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Iraq: Time for a Modified Approach

Ten years after the Gulf War, Iraq constitutes a much-reduced challenge to U.S. interests in the Gulf region. Military and economic measures have deterred Saddam Hussein—the initiator of the Iran-Iraq War and the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait—from embarking on further acts of external aggression over the past decade. Iraqi military capabilities have not been restored to pre-Gulf War levels. Nevertheless, the picture is not all positive. The ability of the United States to ensure that Iraq remains a negligible threat is fast eroding. Complicating the administration's efforts in Iraq is the deterioration of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, which has seriously reduced both American standing in the region and Arab willingness to support a punitive approach toward Saddam. For these reasons, President Bush should act quickly to craft a modified Iraq policy which commands broader international support while continuing to stem the Iraqi threat.

Sanctions in particular are coming under pressure. Despite substantial evidence to the contrary, Saddam Hussein has successfully convinced much of the world that the woeful humanitarian condition of Iraqi civilians is the result of sanctions, not of his own reluctance to ease their pain, either through the full use of UN-sponsored programs or the expenditure of any portion of the enormous resources he lavishes on his inner circle. This widespread misperception of Western culpability for and indifference to the suffering of Iraqis—further inflamed by recent Israeli use of force against Palestinians—has transformed sanctions fatigue into sanctions outrage in the Arab world.

Arab protests are far from the only challenges to the Iraqi sanctions regime. In recent months, European, African, Asian, and Middle Eastern countries have registered their disapproval of sanctions by sending airlines to Baghdad in violation of what was until recently a universally-respected suspension of flights to Iraq. The flurry of activity at Saddam International Airport has been matched by countries clamoring to re-establish diplomatic relations with Baghdad. Moreover, an increasing number of countries—including three of the five UN Security Council (UNSC) members—are calling for an easing of the sanctions on Iraq. All this, in combination with the success of Saddam's ever-growing smuggling network, has transformed sanctions fatigue into sanctions defeatism in Washington, D.C.



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A Revised Iraq Policy

Yet, despite these challenges, sanctions remain the cornerstone of both U.S. and UN policy toward Iraq. However imperfect they may be, sanctions have imposed significant costs on Saddam Hussein and curtailed his ability to provoke unrest in the region. Even acknowledging the recent erosion that has occurred, the most important elements of the sanctions regime remain in place; the United Nations controls the proceeds from all legal Iraqi oil sales and international restrictions on the sale of weapons and dual-use technology to Iraq still frustrate Saddam's ambitions to reconstruct and modernize Iraq's military capabilities.

Faced with this situation, the new U.S. administration will promptly need to re-think the Iraq policy it inherits from the Clinton team. A renewed U.S. position on the sanctions regime, while critical, will be just one piece in the overall puzzle of an improved Iraq policy. A willingness to use military force in larger amounts is also likely to be necessary. Lastly, there is a case for increased support for the Iraqi opposition, although it is not clear that these groups will ever be strong enough to pose a serious threat to the regime.

Yet, no matter what course the Bush administration wishes to pursue concerning military action and covert policies, it will desire a sanctions regime with solid international support to buttress its efforts elsewhere. Given the declining enthusiasm of many countries for the current sanctions on Iraq, recapturing and sustaining international support for these economic measures will require action beyond tweaking the status quo. Instead, building a stronger coalition will entail accepting a less comprehensive sanctions regime. Recognizing this, the Bush administration should advocate lifting certain sanctions in return for renewed international commitment to a narrower set of measures. Spearheading the creation of such a modified sanctions regime is the best way the United States can achieve a new international consensus on Iraq, while maintaining the sanctions which have been most successful in containing the regime of Saddam Hussein.

The Sanctions Record

Notwithstanding the current sanctions outrage and sanctions defeatism, the record of sanctions on Iraq has been anything but dismal. Admittedly, sanctions have not achieved the most ambitious goal of removing Saddam Hussein from power. But while regime change may have been an avowed American ambition, it was never an objective that the United Nations intended to achieve through sanctions. The inability of UN sanctions to bring about such dramatic change in the internal structures of Iraq is more a reflection of Saddam's tenacity and the poor use of other foreign policy instruments than a failure of sanctions themselves.

A fairer evaluation of sanctions would reveal some important achievements. Although the first sanctions imposed under UNSC resolution 661 in August 1990 did not force Iraq to

for the Bush Administration

withdraw from Kuwait, they did provide the United States with the opportunity to organize a military coalition against Iraqi occupation while the world waited for sanctions to bite. Continued Iraqi intransigence in the face of sanctions also helped build a consensus for military action among international actors initially reluctant to use force. Similarly, the sanctions enshrined in UNSC resolution 687 shortly after Operation Desert Storm ousted Iraq from Kuwait did not achieve Iraq's complete disarmament as hoped, but were instrumental in securing Iraqi recognition of Kuwaiti borders and extracting some Iraqi cooperation with the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM). Although UNSCOM never completed its mission to ensure that Iraq was fully disarmed, it made substantial progress in disabling Iraqi weapons of mass destruction capabilities, particularly in the realms of missiles and nuclear and chemical weapons.

Perhaps of even greater importance, sanctions deserve credit for keeping vast resources out of the hands of a regime dedicated to attaining and augmenting its weapons of mass destruction capabilities. For more than the first five years that sanctions were in place, Iraq exported no oil legally with the exception of a small quantity under a UN-acknowledged deal with Jordan. Once Iraq finally accepted the UN sponsored Oil-for-Food program in 1996, it resumed its oil exports. However, the revenues from these sales have been placed in a UN-managed escrow account from which Iraqi withdrawals are limited almost exclusively to funds for the purchase of food and medicine for Iraqi civilians under UN supervision. Rough calculations reveal that

Selected UN Security Council Resolutions

Resolution 661: Adopted Aug. 6, 1990

- Imposed comprehensive trade, aid, and financial sanctions (exempting humanitarian aid and trade) on Iraq in wake of its invasion of Kuwait.
- Froze overseas assets not only of Iraq, but also Kuwait, to keep Iraq from gaining further access to Kuwaiti wealth.

Resolution 687: Adopted April 3, 1991

- Established terms of cease-fire and delineated conditions for lifting of sanctions.
- Demanded that Iraq recognize UN-demarcated border with Kuwait.
- Required that Iraq remove or destroy all of its nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, as well as ballistic missiles with a range of more than 150 km.
- Created UN Special Commission (UNSCOM) to supervise and document Iraq's disarmament.

Resolution 1284: Adopted Dec. 17, 1999:

- Created UN Monitoring and Verification Committee (UNMOVIC) and specified procedures for its conduct.
- Broadened humanitarian provisions.
- Outlined conditions for suspension of sanctions for renewable 120-day periods once Iraqi cooperation with UNMOVIC and International Atomic Energy Agency is well-established.

over the course of the last decade, Iraq has foregone control of nearly \$150 billion of oil revenues due to its reluctance to comply with UN resolutions demanding its disarmament. The lack of these funds has severely hindered Iraq's ability to rebuild and modernize its conventional military and has thwarted its pursuit of nuclear weapons. Under these restraints, Iraq's past pattern of military adventurism in the region has been curbed.

Despite these achievements, current challenges to the sanctions regime and escalating smuggling profits accruing to Saddam Hussein indicate that significant erosion of sanctions is taking place. Although the United States will be unable to completely stem this erosion, it can and should influence the degree and rate at which it occurs. Those who might argue that the inevitable collapse of sanctions at some future point invalidates efforts to forestall it today should look to the non-proliferation regime. While not expected to halt the spread of nuclear weapons completely, that regime has slowed proliferation far longer than anticipated and helped make it more manageable in those few instances when it has occurred. Similarly, if a modified Iraqi sanctions regime can give the world another decade during which Saddam Hussein is restrained, if not totally tamed, then it is worth pursuing.

A New Deal with U.S. Coalition Partners

Past efforts to modify Iraqi sanctions have failed because they sought to change the underlying tenets guiding Iraqi behavior toward the United Nations. Most notably, UNSC resolution 1284 was the product of intense deliberations intended to recast the sanctions regime in a way that enticed Saddam Hussein to comply with the original UN demands for

Iraqi disarmament. The resolution, passed in December 1999 with France, Russia, and China all abstaining, offered the Iraqi regime greater incentives to allow a new UN weapons inspection team to enter Iraq and complete the disarmament mission begun by UNSCOM. As well as offering other inducements, the resolution stipulated that trade sanctions on non-military and dual-use items would be suspended after establishment of full Iraqi cooperation with the new inspections operation, the United Nations Monitoring, Verification, and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC). These new terms were considerably more favorable to Iraq than those put forth nearly a decade earlier in UNSC resolution 687, which demanded full disarmament before any sanctions relief was provided. Despite

this, Iraq rejected UNSC resolution 1284 and declared its continued opposition to both weapons inspections and international sanctions.

Iraq's ongoing defiance of UN resolutions suggests that it is unrealistic to expect meaningful Iraqi cooperation with the United Nations. In an international climate increasingly sympathetic to Iraq, this cooperation is almost certain to be elusive as long as Saddam is in power. The United Nations may wish to continue a dialogue with Iraq over sanctions in the hope that internal politics force a change of tactics in Baghdad, just as an economic crisis in 1995 led Saddam to accept the UN Oil-For-Food program after almost five years of rejecting it.

However imperfect they may be, sanctions have imposed significant costs on Saddam Hussein and curtailed his ability to provoke unrest in the region.

In these discussions, however, the United Nations should not make any further concessions to Iraq in order to gain its cooperation. Although such talks might provide Iraq with a face-saving mechanism allowing it to adhere to UNSC resolution 1284, the United States and other Security Council members should make no further compromises concerning the robustness of the inspections or the terms for the suspension or lifting of sanctions. To do so would run the risk of creating an inspections regime which is not intrusive enough to ensure Iraqi disarmament, yet provides Iraq with a vehicle for claiming it has fully complied with UN resolutions and therefore deserves comprehensive sanctions relief. Not only should a strict implementation of UNSC resolution 1284 remain the basis for discussions with Iraq, but, judging from past experiences, any new agreement with Iraq should be met with caution, diligent monitoring, and a firm declaration of the consequences of an Iraqi breach of its terms.

More realistically, a whole new logic to the reform of Iraqi sanctions is needed. Rather than focusing on crafting a new consensus on sanctions geared toward eliciting Iraqi compliance, the United States should devote its energies to striking a new deal which would persuade the international community of the value of continued support for a reformed sanctions agenda. Over the past five years, the positions of France, Russia, China, and most Arab countries concerning Iraqi sanctions have radically diverged from that of the United States, and, to a lesser extent, Britain. The combination of strong humanitarian impulses and intense commercial pressures to resume economic relations with Iraq has led many of these governments to advocate either an easing or outright lifting of sanctions. Moreover, the perception that the United States has at times commandeered the United Nations to promote its own agenda—most notably when it declared sanctions would remain in place until Saddam Hussein was ousted from power—has tinged the impetus to end Iraqi sanctions with resentment of American global primacy.

Despite the potent concoction of pressures opposing Iraqi sanctions, virtually all countries agree on the continued need to deny Iraq military hardware and technology and, ideally, would prefer complete Iraqi disarmament. The problem is that most countries have seen the continued containment of Saddam Hussein through sanctions, on the one hand, and the easing of Iraqi civilian hardship and the satisfaction of commercial interests, on the other, as mutually exclusive. The challenge to the United States is to craft a new structure to sanctions which makes all three simultaneously possible. If it is able to do so, it could change the calculus of countries now lobbying for lifting sanctions and form the basis of a new sanctions contract with lasting benefits to regional and global security.

No matter what course the Bush administration wishes to pursue concerning military action and covert policies, it will desire a sanctions regime with solid international support to buttress its efforts elsewhere.

A Modified Sanctions Regime

In crafting this new deal on sanctions, the United States should be willing to barter away some measures which it does not view as critical to containing Saddam Hussein in order to shore up international support for the elements of the sanctions regime that have worked well.

Maintaining the UN escrow account and keeping control over military items and those dual-use technologies that could truly have a military impact are essential and should not be reconsidered for any reason. But other restrictions currently in place are dispensable in comparison. In return for agreeing to relax some of the existing sanctions which inhibit civilian economic activity, the United States should ask countries to renew their commitment to maintaining the UN escrow account and refrain from selling arms or any weapons-related technology to Iraq. In addition, the United States should advocate a land-based system of monitoring goods entering Iraq and even demonstrate a U.S. willingness to foot some of the bill for this new undertaking.

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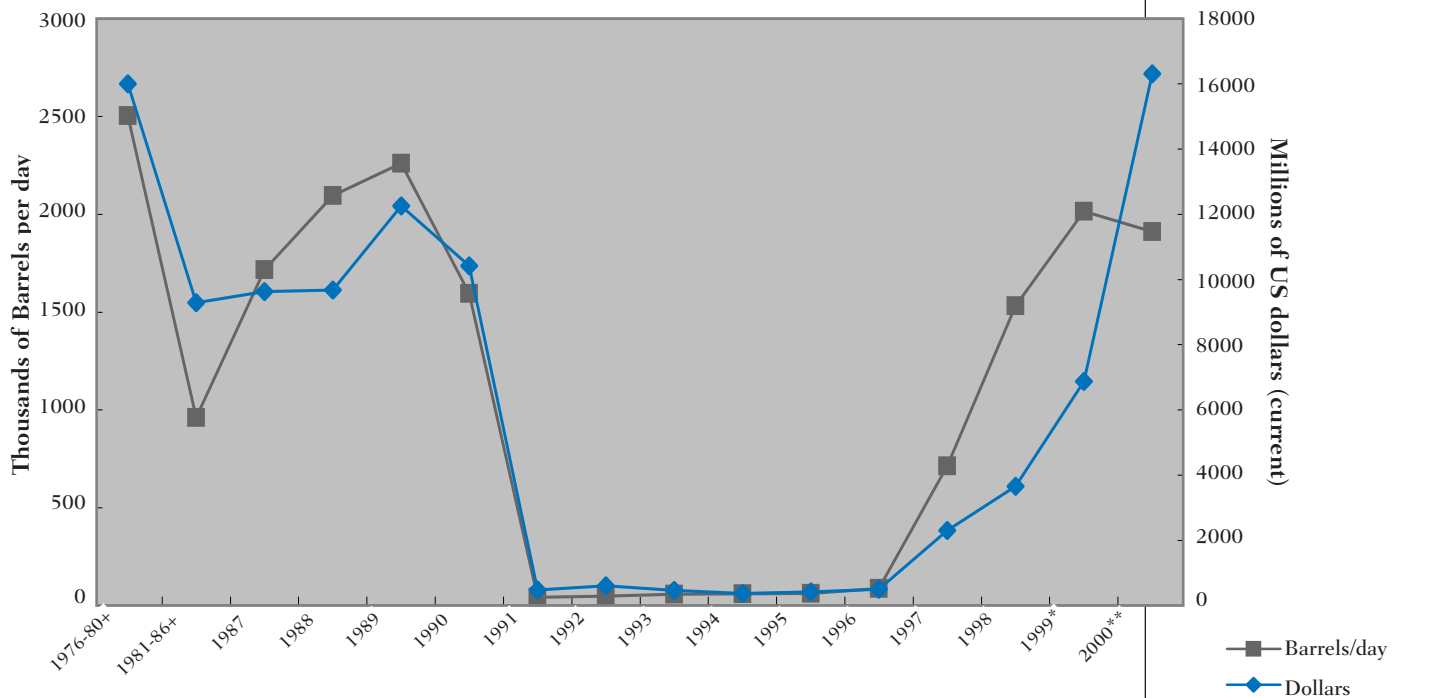
Policymakers contemplating modifications to the sanctions regime should judge each proposal against three standards. First, does the proposed change continue to keep resources, particularly foreign exchange, away from the Iraqi regime? Second, would the proposal shore up the coalition and international support for the sanctions that would remain in place? And finally, would the suggested modification ease—or at least not exacerbate—humanitarian hardship in Iraq? Any proposal that elicits a yes on all three counts is likely to be a good idea; those that meet one or two standards without violating the others deserve serious consideration. Keeping these guidelines in mind, the United States should spearhead an effort to modify the sanctions regime in these ways:

- **Permit foreign investment in the Iraqi oil industry.** Such investment would serve a humanitarian purpose by enabling Iraq to increase the amount of oil it can export under the Oil-for-Food program and, therefore, the sum of money with which Iraq can purchase food and medicine for its people. It would also ease commercial pressures to lift the sanctions in France, Russia, China, and elsewhere by allowing companies to engage economically with Iraq, while at the same time safeguarding Iraqi oil reserves by putting a stop to unsafe extraction techniques currently employed. As long as foreign investment follows a “buy-back” or a technical service contract model through which foreign companies provide expertise and equipment in exchange for cash or oil through the Oil-for-Food program, it can be undertaken without providing foreign exchange or other fungible resources to the Iraqi regime.
- **Link Iraqi agricultural production to the Oil-for-Food program.** By providing large quantities of food to the Iraqi population free of charge, the Oil-for-Food program has

undermined the incentive Iraqi farmers have to produce and has contributed to the collapse of the country's agricultural sector. Enabling the proceeds of Iraqi oil sales to be used to purchase the output of Iraqi farmers—which has already been authorized by the Security Council with the endorsement of a “cash component” to the Oil-for-Food program in UNSC resolution 1284—would help rejuvenate the civilian economy and revive a once market-oriented segment of the economy.

- **Allow foreign investment in the civilian economy.** Such investment is essential if the humanitarian situation of Iraq is to improve. Although the small size of the non-state economy in Iraq limits the opportunities for private sector investment, the decrepit state of civilian infrastructure offers abundant possibilities for those wishing to invest in Iraq. An investment code restricting the sort of investments that were permissible should seek to ensure that inflows of foreign capital do not further military purposes or greatly bolster the fungible resources of the regime. The UN could promote this code and demand that investments require UN approval or supervision.
- **Lift sanctions on the export and import of consumer goods.** Initially, this reform would have a relatively minor impact, given the small size of the civilian economy and the limited ability of average Iraqis to purchase civilian goods. However, this action would have immediate psychological value by signaling that the international community welcomed economic interaction with Iraq and was interested in improving

Iraqi Exports, 1976–2000, in Barrels of Oil and Dollars



Sources: Dollar figures are from International Monetary Fund, *Direction of Trade Statistics*, various years, except for 2000 which is from Department of Energy, Energy Information Agency, “Iraq: Country Analysis Brief,” September 2000. Barrel figures are from OPEC, *Annual Statistical Bulletin*, 1998, and United Nations Office of the Iraq Program.

+ Average Annual Numbers
 * Estimate (Barrels Only)
 ** Estimates (Barrels & Dollars)

the well-being of the Iraqi people. Moreover, it would legitimize existing black market trade in consumer items, forcing down the current prices of many commodities. At first, this reform would be best implemented through an expansion of the current Oil-for-Food program, which regulates all trade with Iraq, by widening the categories of goods allowed to be traded under its auspices. However, once greater on-the-ground border controls were in place, the possibility of widening consumer trade to encompass all Iraqi entities should be considered.

- *Consider the creation of an oil-for-debt relief mechanism.* The understandable desire of countries such as France and Russia to collect on the large debts owed to them by Iraq has helped fuel the movement to lift sanctions and resume normal economic relations with the Gulf country. A scheme that allowed Iraq to begin paying off some of its estimated \$130 billion in external debt through the use of oil or oil profits would help allay these pressures. The theoretical “relief” this move would provide to Saddam Hussein would be a small price to pay for a more robust coalition to maintain limited sanctions. Moreover, by helping ease the financial burden presumably to be faced by a post-sanctions Iraq, this proposal would chip away at one element which may deter internal Iraqi forces from challenging Saddam’s rule.
- *Terminate the flight ban on Iraq, allowing most Iraqis not in the regime to travel.* The international community has no interest in further isolating the average Iraqi from the rest of the world. To do so is only to invite anti-Western sentiment and encourage the growth of marginalized, radical groups. Instead, a new sanctions pact should not only welcome international travel by Iraqis not associated with the regime or deemed to be a security threat, but should specifically create more opportunities for Iraqis to visit other countries and participate in international exchanges.

Although some of these proposals necessitate a minimal level of cooperation from Iraq, this reality should not deter the United States from promoting these changes. Iraqi cooperation in easing some sanctions cannot be assumed, but it also cannot be dismissed outright. In the past, Iraq has resisted modifications to the UN Oil-for-Food program—the only “easing” of sanctions thus far proposed—when it has felt that these moves would weaken its quest to get sanctions lifted completely or when international dissension has suggested that the larger prize of full sanctions relief was imminent. If the new sanctions deal has the firm backing of a wide array of international actors, Iraqi cooperation on small matters of implementation is much more likely.

Even if Iraq stymies each proposal that demands some level of cooperation from it, the United States will benefit from proposing these modifications. By resisting measures clearly intended to improve the lives of Iraqi civilians, Iraq will have lost the humanitarian high ground that it has wrongfully captured. In addition, the United States will have demonstrated its desire to separate the Iraqi regime from its people, and exhibited a new flexibility that will be appreciated by many of its allies lamenting American rigidity on Iraq in the past.

In this way, U.S. support for a modified sanctions approach toward Iraq will help the image of the United States in the Middle East at a time when it is seriously in decline.

Presenting the New Package to Iraq

Critics may claim that a new sanctions package along these lines constitutes being ‘soft’ on Iraq. This is hardly the case. Each proposal is justified on its ability to shore up the international coalition either directly by easing commercial pressures, or indirectly by seeking to improve the humanitarian situation in Iraq regardless of Saddam’s responsibility for the state of his people. None should be perceived as an effort to provide Saddam Hussein with incentives, beyond those already articulated in existing UN resolutions, to behave according to international standards.

This modified sanctions agenda should be accompanied by a renewed, unified, multilateral call for Iraq to accept and comply with UNSC resolution 1284. Even if Iraq continues to defy the UN, placing the modified sanctions regime in a context of attempted cooperation will not have been in vain. By forcing Iraq to bear the blame for a continued stalemate, the United Nations will further solidify international support for the imposition of additional, targeted sanctions on members of the Iraqi regime in the face of Iraqi intransigence. These targeted measures should include:

- ***Tightening the freeze on private foreign assets of the Iraqi regime.*** The United Nations has long hesitated to demand that member states freeze the private assets of individuals, as opposed to those of states. As a result, many members of the Iraqi regime are still able to access many of their overseas assets. Clamping down on these resources would increase pressure on the regime while sparing Iraqi civilians any further harm.
- ***Imposing and enforcing travel bans on members of the Iraqi regime.*** While loosening travel restrictions on most average Iraqis, imposing international travel bans on regime figures—similar to those in place against Slobodan Milosevic and his cronies—would further de-legitimize those in power in Iraq. These travel sanctions should serve as interim measures while the United States steps up its efforts to build international support for the indictment of Iraqi figures by war tribunals.
- ***Creating time limits under which Iraq must spend Oil-for-Food funds in escrow.*** At the end of 2000, Iraq had billions of uncommitted funds in its UN escrow account awaiting Iraqi action to use it to purchase food, medicine, and other necessities. The United Nations should consider placing a time limit on how long Iraq can let funds go unallocated and indicate that once that period has elapsed, the United Nations will decide itself how these funds will be spent in the interests of the Iraqi people.

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Supplementing Sanctions

A modified sanctions regime that keeps financial constraints and dual-use controls in place yet eases restrictions on the civilian economy and allows limited economic transactions with Iraq should garner broad support. It should gain international backing by addressing humanitarian concerns about the plight of the Iraqi people, easing foreign commercial pressures currently pushing for a lifting of sanctions, and clarifying the distinction between the regime of Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi people. At the same time, in rejuvenating the consensus to maintain the elements of sanctions that have been most successful, it remains the best way to dampen Saddam Hussein's ability to reconstitute weapons of mass destruction and threaten regional stability. In the absence of such a bargain, the entire UN sanctions regime will continue to unravel, leaving Saddam Hussein unchecked, unrepentant, and in absolute control of revenues generated from the world's second largest oil reserves.

Beyond working through the United Nations to build consensus for this less comprehensive sanctions regime, the United States should take additional bilateral steps to encourage countries to support this modified approach. Such measures could involve the extension of incentives. For example, in exchange for increased Iranian cooperation in stemming Iraqi oil smuggling in the Gulf, the United States could allow American companies to engage in oil swap arrangements with Iran. In other cases, the United States should strongly reiterate penalties to potential violators of sanctions. For instance, U.S. law requires that the president terminate all American aid to countries that provide military assistance to states, such as Iraq, that are deemed to be supporters of terrorism.

In addition to taking action to ensure that a new international consensus on a less comprehensive sanctions regime is achieved, the Bush administration should revamp its Iraq policy in three other critical areas.

Declaratory Policy

First, the United States should supplement its efforts at the United Nations with a clarification of its own declaratory policy toward Iraq. A sensible declaratory stance would have two components. It would begin by stating a clear U.S. preference for regime change in Iraq, equating this position with the American desire not only for democracy and good governance there, but with the belief that regime change would be the most expeditious way for Iraq to reclaim its rightful place in the international community. Such statements should be accompanied by an explicit U.S. commitment to support the lifting of sanctions, lobby for forgiveness of Iraq's debts, and provide generous reconstruction aid if the new regime in Baghdad respected international norms and adhered to UN resolutions.

However, in addition to articulating a "pro-Iraq" preference for regime change in its declaratory policy, the United States should confirm its own commitment to comply with UNSC resolutions on Iraq. In particular, President Bush should stipulate that if Iraq—even under the rule of Saddam Hussein—fully complies with all elements of UNSC resolution 1284, the United States will not block the lifting of non-military sanctions.

After many years during which U.S. policy toward Iraq was often at odds with UN resolutions, a pronouncement to this effect would be an important way of assuring the international community that the United States prefers a multilateral Iraq policy to a unilateral one.

The Use of Force

Apart from sanctions, the second area of Iraq policy demanding immediate attention is the use of military force. The Bush administration should consider scaling back the U.S. patrol of the no-fly zones over northern and southern Iraq. Their maintenance is wearing down U.S. military equipment, straining U.S. resources in the region, and providing Saddam Hussein with valuable fodder for his propaganda war. Furthermore, the resumption of civilian flights within Iraq and international flights to Baghdad increase the possibility of airborne mishaps, which could carry significant collateral costs both in terms of human lives and U.S. standing in the Gulf.

One way to avoid the perception that this change in the no-fly zone policy was made as a concession to Iraq, rather than on the basis of a military assessment, is to couple its announcement with the vigorous pursuit of the indictment of Iraqi war criminals. More intensive consultations with U.S. allies are necessary to win international support for this endeavor and for establishing an international criminal tribunal. At the same time these discussions are occurring, the United States could signal its own commitment by providing adequate funding for the war crimes process.

The new administration should also intensify consultations with Congress, Iraq's neighbors, and Security Council members about the egregious Iraqi actions that would elicit a robust military response. The use of weapons of mass destruction or the direct attack on a bordering country by Saddam Hussein might necessitate a level of military force sufficient to force regime change. In contrast, the confirmed acquisition of weapons of mass destruction or the amassing of Iraqi troops near its borders (as was done near Kuwait in October 1994) might require a sustained military response geared at forcing Iraq to accept weapons inspectors. Finally, the United States should work assiduously to craft a consensus on how the international community would respond to an attack by Saddam Hussein on the populations within his own borders. In the past—as in August 1996 when Saddam moved against the northern Kurds in Iraq—the international community has been fractured in its response to such violations of UNSC resolution 688, which protects human rights within Iraq. Although the international reaction should vary with the severity of the attack, the concept of humanitarian intervention should be as widely accepted in relation to Iraq as it is to other areas in the post-cold war world.

Support for the Opposition

Third, U.S. policymakers must carefully craft a policy toward the Iraqi opposition. Jettisoning the opposition would be short-sighted, at least in part because it would forfeit potentially useful leverage. Yet at the same time, extending military support to the Iraqi opposition is not without its problems. Besides being unlikely to achieve Saddam's overthrow, such a strategy

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would risk sparking an armed challenge to the regime that could not be sustained without massive intervention by U.S. air or ground forces.

Instead, the Bush administration should embrace a policy geared toward preparing the Iraqi opposition to play a positive role in a post-Saddam Iraqi society. This approach would entail bolstering the opposition's non-military capabilities to act as agents of change within Iraq today, such as by transmitting anti-Saddam messages into Iraq. However, the main focus of such a policy would be to prepare the opposition to participate in a more democratic Iraq once Saddam leaves.

Training the opposition to operate a judicial system, run elections, prosecute war criminals, and even conduct truth commissions would be a sensible investment. Although it is unrealistic for policymakers to believe they can create a civil society in Iraq under Saddam Hussein's rule, shaping a "civil opposition" outside its borders will significantly ease the transition period in Iraq when regime change does occur.

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