

had only five Arabic speakers capable of appearing on Arab television? Beyond ramping up attendance at language schools, we also should recruit a corps of Muslim-American volunteers to tell America's story around the Muslim world. A landmark poll by the Pew Research Center found that U.S. Muslims are well-assimilated, on average well-educated and prosperous, and satisfied with the way their lives are going. They are, in short, uniquely qualified to testify to the essential compatibility between Islamic faith and culture and liberal democracy. America needs these credible interlocutors who can debate, challenge, and reason with Muslims—preferably in their own language.

Finally, given America's diminished moral stature in the Muslim world, we should work with Europe and other great powers to marshal the legitimating force of international agreements and institutions to stigmatize terrorism. For example, we should push for a new international anti-terrorism treaty that outlaws all acts of violence against noncombatants—with no exceptions for “resistance” to occupation. The next president should lift the administration's pigheaded bar on U.S. participation in the International Criminal Court and ask that body to indict Al Qaeda and other terrorist leaders for crimes against humanity.

The civil war raging today within Islam is not ours to win or lose. But America can help to tip history's scales by standing alongside those who are willing to take a stand against fanaticism and terror. ▀

Engage Iran

Suzanne Maloney & Ray Takeyh

We may not leave Baghdad with Iraqis scrambling to the roof of our billion-dollar embassy and clinging to the struts of departing American helicopters, but we will likely bequeath a state incapable of protecting its people or defending its borders against even today's threats. Ultimately, Iraq's democratic edifice, erected at such great cost, will likely crumble from a combination of internal and external pressures, and whatever succeeds it will surely be even less appealing for the United States and for Iraq's neighbors. We will face a profusion of trigger points and potential dangers from actors inside

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Iraq and across the region. Some proportion of Iraq will no doubt continue to provide hospitable sanctuary for Al Qaeda and its aspirants seeking to hone their tactics. In the meantime, the entanglement of the broader Gulf and the Middle East in Iraq's internal turmoil is likely to worsen.

Looming over this dire scene is the specter of Iran. No piece of the tragic puzzle that is post-Saddam Iraq evokes greater anxiety within Washington or among its regional allies than the role and ambitions of the Islamic Republic. Tehran has emerged if not triumphant then at least greatly empowered by the American adventure in Iraq, and a dramatic reversal of its fortunes, as the United States begins to script its departure or redeployment, is highly unlikely. Under almost any conceivable near-term scenario, the regime that is Baghdad's historic adversary and an implacable antagonist of the United States will inherit the dominant role in shaping Iraq's future and the security environment of the Persian Gulf. And this reality is the starting point from which a new American strategy in the region must flow.

The centrality of Iran to Iraq's current morass and prospective trajectory makes it an indispensable player in fashioning an American exit path and a viable framework for stabilizing Iraq and the region. Iran is undoubtedly part of the problem in Iraq, but there can be no effective, enduring solution without Tehran playing a constructive role. Achieving Iranian cooperation will necessitate the very tool that the Bush Administration has disdained in dealing with Iran, dialogue—in particular the sort of quiet, sustained, pragmatic diplomacy between Washington and Tehran that from 2001 to 2003 generated a post-Taliban government in Afghanistan. In this way, engaging Iran to help salvage Iraq could also offer the best platform for an incrementalist approach to altering Iran's more objectionable policies.

That Iran has reaped the inadvertent windfalls of regime change in Iraq is as much a product of choice as chance. By virtue of the long war between the two countries, the Islamic Republic was the natural sponsor and host of most of Saddam's opponents. Beyond that accident of history, however, Iran has worked assiduously since the fall of the Baathist regime to maximize its leverage in post-Saddam Iraq and hedge its bets against an unfriendly Baghdad. As a result, it has the dubious distinction of being the most ardent regional supporter of American-administered Iraq, at the same time as its leadership has fortified the networks and capabilities of the anti-American insurgents who have reduced the Baghdad government to a brittle shell. Iran's primacy significantly compounds the alarms sounded by Iraq's internal inadequacies, and it upends the intended outcome of Operation Iraqi Freedom and the prevailing American strategy in the Gulf.

Nevertheless, it is not axiomatic that as Tehran becomes the regional heavy-weight it will begin to play the hegemon. Iran's massive, multi-faceted investment in Iraq is driven by existential rather than ideological interests, a distinction that is critical to appreciating Iranian actions in Iraq as well as to anticipating its future course. Iran has not sought to export its revolutionary theocracy to Iraq, nor has it exploited its influence there to destabilize Iraq's neighbors or disrupt key energy markets and transportation corridors. Such restraint should not be interpreted as evidence of Iranian benevolence—no doubt such exploits remain gleams in the eyes of some Iranian hardliners—but rather as confirmation that Iran's most vital interests can in fact override the temptations of ideology.

In Iraq, what matters most to Tehran is deterring the two threats—one historic and one prospective—with the proven capacity to imperil the Islamic regime: Sunni Baathists and the American military. To ensure against the former, Iran has thrown its weight behind any and every Shia and Kurdish faction that will accept its largesse, while lavishing Iraq's precarious central government with the sort of diplomatic and financial support that U.S. diplomats routinely, fruitlessly importune the Gulf governments to provide. Its generosity toward Shia militants in Iraq has the added benefit for Iran's leadership of bloodying its other adversary, the United States.

Iran's supporting role in the violence perpetrated by some of its Iraqi allies invites a direct and correspondingly forceful U.S. response, such as the efforts over the past six months to interdict Iranian agents in Iraq. Limited, effective strikes on Iran's most nefarious activities may well temper Tehran's recklessness, as Iranian leaders want to avoid provoking a reeling American giant. But escalating against Iran in Iraq also risks inciting a full-fledged proxy war, which will only further inflame Iraq and the region. Iran is likely to persist and prevail in what is effectively its home turf—the killing fields of its own disastrous, futile war.

Engagement, then, needs to constitute the primary thrust of the American approach to Iran. The purpose of engaging with Tehran is not to reward its dangerous policies, but to restrain and redirect them. There are few good alternatives to working more intensively with Iran over Iraq. There is no other country with its interest, investments, or leverage with key Iraqi actors; more disturbingly, its capacity for wreaking havoc in Iraq has been as yet only partially deployed. Developing a vehicle for serious dialogue with Iran's leaders would be aimed at bolstering Iran's investment in a functional Iraqi state, encouraging Iran to rein in its recalcitrant allies and help temper their sectarian demands, and identifying clear red lines for Iran's multifarious activities in Iraq.

Developing a *modus vivendi* with Tehran on a post-American future for Iraq should not undermine our broader agenda with respect to Iran's nuclear ambitions, support for terrorism, and human rights abuses. The Islamic regime may well seek trade-offs in exchange for its assistance in Iraq, but Washington will be under no obligation to provide them. And our departure or redeployment from Iraq will at least partially redress the disparity between Iran's interests and actions in Iraq, depriving Iran of its easy opportunities to bleed Washington and forcing its leadership to confront the contradictions within their dual-track approach to Iraq. The costs of cultivating Moqtada Al Sadr's militancy or funneling weaponry to any willing recipient become manifestly higher when faced with the potential blowback from a turbulent, disintegrating Iraq unchecked by American military presence. Likewise, the imperatives for cooperation rise correspondingly.

Talking to Tehran has only just begun, after at least two years of inexplicable reluctance by the Bush Administration to utilize the very mechanism, the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, it had long authorized. Ambassador Ryan Crocker's meeting with his Iranian counterpart is a useful starting point, but the dialogue needs to move beyond mutual recriminations to identification of specific expectations and areas of common interest.

To induce Iran to rein in its assistance to Sadrist militias, Washington should dangle a confidence-building measure that is of relatively low cost to the United States but of high value to Tehran: a serious plan to transition responsibility for Camp Ashraf, which houses more than 3,000 members of an Iranian terrorist group formerly backed by Saddam Hussein, to the International Committee of the Red Cross. If a foundation for cooperation can be established between Washington and Tehran, other key neighbors, such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, should be invited to participate in creating a regional diplomatic platform and to avert destabilizing countermeasures by the leading Sunni states.

For some within the Bush Administration, the notion of leaving Iraq or talking with Tehran is an affront to America's moral and security responsibilities. Ironically, however, Iran is the country in the region most supportive of Iraq's precarious democratic institutions—and the one that is most averse to a jury-rigged replacement. The challenge for the United States, then, is to establish a diplomatic process that generates region-wide buy-in to a stable, unified future for Iraq. The broader international mechanisms established to date, particularly the International Compact With Iraq, have been markedly less than success-

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ful, and the Administration's regional diplomacy initiatives, such as the Gulf Security Dialogue, have produced little beyond a lucrative stream of new arms sales. Regional diplomacy may not save Iraq from the vicious cycle of sectarian violence that is consuming the state, but it can contain some of the spillover effects and avert the sort of regional proxy war that would produce an even more poisonous conflagration in Iraq.

The only formula for constructing a viable way out of the sordid mess in Iraq and a meaningful framework for security in the region entails a concerted regional mediation effort organized by the one party that still holds the cards in Iraq: Washington. A lessened American presence in Iraq may just invoke a degree of caution and responsibility on the part of Tehran, forcing the recalcitrant theocracy to behave in a more judicious manner and open itself up to dialogue with the United States—if Washington is willing to talk. ▀

Tend to Turkey

Elizabeth Sherwood-Randall

In the wake of the Iraq debacle, the United States will occupy a position of greatly diminished stature and leverage among the many allies that stepped forward to offer unqualified support immediately after September 11, 2001. No relationship has been more badly damaged in this relatively short period of time, or is in greater need of repair, than the alliance between the United States and Turkey. Although America's standing has declined precipitously across Europe, Turkey is the one NATO country at risk of becoming strategically unmoored.

The war has had a profound and disorienting effect on Turkey—the only Muslim nation anchored in the West through bilateral ties with the United States and membership in NATO. In some polls, Turks are reported to have the least favorable public opinion of the United States among countries surveyed. The Bush Administration's actions have ominously alienated a generation of young people unfamiliar with the positive legacy of American global leadership. Across the population, a slow process of disenchantment and disengagement has taken place. If this negative trajectory is not reversed, Turkey could seek

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