a check against Iranian power in the region.

In the event, the Bush administration admonished the Iraqis that it would attack any Iraqi units using chemical weapons but went no further. Such a warning was consonant with earlier U.S. warnings that the administration would not tolerate the use of chemical or biological weapons against allied troops in the war. When Saddam began to use helicopters to battle the uprisings, the U.S. government complained that he had violated the terms of the cease-fire but took no immediate action against him.

Partly at the urging of Turkey, allied forces dispatched more than twenty thousand soldiers to the north of Iraq in April 1991 to create a safe haven for Kurdish populations. Under Operation Provide Comfort, the tide of more than two million Kurdish refugees streaming

into Turkey and Iran was stemmed, and Kurds even began to return to northern Iraq. Iraq massed troops on the border of the northern enclave in the autumn of 1991, but after several initial confrontations the Iraqis backed off (until moving on the enclave in August 1996, described later). The northern zone, which existed into 2003, has been a strange hybrid. It has had no legal standing as a separate entity, but it is not controlled by the government of Iraq. Since May 1991 the United Nations has controlled the disbursement of relief supplies.

This incident is a more limited example of coercive diplomacy, since the United States and its allies made few demands on Iraq. Rather, the United States, France, and Britain moved troops into the north and established refugee camps, while the Iraqis agreed not to challenge the northern zone.

Saddam made no such efforts to cease his attacks in the south, where foreign inaction was driven by discomfort with a possible Iranian hand in the uprisings. Consequently, the government of Iraq was able to brutally suppress the Shiites and even drain the marshes where many revolting Shiite communities were based. In August 1992, the United States and the United Kingdom created a no-fly zone in southern Iraq, but that move may have been intended more to restrain future Iraqi threats against its neighbors than to protect the Shiite population.

Confrontations over No-Fly Zones and Inspections (1991–93)

The government of Iraq agreed to thorough arms control inspections as a condition of the 1991 cease-fire but did so under duress. Even early on in the inspection process it became clear that while Iraq was forthcoming about some elements of its arsenal, it continued to hold a good deal back. In July 1991 Iraqi troops fired warning shots at inspectors seeking to intercept trucks carrying calutrons, which are used in nuclear programs. Two months later weapons inspectors located a cache of documents indicating that the Iraqis were developing a clandestine nuclear program. In a bizarre standoff, the inspectors refused to surrender the documents back to the Iraqis, and for four days the Iraqis denied them permission to leave the

parking lot of the building they had just inspected. The Iraqis relented after the Security Council threatened to use force, and the United States announced the dispatch of ninety-six Patriot missiles and additional troops to Saudi Arabia.

On other occasions in the subsequent months, Iraqi troops obstructed inspectors and even blocked them from destroying equipment as specified in the 1991 cease-fire. Iraqi actions drew a condemnation from the Security Council in February 1992, which declared Iraq in “material breach” of the UN resolutions and promised serious consequences if Iraq did not desist. In this matter, the Iraqis backed down three days after being officially informed of the Security Council’s decision. There was also a seventeen-day standoff outside the Ministry of Agriculture in July 1992, which United Nations Commission on Iraq (UNSCOM) inspectors were seeking to enter for evidence of Iraq’s ballistic missile development program. In this case the inspectors withdrew.

Tensions peaked in the final days of the Bush administration. In January 1993 Iraq moved surface-to-air missiles into the southern no-fly zone and argued that UNSCOM inspectors could travel only on Iraqi government planes to enter Iraq and conduct their inspections. At the same time there were reports of skirmishes between Kuwaiti and Iraqi troops on the border, and Iraqi troops moved into the DMZ to retrieve Silkworm missiles they had left behind in the war.

In response, more than one hundred French, British, and U.S. planes bombed targets on January 13. On January 17 forty U.S.-launched Tomahawk missiles attacked the Djilah Industrial Park in Zafaraniyya, which was thought to be connected to the Iraqi nuclear program; the next day seventy-five British, French, and U.S. aircraft bombed sites in the southern no-fly zone. On January 19 Saddam Hussein announced a unilateral cease-fire to mark the end of the Bush administration.

The United States does appear to have been engaged in an exercise of coercive diplomacy on these occasions, with mixed results. Clear demands with broad international support were often effective in reversing Iraqi actions. Yet while the United States and its allies

were able to reverse these individual Iraqi actions, they were unable to reverse Iraqi behavior. Indeed, rather than moving toward cooperation with the international community, Iraqi behavior during this period appears to have been a carefully calibrated mechanism to test Western responses and wear down Western resolve.

Operation Vigilant Warrior (1994)

On October 5, 1994, U.S. intelligence analysts noted the massing of two Iraqi Republican Guard armored divisions near the Kuwaiti border, numbering some fifty thousand soldiers. The massing of troops was accompanied by Iraqi threats to expel UNSCOM weapons inspectors from Iraq. The move became public on October 7. In response to the Iraqi troop movement, the United States swiftly deployed thousands of troops to the area and began moving tens of thousands more. The United Kingdom and France also sent token naval assets to the Gulf. The administration made its move public by leaking it to CNN correspondent Wolf Blitzer on the morning of October 9. The next day Iraq announced that the troops were being withdrawn from the border area, but the United States expressed skepticism, continued its deployment, and announced that it would send hundreds of additional aircraft to the Gulf. Whether the Iraqi deployment represented a testing of the waters or was merely a feint to show bravado is unclear. What was clearer was that the United States took the threat seriously and acted to move forces with extreme speed. Because of the forward deployment of so much materiel in the region, a U.S. threat to meet an Iraqi invasion forcefully was credible.

Perhaps more than any other episode in the U.S. confrontation with Iraq, Operation Vigilant Warrior appears to have been a successful application of coercive diplomacy, even though it lies between coercive diplomacy and deterrence (since it was chiefly intended to preempt a future Iraqi action, rather than curtail or roll back an action that had already taken place). The U.S. action took place in a relatively confined time frame, the demands were specific, and the threat of force was real. While we cannot understand Saddam's motivations for massing troops, he clearly calculated that he was better off retreating than pushing the exercise to its conclusion.

Iraqi Thrust into the North (1996)

In August 1996 fighting escalated between two rival Kurdish factions, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP). The PUK, which was receiving some support from Iran, was making strides. In response to a request for assistance against the PUK from KDP leader Massoud Barzani, Iraqi troops entered the “safe haven” area of the north on August 29 and occupied the local capital of Irbil two days later. The Iraqi army swept in with thirty thousand to forty thousand troops and extensive police and intelligence personnel. They killed more than one hundred lightly armed Kurdish troops and arrested nineteen members of the opposition group, the Iraqi National Congress (INC), who were never seen again. According to at least one account, CIA officers who were working with INC members in Salahuddin fled just ahead of the Iraqi tanks, leaving their clients to the Iraqis.¹⁸

In response to the Iraqi offensive, the United States launched forty-four cruise missiles against targets four hundred miles south of the zone of fighting on September 3 and expanded the southern no-fly zone by seventy miles, from the 32d parallel to the 33d. The United States did not provide air cover for the PUK fighters and ensured that its military intervention remained well outside the zone of conflict. Iraqi troops withdrew from Irbil within days of the initial invasion, thus sparing any long-term U.S. response.

Despite the apparent clarity of winning an Iraqi withdrawal from the north after the U.S. missile strike, this episode does not appear to have been a successful application of coercive diplomacy for two reasons. First, the Iraqis were arguably able to achieve their goals in the brief time they were in Irbil, rounding up oppositionists and neutralizing any insurgency. Viewed in this light, the Iraqi retreat was not a response to U.S. threats or U.S. force but a sign that its goals had already been accomplished. Any presumptive U.S. victory was illusory, since the outcome of Saddam’s short stay in Irbil was the destruction of the CIA’s significant operations there. Second, there is no evidence that cruise missile attacks on targets in the south were either sufficiently punishing in and of themselves or indicative of enough future

punishment to sway Iraqi behavior. More than the previous confrontations, Saddam's incursion into Irbil suggests that he had begun to understand U.S. diplomacy and the use of force and had begun to take actions that served his interests while limiting the U.S. response.

Defiance of UNSCOM (1997–98)

As UNSCOM inspections of Iraq progressed, inspectors came to believe that Iraq was implementing a concerted program of obstruction, deception, and outright lies. In response, UNSCOM began to concentrate on understanding the deception mechanism, in addition to conducting its overall inspection work. This operation, called "Shake the Tree," was directed by Scott Ritter, a hard-charging former U.S. marine. Relying heavily on satellite imagery, signals intelligence, and other assistance from cooperating governments, Shake the Tree laid bare the pattern of Iraqi deception, led by intelligence services close to the Iraqi leadership. The actions also antagonized the government of Iraq, which increasingly obstructed the inspectors and denied them access to sites all over the country.¹⁹

In the face of such confrontations, the Security Council expressed grave and increasing concern about Iraq's "clear and flagrant violations" of its obligations.²⁰ Despite the Security Council's protests, Iraq moved to bar U.S. inspectors from participating in UNSCOM activities on October 29, 1997, leading to a withdrawal of all UNSCOM inspectors from Iraq. Iraq readmitted inspectors the following month after solemnly promising "full compliance," but in December 1997 Iraq constructed a category of sites called "Presidential and Sovereign," which inspectors would not be allowed to visit.

Amid growing war clouds in February 1998, UN secretary-general Kofi Annan traveled to Baghdad to defuse the crisis. He emerged on February 23 with a memorandum of understanding in which Iraq reconfirmed its acceptance of the relevant Security Council resolutions and promised to grant the inspectors full access to suspect sites in the country.

U.S. officials were reportedly enraged by Annan's efforts, believing he had won only a Pyrrhic victory. They remained deeply skeptical that Annan had won Saddam's cooperation on inspections; instead,

they believed that Annan's actions represented a high watermark for international obstruction of U.S. efforts to force Iraqi compliance. Indeed, Annan's energetic and high-profile diplomacy (which Americans whispered was part of an effort to secure the Nobel Peace Prize for himself) forcefully reminded Americans that the confrontation with Saddam Hussein's Iraq was not a bilateral one with the United States but a multilateral one predicated on Security Council resolutions and international law.

At the same time, evidence has emerged to suggest that the U.S. government was having second thoughts about coercive arms control in this period. Scott Ritter has charged that between November 1997 and August 1998 the U.S. government had called off UNSCOM inspectors at least seven times when they were on the verge of uncovering evidence of Iraqi noncompliance with relevant Security Council resolutions, for fear that discovery of noncompliance would precipitate a crisis that the United States hoped to avoid. The effect of the charge was to further weaken the U.S. exercise of coercive diplomacy, because it suggested a lack of U.S. resolve to back up its threats with force.

Operation Desert Fox (1998)

Kofi Annan's February victory was short-lived, as Iraq suspended its cooperation with UNSCOM in August 1998 and then announced unilaterally in October that all UNSCOM work in Iraq should cease. The inspectors left Iraq on November 9–12. After U.S. warplanes were in the air to bomb Iraq on November 14, Iraq announced that inspectors could return and that the Iraqis would cooperate fully. Inspections resumed on November 18, with a warning that the United States and its allies would strike if, in fact, full Iraqi cooperation was not forthcoming. In his report to the Security Council on December 15, UNSCOM chairman Richard Butler noted several instances (out of several hundred inspections) in which the Iraqis did not fully comply with UNSCOM demands. U.S.-British air strikes began shortly after midnight on December 17 and lasted four days, ending just before the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. In all, something like six hundred sorties and four hundred missile strikes were carried out against one hundred or so targets in Iraq.

The events leading up to Operation Desert Fox may have marked the death rattle of coercive diplomacy against Iraq. While Saddam had complied with UNSCOM's demands in limited cases under specific military threat, the United States and its allies were unable to change the overall pattern of Iraqi behavior. Iraq single-mindedly worked to undermine both the inspections and the international support for sanctions and achieved significant success in doing so. Operation Desert Fox further undermined international support for containment of Iraq and resulted in the termination of weapons inspections. Viewed in this light, Saddam Hussein may have made the quite rational calculation that his defiance of U.S. demands was in his interest since he could withstand whatever the United States was willing to deliver and use such strikes to build international support and lock in gains he sought.

Pursuing "Containment Plus"

The United States appears to have adopted a new policy toward Iraq in the aftermath of Operation Desert Fox. On the one hand, Anglo-American air strikes against Iraqi targets were increased. While the lethality of these strikes was relatively low, the cost to Iraq in terms of prestige and of replacing destroyed facilities was high. Repeated air strikes made clear that Iraq was defenseless against Anglo-American assaults and were no doubt intended to take a toll on the Iraqi army.

On the other hand, the Clinton administration made "regime change" the centerpiece of its policy toward Iraq.²¹ In so doing, the administration made any Iraqi cooperation with U.S. demands unlikely. If coercion is to work, the coerced must believe that the use of force will stop if the offending action stops. As long as the stated goal of U.S. policy was to overthrow the regime, it legitimated any and all Iraqi efforts to defy U.S. policy since its ultimate goal was not disarmament, containment, or deterrence, but regime change. One can argue about whether there were any circumstances under which Iraq would cooperate with U.S. disarmament commands, and, given the Iraqis' past behavior, it seems unlikely that they would have fully complied in any event. But an avowed policy of regime change took all "carrots" out of the equation and made clear that the current regime was locked in a life-or-death struggle with the United States. The dynamic made Iraqi

intransigence more likely, especially given the U.S. inability to establish a bill of particulars against Iraqi actions that could galvanize the international community. By pointedly dismissing the possibility of offering any “carrots” to the Iraqi regime, the U.S. government had given up on using coercive diplomacy to influence the regime of Saddam Hussein.

An Elective War?

When the Bush administration came into office in January 2001, it resolved to revise U.S. policy toward Iraq. In the latter years of the Clinton administration, the Bush administration believed, Iraq policy had badly unraveled. Inspections had ended, international support for sanctions was eroding, and the regime was able to combine black-market kickbacks, smuggling, sanctions busting, and a variety of other tactics to gain access to billions of dollars annually. The clear trajectory was for the dismantlement of the coercive disarmament regime that had been imposed a decade earlier, probably in a matter of a few years.

From the beginning, the Bush administration encompassed two schools of thought when it came to Iraq policy. One school favored “smart sanctions,” which is to say a sanctions regime that enjoyed more international support, worked more efficiently, and took less of a toll on Iraqi civilians. The other favored a more robust policy of regime change and contained many advocates of using the fissiparous Iraqi expatriate opposition as a key element of that change.

The early round of the debate went to the “smart sanctions” faction, which won international approval for a new sanctions regime in May 2001. But after al Qaeda’s catastrophic terrorist attack of September 11, 2001, the balance tilted toward the regime-change faction. The argument this faction made—that Saddam’s unpredictability made him undeterrable and that his pursuit of weapons of mass destruction would give him the capability of a catastrophic attack even worse than that of September 11—gained increasing traction in a year when so much of U.S. foreign policy swung behind the ideas of combating terrorism and preempting national security threats.

The U.S. policy debate over Iraq reached something of a crescendo in August 2002, but in a strange way: it wasn’t much of a debate. Rather, it was a series of leaks and counterleaks that seemed to indicate the

creation of war plans and the movement of troops, without a debate on the advisability of starting a war against Iraq. Most administration officials portrayed the conflict in solely U.S.-Iraqi terms, leaving many erstwhile Arab and European partners feeling neglected and hurt.

On September 12, 2002, in a speech before the UN General Assembly, President Bush laid out the case for action against Iraq and invited international cooperation. After months of concern from the international community that the U.S. government was more interested in acting vigorously against Iraq than in having international sanction to do so, Bush said, "My nation will work with the U.N. Security Council to meet our common challenge. . . . We will work with the U.N. Security Council for the necessary resolutions." Bush did not completely forswear the unilateral card, however. He added, "The Security Council resolutions will be enforced—the just demands of peace and security will be met—or action will be unavoidable."²² By demonstrating his willingness to act unilaterally, Bush was able to win passage of a new resolution, 1441, which codified past Iraqi noncompliance and promised "serious consequences" if full compliance were not forthcoming.

In a way, by the fall of 2002 the United States had adopted a strategy of coercive diplomacy against its allies, arguing that it would strike Iraq unilaterally if they did not support robust and effective action against the Iraqi regime. The incentives for the allies to cooperate were several, but two are clear. First, if action were inevitable, futile gestures to halt such action would only incur U.S. wrath while providing no benefit. Second, such gestures would highlight the impotence, if not irrelevance, of the protesting party or parties. Although allies would not be the target of a U.S. strike, the potential blow to their influence and prestige was hoped to be sufficient to cause them to mute their criticism and drop obstacles to U.S. action against Iraq.

In the event, international criticism persisted, as did U.S. perceptions of noncompliance, and the United States went to war again in March 2003. Although some claimed that the Bush administration had already decided to go to war, and thus entered negotiations in bad faith, U.S. adherence to the principles of coercive diplomacy was clear: the desired actions were clearly specified, the threat of force was credible, and the time allowed for compliance was clearly bounded.

ANALYSIS

There are five particular aspects of the Iraqi case that demonstrate the difficulties of the United States' employing a strategy of coercive diplomacy against a determined adversary.

1. Unilateralism, Multilateralism, and Their Contradictions

Coercion (and the threat of coercion) is most precisely applied by unitary actors, but the legitimacy of coercion must come from multilateral actors. The confrontation between Iraq and the international community was neither a bilateral conflict nor a multilateral one, but rather a conflict that had bilateral and multilateral components and that required their coordination or, even better, their integration.

After Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, the United States assumed the lead role in confronting and sometimes battling the Iraqi regime. This role arose from U.S. global leadership, as well as the U.S. strategic interest in protecting friendly regimes in the Persian Gulf and ensuring the unencumbered flow of oil from the Gulf to U.S. allies (and, to a much lesser extent, to the United States itself). Yet the coalition confronting Iraq waxed and waned over time. The Desert Storm military coalition gathered twenty-nine countries. While U.S. troops formed the bulk of the fighting force, the coalition also included major Arab powers such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia, thereby undermining any Iraqi claim that the force represented outside powers invading the Arab world. Thereafter, the conflict veered between being an essentially bilateral (U.S./Iraqi, or sometimes U.S.-British/Iraqi) conflict and being a multilateral (coalition/Iraqi or UN/Iraqi) conflict.

In the aftermath of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the United States worked assiduously to build international support for rolling back the invasion. Part of that support came in the form of the UN sanctions mentioned earlier. But in June 1993 the United States acted unilaterally when it bombed Iraqi intelligence headquarters in Baghdad in retribution for evidence linking Iraq to a plot to assassinate former president George Bush. The United States also acted unilaterally in October 1994 when it deployed an additional fifty-four thousand troops to Kuwait in response to Iraqi troops massing near the Kuwaiti border. In February

1998, after Iraqi obstruction of weapons inspectors, the United States and Britain pulled back from the brink of war after UN secretary-general Kofi Annan negotiated a memorandum of understanding with Baghdad that secured Iraqi promises to cooperate more fully with weapons inspections. The U.S.-British air attacks of December 1998, which followed within days of a negative report from UNSCOM's chairman regarding Iraqi cooperation, appear to have been carried out through coordination with the chairman but without the approval of the Security Council or the secretary-general.

One important question to be resolved is whether multilateralism has its moment in an international conflict. As the memory of Iraqi actions receded and nations felt no immediate threat from Iraq, it proved increasingly difficult to maintain a coalition to support the practice of coercive diplomacy against the Iraqis. Indeed, even the consensus for containment receded. One option for the United States, adopted in 2003, was to abandon the desire for Security Council consensus and instead to form a narrower coalition with clearer goals and a clearer will to pursue them. Such a choice sacrifices international legitimacy, but it may be worthwhile if the outcome would be significantly improved.

2. Coercive Diplomacy within Containment and Deterrence

The coercive diplomacy aspect of policy toward Iraq was embedded in a larger policy based on containment and deterrence. While the containment of Iraq had clear UN sanction, the deterrent aspects of U.S. policy toward Iraq had somewhat less clear UN sanction and were carried out primarily by U.S., and to some degree British, forces. They included the forward basing of troops and equipment in the Gulf region and aggressive patrolling of no-fly zones in northern and southern Iraq. The deterrent elements were ongoing and intended to send a clear message that Iraqi aggression against neighboring states would meet with a swift and punishing response. The coercive diplomacy aspects of U.S. policy were distinguished from the containment and deterrence components in that they were bounded in time and the individual actions had observable outcomes.

It is more difficult to judge the long-term efficacy of coercive

actions. Although individual coercive actions may be successful in the short term, they may actually be a failure in the longer term because of negative effects on coalition cohesion, target motivation, or even coercer motivation. Coercive diplomacy was only one component of U.S. policy toward Iraq, and in some cases it undermined, or at least weakened, other elements of that policy. This was particularly true in the way perceived U.S. unilateralism vis-à-vis Iraq undermined international support for containment.

3. Highly Iterative Confrontations

The third particular aspect of the Iraqi case was its unusually iterative nature. Conflicts rose to a crescendo again and again and often resulted in the limited use of armed force. The conflict was striking, then, not only for its duration but also for the repeated cycles of violence short of all-out war.

Over time Iraq learned how to deal successfully with the international community. It adopted policies of “cheat and retreat,” testing limits and then quickly stepping back from the brink when punishment seemed imminent. In its invasion of the Kurdish areas in the north, the Iraqi army made a quick thrust and then retreated before a concerted allied response could be assembled. Iraq also showed great skill in dividing the international coalition, publicly offering images of mass Iraqi suffering and privately offering remuneration to lending nations such as France and Russia. Time after time Saddam Hussein admitted weapons inspectors unconditionally and then swiftly moved to constrain their activities. While Saddam did not call the tune, he became familiar with the one that was being played, and he learned to live with it, if not how to make his country thrive despite it.

Viewed in this light, Saddam Hussein apparently used his series of confrontations with Western coercive diplomacy as an educational opportunity. He was more difficult to coerce in 1998 than he was in 1991 because he understood well the limits of Western resolve and the ways to undermine that resolve (through coalition splintering and other tactics). While Daniel Byman and Matthew Waxman urge that coercion be seen as a dynamic process, such admonitions may be insufficient.²³ Over time, repeated efforts to employ coercive

diplomacy may tilt the balance in favor of the target country because of the relative robustness of possible counter-coercion strategies combined with a fine-tuned understanding of likely responses to defiance by the target country.

4. A Highly Motivated but Difficult-to-Understand Adversary

Alexander George's model of coercive diplomacy admittedly relies on the "assumption of a 'rational' opponent; that is, it assumes that the adversary will be receptive to and will correctly evaluate information that is critical to the question of whether the costs and risks of not complying will outweigh the gains to be expected from pursuing the course of action."²⁴ What George really means by rational, however, is that theorists or policymakers can anticipate the calculations of the target country. The two are not necessarily the same.

A leader such as Saddam Hussein is a particularly difficult target for coercive diplomacy. This stems in part from his violent background and in part from the way his interest in his own survival has trumped the well-being of his country to an overwhelming extent. U.S. models are predicated on political leaders who seek to preserve their armies, their assets, and their infrastructure. In the Iraqi case, the United States may have faced an adversary who made calculations based only on his individual interests and who controlled a political system alien to anything U.S. analysts themselves had known. With Saddam Hussein's status so tied up in his aura of power and invincibility, he may have calculated that the cost of compliance outweighed the cost of defiance since signs of weakness in the international arena could threaten his grip on power at home. In the words of one scholar of Iraq, since Saddam Hussein came to power, "whenever Iraq's foreign interests clashed with perceived domestic security interests, the latter has always prevailed."²⁵

In such circumstances not only was the Iraqi leadership unswayed by long-running sanctions; it may even have concluded that maintaining the sanctions; was in its interest. Counterintuitive though such a prospect may be, it has a certain amount of rationality. The shortages caused by sanctions allowed the regime to reward and punish individuals and groups and created black markets from which the

regime could profit. In this way, sanctions helped entrench the regime. The mechanism for selling oil also allowed the regime to enrich itself by pocketing smuggling proceeds, as well to make profits by manipulating the prices of oil futures. Finally, the appalling humanitarian situation in Iraq undermined international support for the continued containment of Iraq, thereby splitting the anti-Iraq coalition and making future military action less likely.²⁶

If such calculations were in play, U.S. threats to launch cruise missile attacks or even air strikes at Iraqi targets were unlikely to yield Iraqi compliance since the Iraqi leadership calculated on a completely different—yet still rational—basis than countries are expected to use.

5. Changing Goals and Unchanging Authority

A final characteristic of the U.S.-Iraqi confrontation is that U.S. goals changed but the stated authority for those goals did not. This characteristic is peculiar to the Iraqi case, but it may be replicated in similar confrontations in the future. In particular, the United Nations levied sanctions against Iraq on August 6, 1990 (and revised them on September 25, 1990) in response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Those same sanctions were institutionalized with the passage of a resolution on April 2, 1991, following the cease-fire and fixed to remain until Iraq cooperated fully and completely with the UN-dictated arms control provisions. They were being used a decade later to ensure the continued containment of Iraq. Similarly, authority for Anglo-American no-fly zones in the north and south of Iraq was originally granted to protect populations under attack, but those zones were clearly used later to maintain pressure on the Iraqi regime.

The complication for U.S. policy was that the U.S. government had a clear preference for coercion backed by multilateral support,²⁷ yet that support was increasingly undermined by a reliance on outdated mandates. Such an environment induced U.S. partners to announce their distance from U.S. policy (as indeed the French, the Russians, and many Arab governments did) and actually eroded the ability of the United States to marshal international support for its actions.

ASSESSMENT AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The balance sheet for coercive diplomacy against Iraq is mixed. The strategies that the United States and the international community applied to Iraq cannot be evaluated normatively but rather only in comparison with the likely outcomes of alternative policies. In addition, the United States did not need to pursue the most effective policy. As David Baldwin suggests, a less effective policy may be preferable to a more effective one if the differential in costs is sufficient.²⁸ Finally, it is unclear if the various branches of the U.S. government shared a single measure for success. The military was avowedly hostile to being held accountable for political outcomes and insisted on being judged solely on the basis of mission completion. The State Department had its own measures for success (presumably relying on its success at winning international support for coercive moves), and the White House yet others. Under such conditions, any such assessment is tenuous.

Taken on the whole and viewed retrospectively, U.S. policy seems to have been a qualified success. The threat of force and occasional limited use of force contributed to “keeping Saddam in his box” from 1991 to 2002. Saddam sometimes threatened his neighbors, but those threats were limited and always effectively countered. Inspections revealed a great deal about Iraqi weapons development programs and certainly slowed (if not completely halted) Iraqi efforts in that direction.

The cost of the U.S. policy, however, was extremely high in terms of dollars, troop morale, and Iraqi lives. In order to enable the United States to pursue the occasional coercion of Iraq, the United States repositioned billions of dollars of equipment in the Gulf, increased its standing force there, and periodically deployed even more troops to the region during crises. Policing the no-fly zones in the north and south of Iraq imposed a significant burden on U.S. pilots and support crew, who had to be away from home for months at a time and live through hot Arabian summers. Unused, coercive power morphs into deterrent power, and the costs of maintaining a significant deterrent to Iraqi behavior were high.

In addition, one account estimated that sanctions imposed on Iraq because of the government's efforts to develop weapons of mass destruction themselves caused more deaths than all weapons of mass destruction throughout history.²⁹ While U.S. policy was not wholly responsible for increased child mortality in Iraq, that policy certainly contributed to it. According to a UNICEF survey published in August 1999, both infant mortality and under-age-five mortality more than doubled in the decade of sanctions in those parts of Iraq under Saddam Hussein's control.³⁰

Another cost was the way the past decade's events undermined the credibility of the United Nations, which insisted on Iraqi compliance but was unwilling to enforce it. In addition, the events induced the United States to have basically one-dimensional and occasionally strained relationships with the nations of the Persian Gulf, which concentrated on military threats at the expense of domestic development.

Finally, U.S. policy contributed to strengthening Saddam Hussein's hold on his people and on the presidency of his country. While U.S. policies appear to have denied the regime resources that it could have used to threaten its neighbors militarily, those policies also helped provide it with the resources to consolidate control over its own people.

CONCLUSION

Iraq proved to be a difficult target to coerce, in part because the government put such high value on engaging in the proscribed behavior. With such a highly motivated adversary acting over such an extended period of time, U.S. officials faced a difficult task in their efforts to shape Iraqi actions. The passage of time eroded international consensus on actions against Iraq, isolating U.S. policy from the original Gulf War coalition and from the UN authority that gave rise to it.

In this regard, Byman and Waxman's admonition to view coercion as a dynamic rather than a static process seems especially apt.³¹ Iraq responded clearly to U.S. strategy by splitting the United States off from its allies. It did so by partial compliance with U.S. demands, by appeals

for solidarity, and by highlighting the suffering of the Iraqi population. Just as the United States ramped up its forces and hit Iraqi targets time after time, so, too, did Iraq pick off members of the allied coalition. The vote to establish UNMOVIC as a successor to UNSCOM in December 1999 was certainly a great Iraqi victory: the new organization's mandate was significantly weakened to take account of French, Russian, and Chinese concerns, yet in the end those countries declined to vote in favor of the new organization anyway.

As the United States continued its efforts to isolate Iraq, Iraq succeeded in its efforts to isolate the United States. The question is not what U.S. coercive power can achieve, since it is clear that the United States enjoys overwhelming military superiority over Iraq. The question is rather where the limits of coercive diplomacy lie, since for most of this period the United States was far less motivated to engage in an escalation than the Iraqis were.

For coercive diplomacy, there are several lessons. The most important is that coercive diplomacy works best in the short term, for several reasons:

- the will of the coercer is the highest at that point;
- the coercer's reprisals for noncompliance are least predictable;
- the coerced has had the least opportunity to devise counterstrategies to coercion; and
- the authority for action is most closely tailored to the prevailing conditions.

The Iraq experience also revealed multilateralism to be a double-edged sword, conferring legitimacy but hamstringing implementation. Finally, the UN framework for confronting Iraqi behavior became threadbare over time. It was never devised to do what it subsequently did, nor to do it for so long.

It is hard to imagine an end to the U.S. confrontation with Iraq other than a change of regime in Baghdad—a change that the Bush administration chose to precipitate rather than wait for. The benefits and costs of this choice will take some time to become apparent.

NOTES

The author wishes to thank the editors, Daniel Byman, and Andrew Parasiliti for their helpful comments on earlier versions of this paper. There remains much with which they disagree here.

1. Kenneth I. Juster, “The United States and Iraq: Perils of Engagement,” in *Honey and Vinegar: Incentives, Sanctions, and Foreign Policy*, ed. Richard N. Haass and Meghan L. O’Sullivan (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2000), 55. For a sympathetic assessment of this policy, see Laurie Myroie, “The Baghdad Alternative,” *Orbis* (summer 1988).

2. One could argue that the U.S. shift toward a policy of overthrow represented a continuation of coercive diplomacy, with the aim of coercing the Iraqi people to overthrow their extant government. My own view is that coercive diplomacy properly remains at the state level, and that directly coercing populations veers toward engaging noncombatants in an inappropriate way.

3. Alexander L. George, “Coercive Diplomacy,” in *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy*, 2d ed., ed. Alexander L. George and William Simons (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1994), 8–9.

4. “The Glaspie Transcript: Saddam Meets the Ambassador (July 25, 1990),” in *The Gulf War Reader*, ed. Micah L. Sifry and Christopher Cerf (New York: Times Books, 1991), 122–136.

5. See, for example, Admiral William Crowe’s testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee on November 28, 1990, reprinted in Sifry and Cerf, *The Gulf War Reader*, 234–237.

6. George Bush, quoted in Juster, “The United States and Iraq,” 55–56.

7. See George Bush and Brent Scowcroft, *A World Transformed* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998), 309–312; and James A. Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1995), 271–272.

8. Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, 322.

9. George, “Coercive Diplomacy,” 8.

10. One interesting possibility is that in this case, Iraq was trying to employ coercive diplomacy against Saudi Arabia, possibly seeking accommodation on debt repayment, oil production, or U.S. presence. Andrew Parasiliti, personal correspondence with author, September 24, 2000.

11. Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy*, 277.

12. The text of the letter, which suggested an allied attack would destroy

the Iraqi military establishment, is reprinted in Sifry and Cerf, *The Gulf War Reader*; 178–179.

13. Transcript of press conference with James Baker and Tariq Aziz, reprinted in Sifry and Cerf, *The Gulf War Reader*; 173.

14. Sifry and Cerf, *The Gulf War Reader*, 179.

15. U.S. News and World Report, *Triumph without Victory: The Unreported History of the Persian Gulf War* (New York: Times Books, 1992), 410.

16. Americans and Russians shared dismay at Saddam Hussein's behavior. In August 1990 President George Bush said, "We do have a chance at a new world order. And I'd like to think that out of this dreary performance by Saddam Hussein there could be now an opportunity for peace throughout all the Middle East." Meanwhile, Russian foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze echoed that language, terming Saddam Hussein's action "an act of terrorism against the emerging new world order." "Confrontation in the Gulf" (press conference excerpts), *New York Times*, August 31, 1992, A11; and Paul Lewis, "Confrontation in the Gulf," *New York Times*, September 26, 1992, A1.

17. Alexander George, "The Role of Force in Diplomacy," in *The Use of Force after the Cold War*, ed. H. W. Brands (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2000).

18. Andrew Cockburn and Patrick Cockburn, *Out of the Ashes: The Resurrection of Saddam Hussein* (New York: HarperCollins, 1999), 241–242.

19. See Peter J. Boyer, "Scott Ritter's Private War," *New Yorker*, November 9, 1998.

20. United Nations Security Council Resolution 1115 (unanimously adopted on June 21, 1997).

21. The shift in strategy was partly driven by congressional demands. President Clinton signed the Iraq Liberation Act into law on October 31, 1998, but it was not until early December 1998 that the administration's formula of "containment plus" for Iraq became "containment plus regime change."

22. See www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/09/print/20020912-1.html.

23. Daniel L. Byman and Matthew C. Waxman, *Confronting Iraq: U.S. Policy and the Use of Force since the Gulf War* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 2000), 8–10.

24. George, "Coercive Diplomacy," 13.

25. Amatzia Baram, *Building toward Crisis: Saddam Husayn's Strategy*

for *Survival* (Washington, D.C.: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1998), 2.

26. I am indebted to Ambassador Richard Murphy for his thoughtful comments along these lines.

27. See Daniel Byman and Matthew Waxman, “Defeating U.S. Coercion,” *Survival* 41, no. 2 (summer 1999): 108.

28. David A. Baldwin, “The Sanctions Debate and the Logic of Choice,” *International Security* 24, no. 3 (winter 1999-2000): 86.

29. John and Karl Mueller, “The Real Weapons of Mass Destruction,” *Foreign Affairs* 78, no. 3 (May-June 1999): 51.

30. Three northern provinces are beyond the control of Saddam Hussein. Mortality rates in those areas, while higher than before sanctions were imposed, are significantly lower than in the rest of Iraq. See UNICEF, *Child and Maternal Mortality Survey: Preliminary Report (Iraq)*, July 1999, 9, available at www.unicef.org/reseval/iraq.htm.

31. Byman and Waxman, “Defeating U.S. Coercion,” 86–88.