



Assessing the “Axis:” The WMD Capabilities of Iran, Iraq and North Korea

From the Editors...

With a bit of rhetorical flourish invoking the specter of past enemies, President Bush’s 2002 State of the Union address drew a connection between three unallied states, identifying them as points in an “axis of evil.” The singling out of Iraq, Iran, and North Korea, three nations with arguably more differences than similarities, moved proliferation decisively to the top of the national foreign policy agenda. With “evil” so strongly and recently associated in the world imagination with terrorism after September 11, the reason for singling out these three states from the list of “rogues” seemed initially to be their status as state sponsors of terrorism. But recent debate over forcing “regime change” in Iraq has made it clear that membership in the “axis” has as much, if not more, to do with WMD proliferation than terrorism. Other rogue states support terrorists; but axis states are distinguished by their suspected, relatively advanced WMD programs.

This is certainly not to say that terrorism has been pushed aside on the U.S. agenda. The September 2001 attacks are

the backdrop against which current U.S. foreign policy is being forged and in their aftermath, preparedness has become the key issue. The United States was caught by surprise last September, and the Bush administration seems determined not to be surprised again, even if it means taking the radical, unprecedented path of preemptive strikes against perceived enemies. The prospect of preemptive action against states with suspected WMD capabilities as a new strategic doctrine for the U.S. is causing considerable unease among its allies and enemies alike.

In this issue of *The Monitor*, we have collected a wide range of views on different dimensions of the axis issue: the magnitude of the WMD threat posed by the axis states, their possible links to terrorists, the impact of the axis characterization on international and regional security, and proliferation threat as sufficient grounds for preemptive strikes. Joyce Davis’ article “The Coming War with Iraq” reflects the grim certainty pervading the U.S. media that military action is unavoidable. She discusses the political and economic obstacles and the necessity of securing support for any such endeavor from Arab allies.

Former Iraqi nuclear scientist Khidhir Hamza’s excerpted testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee

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on July 31 details the priorities of Saddam's WMD programs, emphasizing the chameleon-like resourcefulness of the regime in perpetuating its activities even while submitting to UN inspections. The ingenuity and enforced loyalty of Iraqi scientists have resulted in a regime already fully capable of effective use of biological and chemical weapons, Hamza claims, and one very close to obtaining a nuclear capability. He discounts the utility of renewed inspections, technology controls, and political solutions and sees the window of opportunity for dismantling Iraq's WMD quickly closing.

Anthony Cordesman's testimony focuses on Iraq's capability to contest U.S. military action. While aspects of Iraqi WMD programs are fairly advanced, their development has been uneven, according to available intelligence, and Cordesman cites gaps in operational lethality of Iraqi weapons and Iraq's delivery capabilities. Cautioning that there are many unknowns, Cordesman expresses confidence that Iraqi capabilities are not sufficient to deter a carefully planned U.S. strike or to pose a current, imminent danger to other states in the region -- the United States could win a war with Iraq. But despite the flaws in its programs, the state of Iraq's WMD programs is still alarming enough to warrant a preemptive strike in Cordesman's view.

The Bush administration's fixation on military action in Iraq has incited a great deal of protest across the Atlantic, and Harald Mueller reports that the general sentiment is that the administration has not carefully considered the possible consequences of any such action. However, Mueller is critical of what he sees as a European tendency, with the excep-

tion of Britain, to ignore the violations of the Gulf War treaty and other international agreements that conceivably justify a multilateral military response.

He is less sympathetic to Bush's inclusion of Iran and North Korea in the same threat category as Iraq. He sees Iran as moving in the direction of constructive foreign policy and says that, while Europe continues to favor technology transfer controls so as not to augment Iran's WMD program, it sees dialogue and economic cooperation as the best approach. North Korea's nuclear weapons, Mueller says, are primarily the deterrent of a tottering regime against incursion from the South and not likely to be used aggressively.

Our other contributors tend to share the view that North Korea and Iran, despite their WMD capabilities, may be inaptly lumped with Iraq, though they differ on the degree of threat posed by these countries. Although John Stempel sees Iran's WMD programs mainly as a defense against Iraq, he points out that the hardliners who are in control of Iran's military are still extremely anti-American and that the CIA believes that Iran may already have a nuclear capability. Stempel indicates that intelligence sources have reported the disturbing possibility of al-Qaeda encampments in western Iran, raising the possibility of Iranian support for anti-Western terrorism.

Michael Kraig describes a penchant among even moderate forces in Iran for a "balance of power" in the Gulf, cautioning against the belief that Iranian hardliners are the only WMD and missile technology proponents in that country.

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Kraig concurs with Stempel that pro-democratic forces are ascendant in Iran and that these forces tend to oppose support for terrorist groups, but the need for energy and strategic deterrence suggest that the pursuit of nuclear technologies is not likely to be easily abandoned, even in the event of regime change in Iran.

On the issue of North Korea, Han Park argues that the axis label is counter productive for the United States, inciting defensive posturing from a weak, cut-off and economically desperate nation. The vilification of North Korea by the world superpower augments the position of conservative forces in South Korea and increases the possibility of serious instability on the Korean peninsula. Both Park and contributor Timothy Savage see North Korea's missile technology capability as primarily driven by economic need rather than aggressive intent, and Savage points to its willingness to give up its program in exchange for a payoff from Washington as evidence. Savage details the contingencies of U.S.-North Korean nuclear energy cooperation begun in 1994 and describes the push-pull, energy-versus-security dynamic between the two nations. While Savage acknowledges the effectiveness of North Korea's WMD capabilities as a deterrent against U.S. military action, because of the potential for devastation of Seoul, he thinks that economic cooperation between North and South Korea and other nations, including the United States, could alleviate tension in the region by removing WMD as the North's primary bargaining chip.

As we go to press, the Bush administration continues its efforts to build support internationally and at home for military action against Iraq. Iranian president Khatami has warned the United States against any preemptive action against Iraq, the Islamic Republic's old enemy. North and South Korea are engaged in talks aimed at diffusing a recent flare-up of tensions; meanwhile, the Bush administration announced new sanctions on the North for selling Scud missile components to Yemen, casting doubt on plans for formal dialogue between the two nations in the fall. Bringing Iraq, Iran and North Korea under the axis umbrella may have served to identify WMD development as the number one threat to U.S. security, but addressing the threat in each case is a far more complex matter. ♦

Iraq

The Coming War Against Iraq

Joyce M. Davis

Despite serious reservations among America's European allies, the Bush administration seems to be heading toward outright war against Iraq, possibly as early as this winter, believing that Saddam Hussein is steadily rebuilding his military and might be producing a nuclear weapon. And experts say there are good reasons for the United States to contemplate such action.

The Iraqi government is one of the most dangerous regimes in the world and one that is openly hostile to U.S. interests. Some suspect that Saddam was involved with the 1993 attack on the World Trade Center in New York as well as the Sept. 11 attack. Ramzi Ahmad Yusuf, an Iraqi, was the key person in the 1993 attack, and some experts believe he began organizing the attack shortly after he left Iraq in 1992. Mohammad Atta, the head of the Sept. 11 hijackers, met secretly with Iraqi agents in Prague a few months before the attack. There also is some evidence to suggest that at least some of the suspected hijackers did not fit the profile of Islamic militants, but of secular ones, like those known to be nurtured in Iraq. Witnesses said two of the suspected hijackers had spent a night drinking and cavorting with women, rather than praying and meditating, as Islamic militants might be expected to do.

Iraq is also known to be a producer of the lethal chemical and biological weapons, including the deadly anthrax virus, although Iraq has not been linked to the spores that had been distributed throughout the United States after Sept. 11. Still, what is indisputable is that Saddam Hussein's regime is a menace to the world and no nation can feel comfortable with him in power in the middle of such an already unstable region. In his State of the Union address earlier this year, President Bush said Iraq was part of an "axis of evil" of countries believed to be developing weapons of mass destruction.

"The Iraqi regime has plotted to develop anthrax, and nerve gas, and nuclear weapons for over a decade," Bush said in the speech. "Iraq continues to flaunt its hostility toward America and to support terror."

More recently, Bush has sounded increasingly as if he is

No one, short of the Iraqi people themselves, has more at stake in what happens to Saddam than Jordan...

laying the groundwork for war against Iraq, no matter the costs. Even as the U.S. Senate debated the pros and cons of such action in August, and Bush maintained publicly that he had not made up his mind about whether to go to war with Iraq, the president continued to move in that direction. In early August, he renewed U.S. economic sanctions against Iraq and made this case in a letter to Congress:

The crisis between the United States and Iraq that led to the declaration of a national emergency on August 2, 1990, has not been resolved. The government of Iraq continues to engage in activities inimical to stability in the Middle East and hostile to U.S. interests. Such Iraqi actions pose a continuing unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States.

President Bush seems to be determined to complete the work that his father started in January of 1991 when he sent U.S. troops to force Saddam out of Kuwait. Many people had criticized the first Bush administration for not going into Baghdad and finishing the job. Even when Iraq's Shias tried to launch a rebellion, expecting U.S. help, none was forthcoming. The thought then was that the United States did not want to risk a prolonged war or the casualties that going after Saddam would entail. Containment through sanctions and an aggressive United Nations campaign to destroy his weapons of mass destruction were thought to be adequate measures.

But Saddam has proven difficult to control, wily and deceptive. Despite his recent announcement that he would allow U.N. inspectors back into the country to look for weapons of mass destruction, many experts are warning that he cannot be trusted to cooperate. It is not hard to believe that Saddam's announcement is just another trick to try to keep his adversary off guard, to delay and to foil U.S. attempts to forge a coalition against him.

White House Deputy Press Secretary Claire Buchan told reporters shortly after Saddam announced he would allow U.N. inspectors back into the country, "The President's view is that, the position of this government is, that we need a

regime change in Iraq, and he continues to consider all options with regard to that."

Many world leaders are nervous and resentful at what they see as U.S. unilateralism. European leaders want to be consulted as equal partners, not dictated to. Although Secretary of State Colin Powell has tried to build a coalition of U.S. allies in Europe and the Middle East to overthrow Saddam, it has proven difficult to convince the rest of the world that the United States has a plan that will not cause more trouble for the region than allowing Saddam to remain in power.

U.S. allies are not worried about whether the American military is strong enough to unseat Saddam. The power of the U.S. military is clearly up to the task. But the question is at what cost? What government will replace him? How many Iraqi lives will be lost in the bombing and ground assault that will be needed to track him down? Americans are wondering how many of their soldiers will have to die before Saddam is crushed. And how long they will American troops have to stay inside Iraq to rebuild the country?

"If the U.S. embarks on [regime change], it needs to be prepared to fulfill its responsibilities, and see it through to an acceptable outcome, including a potential long-term military and political commitment to assure a stable and more democratic government," said Phoebe Marr, an acknowledged expert on Iraq, who spoke at the Senate hearings on potential military action against Iraq. "If U.S. involvement is not at the level discussed, then we better have Arab presence," she said.

But Arab presence is not guaranteed. Arab leaders such as Egypt's Hosni Mubarak, Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia and King Abdullah of Jordan do not want to be in the situation of helping the United States bomb Iraq.

No one, short of the Iraqi people themselves, has more at stake in what happens to Saddam than Jordan, a key U.S. ally in the region which has also signed a peace treaty with Israel. King Abdullah has made it clear that he is worried about the repercussions of a military campaign against Iraq, regardless of whether it succeeds in getting rid of Saddam Hussein. Abdullah was quoted as saying that such a war would have "devastating effects" on the Middle East.

With thousands of Iraqi exiles and a majority Palestinian population, King Abdullah has reason to be worried about unrest inside his Hashemite kingdom, and they are the same reasons his father King Hussein decided not to join the U.S.-led coalition in Operation Desert Storm. American planes bombing Iraq with the help of Jordan had the potential to

unleash chaos in the kingdom.

Of paramount concern are the economic consequences of a war against Iraq for a nation persistently teetering on the verge of collapse. Jordan worries that a war will stop the cheap oil that Saddam gives them, his gift for their support during 1991 Operation Desert Storm. Since King Hussein stood with Iraq against the United States the first time, Jordan now gets \$600 million dollars worth of oil from Iraq for about half the price. Iraq also exchanges oil for Jordanian goods, which allows the kingdom to save hard currency. Jordan exports an estimated \$450 million dollars in goods to Iraq under the U.N. oil-for-food program, which allows Iraq to sell oil and buy goods such as food and medicine. This business is vital to Jordan's economy. And Jordan would likely have to deal with another influx of Iraqi refugees who would flee at the first sign that the United States was preparing to bomb, a problem that Jordan is ill-equipped to bear.

To secure Jordan's help in a war against Iraq, American taxpayers would have to help Jordan with the refugee issue, subsidize the kingdom's economy and make up for the lost revenue from its trade with Iraq. Jordan already receives more than \$270 million each year in U.S. aid, making it one of the largest recipients of such aid, but the price tag for its cooperation in a war against Iraq would be much steeper. Add to that the cost of keeping American troops in Iraq, rebuilding the country after any military action, while continuing U.S. efforts in Afghanistan and pursuing al Qaeda terrorists around the globe and the picture that emerges is one that has many economists worried about the ability of the U.S. to absorb the effects of such endeavors.

But Arab leaders such as King Abdullah are worried about their own skins. They will be under serious pressure to cooperate with American leaders but will likely face angry populations for doing so. Arab streets are already seething over the worsening Israeli-Palestinian conflict and leaders' impotence in stopping it.

"I believe the slightest spark could set things off," said Abdul Latif Arabiyat, secretary general of Jordan's Islamic Action Front, the country's most powerful political party. Arabiyat warned that the anger in the Arab world was the biggest threat to the security of the United States and to world stability. And an attack on Iraq, he said, would only make things worse.

Abdullah was also worried about anger in the Arab world and in his own kingdom over the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

"In the light of the failure to move the Israeli-Palestinian process forward, military action against Iraq would really

open a Pandora's box," he warned after meeting recently with British prime minister Tony Blair. Abdullah repeated the same warning to President Bush in his recent visit to Washington, telling him that a war to unseat Saddam could unleash mayhem in his country.

Many American experts are not convinced that an all-out assault is in the best interests of the United States. Robert Gallucci, dean of Georgetown University's Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, argued in the Senate hearings that the wisest course is containment. Gallucci would take Saddam up on his offer to have U.N. inspectors return because he believes valuable lessons have been learned from the mistakes of the past that would make this inspection regime stronger.

"This inspection regime would be designed to prevent Iraq from manipulating the inspection process," said Gallucci, who was one of the first U.N. inspectors sent to Iraq after Operation Desert Storm. "It would aim to strike the right balance, linking the inspection regime to an invasion if Iraq fails to cooperate, without being so robust as to appear to inevitably presage a move to overthrow the Iraqi government."

But even Gallucci's plan involves the threat of war, a threat that Saddam is likely to test. This is the biggest weakness in the argument against an all-out war to unseat Saddam. He has proven that he is dangerous, that he will not cooperate, and that he will test the waters to see how hot they are. And in the long term, delaying an all-out fight may make it harder to win. After Sept. 11, the Bush administration contends that waiting to go after those who are openly hostile to the United States puts Americans at a disadvantage in that it allows their enemies to grow stronger. Some argue that had President Bill Clinton launched an all-out war against al Qaeda after the bombing of the *USS Cole* in October 2000, it might have prevented the Sept. 11 attacks. At the very least, bin Laden would have been on the run and perhaps unable to so meticulously plan his next assault on the United States from the mountains of Afghanistan. ♦

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Excerpts of Testimony before the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, July 31, 2002

The Iraqi Threat

Khidhir Hamza

Iraq is currently the country with the most extensive experience in the use of chemical weapons (CW). Its extensive use of these weapons and biological toxins during the war with Iran and against its own Kurdish population provided the Iraqi government with a huge database of information about the effectiveness and strategy of use of each of these agents. The two tests of dirty bombs carried in Mohammediyat in 1988, though were inconclusive as to their effectiveness in a war setting, provided Iraq with extensive design and testing experience in this area, probably the only Middle East country to do so in the last two decades. This provides Iraq with another tool for possible use in a terrorism setting. The recent defector reports of purchases of Russian radioactive materials through an African country reinforces Iraq's intents in this direction.

It is understood that CBW use is mainly intended to create a terror situation in the targeted area. Any lethality that can be achieved using CBW can be surpassed by conventional means. But the effects are not the same. The Iranian attackers who showed no hesitancy in facing all the fire Iraq can muster were terrified of the limited CBW Iraq used at the time. The Iraqi port of al-Fao was occupied by Iranian forces that repelled many conventional attacks, but collapsed easily under the continuous flow of CW that was thrown at them in the closing days of the war with Iran. The same goes for the Kurds who fought with incredible bravery against the Iraqi armed forces but ran away in terror to Turkey and Iran when the Iraqi armed forces approached after the Gulf war fearing the use of CW after the Halbja massacre.

Iraq's use of these weapons included also the threat of use to prevent an attack. Thus Saddam's government firmly believes that it thwarted a second Israeli strike against its nuclear installations in 1990 when Saddam threatened to "burn half of Israel using the binary" (chemical weapon.) Thus a firm belief in the utility and effectiveness of these weapons by Saddam's government emerged to present an option that the regime believes that it cannot survive without. The WMD option is firmly believed to be the reason behind not losing the war with Iran and preventing further strikes by Israel and, if the Americans had not interfered, would have helped in quelling the Kurdish uprising.

Iraq is in the final stages of putting together its enrichment program to enrich enough uranium for the final component needed in the nuclear core.

Iraq built its own WMD technologies indigenously with some foreign help. Saddam understood that his main assets were not the equipment but his scientists and engineers. Thus Saddam's government kept a tight lid on its science and engineering military teams at the same time it allowed UNSCOM and the IAEA to demolish most of its weapons production sites. That these science and engineering teams were capable was made manifestly clear in the aftermath of the Gulf war. Within less than a year these teams rebuilt successfully most of Iraq's services infrastructure. These included rebuilding the destroyed control rooms of the power stations, the major telephone exchanges and oil refineries. Elated by their success, Saddam kept these teams as contracting entities to the government for the civilian sector with a much-reduced load and assigned them the rebuilding of needed facilities for the WMD program. This provided them with a cover as civilian contractors with actual work to prove it, but at the same time, their WMD work continued unhindered. Thus, the computer we used for the nuclear weapon design is now located in a hospital in Saddam City at the outskirts of Baghdad. If an inspector should arrive at the site, he or she will be shown contracts for the civilian sector. The only indication that things are not what they seem is that it is headed by a man who worked extensively on the Iraqi NW design and that most of his staff are former workers in Group Four, the Iraqi nuclear weapon team. Legally, and according to the current mandate of UNMOVIC, the new UN inspection body, the burden is on the inspectors to prove otherwise. Thus Saddam has managed from the experience of the last eleven years to create the perfect cover. In effect, it turns the whole Iraqi science and engineering enterprise into a giant weapon-making body. And since they do actually accomplish civilian tasks, the economic burden on the government is minimized. Thus Saddam not only used the international markets to import dual-use items under false pretenses, he created, for the first time in the third world, dual-use engineering teams.

Unlike the UN, Saddam valued his people more than the equipment. And, while initially the UN teams concentrated on destroying equipment and facilities, Saddam kept tight control over his scientists and engineers. Thus, defections were kept to a minimum. This was helped by well-publicized

cases of defectors seeking help who were turned down. One of them got killed in Jordan by Iraqi agents while waiting for the US Embassy to grant him an entry visa. Not a single high level defector left the regime since the botched defection of Hussein Kamel, Saddam's son in law, to Jordan in 1995. This kept the information flow out of Iraq to a minimum, increasing the opacity of the WMD programs.

German Intelligence (the BND) has been the only major Western intelligence service to provide assessments of the Iraqi WMD programs openly. Though flawed in some minor details, they provide a broad outline of the clandestine Iraqi activities in the WMD and missiles areas. At a minimum, it generated a large database on Iraqi purchases from Germany and other countries that, when put together with defector and other information, can present a credible assessment of the current and future threats of the Iraqi programs. These may be summarized as follows:

a) Iraq is well into CW production and may well be in the process of BW production.

b) With the more than 10 tons of uranium and more than one ton of slightly enriched uranium in its possession, Iraq has enough to generate the needed bomb grade uranium for three nuclear weapons by 2005.

c) Iraq is using corporations in India and other countries to import the needed equipment for its programs, then channel them through countries like Malaysia for shipment to Iraq. Germany already blacklisted some of these corporations for violating the sanctions imposed on Iraq.

d) Iraq is importing directional control instruments for its missiles of much higher precision than those needed for the allowed 150km missiles under UN sanctions. Thus, Iraq is gearing up to extend the range of its missiles to easily reach Israel.

e) The type of equipment imported indicate that Iraq is in the process of creating its own foundation for the production of needed materials, thus avoiding detection if these materials are on the watch lists of the exporting countries. Following this logic, Iraq is or will be able to produce its own growth media for the biological weapons program and many precursors for its CW program. The same can be said for local uranium production from phosphates. This removes many limitations on production and allows Iraq to accelerate its output.

Iraq realized that CBWs are more instruments of terror than they are of war. A real deterrent is the nuclear weapon option. Realising that a few nuclear weapons are not a serious deterrent because of the need for testing, it configured its

The claim that the US needs a smoking gun to prove that Iraq is in violation of its commitments regarding WMD discounts all the past.

program to generate its own materials for the nuclear core. Thus, the plan that was set in 1982 targeted a 100 kg (220 lb) of bomb grade uranium a year. This is equivalent to 6 implosion or two gun type bombs a year. With a worked-out design for the implosion option, Iraq planned on being a major power in the region through its nuclear arsenal. Thus, under this program Iraq was not much interested in purchasing the materials needed for the nuclear core through its extensive black market network. However, under threat, the situation did change. After the invasion of Kuwait, Iraq embarked on a crash program to make one nuclear bomb using the French supplied fuel at its disposal. This option, [it is] now declared by the Iraqi government, was dropped only after it was made clear that the uranium extraction capabilities were not good enough to achieve enough material for one bomb. Recent defections indicate that Iraq is seeking actively all kinds of nuclear materials. It is also active in seeking the needed components to accelerate its uranium enrichment program.

With a workable design and most of the needed components for a nuclear weapon already tested and in working order, Iraq is in the final stages of putting together its enrichment program to enrich enough uranium for the final component needed in the nuclear core. Thus, Iraq's nuclear achievement when it happens, together with its history of use of its available WMD, will turn it into a serious threat to US interests in the region. Serious punishment (regime change) will be largely discounted. Iraq's posturing, aggressiveness and harassment of unfriendly regimes will increase considerably. The window of opportunity to abort this option before it happens is closing down, possibly within the next two to three years. After that, a change of regime will be a much costlier prospect.

The inspection regime in Iraq had a mixed history. The International Atomic energy Agency (IAEA), the UN body charged with ensuring that nuclear facilities are not used for nuclear weapons production, failed completely in its task with regard to Iraq before the Gulf war. The IAEA remains basically a weak organization, beset by its international composition and the multiple loyalties of its workers. Within its sphere, it is quite successful in accounting for and keeping

Thus, if Saddam makes it in the nuclear arena, he will be the region's undisputed leader in Arab eyes.

tabs on the essential components of the nuclear fuel cycle and its utilization over the globe. But it has limited latitude with the states and works best in a cooperative and amiable environment. Against determined states such as Iraq it is at a great disadvantage. Thus, it failed again after the Gulf war, when it declared early that it had taken care of basically all of Iraq's nuclear program. It took the defection of Kamel, Saddam's son in law, to force the Iraqi government to declare the actual scope of its nuclear weapons program which forced the inspectors to start all over again in unraveling what had not been declared before. Thus, while it managed to dismantle a large part of the Iraqi nuclear program, it was at a loss by the time the inspectors left in 1998 as to the whereabouts of many of the important figures in the program. The new Iraqi policy of giving up some of the equipment but keeping the working teams intact was beyond the inspectors mandate. There was nothing they could do to prevent the Iraqi teams from rebuilding what was destroyed.

Iraq is actually quite open about its intents and goals. It refused to promulgate laws that make it illegal for its citizens to work in the area of WMD as was required by UN resolutions. It also refuses to accept the limitations imposed by sanctions declaring them to be illegal. Thus, as stated by the former Iraqi ambassador to the UN, Nizar Hamdoun, Iraq is not going to impose sanctions on itself...Policing what Iraq imports is a problem for the UN and not the Iraqi government.

If the inspectors go back now, there is very little human intelligence that will help them locate the new weapons sites. Spread widely among the government infrastructure in smaller hard to detect units, the inspectors will have a hard time locating all the program components. A recent defector with credible information asserted that all units are built with a backup. If one is detected or is in danger of discovery, all activity is immediately transferred to the back-up facility.

The new UNMOVIC inspection body does not have the support and free hand UNSCOM enjoyed. With Russia and other states that favor removing sanctions keeping the pressure, the onus is now on the inspectors to prove that Iraq is in violation. Not finding a smoking gun after a series of inspections is all that the Russians and the French need to

declare that the US has no case and sanctions must be lifted. The US case will be considerably weakened and more voices will rise against the US Iraqi policy as baseless. This is a danger that must be carefully examined before inspection terms are allowed back in possibly to divert an invasion.

The claim that the US needs a smoking gun to prove that Iraq is in violation of its commitments regarding WMD discounts all the past experience in dealing with Iraq. Many voices declared that Iraq was not pursuing nuclear weapons before the Gulf War. This included the IAEA that declared Iraq clean in many statements... even after the German publication Der Spiegel reported Iraq's successful attempts to acquire classified uranium centrifuge enrichment technology from Germany. However, the US knew better and used the Gulf War setting as a way to dismantle Iraq's nuclear weapons program. But the dismantling process ignored the knowledge base, acquired over the years, that can be used easily to rebuild what was destroyed. A similar insistence on proof before taking serious action will be allowing Saddam to achieve his goals unchallenged.

With no large easily distinguishable nuclear sites and little or no human intelligence it is difficult to see how any measure short of a regime change will be effective. Saddam is totally indifferent to the human suffering of his people, and with his threats of reprisals against the families of WMD workers has managed to stop defections among personnel despite the fact that a large number of Iraqis from other walks of life managed to escape. With a Soviet style economy that is basically geared toward war and its requirements,

Iraq is currently the only Arab state that all the Arab extremists look at as the future challenger to Israel and US interests in the region. Thus, if Saddam makes it in the nuclear arena he will be the region's undisputed leader in Arab eyes. It will then be much harder to agree on the needed concessions for a peace process and a viable peace will be impossible to achieve under any terms. Saddam has used and will continue to use the Palestinian issue to rally the Arabs around him as he did when he used the Arab leaders meeting in Baghdad to challenge the peace treaty of Egypt with Israel...

Limiting Iraq's access to technology is bound to fail in the end. The US cannot police the transfer of technology in the age of the internet and the widening of the science base all over the globe. Perversely, limiting sales of high technology equipment created financial difficulties for many high tech companies and scientists and made them an easy target for countries like Iraq. Lawyer Michael Rietz, who represented three of the main German exporters of technology and know-how to Iraq, tells a sobering tale. One of his clients, Karl

...experts are deeply divided over Iraq's systems integration and engineering skill and the probability that Iraq has developed lethal missile warheads.

Schaab, sold the blue prints for the uranium enrichment centrifuge to Iraq for a mere forty thousand dollars. He also provided more than a hundred classified reports in the deal. He provided 36 high tech carbon fiber rotors for the centrifuges for a million dollars. Iraq's investment to buy technology this way was much cheaper than developing it themselves. Dietrich Hinze provided flow-forming machinery to make missile shells and gave away half ownership of his company to Iraq, all for less than 20 million dollars. He also taught the Iraqis how to use the equipment. Locally he was so much admired for bringing business to his small town in Germany that he was honored with a statue in a main location in town. All those represented by Rietz were more or less sentenced for time served and released though they all pleaded guilty. Actually, according to Rietz, one of the men working for the German Federal export Agency, Dr. Welzien, opened a consulting business charging very high rates to German companies for advising them on how to use loopholes in the German export laws to expedite making some questionable exports, and it is legal. With Europe no longer in an accommodating mood, Iraq shifted its purchasing bases to India and Malaysia, among others. Thus, technology transfer restrictions, which failed in the past to limit advances in the Soviet Union's weapons programs, are failing again in limiting access to weapons technology as was demonstrated by India, Pakistan and now Iraq and possibly Iran. Another failure for the policy of containment... ♦

Khidhir Hamza is an American-trained nuclear physicist who headed the Iraqi nuclear weapons program before defecting to the West in 1994. He is the author of Saddam's Bombmaker (Scribner, 2000), a memoir recounting his experiences working in Saddam's inner circle.

Iraqi War-Fighting Capabilities: A Dynamic Net Assessment

Anthony Cordesman

Iraq has a much more serious history of exploiting proliferation than Iran. It has seen proliferation as a counter to conventional superiority since the late 1960s. It sought weapons of mass destruction long before the Gulf War showed it what the "revolution in military affairs" and U.S. conventional superiority could accomplish. Since 1991, Iraq has been unable to obtain significant imports of conventional weapons, and it is incapable of producing its own. As a result, it is scarcely surprising that Iraq sees proliferation as its key potential method of countering the U.S. advantage in conventional forces and has been willing to pursue such options in the face of massive economic costs, United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) efforts to destroy its remaining capabilities, and the extension of U.N. sanctions...

In spite of the Gulf War, and nearly eight years of UNSCOM efforts before Iraq forced an end to the UN inspection effort, Iraq still presents a major threat in terms of proliferation. It is all too clear that Iraq may have increased this threat since active UNSCOM and IAEA efforts ended in December 1998. It is known to have continued to import precursors for chemical weapons and may have increased its holdings of biological growth agents. No one can dismiss the risk that Iraq does have weapons with very high real-world lethalties.

Much depends on how well Iraq has organized its chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear (hereafter, CBRN) forces and weaponized its chemical and biological agents. Virtually nothing is known in the unclassified literature about the Iraqi process since 1991 in this latter area, which can affect the real-world lethality of chemical and biological warheads, bombs, munitions, and sprayers by up to two orders of magnitude.

Iraq developed effective 155-mm artillery and 122-mm multiple rocket rounds for the delivery of chemical weapons during the Iran-Iraq War and could probably modify such technology to deliver biological weapons. The effective use of chemical weapons armed with artillery and multiple rocket rounds against large enemy ground forces does, however, require an extensive inventory of munitions, however, even in using VX-gas. It is unclear that Iraq could conceal the production, deployment, and training for an operation of this scale. The delivery of biological agents using such weapons would present two critical problems: The effects would probably only develop after the battle was over and there

The greatest single unknown... consists of infectious agents like smallpox and plague. Iraq was one of the last countries to have a natural outbreak of smallpox...

would be a serious risk of secondary effects if the agent blew back over Iraqi troops and civilian areas. The use of such attacks cannot be ruled out, however, particularly as a last extreme, and the troops firing such weapons would not have to be informed of such risks.

Iraq has had cluster bomb technology since the Iran-Iraq War, and has long had the theoretical engineering capability to use non-explosive release mechanisms like air bags to release chemical and biological munitions. Before the Gulf War, Iraq developed crude parachute release designs for its missile warheads, systems which would be substantially more effective than the primitive contact fuse warheads and bombs it had at the time of the war, and which might well have produced negligible weapons effects if they had ever been used.

Iraq must realize that the crude contact fusing, and chemical/biological warhead/bomb designs it had at the time of the Gulf War drastically limited the effectiveness of its CBRN weapons. Iraq has had strong incentives to correct these problems for over a decade, and the development of parachute release weapons is only moderately challenging. Iraq has also had a decade to adapt non-destructive dissemination technology like airbags. Nevertheless, experts are deeply divided over Iraq's systems integration and engineering skill and the probability that Iraq has developed lethal missile warheads.

There is broad agreement among experts that Iraq has probably developed effective sprayer and line-source delivery technology since the Gulf War. This is the most lethal way to deliver chemical and biological weapons, and is far more effective than using even advanced missile warheads. Iraq also experimented at the time of the Gulf War with using aircraft like the Czech L-29 trainer as a remotely piloted drone to carry out such deliveries at long ranges, and U.S. forces were deeply concerned that Iraq might be using its unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) for such missions early in the Gulf War. The use of fighters, helicopters, and drones for such missions requires relatively large aircraft, and they

would be vulnerable to air defenses. It is at least possible, however, that Iraq could use its best strike aircraft to fly a one-way mission and succeed in penetrating deep into Southern Gulf, Turkish, and Kurdish territory or the rear area of U.S.-led coalition ground forces. It is also possible that Iraq might be able to use a drone, UAV, or modified fighter, GPS, and earth-hugging flight profiles to create the equivalent of cruise missiles for such missions with sufficient accuracy and reliability to attack city sized targets at long ranges.

Similar critical uncertainties exist in other areas of Iraqi CBRN warfighting. Several UNSCOM inspectors believe that Iraq lied about its ability to produce a stable form of persistent VX nerve gas during the time Iraq was still under inspection, just as it had lied earlier about weaponizing of VX. Iraq's mustard gas inventory proved to be highly stable during the period of inspection, and it seems likely that Iraq now has both stable non-persistent and persistent nerve gas. Iraq is known to have continued to smuggle in precursor chemicals during the inspection period and since 1998. Persistent VX would probably be at least 10 times more lethal than anything Iraq used in the Iran-Iraq War or against its Kurds.

Iraq has experimented with the conversion of biological agents into dry, coated micropowders that can be lethal to two orders of magnitude or more versus slurries of wet agents. At least in the case of the most lethal, advanced weaponized forms of dry-storable anthrax — such biological weapons can achieve the lethality of simple nuclear fission weapons. They can have far more immunity to heat and sunlight, disseminate without clumping, and are extremely lethal when inhaled. They can be non-explosively disseminated with airbag technology, and are far better suited to use in bombs, missile warheads, and covert attacks. Similarly, little is known about any Iraqi advances in sprayer and line-source delivery technology, and in tailoring CB agents to make them more effective in such delivery profiles. Contrary to some literature, truly effective line-source and sprayer delivery is a complex engineering problem involving both the agent and delivery system.

The greatest single unknown, in terms of Iraqi capability to use biological agents, consists of infectious agents like smallpox and plague. Iraq was one of the last countries to have a natural outbreak of smallpox and may well have the culture. Smallpox is easy to reproduce in a small facility and is infectious enough so agents willing to commit suicide or individuals who are unwittingly exposed could create serious corridors of infection. The long period between exposure and symptoms deprives such agents of immediate impact in warfighting scenarios, but they could be used in port, airbase, or rear areas during the staging of enemy forces with limited risk because Iraq's borders would be sealed. Infiltrating the

agent into Turkey, Southern Gulf states, Israel, or the U.S. and U.K. would be an option; as is sending in exposed unwitting or deliberately infected individuals. No meaningful capability now exists to screen for the agent or exposed individuals, and agents carrying smallpox agent could be immunized, as could those infecting unwitting subjects.

IAEA and U.S. intelligence experts privately put little or no faith in the claims of various Iraqi defectors that Iraq retains the ability to make fissile material, has extensive covert fissile material production facilities, and has workable bomb designs small enough to be used in missile warheads. IAEA experts note that the Iraqi diffusion effort was never effective, that the Calutron designs fell far short of meeting specification, and that Iraq's centrifuge designs proved to be far less effective during laboratory review than they initially estimated, and that Iraq does not seem to have understood the technical problems in using centrifuges to enrich fissile material beyond 90%. They note that cascades of centrifuges are relatively easy to conceal in multistory buildings, but they [also note that] Iraq is extremely dependent on imports to create such a facility and would probably need outside technical support.

Iraq did, however, have at least two workable fissile weapon implosion designs that could be used in large bombs at the time of the Gulf War, had solved the technical problems in making and triggering high explosive lenses for nuclear weapons, and had workable neutron initiators. If it could obtain fissile material, it could probably make a large explosive device relatively quickly, but not fit one to a missile warhead or build a bomb that any of its aircraft other than its bombers and MiG-24s could deliver at long distances, particularly in low-altitude penetration missions. Iraq might be much more successful in arming any actual nuclear weapon it could obtain, particularly because of the relatively crude PAL systems fitted to many FSU weapons, and the duplicative code sequences used to arm them.

Iraq has shown both that it can disperse and conceal and that it is willing to take serious risks in doing so in spite of the centralized nature of the regime. During the Gulf War, Iraq was willing to place large numbers of chemical weapons under the control of its regular Army forces, although biological weapons and missiles were placed under the control of special units of the Republican Guards which seem to have had a significant element of Iraqi security forces. Iraq also showed during the Gulf War that it could disseminate chemical weapons (and possibly biological weapons) over a wide area without detection by coalition forces. Coalition intelligence and targeting of such weapons stocks was a near total failure through the end of the war, and advancing forces sometimes had to be warned of the existence of stockpiles of

chemical weapons by surrendering Iraqi officers. Iraq mixed chemical and conventional munitions stockpiles without special security precautions and even dispersed unguarded weapons at unused airstrips for possible arming in a last-ditch emergency.

A number of experts believe Iraq could disperse most of its covert biological production on warning or under attack. Iraq is known to have mobile laboratories and storage equipment and to have developed advanced techniques for rapid equipment and material movement during the time of UN inspections. It is not known whether Iraq has developed special survivable communications for such dispersal efforts, or exactly who would control such units and how loyal they would be under extreme conditions – particularly knowing the probable level of reprisals both in terms of the level of attacks on Iraq and future treatment of war criminals. Regimes like Iraq's do, however, have a long history of successfully indoctrinating and lying to carefully selected "loyalist" units. Such units can now also make use of GPS rather than pre-surveyed sites, and may well be able to make use of GPS for preplanned targeting or to change targeting in the field. This could increase the dispersal area and the effectiveness with which an Iraqi force would be able to target cities and fixed facilities at long ranges.

Cumulatively, these uncertainties make it impossible to do more than guess at Iraq's warfighting capabilities. As such a guesstimate, Iraq's present holdings of delivery systems, and chemical and biological weapons, seem most likely to be so limited in technology and operational lethality that they do not severely constrain U.S. freedom of action, or seriously intimidate Iraq's neighbors.

Barring classified intelligence to the contrary, Iraqi CBRN capabilities must be taken seriously, but do not seem great enough to change U.S., British, Iranian, Israeli, Saudi and/or Southern Gulf perceptions of risk to the point where they would limit or paralyze military action against Iraq by a U.S.-led coalition or prevent large-scale Israeli strikes on Iraq.

Iraq has not fired any Scud variants in nearly twelve years. There are no public reports that it has tested dry-storable biological weapons, or has made major advances in its weaponization of nerve gas. Furthermore, it seems unlikely that Iraq can openly build up major production and deployment capabilities without their being detected and targeted, and without provoking strong U.S. counter-proliferation programs, including preemptive or retaliatory strike capabilities.

Nevertheless, Iraq's possession of even moderately effective CBRN weapons must affect other aspects of U.S.,

British, Southern Gulf, and Israeli perceptions of the risks inherent in attacking Iraq. President Bush has already made it clear that the U.S. might well make maximum use of its advanced intelligence, strike, and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities, and air and missile power to carry out a massive preemptive strike on Iraq's CBRN and delivery capabilities at the first sign of any major crisis or as a prelude to an invasion to overthrow Saddam. Such weapons create a strong incentive for preemption even in "peacetime conditions" if (a) they can be targeted with sufficient reliability and depth of coverage, (b) the U.S. and its allies are confident the resulting strikes would do sufficient damage to offset the risk of Iraq's lashing out with its surviving weapons, (c) the U.S. is confident any secondary effects in terms of Iraqi civilian casualties would be limited, and (d) the U.S. is convinced it can show the world that Iraq was in violation of the UN ceasefire. Preemption might also take place regardless of these risks if the U.S. was convinced Iraq was prepared for the use of such weapons or had dispersed a major force for the possible delivery of such forces.

It should be noted in this regard that the physical destruction of stored or dispersed chemical and biological facilities and munitions stored on the ground presents only a limited risk of major collateral damage and secondary civilian casualties unless the weapons are in densely populated areas. No one can disprove the idea of trace effects from such explosions, such as those associated with Gulf War syndrome, but the probabilities are limited... ♦

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View from Europe

Europe and the Axis of Evil – A View From Germany

Harald Mueller

The State of the Union Speech by President George W. Bush in January 2002 engendered probably the most negative echo in Europe that any presidential address to Congress has ever provoked. Most European observers and officials engaged in foreign policy took the notion of the "axis of evil" as proof of their existing concern that the approach by the Bush administration to world politics was conceptually misguided and possibly dangerous. If anything, the "axis of evil" speech has hardened the resistance in Europe against solving the Iraqi problem by military force.

It is not that European countries are in love with Iraq, North Korea, or Iran. But the lumping together of three vastly different countries, operating in equally different contexts and crying out for carefully tailored approaches struck many on the Eastern side of the Atlantic as fundamentally flawed. To be sure, there are commonalities: The countries have been striving for weapons of mass destruction, their human rights record is unsatisfactory to horrifying, and they have been supporters of international terrorism. None is, of course, a clear-cut democracy. Apart from this, each of the three states shows quite different characteristics.

North Korea

North Korea is a relic of the Cold War, an absolutist communist monarchy with no future. This judgment holds even if the regime can linger on for awhile. Historically, it is finished. The resource gap between North Korea and South Korea widens by the day. The Cold War has deprived it of its allies, whatever Chinese or Russian rhetoric may offer today in terms of friendly consolation. North Korea is thus facing an increasingly stronger fellow Korean country to the South, allied to the world's only superpower. From past conduct, it would appear that weapons of mass destruction serve two strategic purposes in the North Korean calculus: First, to present a deterrent of last resort, since these weapons threaten to cause havoc in the South, notably the densely populated industrial core land around Seoul so close to the border. Second, to serve as a bargaining chip to extract economic, political and security concessions from the United States. It is the only leverage Pyongyang has got. And the North

Most Europeans would thus prefer... to apply pressure on Iraq to accept inspections without conditions.

Korean leadership is exactly aware of this situation. It is thus unlikely that it will give up its WMD quickly before a major change in its internal structure. This change will come, but may take more time than we would like. On the other hand, it is equally unlikely that North Korea will repeat its attack on the South in the light of overwhelming military opposition and no support. The weapons of mass destruction will thus not serve as an umbrella for aggression. The most advisable policy – and one the Europeans (and South Koreans) have been following quite consistently – is to develop as much dialogue and communication as possible without, however, neglecting the necessities of prudent military containment. In other words, to try, adapted to the circumstances, the two-track policy of detente and defense that characterized NATO policy after 1967 with regard to the former Soviet Union. Loose talk about the “axis of evil” is thus seen as a completely unnecessary rhetorical disturbance that plays only in the hands of the more reactionary, retarding hard-line forces that undoubtedly do exist in the North of the Korean Peninsula. Since it is believed that WMD, to a considerable part, is a “trade instrument” for Pyongyang, a combination of carrot and sticks is adequate to dampen or eliminate the North Korean contribution to WMD and missile proliferation. North Korean support for terrorism, it appears, has subsided in the past decade.

Iran

Iran, on the other hand, is a country in transition with a most intriguing system of political double-rule. The Iranian constitution makes Iran one of the most democratic countries in the region (which speaks for the low standards prevailing, but there we are). Today, Iran has a lively civil society that longs for more reform, and this will have been expressed most definitely in the elections over the past few years. There is a dualism between the government that has nominal authority over soft policy and foreign policy, and the hard-line Guardians Council that controls the instruments of force and the judiciary. As in North Korea, time is not on the side of the hard-liners. The disproportionate support for President Khatami and his policy among young people is much more telling for the future of the Islamic Republic than the disconcerting foreign policy effects emanating from the conservatives.

Iran is a particular case in the nonproliferation field as the smoking gun is missing. Suspicions rage high, notably in the United States and Israel. Evidence discussed in Western Europe points to a slow-going effort to create a nuclear option, but not a crash program. Indeed, the first notices that the Shah’s nuclear program had been revived date back to the mid-eighties, and at that time the forecast was that Iran might have a nuclear capability within ten years’ time. More than fifteen years have passed since, and the ten-year distance is still prevailing in the assessments. Either something is very wrong with Iranian nuclear engineers, or, alternatively and more likely, with the threat assessments given in the past decade and beyond.

However, given its security situation, it would not be unsurprising if Iran – or certain forces within Iran – were considering an existential deterrent. Iran is positioned in a very unruly region. A hostile regime, the Taliban in Afghanistan, just disappeared. Their former patron, Pakistan, is nuclear armed. More important, Iran was victim of an aggression and the offensive use of chemical weapons by its neighbor Iraq, and the international community did not only not care, but was actively supporting Iraq’s warfighting capabilities and looking the other way when greedy companies were helping Iraq with its panoply of WMD programs. Iran has been the chosen enemy of the United States, the overwhelming superpower. Unless something positive is done by the West to improve Iran’s security situation, it is unlikely that people responsible for Iran’s national security would not look into WMD as an answer. Nevertheless, as Iran is member to all WMD nonproliferation agreements, the instruments are there to check it out. If there is sufficient suspicion for a nuclear program or a chemical weapons program, the IAEA and the OPCW should be asked to undertake the “special inspection” (NPT) or “challenge inspection” (CWC) foreseen in these treaties.

In Khomeini’s last years and even more after his demise, Iran has moderated its previously quite adventurous foreign policy. Support for terrorism appears to have shrunk to the Middle East, and while this is unhelpful – and would prevent a fully cooperative relationship as long as it continues – it is

The difference between the Bush team’s unilateral instincts and Europe’s multilateral preferences... reflects much deeper cleavages in the vision of what the world order should look like.

not the equivalent of supporting transnational terrorism of the al Qaeda kind; the recent extradition to Saudi Arabia of sixteen al Qaeda suspects by the Iranian government appears to confirm this assessment. The destructive policy in the Middle East remains the major sticking point in Iran's foreign policy. In most diplomatic settings, the Khatami government is conducting a reasonable and – within the limits of Iran's perceived national interest – constructive policy.

The European idea of “constructive dialogue” combines a special caution in export and technology transfer licensing decisions with the readiness to cooperate economically where it would not support Iran's WMD programs, and to stay in communication with the government of the Islamic Republic and encourage the nongovernmental sector to work with their Iranian peers wherever they can find them.

Iraq

Last, there is Iraq. It is here that European positions diverge most on appropriate policy, and this has shown since the Gulf War. However, it appears that the Bush administration's pressure towards a military solution might, unexpectedly, bring the Europeans closer together. The Iraqi issue brings up the crucial question how international regimes are enforced. Iraq has breached the conditions under which the end of hostilities was granted in 1991, and is likely to continue breaching commitments under the CWC and the BWC as well. Ultimately, as in any system designed for security, these regimes rely on the sanction of force if all other means are exhausted. The Europeans, with the exception of the United Kingdom, have ignored the issue. Britain, in turn, has joined the United States in occasional military action against Iraq without an explicit authorization by the UNSC; if, however, it is up to individual countries to decide whether a breach of a treaty is there and if this breach is serious enough to justify a military response, we are straight on our way to international anarchy.

It is understandable that the disunity of the Europeans has not enhanced their standing in Washington. That the U.S. pulls forward without great concern for the allies (up to now) should thus not surprise anyone. However, in all European countries, including Great Britain, the impression is that the case for military action has not been made convincingly, and that such action could cause more trouble than it would put to rest: there is no clear relation between September 11 and Saddam; there is no UN mandate; there is no support in the region and there is a real possibility that anti-Western feelings would grow considerably after a strike, particularly if the Israeli-Palestinian conflict continues in its present violent ways; there is no valid partner on the ground in Iraq, and no visible solution for a post-Saddam Iraqi government. In

other words, military action contains considerable risks in addition to the possible WMD use. On the other hand, the opinion prevails in Europe that containment has worked against Saddam, and that it will continue to do so for the next few years.

Most Europeans would thus prefer to work the issue through the Security Council and UNMOVIC and to apply pressure on Iraq to accept inspections without conditions. Logically, this position will force the European governments to come clear on the issue what to do if Iraq continues to stall, and at what point the use of force would become inevitable. They will then have to join in weighing the pros and cons of an attack, particularly the speculation about the future of the region after a war and the consequences for the nonproliferation regimes if Iraq were permitted to defy these regimes.

The Axis of Evil, Unilateralism, and the European Preference for Multilateral World Policy

European misgivings about the axis-of-evil approach relate to more general misgivings about the thrust of President Bush's world order policies. These misgivings stretch from the Kyoto Protocol to the International Criminal Court, with arms control, disarmament and nonproliferation at the center. The impression here is that the forces running U.S. foreign and security policy combine a degree of ignorance and arrogance not previously seen; a feeling that the U.S. right-wing guard is capable, willing, and entitled to run the world on the basis of its own narrow ideology without any regard to anybody else's opinions, interests, concerns or feelings. These misgivings were obscured by the need to express and demonstrate solidarity with the U.S. partner after the losses of September 11, mitigated by the hope that the experience of ultimate vulnerability and the need to bring together a coalition of vastly divergent countries for the fight against terrorism would convince the president and his collaborators that multilateralism was the name of the game. Today, the feeling is largely one of betrayal: an understanding that the hawks in the Bush government have smartly used the understandable mood of the American people after September 11 as a window of opportunity to press their long-existing agenda, including national missile defense and dethroning Saddam Hussein.

It is only since the congressional hearings on a military action against Iraq, and the sudden revival of critical scrutiny of Bush's policies by Congress and the media after almost a year of impressive and disquieting conformity in U.S. public opinion, that the Europeans appear to be ready to express their own skepticism loudly. The world vision of Europe is to expand the boundaries of the realm of law-regulated inter-

national politics. They have been at the forefront of the Ottawa Convention, the Kyoto Protocol, the International Criminal Court and the Protocol of the Biological Weapons Convention, all international agreements opposed or neglected by the United States. The ostensible refusal of the Bush administration to accept the importance of international law, the relevance of international organization, or the norm of self-constraint through submission to international agreements is deeply disquieting to the European project. The difference between the Bush team's unilateral instincts and Europe's multilateral preferences is not just a disagreement on tactics. It reflects much deeper cleavages in the vision of what the world order should look like. By necessity, these deep philosophical differences extend into the realm of arms control, disarmament and nonproliferation. Europe's hope is that the common sense of the American people that is regularly and continuously demonstrated in public opinion polls will finally prevail over the ideological zeal of the minority that is running the foreign and defense policy shop in Washington, D.C. Europe's hope rests also in the reassertion of the independent role of Congress as controller of the executive. Congress has not exactly been the force of multilateralism in recent years, to be frank; but the recent hearings give some hope that it may return to that role in the future. ♦

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Iran

Iran: A Subtle Problem

John D. Stempel

The problem of assessing Iran on any level is that there are really two Irans—the Persia of the 70 per cent of voters who elected Mohammed Khatami president twice, and the Iran of the fundamentalist radicals lined up behind Ayatollah Khomeini and who still dominate Iran's top governing bodies—The Council of Guardians—as well as the intelligence community, the Ministry of National Guidance, and certain military elements, including the Pasdaran.

The vast majority of Iranians—Thomas Friedman refers to them as “The Bomb”—are young, anti-fundamentalist (but not anti-religious), and want more contact with the world. They support President Khatami and the reformers, who have had a parliamentary majority since February 2000. Many analysts agree, however, they are not yet organized enough to seriously challenge the radical fundamentalists, whose ideology is virulently anti-Western and anti-American.

Since the end of the Iran-Iraq War in 1988, American policy-/decision-makers have alternated between severe criticism of Iran's behavior and efforts to bring Iran back into the community of nations through commercial interaction. The criticism focuses on Iran's behavior in three areas: a) terrorist activities against Americans and others; b) violent opposition to Middle East peace effort, including the Oslo Accords; and c) efforts to acquire nuclear and weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

Efforts to engage Iran have focused on Iran's desire for increased trade with the West, efforts to bring Iran into the international NGO community, and a range of cultural and sports contacts. Iranian trade has expanded with the Europeans, but only slowly and timidly with the U.S., which still maintains significant sanctions against Iran, and has

... the Iranians have let it be known that they do not trust the United Nations to prevent Iraq from developing a sizable nuclear and chemical-biological (CBW) arsenal.

Most intelligence services now believe it possible that Iran may have developed up to three bombs, but still lacks key elements of the delivery technology.

been unable to develop a consensus position for dealing with Iran.

President Bush's 2002 State of the Union speech placed Iran within the "axis of evil," joining it with North Korea and Iraq. It clearly signaled his intention to lump Iran with the bad apples in the international barrel rather than to placate the Iranian moderates and try to seek what many have called "moderate engagement."

Europeans believe there is more to be gained by making a steady effort to strengthen the presidential/parliamentary government than by confrontation. Neither brand of statecraft has produced pronounced results and, at least in the American case, has made consensus a hard commodity to come by. For example, at a recent meeting of the New York Council on Foreign Relations, there were many ideas about how to move Iran toward a more moderate stance, but little agreement on what the next steps should be. Within the councils of government, "hawks" fight with "doves" on what tack to take on the question.

Ironically, Iran's principal strategic concerns have focused on its fellow axis nominee, Iraq. The 1980-88 Iran-Iraq War devastated both countries, leaving them in much the same shape as Germany and France after World War I. Iraq's use of poison gas and chemical weapons provoked the development of an Iranian counter-capability, and the escalation of Iran's nuclear program during the Gulf War was justified by the need to deter Iraq and the United States. The impact of the Iran-Iraq War and the Gulf War has been deep and persistent on Iran, and the Iranians have let it be known that they do not trust the United Nations to prevent Iraq from developing a sizable nuclear and chemical-biological (CBW) arsenal. In practice, it is difficult to determine which country they despise more—the United States or Iraq. They are closer to Iraq, however, and focus more on that threat, while maintaining deep mistrust for the United States.

The Iranian Arsenal

Iran's efforts to strengthen its own capabilities in the WMD areas disturb Western policy-/decision-makers, but Iran has also turned to China, Russia and North Korea for help.¹ This undoubtedly made Iran a candidate for the axis of evil, but it also made it less likely that the United States would be able to exercise any constructive influence upon the country for some time under current circumstances.

There is no doubt that the Iranians already have substantial chemical and biological weapons and have continued to build up stocks, particularly since 1995. These would include chemical weapons with blister, blood and choking capability and, since 1995, 155 mm artillery shells.

From its beginning in the late 1960s as a peaceful nuclear energy program in the Shah's time, the Iranian effort has risen since 1989 to a \$2-3 billion dollar a year weapons procurement effort. Iran ratified the Nonproliferation Treaty in 1970, and has allowed International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors into the country since 1992. No violations have been reported, but enough information has been pieced together outside IAEA auspices to indicate the scope of Iran's nuclear weapons program: there are fifteen power reactors in Iran, plus two identified research reactors; over fifty research facilities, seven or eight of them major laboratories or ranges are active now; and in addition, there are extensive reports of Iranians attempting to (and often succeeding in) getting fissile material.

Western intelligence agencies have differed in their estimates of when Iran will produce an actual bomb, suggesting years from 2003 to 2007. However, in 2000 the CIA adjusted its figures in light of known Iranian efforts and fissile material acquisitions to assert that Iran could have a bomb at any time. No hard evidence has yet been produced to suggest that Iran actually has one. Most intelligence services now believe it possible that Iran may have developed up to three bombs, but still lacks key elements of the delivery technology.

What is known about Iranian missile development to date

Their memories of how the United States refused to help the Shiite rebellion in Iraq at the end of the Gulf War reinforce their ideological view of the U.S. as a hostile and unstable power...

¹ Figures for this discussion are drawn from several sources, but primarily the Federation of American Scientists website (<http://www.fas.org>) keep url, but remove weblink and Edward B. Atkeson, *The Powder Keg* (NOVA Publications, 1996).

suggests that Iran has acquired operational missiles which could hit all neighboring countries, including most of central Iraq and extending to a few points on the other side of the Persian Gulf. It does not have, nor is expected to have in the foreseeable future, anything beyond an intermediate range ballistic missile, with a range of 1,000 to 1,500 miles under the best of operational conditions.

It is clear from the resources that Iran is putting into its nuclear and CBW development that the governing elite is determined to have these capabilities, and is prepared to use them.

Iranian Strategic Doctrine

Protecting the Islamic Revolution is the primary goal of Iranian strategy. From early 1991, government officials called for the development of a nuclear program. Ayatollah Mohajerani, a deputy to then-President Rafsanjani said, "Since the enemy has atomic capabilities, Islamic countries must be armed with the same capacity."² However, the nuclear program has not been developed on the same urgent basis as the CBW capability, which suggests it is more of a deterrent scheme than an offensive projection.

Such deterrence is aimed primarily at Iraq, but as Mohajerani's statement above suggests, the "enemy" includes other possible threats, specifically the United States and Israel. In the wake of September 11 and subsequent U.S. activities in Afghanistan, plus the development of support facilities elsewhere in Central Asia, Iran clearly has its eye on prospective future U.S. activities in the region, which it has suspected and feared from the beginning of the Islamic Revolution.

Where Do We Go?

Bush's naming Iran to the "axis of evil" has certainly limited American options, but has not, as some feel, eliminated all the moderate engagement possibilities. Iran was initially helpful in the war against the Taliban and al Qaeda, offering to rescue allied flyers and through October 2001 at least, closing its border with Afghanistan and helping to organize the interim government of Hamid Karzai. That was the work of more moderate government forces.

Since at least early this year, however, following the assumption of power in the Western province of Afghan's capital Herat by long-time Iranian ally, Ismail Khan, Iran has been hostile to Western efforts. Though Iran supported the

restoration of an Afghan government at two international conferences over the past eight months, it did so in its own interests. Moreover, various intelligence sources believe that as many as 175-200 al Qaeda leaders, including some powerful ones, slipped across the border and are now ensconced in a few camps in western Iran. Iran may now be helping the remaining al Qaeda leadership get back on the terrorist track. The conundrum is how to support "the good guys" while keeping the hammer down on the "bad guys." It is this double-bind aspect which makes Iranian policy so much more complicated than our policy toward Iraq, where everyone in varying degrees is united on the fact that Saddam must go, even if they disagree on how.

The dilemma unfolds like this: thanks to natural intergenerational conflict, the mass of Iran's population now actually looks toward the West to enable itself to rejoin the world. Harsh measures against this basic population (about 70 per cent of the country) go against our long-term interests. Of course, many of these people reacted negatively to being called part of the "axis of evil." But the outcry was rather muted from the non-fundamentalists, and subsequent weeks have seen a discussion spurred by this negative reaction which in several quarters has produced a widening of the gap between the radical fundamentalist clerical leadership and the rest of the country.

On the other hand, the radical fundamentalists' entire philosophy and practice of governance is based on such a deep, abiding anti-Western, and particularly anti-American, hostility that changing their minds is virtually impossible. There is really only one issue where they have shown the kind of pragmatic sensitivity that might make hostility abate under certain circumstances: Iraq. Were it possible to convince them that Iran would be safer by at least tacit collaboration with the West, that, plus the widely recognized need for commerce to stimulate development, might move them.

It should be coldly and objectively noted, however, that the radical fundamentalists have thus far been unmoved by this kind of appeal. Their memories of how the United States refused to help the Shiite rebellion in Iraq at the end of the Gulf War reinforce their ideological view of the U.S. as a hostile and unstable power, even while they respect and fear U.S. military efforts.

The only policy that could work is one that treats the presidential/parliamentary leadership in a more engaging way, and reacts strongly and negatively to things the radical fundamentalists do. The first step in this process would be to stop the "axis of evil" talk—don't retract it, just behave differently toward the elective government. Quietly resume what dialog is possible, even with Tehran's Center for the

² Cited on Federation of American Scientists website, <http://www.fas.org/nuke/buide/iran/doctrine/index.html>. Not sure what good it does to list a page number within a website. Keep url, remove weblink.

Dialog of Civilizations. Where we can agree—on anti-drug assistance, on humanitarian aid (in July the government of Iran accepted U.S. aid for earthquake relief, for example), on allowing U.S.-based non-governmental organizations to operate in Iran, on citizen exchanges (some are going on right now under the American-Iranian Council), and on acquiescing in Iran's bid to join the World Trade Organization.

The United States could continue its assistance with refugee problems and expand its quiet dialog on Afghanistan to include discussion of the Iraqi threat to the region, including the problem of nuclear and chemical-biological deterrence. As the same time, for the “carrot” to move the country in the right direction, it has to be accompanied by a “stick” – a much tougher policy toward Iran's unacceptable international behavior, starting with its harboring of al Qaeda refugees. It is puzzling that there has been little discussion of “hot pursuit” into Iran, even while allied air strikes hit Iraq. Destroying al Qaeda centers in Iran would both meet our counter-terrorist objectives and lay down a hard marker to the radicals who harbor them.

Uncovering and dismantling Iranian-sponsored training camps and subversive networks would similarly send an important behavioral message to those who do the things we most strenuously object to. Our involvement in seeking out al Qaeda cells in places like the Philippines and Indonesia may provide some opportunity for this or, at a minimum, for us to aid others in cracking down on Iranian covert networks.

The point is that undertaking both mutually engaging activities and harsh reactions have been seen as mutually exclusive. They are not. Both will be necessary to bring Iran back to more suitable international behavior if they can be planned and carried out in a complementary fashion. Moreover, by taking both positions—help the “good” Iranians; hinder the “bad” ones—it may be possible to balance out the two sides in the current domestic debate and develop a rough consensus as events move forward.

From antiquity the Iranians have been subject to dichotomies, from the light/darkness of Zoroastrianism to the Muslim/Other of Islam. Hence this dual approach will be culturally recognizable to them. Moreover, it offers the chance to pull contemporary Iranian political culture out from its current obsession with righteousness and martyrdom which makes possession of nuclear/CBW weapons especially dangerous.

From the “good” Iranian perspective, there would be rewards, and the negative actions, while regretted by many, would have the advantage of hurting the “bad” folk. At some

future time when radical fundamentalism stoutly resists popular demands (and it will), it will provoke massive popular riots such as those that occurred three years ago. That would open the way for others to emerge to help diminish or oust the radical clerics—the Army, a more traditional set of Shi'ite clerics, or even the Bazaar merchants. In essence, the above approach invites the radical fundamentalists to repeat the repressive errors of the Shah and suffer the same fate—after which a more true democracy stands a much better chance of emerging from the chaos.

To stumble along in our present stance will neither change the Iranians nor reduce the eventual threat from their current and future weapons of mass destruction. ♦

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An Export Control Policy for Iran: Dealing with the Latent Proliferation Threat

Michael Kraig

Since September 11, there has been increasing talk in Washington's official and unofficial circles about the need for stricter, more comprehensive export controls on dual-use technology items that could be utilized by terrorist groups and/or their state sponsors for illicit weapons purposes. This has also involved repeated admonitions by the United States towards Russia and its European allies that more consistent enforcement of existing controls is required to prevent further proliferation of weapons expertise, components, and technologies.

At the center of this debate has been Iran, a large and geostrategically important country that is linked directly or indirectly with four neighboring regions: Central Asia; South Asia; Europe (through NATO ally Turkey); and the Middle East. This latter region is “linked” with Iran via both high-technology threats and low-intensity warfare: Iranian missile

programs like Shahab-3 could threaten Israel; Israeli threats of military preemption of Iranian nuclear programs and the implicit threats embodied by the Israeli nuclear deterrent are constant background factors; and Iranian aid to anti-Israeli groups in Lebanon, the West Bank, and Gaza Strip continues.

This article will argue that the best export control policy towards Iran in regard to its purported nuclear weapons program should be reliance on the most advanced tools of the Nonproliferation Treaty regime, most notably, the Additional Protocols to the International Atomic Energy Agency Safeguards System.

The Purposes of Export Controls

The first step forward is to recognize that export controls do not themselves constitute an overall national security or foreign policy strategy towards a particular country or region. Rather, they are one of many instruments—diplomatic, economic, legal, and military—that together constitute an overall policy package.

This then raises the most important question: what are the ultimate strategic goals and desires of the United States concerning the Persian Gulf, and Iran's future within it? This question encompasses not only specific concerns such as weapons programs, but more broadly, Iran's regional security position and role, its bilateral relations with the United States, and even its domestic political development (which influences the character of foreign and security policies).

The current, mainstream opinion in Washington is that most Iranian policies of concern are directly linked to certain hard-line “unaccountable” elites who are still trying to maintain and advance the goals of the Iranian revolution, namely, the establishment of an undemocratic, theologically-based Islamic regime internally and the support of such movements and regimes abroad. To date, these revolutionary goals have not only failed internationally but are also increasingly under attack domestically by the majority of the younger generation, by the middle and upper economic classes supporting free trade, and by political liberals favoring free expression. Therefore, to prop up these failing revolutionary goals, the minority cliques of hard-line elites have used their exclusive control over many military and economic levers to support terrorist groups abroad and support WMD and missile programs internally.

If one were to accept this mainstream U.S. picture of the Iranian political situation, then it is fairly obvious that the overall U.S. foreign policy strategy should be one of regime change. This could conceivably be accomplished through

... almost all factions in Iran want their country to become truly self-reliant in areas of high commercial technology, including dual-use forms of technology.

continuation of the “dual containment” policy towards Iran and Iraq. Such a policy would include better enforcement of economic sanctions (encompassing dual-use technology controls), continued efforts to build up the military capabilities of neighboring Arab countries, maintenance of U.S. forward deployments in the region as part of deterrence of Iranian aggression in the Persian Gulf, and finally, the securing of European, Russian, and Chinese agreement towards these ends. In short, the U.S. strategy should be one of bringing about a sea-change in Iranian domestic politics, allowing the pro-Western, pro-trade, and pro-democratic majority in the Iranian polity to come to the fore, which presumably would spell an end to all of the offending policies: WMD programs; missile programs; threatening naval exercises in the Gulf; and support of anti-Israeli groups abroad.

This is, in fact, a mirror reflection of the U.S. containment and isolation strategy during the Cold War towards the Soviet Union, and it is the basic course taken by the current U.S. administration towards Iran. In regard to export controls—which are a key component in this isolation strategy—the goal is to thwart the creation of a “peaceful” nuclear energy and research program, because the current Iranian hard-line elites will inevitably use such a program for largely military purposes. Tellingly, the Bush administration has not made any mention of the new IAEA Additional Protocols as a policy solution, and so one must assume that any Iranian action on this front would not lead to any real alteration in current U.S. export control policies. Or put another way, Iranian accession and adherence to a more comprehensive inspections regime would *not* be regarded by the Bush administration as a verifiable indication of ultimately peaceful Iranian intentions. Given a purportedly unvarying Iranian drive for a weapons capability—presumably inherent in the revolutionary ideology and goals of the hard-line clerical and military elite—Iran could, and would, circumvent and undermine even the most elaborate and encompassing IAEA inspections mandate. The NPT regime and its associated inspection tools are therefore not the answer to the nascent Iranian nuclear threat.

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However, even reformist elements in Iran see no basis in Western claims that Iranian WMD would end up in the hands of terrorists...

The Realities of Iranian Geopolitics, National Interests, and Domestic Debates

The viewpoint described above does not admit any ambiguities in either the nature of the problem or its optimal solution. However, like almost everything in international relations, the reality of Iran is one of gray areas and ambiguities. Several past and present trends are notable.

First, articles in pro-reform Iranian venues, such as the English-language journal *Discourse*, tend to support present defense policies even while they heavily criticize, even lambaste, the “irrational” tendencies of Iranian foreign policies in the areas of trade and diplomatic engagement. While pro-reform authors are increasingly critical of the use of Islam to enforce economic and diplomatic isolation, the same analysts are generally quite supportive of increased conventional defense acquisitions, and many forcefully argue for the right of Iran to establish a “balance of power” within both the Persian Gulf (vis-a-vis Iraq, Arab Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, and the United States) and the Middle East (vis-a-vis Israel). These analysts point to several geopolitical factors that mandate a robust Iranian defense policy: the high level of arms sales in the region; the growing nuclear arsenal of Pakistan, coupled with chronic domestic instabilities and Sunni Islamic extremism in Pakistani politics; the existence of leaders such as Saddam Hussein with expansionist drives; the persistent lack of multilateral cooperation and dialogue in the region (not just between Iran and others, but between the Gulf and the Middle East states, and between the Arab GCC states themselves); and finally, the dependence of many regional states on external military powers through bilateral defense agreements. All of these factors are regarded as destabilizing and unpredictable in the long-term, thereby requiring a prudent policy of Iranian self-reliance.

While these various pro-reform voices generally do *not* support a nuclear capability as a solution (and discount U.S. claims that such programs exist), other perceptions are shared with conservative elements. In particular, the general perception of deep regional instabilities, and the threat of external Great Power intervention caused by this lack of

intra-regional agreement on security matters, is something shared alike by conservatives and liberal factions. In the long term, such sentiments could lead to support of a nuclear weapons program even among pro-Western Iranian analysts and politicians. In this regard, it is notable that the nuclear program as it currently stands was sanctioned and inaugurated by the Shah in the 1970s, relying in part on a pro-nuclear-power study completed by Stanford University in 1974 at the behest of the Nixon administration.

Second, almost all elements of the polity—and certainly those elements with the most influence on either the left or the right—do not want to return to the pre-revolutionary status quo, which involved both the cultural degradation and the forceful police suppression of the Islamic side of the Iranian national identity. The Shah is still viewed by most as a repressive leader who was put in place by external intervention, who adopted Western forms of modernity only at an extremely superficial level, who failed to develop the Iranian political and economic system along true lines of “rational” Western positivism (even while he stifled religious influences in politics), and who made Iran completely dependent on the whims of a foreign power (the United States). In short, intense criticism of the current Islamic state does not necessarily mean support of the Shah’s past version of Westernization.

This negative evaluation of the Shah’s legacy is fueled in part by Shia Islamic notions of equality and social justice, which are ingrained in Iranian culture and political ideals. These ideals are viewed as integral to any future domestic and foreign policy for Iran, including any future democratic system that involves free press domestically and open engagement internationally.

These persistent concerns with international sovereign equality, justice, and independence are extremely similar to the concerns that have fueled Indian nuclear programs in neighboring South Asia since the 1950s (even though the cultural and religious sources of such ideals are radically different). And as with India, almost all factions in Iran want their country to become truly self-reliant in areas of high commercial technology, including dual-use forms of technology. Iran’s one-dimensional, *rentier*-based oil economy is viewed as a negative factor that has continually undermined Iran’s economic development and made Iran dependent on foreign consumers.

Third, there is a widespread and continuing belief among Iranian officials of all stripes that nuclear power is required to lift Iran out of its historic dependence on oil for domestic development. While Western analysts believe this is false—pointing instead to Iran’s plentiful natural gas deposits

as an alternative source of domestic energy –this assessment is not uniformly shared even among pro-reform voices in Iran.

Fourth, the use of missile-delivered *conventional* munitions by Saddam Hussein in the Iran-Iraq War as a form of terror and slaughter among the Iranian civilian population has convinced nearly all factions in Iran of the value of missiles—*with or without WMD payloads*. The U.S. assumption is that since conventional munitions delivered by inaccurate missile systems have no strict military value in set-piece conventional battles, an active missile program is automatically and obviously a sign of an accompanying WMD program. Nuclear munitions in particular are viewed as the great optimizer of missile-based delivery systems, giving “more bang for the buck.” However, in arguing this point, Western powers are putting their own historic weapons practices and strategic analyses onto a foreign situation that is inherently more nuanced and ambiguous. The reality of the Iranian defense debate is that even pro-reform elements favor the Shahab missile programs. Therefore, these missile programs should not be automatically viewed as proof of nuclear weapons aspirations, and Western powers should be prepared for the continuation of Iranian missile projects even in the event that a pro-Western, anti-nuclear regime were to come to power.

Fifth, Iranians view the purported link between Iranian WMD programs and Iran-supported terrorist groups as absurd. Like the United States, Iranian analysts and officials have a deep fear of Sunni fundamentalist groups such as al Qaeda and believe that the terrorist use of WMD principally comes from this direction. Notably, Sunni extremist groups believe that killing a Shi’ite will guarantee entry into heaven (and Iran is the only major nation following Shia Islam). In contrast to this transnational, global terrorist threat emanating from Sunni fundamentalism, Iranians view their support of anti-Israeli terror groups as constituting a freedom struggle that would not benefit from, and would have no use for, WMD. In short, Tehran is unlikely to hand over WMD to terrorist groups that at some future date might be tempted to use them in an intra-Muslim conflict.

That said, some pro-reform elements *do* want to end support for groups using terrorist methods such as Islamic Jihad and Hamas, given the intensely negative consequences of these policies for Iran economically and politically. Many believe (correctly) that an end to these practices is a requirement for rapprochement with the United States, and in turn, rapprochement is viewed as necessary to bring Iran out of its economic doldrums. However, even reformist elements in Iran see no basis in Western claims that Iranian WMD would end up in the hands of terrorists, and that Iranian-aided groups would want to use these weapons if acquired. This

viewpoint is in large part due to the fact that use of such weapons in the West Bank or Gaza Strip would destroy the territory and kill the civilians that these groups presumably want to liberate from Israeli occupation. And outside Israel, as stated above, terrorism is largely viewed as a problem stemming from Sunni fundamentalism, which Iran fears as much as the United States.

Ramifications for U.S. Policy

Simply put, the United States cannot be certain that all Iranian policies of concern would end with the advent of a more open, democratic system. Geopolitical, ideological, cultural, and domestic political factors could lead to support of at least a *latent* nuclear weapons infrastructure far into the future. Thus, export control policies based on the broader U.S. foreign policy strategy of regime change do not constitute a stable, long-term solution to the nascent threat of proliferation. In the meantime—while the Islamic Republic continues—the all-or-nothing US approach to export controls, with no hope whatsoever of any dual-use technology trade under the current Iranian political system, could unnecessarily punish those pro-reformist elements who are strongly against a nuclear weapons option and strongly for international cooperation through legal arrangements.

The vexing ambiguities of the Iranian situation should be viewed as a glass half-full. In contrast with India, Iran is a full, cooperating member of the NPT regime. And, there are recent precedents for successful U.S. management of equally ambiguous, tricky situations—namely, the repeated attempts by Taiwan and South Korea in the 1970s and 80s to turn their latent nuclear weapons infrastructure into weapons programs. The energy projects of Taiwan and South Korea lend themselves much more readily to weapons conversion than the planned Russian-supplied reactors to Iran; nevertheless, they are both members of the IAEA Safeguards system (despite periodic wishes to leave it), and the United States has managed to apply pressure to keep both nations within the non-nuclear fold.

Of course, both of these nations are U.S. allies heavily dependent upon conventional weapons assistance, and therefore are particularly susceptible to external pressure. However, in lieu of such bilateral points of leverage with Iran, the United States could still publicly support Iranian accession to the Enhanced Safeguards inspections system, which represents a multilateral form of leverage more easily accepted as legitimate by an Iranian ideology focused on sovereign equality and independence. Rather than a source of weakness and uncertainty, the Enhanced Safeguards system should be seen as representing the one true point of stability in the Persian Gulf: whatever the ambiguities of

Iranian internal politics and foreign policies, IAEA rules and procedures are clear-cut and unambiguous.

In return for Iranian acceptance of all Additional Protocols, the United States should be prepared to accept a long-term Iranian pursuit of a nuclear energy program that will unavoidably contain latent weapons possibilities. Rather than a problem to be eliminated for all time, the Iranian proliferation threat should be viewed as a foreign policy problem to be managed over the long haul. ♦

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North Korea

The "Axis of Evil" and the Korean Peninsula

Han S. Park

As America's war against terrorism expanded into a global campaign, there emerged a need on the part of the Bush administration to legitimize the campaign as a war on *terrorists*, not a war on Islam. When America began dismantling the Taliban regime in Afghanistan in the months following the 9/11 attack, Osama bin Laden did not hesitate to label the Bush administration's maneuver a war against the Islamic world and call for unity among Arab countries. President Bush needed to show the world that this was not a religious confrontation, but rather a war on behalf of the whole civilized world community against terrorists of all kinds. North Korea, a non-Islamic country, was an ideal choice for inclusion in the "axis of evil." If Washington were to attack Iraq or Iran after having destroyed the Taliban government that harbored al-Qaeda terrorists in Afghanistan, the Islamic world would be likely to counter the United States as a common enemy, something the Bush administration cannot allow to happen. As long as the war on terrorism continues, North Korea will remain a convenient target.

Another force behind the advent of the "axis" has to do with the Bush administration's intense interest in developing the National Missile Defense System (NMD). There is no ambiguity about the president's obsession for the incredibly high priced system designed to destroy incoming missiles from hostile countries before they reach American soil. This program will immensely benefit the military industry, thereby addressing a key interest of the Bush administration. With a target date for completion of 2009, the last year of a second-term Bush administration, the current leadership is waging a concerted effort to justify the expensive project by using North Korea as a rationale. North Korea has consistently been singled out as an untrustworthy and evil-minded country that has the military ability to launch long-range missiles equipped with weapons of mass destruction.

Preemptive military action would be certain once Pyongyang concluded that a U.S. attack was imminent.

Although there is ample circumstantial evidence that North Korea's military capability has reached a level uncomfortable to its neighbors, especially South Korea and Japan, the notion that North Korea poses a threat to the United States is far-fetched.

North Korea is a poverty-stricken country undergoing serious economic difficulty with a severe shortage of food that has resulted in mass starvation during much of the post-Cold War era. The collapse of the Soviet Union ended economic and military assistance to North Korea and Chinese policy changes that included diplomatic normalization with South Korea in 1992 brought a virtual suspension of the "fraternal" relations that Pyongyang had enjoyed with China. German reunification, and the assimilation of the communist East by the West, made North Korea fearful of its own absorption into the economically superior South Korea. All these adversarial developments for North Korea forced the regime to shift its policy focus and national energy to the survival of the system itself.

Nevertheless, North Korea is not only militarily incapable of being a threat to the United States but, more importantly, it lacks the political will to contemplate any military confrontation with the United States that would mean certain self-destruction.

The "axis" and another war in Korea

As suggested earlier, the inclusion of North Korea in the "axis of evil" in the context of America's war on terrorism was necessitated by the political expediencies of the Bush administration. However, the ramifications are gravely important for the Korean people, increasing the probability of another war in the peninsula.

In addition to the increase in the U.S. propensity to attack North Korea as part of an extended global war on terrorism, the possibility of Pyongyang initiating a preemptive strike has increased dramatically. After the Gulf War of 1991, I was told by a key policy maker in North Korea that most of the underground military facilities and weapons would escape destruction in an American military assault, as they are hidden in deep underground tunnels. But the precision of American military offensive strikes, demonstrated by the Afghanistan invasion in the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attack, made North Korea uneasy. Once attacked first by computer-guided American missiles that can penetrate into tunnels and caves with pinpoint precision, Pyongyang would have no offensive weapons left, regardless of where were hidden. The psychology underlying North Korean military strategy may be colored by the urge to use their treasured weapons and trained soldiers before a first attack.

Pyongyang will find the presence of subtle tension between the United States and the European Union conducive to expanding relations with the European countries.

Preemptive military action would be certain once Pyongyang concluded that a U.S. attack was imminent. That critical level of psychological uneasiness may be reached if the Bush administration continues to use hostile rhetoric to undermine North Korea. Unfortunately, it looks as if the Bush administration is not going to cease to demonize the Pyongyang regime, which increases the military threat North Korea poses to the United States and the free world.

Yet another source of military conflict in the Korean peninsula lies in the precarious nature of the armistice agreement, a stark reminder that the Korean War, begun in 1950, has not yet ended. The borders dividing North and South Korea are the most heavily armed in the world, manned by 1.5 million soldiers equipped with sophisticated weapons. Skirmishes can erupt at anytime, as witnessed on June 29 of this year when the naval forces engaged in an extensive battle off the West coast of the peninsula, resulting in dozens of casualties. This incident caused the suspension of impending high-level talks between Washington and Pyongyang. Inter-Korea relations also suffered setbacks as South Koreans began criticizing Seoul's Sunshine Policy toward the North, a policy which has resulted in scores of reconciliatory projects on humanitarian aid and economic exchange. The seemingly irrational and ill-advised aggression on the part of North Korea may have been the result of the inability of the Pyongyang government to control the military sector on frontline combat decisions. Whatever the reasons, the potential for this kind of incident is high as long as the two adversarial governments are at war with each other.

The "axis" and regional relations

North Korea's membership in the "axis of evil" has profound implications for relations among nations surrounding the Korean peninsula.

The current administration's drastic reversal of Clinton administration policy leaves North Korea little choice but to concentrate its efforts on protecting the system from collapse. Reclusive Pyongyang will become even more protective of its status quo, enhancing military build-up and

increasing weapons sales on the international market to earn much-needed foreign currency. This policy posture will provide Washington with greater justification for further pressuring North Korea through punitive measures, including military action.

The “axis of evil” designation is well received in conservative circles, especially among the ultra-rights in South Korea. In the upcoming December presidential election, South Koreans will elect a new president to succeed Kim Dae-jung. All indications are that a new leader will emerge from the opposition party, the Grand National Party, which will clearly take a conservative stance toward North Korea, a position that will be welcomed by the Bush administration. Thus, U.S.-South Korea relations will be far more congenial than they are at the present time, and together the two nations will pursue a policy of containment toward North Korea. As a result, inter-Korea relations will suffer immediately, reverting back to Cold War status.

In the politics of the “axis of evil,” neither Japan nor China will press for a reconciled Korea at the risk of antagonizing the United States. The pragmatically orientated Asian powers will pursue their national interests by maintaining active economic relations with South Korea, even at the risk of further alienating North Korea from the international arena. Pyongyang, on the other hand, is likely to shift its diplomatic emphasis to the European Union in a desperate effort to offset the losses incurred by deteriorating relations with Washington and Seoul. During the last five years or so, Pyongyang achieved diplomatic normalization with practically all nations of Europe including the EU countries. As Europe poses no threat to North Korea’s security or ideological legitimacy, Pyongyang will be more amenable to making concessions to European countries when negotiating with them. Pyongyang will find the presence of subtle tension between the United States and the European Union conducive to expanding relations with the European countries. The same may be said more assertively with respect to Pyongyang’s relations with the Middle East, especially with those countries adversarial to the United States.

Conclusion

Despite the tragedy of the 9/11 terrorist attack that killed more than 3,000 innocent people, the Bush administration’s inclusion of North Korea in the “axis” cannot be justified. The North Korean government does not have any functional links to al-Qaeda or any other international terrorist organization. The “axis” concept was engineered for the Bush administration’s political expediency, to boost its popularity among the American people under the banner of the anti-terrorist campaign. President Bush has made himself a wartime

president and wartime presidents have always been popular in American history, as defenders of the country from external enemies. In this case, American patriotism is being fashioned into support for the leadership.

The “axis of evil,” however, casts a dark cloud over the prospects for stability and peace in the Korean peninsula. Hostile policies stemming from the “axis” speech compound the deteriorating relations between Pyongyang and both Washington and Seoul, leading to the possibility of another war in the Korean peninsula, one that would be destined to produce catastrophic consequences. ♦

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Crisis in 2003?

North Korea’s WMD Program

Timothy L. Savage

It has been nearly a decade since the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) found a discrepancy in North Korea’s declaration of its nuclear activities, touching off a confrontation with the United States. War was avoided through the signing of the Agreed Framework in Geneva in October 1994, according to which North Korea agreed to freeze operations at its graphite-moderated reactor in Yongbyon in exchange for two new light-water reactors (LWRs) and yearly shipments of heavy fuel oil until the reactors are completed. While the agreement did halt North Korea’s nuclear activities, it failed to usher in a new era of U.S.-North Korean relations, as Pyongyang had hoped, or answer all the questions regarding North Korea’s weapons of mass destruction (WMD) programs, as Washington had hoped. When George W. Bush came to power, opponents of the agreement were assured of a more sympathetic ear in the White House, and the future of the Agreed Framework was put in doubt. With a confluence of deadlines and political uncertainties, 2003 may be a critical date for deciding the future of North Korea’s WMD program.

Under the 1994 agreement, 2003 was set as the “target date” for completion of the LWRs. The date was always an optimistic one, especially for a project that requires coordinating among multiple governments; although the agreement was signed between the United States and North Korea, South Korea and Japan are providing the majority of the

Critics of the Agreed Framework have long argued that it buys time for North Korea clandestinely to continue its nuclear program free from IAEA constraints.

funding. Although both sides share some of the blame for the delays, Pyongyang's recalcitrance—sending spy ships to South Korea and Japan; demanding higher pay for the its workers—is the primary cause of the slowdown. The concrete for the construction was finally poured in the first week of August 2002, leaving the completion of the reactors several years in the future.

Officially, North Korea has treated 2003 not as a target date as spelled out in the agreement, but as a firm deadline, the passing of which would constitute a breach on the part of the United States and free Pyongyang from its obligations under the agreement. In reality, North Korea's interest in getting the reactors outweighs any resentment it may hold over the delay. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union cut off North Korea's supply of cheap oil, the country has been enmeshed in a protracted energy crisis that in turn has devastated both its industrial and agricultural sectors, leading to widespread malnutrition and starvation.¹ With limited energy resources available and scant foreign exchange to purchase what it needs, North Korea views the LWRs as a potential solution to its energy problems. Thus rather breaking the agreement, Pyongyang is more likely to attempt to use the construction delay to wring more concessions out of Washington and its allies. North Korea may also realize that the delay could ultimately be to its advantage, as it will afford more time to come up with solutions to some of the severe technical difficulties involved with utilizing two large nuclear reactors on North Korea's small, dilapidated power grid.²

If a crisis is to come in 2003, it may be more likely that the United States is the instigator than North Korea. According to the Agreed Framework, when a "significant portion" of the reactor construction has been completed, but before the delivery of the key nuclear components, North Korea must come into full compliance with IAEA safeguards and verify

its past nuclear activities. Critics have argued that this process will take approximately three years.³ With the pouring of the concrete, the "significant portion" milestone should be reached around May 2005. Therefore, the argument goes, if the project is to avoid further delays, North Korea should allow IAEA inspectors to begin the process this year. This was the justification behind U.S. president George W. Bush's decision not to certify that North Korea is in compliance with the agreement, although he waived the certification requirement on national security grounds, allowing the oil deliveries to continue. An unnamed U.S. official was quoted shortly afterward as warning that should North Korea fail to allow the IAEA inspections to begin next year, Washington is prepared to walk away from the agreement.

Critics of the Agreed Framework have long argued that it buys time for North Korea clandestinely to continue its nuclear program free from IAEA constraints. They see Pyongyang's foot-dragging as further evidence of North Korea's nefarious intentions.⁴ There is an alternative explanation, however. North Korea, not without reason, doubts the Bush administration's commitment to fulfilling the Agreed Framework. Pyongyang views, correctly, that Washington's primary interest in continuing the agreement is to get information about North Korea's nuclear history. Thus it likely fears that if it shows its cards too soon, the United States will no longer feel obligated to continue to cooperate. Given the Bush administration's general disdain for international treaties, its commitment to a non-treaty agreement negotiated by the previous administration can be called into question.

The United States is concerned not only with North Korea's nuclear weapons program, but also with its production and sale of long-range missiles. Before becoming secretary of defense, Donald Rumsfeld headed a study that warned that North Korea could have intercontinental missiles capable

Aid workers who have been to North Korea and have visited its factories have noted the overall lack of mechanization or mass production capability.

¹ Jim William, David Von Hippel, and Peter Hayes, "Fuel and Famine: Rural Energy Crisis in the DPRK," Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation, *Policy Paper 46*, April, 2000: http://www-igcc.ucsd.edu/publications/policy_papers/pp46.html.

² North Korea has neither sufficient total installed capacity nor a properly functioning electrical grid required to safely run even one of the 1 gigawatt reactors. For a discussion of the issues involved, see David Von Hippel et al., "Modernizing the US-DPRK Agreed Framework: The Energy Imperative," February 16, 2000, at <http://www.nautilus.org/papers/energy/ModernizingAF.pdf>.

³ When South Africa renounced its nuclear weapons program, it took approximately two years for the IAEA to complete verification with a high degree of cooperation from the South African government. Whether North Korea will prove equally cooperative remains to be seen. Henry Sokolski and Victor Gilinsky, "Bush is Right to Get Tough with North Korea," *Wall Street Journal*, February 11, 2002.

⁴ *Ibid.*

...despite recent indications that North Korea is preparing to expel a group of Japanese Red Army hijackers in an attempt to get removed from the State Department list of state sponsors of terrorism, it is unlikely that the Bush administration is prepared to make any major breakthroughs in relations with Pyongyang.

of hitting the United States with nuclear, chemical, or biological warheads by 2015. In August 1998, North Korea successfully launched a three-stage rocket, the Taepodong, that overflew Japan and landed in the Pacific Ocean, although the third stage was at least a partial failure. At the time, U.S.-North Korean relations were at a standstill, but the missile test brought renewed U.S. attention to the Korean Peninsula situation, a phenomenon which was surely not lost on the North Korean leadership. In a subsequent visit to Pyongyang by Russian president Vladimir Putin, North Korean leader Kim Jong Il pledged a moratorium on missile tests until 2003. He later reiterated the promise to visiting US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.⁵ The choice of 2003 as the end date of the moratorium seems designed to coincide with the target date for completion of the LWRs, to give North Korea one more bargaining chip to use in its negotiations with Washington.

There are numerous indications that North Korea views its missile program as more of a monetary asset than a strategic one. North Korea has sold missiles to such "rogue" states as Iran, Iraq, and Pakistan. In 1992, Israel tried to negotiate a deal with Pyongyang to put a halt to such deals in exchange for almost \$1 billion in aid, but the United States intervened to prevent the deal.⁶ Since then, Pyongyang has frequently offered to end its missile sales if the U.S. provides some form of compensation.⁷ This willingness to trade in its missile programs reflects two realities: North Korea's desperate need for foreign currency and the poor quality of its missiles. The ability of North Korea to sell its missiles abroad results

more from the difficulties that states like Iran, Iraq, and Pakistan have in acquiring missile technology than the technological prowess of North Korean arms manufacturers. Aid workers who have been to North Korea and have visited its factories have noted the overall lack of mechanization or mass production capability. Parts for machines, be they tractors or hydropower plants, are bent and welded piecemeal because of lack of casting technology. While it is likely that North Korea dedicates more resources to missiles than to other manufactures under the "military first policy," it is still difficult to believe that a country so woefully backwards in all other aspects could be capable of dealing a major military blow to the world's sole remaining superpower.

North Korea may hope that the threat of being able to hit the U.S. mainland may be sufficient to prevent a pre-emptive strike of the type that President Bush recently warned may be used against suspected proliferators,⁸ thus giving it a limited deterrent capability. However, it has no reason to believe that the threat of missile attack would cause Washington to abandon its fifty-year alliance with South Korea should North Korea attempt another invasion. North Korea's missiles have neither the accuracy nor the payload capacity to be able to do serious damage to the U.S. military's ability to counterattack if Pyongyang attempted a first strike. Such an attack would undoubtedly result in a massive retaliation that would likely cause the end of North Korea as we know it. While Pyongyang's heavy-handed propaganda and the bizarre personality cult around leader Kim Jong Il make it easy for U.S. policymakers to portray the North Korean leadership as "crazy," there is no reason to believe that they are preparing to commit national suicide.

If North Korea is eager to resolve the missile issue, the United States would appear less inclined to find a negotiated solution. Ideologically, the Bush administration is opposed to the idea of paying off North Korea, as it sees such deals as rewarding bad behavior. Moreover, removing the North Korean missile threat would undermine the rationale for a National Missile Defense, one of the administration's longest-standing priorities. North Korea also holds pride of place in Bush's "axis of evil" as the only non-Muslim nation. Including Pyongyang in the notorious triad with Tehran and Baghdad helps the Bush administration to counter arguments that the "war on terrorism" is really a war on Islam. Thus, despite recent indications that North Korea is preparing to expel a group of Japanese Red Army hijackers in an attempt to get removed from the State Department list of state sponsors of terrorism, it is unlikely that the Bush administration is prepared to make any major breakthroughs in relations

⁵ Reuters, Jonathan Wright, "U.S. Says North Korea Pledges No More Missile Launches," Pyongyang, 10/24/00.

⁶ David Wright, "Cut North Korea Some Slack," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Vol. 55, No. 2 (March/April 1999).

⁷ Leon Sigal, "For Sale: North Korea's Missile Program," *Northeast Asia Peace & Security Network Policy Forum Online* #22 (November 11, 1998): http://www.nautilus.org/fora/security/22A_Sigal.html.

⁸"Bush's United States Military Academy Graduation Speech," *Washington Post*, June 2, 2002.

with Pyongyang.

The future of the Korean Peninsula is clouded still further by the uncertainty of the outcome of the South Korean presidential elections slated for December. It is an open secret that the Bush administration prefers the more conservative opposition candidate, Lee Hoi Chang, over the candidate of the ruling party, former dissident Roh Moo Hyun. Lee has been a constant critic of incumbent President Kim Dae Jung's "sunshine policy" of engaging North Korea, arguing that it gives too much to North Korea while ignoring the principal of reciprocity. Lee currently leads the polls, bolstered by his party's victory in parliamentary by-elections and public anger over the recent Yellow Sea naval clash in which four South Korean sailors were killed when a North Korean naval vessel opened fire. In South Korean politics, however, political parties remain less ideological groupings than coalitions around a single leader, and the much-rumored entry of two charismatic independent candidates could still upset the balance before the election. Chung Mong Joon, son of the founder of Hyundai, enjoys immense popularity due to his role as head of the South Korean Football Association during the host nation's surprising showing in the World Cup. Park Geun-hye, daughter of the late dictator Park Chung Hee, appeals to those citizens who view her father's iron-handed rule nostalgically in comparison to the corruption scandals that have engulfed his successors. There is also the possibility that North Korea itself could influence the election by pulling off a "November surprise," such as the realization of Kim Jong Il's promised visit to Seoul in reciprocation for the June, 2000 summit meeting in Pyongyang. Should upcoming North-South talks result in some concrete developments, it would likely benefit Roh's election chances.

Even should Lee Hoi Chang win the election, once in power he may find that some aspects of the sunshine policy are worth preserving. Although the South Korean public may be growing increasingly skeptical about the prospects for reunification with North Korea, no one wants to risk the country's hard-won democracy and economic development in a war with a heavily armed state that sits only thirty kilometers from Seoul. Thus some degree of engagement to keep the peace is likely to continue under any new South Korean administration. Fear of the damage that North Korea could impose upon the South even in a losing effort also imposes a constraint on the unilateralist tendencies of the Bush administration. While some conservative columnists in the US crowed about the inevitability of U.S. military action against North Korea following Bush's "axis of evil" speech,⁹ even the most hawkish U.S. officials would think

twice about imposing a war on an unwilling ally that would bear the brunt of the damage. The outcome of the current debates over a possible U.S. strike against Iraq could also affect America's ability to impose its will upon North Korea. The U.S. military, which is already grumbling about the possible costs of a war to oust Saddam Hussein, will not be eager to open a second front with a foe whose capacity to send American soldiers home in body bags they know all too well. Administration officials and members of Congress are also debating whether refusal to allow inspections constitutes sufficient grounds for an attack on Iraq, which could set a precedent for dealing with North Korea.

With the confluence of the above-described issues, 2003 looms as a critical time for the future of the North Korean WMD issue. A crisis is not inevitable. In addition to North Korea's apparent willingness to negotiate away its missile sales, there are a number of economic cooperation projects on the table, such as railway interconnections and electricity trading, that could be implemented should the WMD issues be resolved. These in turn would constitute part of the long-run solution to the underlying motivation behind North Korea's WMD program—its isolation and economic desperation. North Korea's surprising recent move to devalue its currency and increase wages and prices to put the state more on the road to a real cash economy suggest that it may be getting ready to implement some of the tentative agreements it has reached on economic cooperation with South Korea, Russia, and others. The question is whether the political will exists in all the capitals—Pyongyang, Seoul, and Washington—to take the difficult steps needed to build new relationships among long-time foes. What does seem certain is that the United States will not be able to simply ignore the issue. Recent history has shown that North Korea has both the ability and the willingness to resort to provocative actions if it feels it is not getting enough attention in Washington. U.S. policymakers must decide whether to proactively seize the opportunity to influence future developments on the Korean Peninsula, or to wait and take a reactive approach. ♦

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9. Willaim Safire, "To Fight Freedom's Fight", *New York Times*, January 31, 2002.

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