UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Deterring Saddam Hussein's Iraq:

Domestic Audience Costs and Credibility Assessments in Theory and Practice

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Political Science

by

David Dean Palkki

2013

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Deterring Saddam Hussein's Iraq:

Domestic Audience Costs and Credibility Assessments in Theory and Practice

by

David Dean Palkki

Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

University of California, Los Angeles, 2013

Professor Deborah Larson, Chair

The question of how leaders assess the credibility of threats and assurances is at the heart of scholarly literatures on diplomatic signaling, deterrence, and coercive diplomacy. It is also of enormous importance to policymakers. My dissertation addresses the degree to which leaders assess the credibility of others' signals based on their expectations of whether others will pay domestic audience costs for failing to follow through on their commitments. Leading scholars have written that only democratic regimes can strengthen the credibility of their commitments by generating audience costs. Scholars have also written that personalist regimes, exemplified by Saddam Hussein's Iraq, cannot send credible signals by use of the audience cost mechanism and are unable to grasp the audience cost logic. Recent attempts to identify the audience cost mechanism at work in historical records have come up empty-handed, casting doubt on the empirical validity of Audience Cost Theory (ACT).

I find important instances in which Saddam and his subordinates assessed the credibility of U.S. commitments within an audience cost framework. I also find that Saddam sought to increase the credibility of Iraqi messages by signaling that concerns about domestic audience costs tied his hands. American thinking and behavior were less consistent, though not always inconsistent, with ACT. My research draws heavily from captured audio files of private meetings between Saddam and his most trusted advisers. The thousands of hours of taped meetings involving Saddam and his inner circle provide unparalleled primary source material with which to test and refine scholarship on autocrats' perceptions and decision-making.

The first case study is on U.S.-Iraq signaling prior to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. The conventional wisdom among scholars is that Iraq invaded Kuwait because April Glaspie, the U.S. Ambassador to Baghdad, gave Saddam a "green light" to invade during a private meeting. Scholars fail, however, to address why Saddam would consider this private assurance credible, especially given his longstanding, intense distrust of the United States. I find that the "green light" interpretation is a myth. Glaspie provide no assurance of U.S. acquiescence to an Iraqi invasion, nor did Iraqi leaders believe that she had done so. Saddam and his advisers recognized that public threats and deterrent deployments of tripwire forces are commitment-generating, and, therefore, sought to deter such behavior by signaling that it was unnecessary and that it would lead to a conflict spiral. U.S. Arab allies, Glaspie, and other U.S. officials agreed that to avoid a conflict spiral, American warnings should be private rather than public. Concerns about domestic audience costs were far from a primary reason for why the United States went to war with Iraq over Kuwait, yet neither were they entirely absent from American leaders' deliberations.

The second case study is on why Iraq did not use chemical or biological weapons against U.S.-led forces during the 1991 Gulf War. Many scholars believe that Iraq refrained from using such weapons because the U.S. Secretary of State, James Baker, issued an ambiguous deterrent warning that the United States would respond to Iraqi WMD use with nuclear weapon strikes. They fail to explain, however, why an ambiguous threat would be commitment-generating. Moreover, nothing in Baker's ambiguous warning hinted of a U.S. nuclear response. Other scholars believe that Iraqi restraint stemmed from Baker's threat that the United States would retaliate by pursuing regime change. Baker, however, repeatedly threatened that the United States would replace the Ba'athist regime in the event of any military conflict, whether or not Iraq used WMD. When war ensued and the United States failed to replace Saddam from power, Saddam opined that the administration's public commitment to replace him, and failure to do so, led Americans to vote Bush out of office. Saddam also indicated belief that Iraq's massive WMD evacuation drills generated domestic audience costs, thus signaling resolve to foreign leaders.

The third chapter, on Iraq's coerced disarmament, consists of a mini-case study on the crisis over UN weapon inspectors' attempt in 1992 to inspect Iraq's Ministry of Agriculture, a mini-case study on Iraq's attempt to end the economic sanctions by deploying forces near its borders with Kuwait in 1994, and a review of how concerns about audience costs may have contributed to the ambiguous nature of Iraq's disarmament. Saddam expressed belief that Iraqi demonstrations signaled resolve to foreign leaders and described U.S. calls to replace his regime within the context of American domestic audience costs. The U.S. Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, and other senior Western diplomats expressed belief that Saddam could credibly commit to recognizing Kuwait's sovereignty and borders by doing so publicly and

unambiguously. Albright also predicted that if Saddam were to formally recognize Kuwait, thus clearly reneging on his longstanding commitment to incorporating the "Nineteenth Province," that Iraqis would remove him from power. Considerations about domestic audience costs frequently played a less important role in my case studies than other factors. Even in Saddam's Iraq, however, which supposedly exemplifies the type of personalist regime that can neither signal that it has generated domestic audience costs nor correctly assess the credibility of others' signals within the ACT framework, audience cost considerations were far from irrelevant.

The dissertation of David Dean Palkki is approved.

Albert Carnesale

Marc Trachtenberg

Deborah Larson, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2013

CONTENTS

This dissertation is dedicated to my family.

<div align="right">David Dean Palkki</div>

Arlington, Virginia
August 25, 2013

David Dean Palkki

Education

University of California, Los Angeles
> Ph.D., Political Science, December 2013
> Dissertation: Deterring Saddam Hussein's Iraq: Domestic Audience Costs and
> > Credibility Assessments in Theory and Practice
> Fields: International Relations and Comparative Politics

Brigham Young University, 2000
> B.A., Political Science (Cum Laude)
> Minors: German and History

Current Position

Council on Foreign Relations, Washington, DC   2013-2014
Stanton Nuclear Security Fellow

Publications

Books:

The Saddam Tapes, 1978-2001: The Inner Workings of a Tyrant's Regime (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), with Kevin M. Woods and Mark E. Stout

Journal Articles:

"Saddam, Israel, and the Bomb: Nuclear Alarmism Justified?," *International Security* Vol. 36, No. 1 (summer 2011), with Hal Brands

"'Conspiring Bastards': Saddam Hussein's Strategic View of the United States," *Diplomatic History* Vol. 36, No. 3 (June 2012), with Hal Brands

Response to Avner Cohen, "Deterrence in the Gulf War," *Nonproliferation Review* Vol. 20, No. 3 (2013). The *Nonproliferation Review* will publish my response in March 2014.

Book Chapters:

"Contrasting Causal Mechanisms: Iraq and Libya," with Shane Smith, in Etel Solingen, ed, *Sanctions, Statecraft, and Nuclear Proliferation* (Cambridge University Press, 2012)

"Iraq's Nuclear Weapons Program," with Chris Alkhoury, in Roland Popp, ed, *Uncovering the Sources of Nuclear Behavior* (Georgetown University Press, forthcoming)

"Dealing with the Damage: How to Manage a Nuclear Iran," with Larry Rubin, in Owen C.W. Price and Jenifer Mackby, eds, *Debating 21st Century Nuclear Issues* (Wash., DC: CSIS, 2007)

Other Publications:

"The Saddam I Have Come to Know," www.Foreignpolicy.com, 7 December 2011

"Why Did Saddam Want the Bomb? The Israel Factor and the Iraqi Nuclear Program," Foreign Policy Research Institute E-Notes (August 2011), with Hal Brands

H-Diplo Response to Judith Yaphe's review of "Conspiring Bastards," *Diplomatic History* Vol. 36, No. 3 (June 2012), with Hal Brands. *H-Diplo* published the response on 24 October 2012

Book reviews in the *Journal of Strategic Studies* and *International Affairs* (2006 and 2007)

"Rational Deterrence in an Unpredictable World," Center for Strategic and International Studies (Washington, D.C.: CSIS, 2007)

Works in Progress:

Deterring Saddam Hussein's Iraq: Credibility Assessments in Theory and Practice [book manuscript]

The Iran-Iraq War: Perceptions and Misperceptions, coedited with Christian Ostermann [book manuscript]

"April Glaspie and the Myth of the Green Light," solicited by the *Journal of Strategic Studies*

"Deceptive Deterrence: Calculated Ambiguity, Nuclear Weapons, and Saddam's Strategic Restraint"

Teaching Experience

University of California, Los Angeles   2001-2007
  Graduate Fellow Instructor, Teaching Associate, and Teaching Assistant:
    Research Seminar
    World Politics
    American Foreign Policy
    Current Issues in U.S. Foreign Policy
    Arms Control and International Security
    Nuclear Weapons
    Comparative Politics

Brigham Young University (BYU), Provo, Utah
  Visiting Lecturer, Political Science Department: 2004
    International Relations Theory
    Introduction to International Relations

Policy Experience

Conflict Records Research Center, National Defense University, Washington, DC   2010-2013
Acting Director, Deputy Director, Senior Research Fellow, and Adjunct Senior Research Fellow

Institute for Defense Analyses, Joint Advanced Warfighting Division, Alexandria, VA
Adjunct Research Associate; Consultant   2007-2010; 2013

Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Office for Dem. Institutions and Human Rights
Long and Short-Term (Election) Observer and Polling Station Supervisor   2000-2009
  Kyrgyzstan, Armenia, Moldova, Macedonia, Kosovo, Serbia, and Bosnia

Central Intelligence Agency, Directorate of Intelligence, Vienna, Virginia   2002-2006
Military Analyst/Graduate Fellow

Amnesty International, Europe and Middle East Legislative Department, Washington, DC   1999
Program Assistant/Intern

U.S. Congress, House Ways and Means Trade Subcommittee, Washington, DC   2000-2001
Staff Assistant

Chapter 1: Introduction and Theory

The question of how leaders assess the credibility of threats and assurances is at the heart of voluminous scholarly literatures on deterrence theory, coercive diplomacy, and diplomatic signaling. It is also of enormous importance to policymakers and to defense and intelligence analysts. Because leaders sometimes have incentives to misrepresent their true intentions, some types of signals are considered more credible than others. How leaders distinguish between credible and incredible signals, however, is not entirely clear.

According to audience cost theory (ACT), leaders assess the credibility of others' commitments based on the degree to which they expect others to suffer domestic audience costs for failing to fulfill their commitments. Commitments are considered more credible when leaders issue them in an unambiguous, public manner than when delivered in vague terms and private channels since the former enables domestic audiences to more easily hold their leaders accountable. Domestic groups remove their leaders from power for reneging on commitments because the groups dislike having their leaders show weakness. Leaders recognize this and intentionally generate potential domestic audience costs through unambiguous, public communications that tie their hands and thereby increase the credibility of their signals.

Many audience cost theorists believe that democracies are much better able to signal audience costs than autocracies, either because it is easier for domestic groups to punish their leaders in democracies than autocracies, since it is clearer to outside observers that audience costs are at play in democracies than in autocracies, or for other reasons. Personalist autocracies, such as Saddam Hussein's Iraq, are thought to be particularly poor at signaling via the audience cost mechanism and of properly perceiving others' prospective audience costs. Only in recent

years have scholars begun searching historical records for the audience cost mechanism. In cases where one would most expect to find evidence for this causal mechanism, scholars have found no evidence or only very weak evidence in support of ACT.[1]

New sources from Saddam Hussein's Iraq provide a unique opportunity to assess earlier claims about ACT. When the United States invaded Iraq in 2003, it captured millions of pages of documents and thousands of hours of recordings of conversations between Saddam and his advisors.[2] "Not only have we never had records about Saddam Hussein that bring us this close to him," Robert Jervis correctly observes, but "we also don't have records that compare to these for any authoritarian leader."[3] Many of these records are now available to scholars at the Conflict Records Research Center (CRRC).[4] If one wishes to search the historical record for evidence of audience costs at work, the CRRC records are a superb place to start.

In this study, I use three qualitative case studies of U.S.-Iraq strategic interactions to assess the empirical validity of the audience cost mechanism. These case studies involve U.S.-Iraq signaling prior to Saddam's invasion of Kuwait, U.S. efforts to deter Iraqi chemical and biological weapon use in 1991, and U.S. efforts to coercively disarm Iraq, and deter Iraqi re-armament, following the 1991 Gulf War. The final case study includes two mini case studies, the first on UNSCOM effort to inspect Iraq's Ministry of Agriculture in 1992 and the second on Iraq's deployment of forces near its border with Kuwait in late 1994, and subsequent withdrawal and official recognition of Kuwait's sovereignty and borders.

---

[1] See the "Literature Review" section of this chapter.

[2] Kevin M. Woods and Mark E. Stout, "Saddam's Perceptions and Misperceptions: The Case of DESERT STORM," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (February 2010), p. 6 note 3.

[3] Kevin M. Woods, David D. Palkki, and Mark E. Stout, *The Saddam Tapes: The Inner Workings of a Tyrant's Regime, 1978-2001* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), back cover.

[4] For basic information on the CRRC, see the Center's website at http://crrc.dodlive.mil/, accessed 22 August 2013.

I find that Iraqi and U.S. leaders understood the logic at the heart of ACT, and, on occasion, explained it in unmistakable terms. The logic was certainly not too complex for them to grasp or to accept. Contrary to recent scholarship that challenges ACT on historical grounds, I find empirical support for core elements of ACT in each of these case studies. Iraqi leaders believed that public signals created audience costs in ways that private signals did not, and that domestic audiences would punish their leaders for backing down from public commitments. Iraqi leaders, however, believed that this held true for both U.S. *and* Iraqi domestic audience costs. In key ways, Saddam and his advisers' conceptual framework and behavior were more consistent with ACT than were American leaders'. U.S.-Iraq interactions indicate that audience costs neither explain as much as audience cost theorists have written, nor as little as recent historical scholarship has indicated.

This study also uses insights from ACT to provide improved historical accounts of each of these cases. Evidence in the first two case studies, for instance, refutes widespread beliefs that private and ambiguous communications were interpreted as credible and considered important. It also provides empirical refinements. For instance, Iraq sought to signal the credibility of its commitments by use of domestic protests, a method of autocratic signaling that Jessica Weiss had found in China, but also by using WMD evacuation drills and other means. This study provides important insights for scholarship on ACT, authoritarian regimes, Iraq and the Middle East, deterrence theory, coercive diplomacy, diplomatic history, perceptions and misperceptions, and U.S. foreign policy.

Literature Review

In recent years, scholars have paid a good deal of attention to how domestic institutions and political conditions affect choices about war and peace. For instance, they write that domestic politics and political institutions affect decisions regarding crisis initiation, credibility of signals sent during crises, incentives for waging war, durations of wars, and war outcomes. A smaller number of scholars have taken the opposite approach and analyzed how decisions about war and peace affect leader's ability to obtain and retain power.[5] ACT is at the heart of this broader literature about the interplay between domestic and international politics.

Thomas Schelling and Robert Jervis provided early articulation of key concepts at the heart of ACT. Schelling distinguishes between costly, credible behavior and less costly, less credible, verbal signals.[6] He also differentiates between warnings, which are not commitment generating, and hand-tying threats, which are.[7] Jervis writes that when actors are found to have given misleading signals, they will pay high costs. "Indeed," he continues, "if there were no such costs associated with issuing misleading signals, there would be no reason for receivers to place any faith in them."[8]

Schelling and Jervis provided valuable contributions, yet James Fearon is rightfully considered the father of ACT. Fearon writes that there are a variety of ways in which leaders can send costly signals in crises, but emphasizes that creating audience costs is a "principal way" and that the audience cost mechanism plays a "crucial role."[9] From his perspective, there is a

[5] Kenneth Schultz provides an excellent, concise, overview of these literatures in Schultz, "Looking for Audience Costs," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* Vol. 45, No. 32 (2001), pp. 32-33.
[6] Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), p. 150.
[7] Thomas C. Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960), p. 123 note 5; Thomas C. Schelling, *Strategies of Commitment and other Essays* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), pp. 3-4.
[8] Robert Jervis, *The Logic of Images in International Relations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970), p. 18 note 2, pp. 19-20. See also Marc Trachtenberg, "A Comment on the Comments," *Security Studies* Vol. 21, No. 3 (2012), pp. 412-13.
[9] James D. Fearon, "Signaling Foreign Policy Interests," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* Vol. 41, No. 68 (1997), p. 69; James D. Fearon, "Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes," *American*

"centrality of domestic audience costs" in determining crisis outcomes, making domestic audience costs "crucial" to understanding the causes and consequences of crises.[10] A hands-tying signal, he explains, "typically works" by generating costs that the leaders would suffer, at the hands of domestic groups, in response to perceived failures to make good on public foreign policy commitments.[11] Domestic audiences punish leaders who renege on their commitments because they consider them incompetent or want to maintain their countries' reputations by removing leaders who bluff, other authors explain.[12]

One of Fearon's key contributions is his "plausible working hypothesis" that democrats find it easier to generate audience costs than autocrats.[13] "The side with a stronger domestic audience (e.g., a democracy) is always less likely to back down than the side less able to generate audience costs (a nondemocracy)," he writes.[14] It is difficult but not entirely impossible for authoritarian leaders to generate audience costs, Fearon argues, because it is generally unclear to outsiders what domestic audience costs the autocrats would incur for making concessions. Western leaders had great difficulties assessing the credibility of Saddam's public signals in fall 1990, Fearon writes, because they knew too little about Iraqi domestic politics to predict whether and to what degree Saddam might be punished for reneging on his public commitments.[15]

Kenneth Schultz is more agnostic than Fearon about democracies generating higher audience costs than autocracies, though he agrees that Saddam and other autocrats have greater difficulties than democratic leaders in signaling these costs to foreign observers. Schultz writes

---

Political Science Review Vol. 88, No. 3 (September 1994), p. 579.
[10] Fearon, "Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes," pp. 577-78.
[11] Fearon, "Signaling Foreign Policy Interests," p. 70.
[12] Alastair Smith, "International Crises and Domestic Politics," *American Political Science Review* Vol. 92, No. 3 (September 1998), p. 624; Alexandra Guisinger and Alastair Smith, "Honest Threats: The Interaction of Reputation and Political Institutions on International Crises," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* Vol. 46, No. 175 (2002), p. 175. Smith makes the point about incompetence, while Guisinger and Smith make the reputational claim.
[13] Fearon, "Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes," p. 582.
[14] Fearon, "Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes," p. 577.
[15] Fearon, "Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes," p. 582.

that it is generally more difficult for domestic groups in autocracies to punish their leaders than in democracies, but, when they are able to punish their leaders, the punishment is typically more severe. Hence, he concludes, it is unclear that the higher frequency of punishment in democracies makes democracies better signalers. In this, he agrees with Fearon.[16]

Schultz also indicates that he agrees with Fearon that had Saddam backed down after invading Kuwait, this action would have put his regime at risk. Saddam's problem, he writes, was not that he was unable to generate domestic audience costs that made it more difficult for him to back down, but that it was difficult for him to signal these costs to American leaders. For Schultz, Saddam's Iraq epitomizes "the black box model" in which outsiders can observe external behavior, but not the processes under which decisions are made. Saddam may have created domestic audience costs for himself should he back down, writes Schultz, but was unable to clearly signal that he had done so.[17]

Schultz also indicates that Saddam tried to convey resolve to U.S. leaders by deploying forces toward Iraq's border with Kuwait in July 1990, but failed, since the deployment imposed no costs on Iraq, and, therefore, did not enable U.S. policymakers to distinguish between types. According to Schultz, the deployment, mere cheap talk, was "ineffective in conveying resolve." U.S. leaders assessed the military buildup as a bluff, he writes, intended by Iraq merely to intimidate Kuwait.[18]

According to Schultz, countries whose domestic politics are relatively transparent can better signal commitment than countries whose domestic politics are opaque, black boxes. The existence of opposition parties—not differences in the ability of domestic groups to punish their

---

[16] Kenneth A. Schultz, *Democracy and Coercive Diplomacy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 18; Fearon, "Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes," p. 582.

[17] Schultz, *Democracy and Coercive Diplomacy*, p. 57.

[18] Schultz, *Democracy and Coercive Diplomacy*, pp. 41-42.

leaders—enables democracies to send more credible signals than autocracies. When opposition parties in democracies confirm the government's incentives to follow through on its commitments, he writes, this provides a credible signal of unified resolve that Saddam and other autocrats cannot deliver.[19] For both Schultz and Fearon, dictators struggle to signal to democratic leaders that they are credibly committed. Schultz, unlike Fearon, specifies that rival opposition parties convey these signals of credible commitment to foreign audiences.

Philip Potter and Matthew Baum write that it is a free press—and not opposition political parties or democracy in general terms—that enable democracies to more credibly signal that they have generated domestic audience costs than autocracies. In the absence of an independent press, Potter and Baum write, opposition politicians and parties cannot inform domestic groups of their leader's bluffs or other failures, thus rendering domestic groups unable to punish their leader since the leader's behavior is nontransparent. They write that if democratic leaders wish to "tie their hands" and send a credible signal to a foreign leader, they "must" first have an independent media. In contrast to democrats, the ability of autocrats to generate audience costs (and signal commitment) is "nonexistent," they claim, since the autocrats could either spin or withhold news of their failure to follow through on their public commitments.[20]

Potter, Baum, and Alastair Smith make far more expansive claims about the role of domestic audience costs in signaling commitment than did Fearon. According to Smith, public commitments "are only credible" if leaders will suffer domestically for reneging on their commitments. In other words, domestic audience costs provide the only means by which leaders can credibly commit themselves.[21] Potter and Baum agree. They write that if democratic

---

[19] Schultz, *Democracy and Coercive Diplomacy*, p. xiv, 18.
[20] Philip B. K. Potter and Matthew A. Baum, "Democratic Peace and Domestic Audience Costs," *Political Communication* Vol. 27, No. 4 (2010), pp. 454, 466 note 3.
[21] Smith, "International Crises and Domestic Politics," p. 623.

leaders wish to send a credible signal to a foreign leader, they "must" both have an independent media and invoke audience costs—there is no other way.[22]

Jessica Weeks, in contrast to these other authors, finds that democracies are no better at signaling audience costs than most types of autocracies. Weeks identifies three factors affecting audience costs: first, whether domestic groups are able and willing to coordinate to punish a leader; second, whether the groups are opposed to the leader backing down; third, whether foreign observers are aware that the leader might be punished for backing down. The only types of autocracies that are worse in generating domestic audience costs than democracies, she concludes, are certain types of monarchies and personalist regimes such as that of Saddam, whom she describes as "the stereotypical autocrat in the international relations literature," engaging in "crushing domestic rivals and co-opting political institutions."[23]

Saddam was "the quintessential unconstrained dictator," Weeks writes. After all, she explains, he did not deal with a free press, genuine political participation was nonexistent, and he could easily detect and punish any Iraqis who tried to overthrow him.[24] Inasmuch as Saddam was "unconstrained," he could not, by definition, tie his own hands through domestic audience costs or any other commitment mechanism.

From the perspective of Jessica Weiss, the risks and costs that authoritarian leaders face when repressing protests enables them to send informative signals. She finds that authoritarian states such as China are able to generate audience costs by allowing anti-foreign protests. Allowing protests signals resolve, since the regime would face higher costs for backing down to external demands after allowing the protests than would otherwise be the case, as the regime

---

[22] Potter and Baum, "Democratic Peace, Domestic Audience Costs, and Political Communication," p. 454.

[23] Jessica L. Weeks, "Autocratic Audience Costs: Regime Type and Signaling Resolve," *International Organization* Vol. 62, No. 1 (2008), pp. 35-36.

[24] Jessica L. Weeks, *Leaders, Accountability, and Foreign Policy in Non-Democracies*, DPhil dissertation, Department of Political Science, Stanford University, May 2009, pp. pp.116-19.

could lose control over the protestors and find its security at risk.[25] She explains, "The decision to give a 'green light' to anti-foreign protests sends a costly signal of resolve and generates a credible commitment to stand firm." A decision to prohibit nationalist protests, she continues, "allows authoritarian leaders to signal that the value they place on international cooperation is high enough to offset the cost of appearing unpatriotic before their domestic public.[26] She finds that authoritarian leaders' use of "rent-a-crowd" mobs provides only "cheap talk" rather than credible signals.[27]

Weiss describes her findings in terms of domestic audience costs and ACT, though her conceptualization of these concepts is much broader than that which Fearon and other scholars employ. Whether or not leaders issue and follow through on threats is at the heart of ACT, whereas the central question for Weiss is whether an authoritarian regime allows domestic groups to signal hawkish preferences.[28] The two arguments are closely related in the crucial sense that both involve use of domestic audiences to signal credible commitments, and that the increased credibility stems from added risks to the regime's internal security, yet the causal pathways are distinct.

Marc Trachtenberg also draws on history in pursuit of evidence for the audience cost mechanism. He briefly analyzes roughly a dozen crises which, he believes, should be among the most likely cases from which to find support for Fearon's theory. Unlikely other audience cost theorists, who almost invariably make claims about the role of audience costs in U.S. efforts to deter or compel Saddam's Iraq, Trachtenberg is silent on the matter. Trachtenberg only reviews

[25] Jessica C. Weiss, "Autocratic Signaling, Mass Audiences and Nationalist Protest in China," *International Organization* Vol. 61, No. 1 (2012), p. 1.
[26] Weiss, "Autocratic Signaling, Mass Audiences and Nationalist Protest in China," p. 4.
[27] Weiss, "Autocratic Signaling, Mass Audiences and Nationalist Protest in China," p. 5.
[28] Jack Snyder and Erica D. Borghard make these points in Synder and Borghard, "The Cost of Empty Threats: A Penny, Not a Pound," *American Political Science Review* Vol. 105, No. 3 (August 2011), p. 438.

cases of great power crises, he writes, since in crises between a great power and a minor power, the possibility of great power intervention by a third state could greatly complicate the analysis and obscure the role of domestic audience costs. Perhaps because Iraq was not a great power, Trachtenberg excludes it from his analysis. Trachtenberg finds "little evidence that the audience costs mechanism played a 'crucial' role" in any of his cases, noting that "it is hard to identify *any* case in which that mechanism played much of a role at all."[29]

Jack Synder and Erica Borghard also analyze cases of crises involving democracies, in which one would expect to find the audience cost mechanism at work, but find that the hypothesized causal mechanism is extremely weak, if not entirely non-existent. The domestic audience costs for bluffing are "a penny, not a pound" they write. According to these authors, inasmuch as leaders think about domestic audience costs at all, they view them as "a minor, derivative consideration." They write that the audience cost mechanism is extremely rare for four primary reasons: first, leaders believe that issuing unambiguous threats is imprudent; second, domestic groups are more interested in the substance of policies than whether a leader has kept or reneged on his word; third; domestic groups are concerned about their state's honor and reputation for resolve independent of whether leaders sent explicit signals; fourth; authoritarian leaders do not understand audience cost dynamics in the manner required by ACT.[30]

For the purposes of this dissertation, the authors' fourth point is perhaps the most important. In support of this point, they cite research indicating that individuals tend to see other countries as more unitary and more motivated by dispositional inclinations (as opposed to situational constraints) than is actually the case. Synder and Borghard identify several cases of

---

[29] Trachtenberg, "Audience Costs: An Historical Analysis," pp. 4-5, 44.
[30] Snyder and Borghard, "The Cost of Empty Threats: A Penny, Not a Pound," p. 437-40.

U.S. efforts to coerce Saddam, including to withdraw from Kuwait in 1990 and to comply with intrusive UN weapon inspections. They conclude that "audience costs are largely irrelevant to these cases" since in these cases U.S. leaders did not issue threats in an attempt to tie their hands.[31]

Jonathan Mercer agrees with Snyder and Borghard that authoritarian leaders will not conceptualize domestic audience costs in the manner required by ACT. Mercer writes that Saddam, for instance, was either unfamiliar with the logic at the heart of ACT or found it implausible. According to Mercer, Saddam thought public threats unimportant. Mercer also writes that Iraqi and U.S. leaders understood each other's domestic politics much too poorly to know whether audience costs were in play.[32]

Mercer bases his argument about Saddam's unfamiliarity with or rejection of ACT logic on a claim by Charles Duelfer and Stephen Dyson. Duelfer and Dyson write that because Saddam continued receiving U.S. intelligence, he discounted "occasional protestations" by U.S. officials about Iraq's use of chemical weapons during the Iran-Iraq War. According to these authors, Saddam "believed that public pronouncements were often bad indicators of true intent. Saddam believed that actions speak louder than words…" Duelfer and Dyson do not demonstrate, however, that these "occasional protestations" constituted threats, let alone threats that could generate domestic audience costs. Moreover, a belief that actions speak louder than words is not inherently incompatible with ACT. Schelling, perhaps the earliest audience cost theorist, used precisely these terms to differentiate between credible and incredible threats. [33] Jervis persuasively argues that actions are not inherently more credible than words, yet agrees

---

[31] Snyder and Borghard, "The Cost of Empty Threats: A Penny, Not a Pound," pp. 437-40, 449-50.

[32] Jonathan Mercer, "Audience Costs are Toys," *Security Studies* Vol. 21, No. 3 (2012), pp. 403-04.

[33] Mercer, "Audience Costs are Toys," p. 403 n23; Charles Duelfer and Stephen Benedict Dyson, "Chronic Misperception and International Conflict: The U.S.-Iraq Experience," *International Security* Vol. 36, No. 1 (Summer 2011), p. 84; Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, p. 150.

with Schelling that a signal's cost contributes to its credibility.[34] If Saddam was unfamiliar with

or understood but rejected ACT logic, one finds no supportive evidence for this in Mercer's

footnotes.

The core of Mercer's argument is that the logic of ACT is far too complex for leaders to

follow. According to Mercer, ACT may be, in a very strict sense, "rational," yet this by no

means indicates that it guides decision-making. He writes,

> Why would American leaders in a diplomatic confrontation with Chinese leaders rely on
> an audience cost strategy? American leaders must believe Chinese leaders believe that
> American leaders believe that American citizens believe that Chinese leaders believe that
> failure to keep a commitment results in a reputation for irresolution, so Americans must
> boot their leaders from office, and that is why Chinese leaders will view audience costs as
> decisive evidence that a commitment is credible. An argument that depends on a belief
> about a belief about a belief about a belief about a belief is unbelievable.

Scholars of strategic interaction should not mechanically defend their theorizing on the basis of

the internal logic being sound any more than an individual should defend "an incomprehensible

sentence by declaring, 'It's grammatical!'", he exclaims. Scholars' inability to verify the

empirical validity of ACT, he writes, renders audience costs mere "toys" that are "fun for

theorists to play with" but of little value.[35]

Methods and Sources

Empirical data is necessary to determine whether leaders perceive and attempt to signal

credibility as theorists suppose. It is particularly important to test theories when they are abstract

or counter-intuitive. "If signaling theories are arcane," writes Robert Jervis, "perceivers who

have not read the literature will draw inferences differently, which means that the theory will

---

[34] Jervis, *The Logic of Images in International Relations*, p. 19.
[35] Mercer, "Audience Costs are Toys," pp. 400-404.

neither describe the thoughts of perceivers nor prescribe the signalers' behavior."[36] Leaders who have not read Thomas Schelling or James Fearon may think very differently about audience costs and signaling than those who have.

Until very recently, scholarship on ACT included virtually no case studies on the hypothesized causal mechanism. Of the 1,361 citations to Fearon's seminal article on audience costs, only a handful involve case studies.[37] This dearth of case studies, relative to cross-unit studies, indicates that the field is in desperate need of case studies on how beliefs about domestic audience costs affect foreign policy behavior.[38] "Process tracing" is needed to uncover causal mechanisms through examination of the steps between independent and dependent variables.[39]

In this study I treat each case as a potentially "deviant case" from which to identify, and compare, causal relationships.[40] In deviant case analyses, the researcher examines individual cases that do not conform with general patterns. This approach compares a specific case to a generalization, which is based on a larger number of cases. Scholars use deviant case analyses to identify new independent variables that affected outcomes, to demonstrate limits of a theory's generalization, to provide analyses of paradoxical cases, and to raise questions and highlight problems for further examination.[41] Deviant case analysis is *deductive*, in the sense that one

---

[36] Robert Jervis, "Signaling and Perception: Drawing Inferences and Projecting Images," in Kristen Monroe, ed., *Political Psychology* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2002), p. 297.

[37] The 1,361 figure comes from a 19 July 2013 Google Scholar search of James D. Fearon, "Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes," *American Political Science Review* (1994), pp. 577-92.

[38] For an argument along these lines, though in general terms, see John Gerring, "What Is a Case Study and What Is It Good for?" *American Political Science Review* Vol. 98, No. 2 (May 2004), p. 353.

[39] Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2005), pp. 147-48, 223-24.

[40] I draw the idea of using *potentially* deviant approaches from George and Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy*, p. 535.

[41] Rebecca Jean Emigh, "The Power of Negative Thinking: The Use of Negative Case Methodology in the Development of Sociological Theory," *Theory and Society* Vol. 26, No.5 (October 1997), pp. 653-55.

begins with a general deduction and then reviews inconsistent evidence, but can also be inductive, in the sense that one abstracts new causal patterns for theory development.[42]

This study also tests whether leaders assess the credibility of others' commitments, and seek to strengthen the credibility of their own signals, in a manner consistent with ACT. The evidence presented in this study refutes deterministic claims in the literature that the logic of ACT is too complex—especially in authoritarian states—for leaders to grasp, and that personalist regimes never seek to strengthen the credibility of their commitments by generating domestic audience costs. It provides confirmatory evidence that authoritarian leaders (and certainly democrats, also) believe they can escape harm from reneging on audience costs by controlling information and the framing of the concession. And, it calls into question arguments that the historical record is void, or virtually void, of evidence for the audience cost mechanism.

Learning from Case Studies

Scholars disagree about how one should go about testing and refining ACT. Not all scholars are convinced that historical records can reliably answer questions about leaders' credibility assessments. Paul Huth and Bruce Russett (H&R) list five problems with assessing intentions from documents: first, leaders do not necessarily comprehend their own motives or intentions, which are frequently unconscious; second, to the extent that they do understand them, they may not express them; third, leader's motives and intentions can change during the course of a crisis, yet leaders may not articulate these changes; fourth, leaders might make contradictory

---

[42] On the element of deduction, see Emigh, "The Power of Negative Thinking: The Use of Negative Case Methodology in the Development of Sociological Theory," pp. 653-655. On the role of induction, see Alexander L. George and Richard Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), pp. 514-15.

comments about their intentions and resolve; fifth, leaders may intentionally misrepresent their actual motives and intentions.[43]

I am sympathetic to the problems outlined by H&R, as, I believe, are all scholars who have grappled with such issues while working with historical records. It would certainly be easier for scholars if decision-makers always understood and truthfully expressed their perceptions and intentions, including changes in their perceptions and intentions, and never articulated them in a conflicting manner. These potential pitfalls necessarily limit the confidence that scholars should place in findings on a wide array of crucially important issues.[44]

Whatever readers may think of the merit of H&R's arguments, their points are irrelevant to this study's most central finding: Saddam clearly understood the basic logic of ACT, and, on important occasions, discussed the credibility of American and Iraqi commitments within the context of anticipated domestic audience costs. Domestic audience costs are not mere "toys" with little real world applicability. It is certainly not the case that the logic of ACT is too complex for leaders to grasp.

H&R's criticisms of qualitative research should not lead scholars to give up on the enterprise. No research design, no matter how carefully crafted, will solve the first three problems identified by H&R. Scholars can, however, mitigate the effects of H&R's fourth and fifth concerns. Certain types of evidence are more reliable than others, and a careful assessment of evidence greatly increases the confidence one can place in one's findings. Trachtenberg

---

[43] Paul Huth and Bruce Russett, "Testing Deterrence Theory: Rigor Makes a Difference," *World Politics* Vol. 42, No. 4 (July 1990), p. 481 (see also p. 497).

[44] Patrick M. Morgan, after pointing out very similar problems, writes that "it is impossible to reliably identify" cases of deterrence success or failure, that it is "nearly impossible" to rule out alternative explanations for nonevents, and that "Asking whether a state is irrational poses a question that can't be answered, so there is no point in asking it…" See Morgan, *Deterrence Now* (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 122-23, 275-76.

provides an excellent guide as to how scholars might rigorously go about making sense of history.[45]

Erik Gartzke and Yonatan Lupu, who share many of H&R's concerns and are critical of Trachtenberg's analysis of audience costs, take no issue with Trachtenberg's general logic about the primacy of certain types of sources. They write that scholars' have drawn conclusions about ACT based on public statements during the Fashoda crisis, Agadir crisis, and Cuban Missile Crisis, but that public statements are a poor measure of actual intentions. By contrast, they acknowledge, leaders might document their intentions privately if they believe that these records will remain private for many decades and if they are adequately introspective and candid.[46]

If scholars hope to use qualitative evidence to prove or disprove the causal mechanism of audience costs, then, Gartzke and Lupu seem to believe, they should use only cases for which the most candid, introspective, and private of records are available. Even under these limiting circumstances, though, they seem to be skeptical about the ability to identify audience costs in historical records. "It might be said," they state, "that the first rule of audience costs is that you do not talk about audience costs." Absence of evidence does not necessarily constitute evidence of absence, they remind readers, while conceding that this makes it difficult to falsify the theory.[47]

Kenneth Schultz is also skeptical of the extent to which one can observe audience costs in historical records. He writes that audience costs are "not unlike the 'dark matter' of international relations: they are hard to observe directly—we occasionally get indirect glimpses…"[48] From

---

[45] Marc Trachtenberg, *The Craft of International History: A Guide to Method* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), especially pp. 146-62.

[46] Erik Gartzke and Yonatan Lupu, "Still Looking for Audience Costs," *Security Studies* Vol. 21, No. 3 (2012), pp. 392-95.

[47] Gartzke and Lupu, "Still Looking for Audience Costs," pp. 392-95.

[48] Kenneth A. Schultz, "Why we Needed Audience Costs and What we Need Now," *Security Studies* Vol. 21, No. 3 (August 2012), p. 369.

Schultz's perspective, because leaders will not issue bluffing threats if they believe that the threats will cause them to suffer audience costs, audience costs generally play the greatest role in situations in which they are not directly observable.[49]

Nevertheless, Schultz is not nearly as skeptical of the use of qualitative research to identify audience costs as are Gartzke and Lupu. He writes that "Historical case studies…may be the most effective way of deciding whether the search for audience costs is a fruitful enterprise." They are, he continues, "useful for examining whether audience costs exist and, perhaps just as important, whether politicians believe they exist."[50] Jack Levy agrees that case studies are an ideal way to test for the hypothesized causal mechanism of audience costs.[51]

Scope of Findings

This study contains only case studies involving U.S.-Iraq strategic interactions, thus limiting the generalizability of the findings. Just because Saddam understood the audience cost mechanism in a certain way does not mean that Joseph Stalin, Bashar al-Assad, Pol Pot, or other authoritarian leaders saw the world similarly. A single case study cannot falsify a probabilistic theory.[52]

Rich case studies, such as those I provide, do provide scholars with new variables and causal relationships to consider when making sense of case studies involving other actors. What

---

[49] Schultz, "Looking for Audience Costs," pp. 32-60.
[50] Schultz, "Looking for Audience Costs," p. 53.
[51] Jack S. Levy, "Coercive Threats, Audience Costs, and Case Studies," *Security Studies* Vol. 21, No. 3 (August 2012), p. 387.
[52] Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba write that "the single observation is not a useful technique for testing hypotheses or theories" and that falsification from a single observation "is not the way social science should be conducted." I do not agree with the authors in the case of deterministic theories, nor does Gerring. See King, Keohane, and Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 103, 211; Gerring, "What is a Case Study," p. 349.

Lawrence Freedom wrote regarding the study of deterrence would seem to equally apply to analyses of signaling and commitment, which are at the very heart of deterrence. Freedman writes,

> The most useful scholarly contributions to the subject will come from a few rich case studies. These may not generate a general theory, but they might at least alert academics and policy-makers to the sort of factors that could be vital when loosely comparable cases arise in the future.[53]

Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett label this the atheoretical/configurative idiographic approach to theory building.[54] Difficulties inherent in generalizing from case studies, and in applying generalized knowledge to specific policy problems, have led a number of scholars to emphasize that commitment and coercive diplomacy involve an element of art, and not just science.[55]

Contrary to what many political scientists believe, though, science is not merely about generalizations and patterns. James Lee Ray writes that "no self-respecting 'scientist' is really interested, at least while wearing his or her 'scientist's' hat, in *a* case." It is impossible to explain individual events, he continues, since "no 'explanation' is worthy of the name unless it alludes to a pattern into which the event in question fits."[56] In a similar vein, Joseph Nye writes that "history is the study of events that have happened only once; political science is the effort to generalize about them."[57] Ray and Nye are wrong.

---

[53] Lawrence Freedman, *Deterrence* (United Kingdom: Polity Press, 2004), p. 58. See also pp. 116-17.

[54] George and Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, p. 75.

[55] Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, pp. 35-91; Lawrence Freedman, ed., *Strategic Coercion: Concepts and Cases* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 14; Frank C. Zagare and D. Marc Kilgour, *Perfect Deterrence* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 22; Ofira Seliktar and Lee E. Dutter, "Assessing the Rationality of Autocrats: The Case of Saddam Hussein," *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence* Vol. 22, No. 2 (Summer 2009), p. 291.

[56] James Lee Ray, "Democracy and International Conflict," in Colin Elman and Miriam Fendius Elman, eds., *Bridges and Boundaries: Historians, Political Scientists, and the Study of International Relations* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2001), p. 21.

[57] Joseph Nye, "Old Wars and Future Wars: Causation and Prevention," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* Vol. 18, No. 4 (Spring 1988), p. 581.

The purpose of science is not solely to explain patterns or regularities. As R. Harrison Wagner persuasively explains, science is also about explaining completely unique events, such as how HIV originated, whether it started with chimpanzees, and, if so, how it traveled from animals to humans. "It is absurd," he writes, "to think that this is an example of a 'small *n* study' that would be assisted by an increase in the size of the sample." To the contrary, he continues, "the problem is to identify possible explanations of what happened and then to see how many of the known facts each explains."[58]

Applying a rigorous, theoretically guided framework to better understand a lone case study is every bit as "scientific" as is generalizing from a set of samples. Every research design inevitably involves a trade-off between "knowing more about less and knowing less about more."[59] One form of research design is not inherently better than another, merely more or less appropriate for answering a specific question. Stephen Van Evera insightfully questions, "If everyone makes and tests theories but no one ever uses them, then what are they for?"[60]

Understanding Saddam's Iraq is particularly important because ACT theorists frequently refer to it as epitomizing the type of state that cannot, or at least has great difficulties, in generating and signaling domestic audience costs, and in correctly perceiving others' audience costs.[61] Policymakers and defense and intelligence analysts have also focused on insights from Saddam's Iraq for understanding potential authoritarian state adversaries. After Operation Desert Storm, Saddam's Iraq became, in the words of one scholar-practitioner, "the archetype for

---

[58] R. Harrison Wagner, *War and the State: The Theory of International Politics* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007), p. 6.

[59] Gerring, "What is a Case Study," p. 348.

[60] Stephen Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997), 4.

[61] See, for instance, Weeks, "Autocratic Audience Costs: Regime Type and Signaling Resolve," pp. 35-36; Mercer, "Audience Costs are Toys," pp. 403-04.

U.S. defense planners."[62] Saddam was, in the words of another scholar, "a veritable 'poster boy'

for leaders that are implacably and irresponsibly hostile to US interests."[63] According to John

Gerring, such paradigm cases matter more than others because they have "come to define, or at

least to exemplify, a concept or theoretical outcome."[64] Concentrating on Iraq, then, is useful

since lessons from dealing with Saddam have provided the framework through which scholars

and policymakers have assessed the prospects for deterring and coercing other authoritarian

adversaries.

Drawing on theory to understand the most important events in over a decade of U.S.-Iraq

relations is important in its own right, independent of easily generalizable lessons. When one

asks theoretically driven questions of the historical record, one notices important data that less

theoretically minded scholars had overseen. Whereas the literature on ACT remains in need of

additional testing and refinement via qualitative research, historical scholarship on U.S.-Iraq

strategic interactions stands in equal need of theoretically driven questions and insights. This

work must not be left to diplomatic and military historians, who have largely disappeared from

the academy in recent decades and who, in any case, are generally uninterested in and unfamiliar

with theory.

The Captured Records

---

[62] Robert Litwak, *Rogue States and U.S. Foreign Policy: Containment after the Cold War* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2000), p. 56.

[63] James H. Lebovic, *Deterring International Terrorism and Rogue States: U.S. National Security Policy after 9/11* (New York: Routledge, 2007), p. 30.

[64] Gerring, *Social Science Methodology: A Critical Framework* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 219.

A recent emergence of primary source documentation from Saddam's Iraq now enables unprecedented insights into the internal perceptions and decision-making of an authoritarian regime. Never before have scholars had access to such a large amount of high quality sources on the decision-making of an authoritarian state, particularly one from the Middle East. The closest precedent to the captured Iraqi records is probably the records that the United States and United Kingdom captured from Nazi Germany at the close of World War II. The Allies were able to seize millions of pages of German records, including quite remarkable musings by the Führer.[65] Whereas only eleven minutes of audio recordings exist of Hitler in private meetings, however, the United States acquired audio files of over 2,300 meetings involving Saddam.[66]

Scholars are now experiencing a once in a generation opportunity to review a recent authoritarian adversary's perceptions and decision-making by use of large numbers of the adversary's internal records. The captured Iraqi records, and, in particular, the recordings, will facilitate tests and refinements to scholarship on authoritarian regime decision-making, deterrence theory, coercive diplomacy, crisis stability, and many other issues. Just as the emergence of the American presidential recordings, U.S. and Soviet documents, and oral histories from both sides during the Cuban Missile Crisis generated new insights for crisis diplomacy, bureaucratic politics, and a host of other issues, so too will the captured Iraqi records and other emerging sources.

I helped supervise a small team that populated the CRRC's Research Database with some 60,000 pages of records, as well as hundreds of hours of audio files, from Saddam's Iraq. To create this database I spent hundreds of hours locating records of high scholarly value in a restricted U.S. Government database, oversaw the expenditure of translations, and screened tens

---

[65] See, for instance, H.R. Trevor-Roper, *Hitler's Table Talk 1941-1944: Secret Conversations* (New York: Enigma Books, 2007).
[66] Woods, Palkki, and Stout, *The Saddam Tapes*, p. 3

of thousands of pages of translations to ensure that the records contained no classified or otherwise prohibited content. This study would have been impossible were it not for the existence of this Research Database. Though it is less than three years old, already roughly 150 scholars have accessed the database. The records in this database have contributed to at least 14 books, dozens of peer-reviewed journal articles, dissertations, theses, and other publications. Many more studies are under way.

The captured audio files are amazing, yet scholars must be careful when making use of CRRC transcripts and translations. As David Greenberg wrote of the White House's recordings, background noise, overlapping conversations, faint speech, and a lack of familiarity with speaker's voices all render transcriptions of these meetings "treacherous" and mistakes "inevitable." There is a world of difference between Richard Nixon referring to Judge John Sirica as a "wop," which the *New York Times* reported, and as the type of judge "I want," which a subsequent review of the audio file indicates Nixon actually said. Transcribers initially believed that Lyndon Johnson had spoken of a "pack of bastards" when actually referring to the "Pakistani ambassador." One transcript incorrectly stated that an individual "lied. He gets his information from the Joint Chiefs," when it should have read that the speaker "implied he gets his information from the Joint Chiefs."[67] A recent edition of the State Department's Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) series acknowledges inaccuracies in earlier FRUS transcripts of White House recordings and cautions readers to treat the recordings as the original records and transcriptions as merely interpretations of the primary sources.[68]

---

[67] David Greenberg, "The Cuban Missile Tape Crisis: Just How Helpful Are the White House Recordings?," *Slate*, 22 July 2003 accessed 18 June 2011 at http://www.slate.com/id/2085761/.

[68] U.S. State Department, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976. Vol. E-10: Preface to Documents on American Republics* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, July 2009); accessed 4 August 2009 at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve10/preface.

The FRUS warnings are even more fitting for the captured Iraqi recordings, given the additional difficulties in translating from Arabic, often from low-quality recordings of colloquial Tikriti dialect, into English. The CRRC warns visiting researchers that the quality of CRRC translations varies widely and that the original Arabic is the primary source—not the CRRC translation.[69] Most of the translations cited in this study, including all of the key citations, were confirmed by skilled and experienced linguists.[70] These linguists meticulously double checked earlier translators' work, which should increase the confidence that readers place in the quotes and translations cited in this study. Translation issues, however, are only one of a number of potential pitfalls of which scholars using captured Iraqi records should beware.

Scholars must be careful not to infer that a lack of evidence in the Iraqi records necessarily constitutes evidence of absence. Iraq created an enormous amount of documentation under Saddam. Saddam, who was deeply concerned about preserving the regime's records, issued orders on 24 February 1991 to create duplicate copies of all important records and to save them in separate locations.[71] On 2 December 2001, Saddam, concerned about U.S. airstrikes, ordered the Iraqi Intelligence Service to disperse documents from headquarters to private residences.[72] Despite this general care in retaining records, for over a decade Iraqi officials had tried to destroy all references to WMD in Iraqi documents.[73]

---

[69] Conflict Records Research Center, FAQs; accessed 8 July 2013 at http://crrc.dodlive.mil/about/faqs/#8.
[70] Laila Sabara, a highly skilled and experienced linguist, provided most of the assistance. I am also deeply indebted to Mohammed Baban, Yasir Kuoti, and Khalid Seirafi, among other individuals, for editing and improving translations upon which the analysis in this study relies. All of these individuals are native Arabic speakers, either from Iraq (Baban and Kuoti), or Syria (Sabara and Seirafi).
[71] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-000-630, "State Command and Council meeting regarding the Russian Peace proposal and communications between Saddam Hussein and Mikhail Gorbachev," 24 February 991.
[72] CRRC, SH-IISX-D-001-536, "Emergency plan concerning prisoners and documents in case of an attack against Iraq," 18 December 2002.
[73] For an example of one such order, see CRRC, SH-RPGD-D-001-474, "Republican Guard intelligence logbook containing information on UN weapon inspections and Iraq's WMD program," 1 January 2003, pp. 2 and 6.

In the prelude to war with the United States in 2003, the Iraqis began planning to destroy sensitive records to prevent their capture. On 23 January 2003, Saddam's office instructed Iraq's intelligence services that if the Iraqi Command were to fall to Coalition forces, then they should "Demolish and burn all offices in the country, especially [those] associated with ours and other departments."[74] In 2003, weeks prior to the U.S. invasion, the regime reportedly ordered the destruction of all records dealing with its ethnic-cleansing program in the Kurdish north. According to *The New Yorker*, an enormous bonfire of such documents burned for nearly twenty-four hours outside of the municipal building in Kirkuk.[75]

Of considerable relevance to this study, the regime also destroyed many of its intelligence records on the United States. General Salim Khalaf al-Jumayli, who served as chief of the American desk at the Iraqi Intelligence Service (IIS), says that three days after Baghdad fell he ordered his subordinates to burn all IIS documents on the United States, Western Europe and Asian countries. There were tons of documents, he recalls, and it took four days to burn all of the relevant records.[76] This destruction of records is incredibly unfortunate for scholars. The harm that this destruction causes for my study is somewhat mitigated, however, by Saddam's general disregard for Iraqi intelligence analysts' assessments on the United States. Saddam wanted facts on the United States, not interpretations and assessments, he informed his intelligence agencies, since he believed he was uniquely qualified to conduct his own analysis.[77]

Not all destroyed records came at the hands of regime loyalists. According to Human Right Watch, for days on end, looters ransacked government buildings in Basra, including

---

[74] CRRC, SH-PDWN-D-000-012, "Letter regarding contingency instructions for Iraqi government personnel in the event of regime defeat," 23 January 2003. An online version of this record was accessed on 9 July 2013 at http://nsarchive.wordpress.com/2012/06/01/document-friday-the-genesis-of-the-insurgency-in-iraq/.

[75] George Packer, "The Next Iraqi War: What Kirkuk's Struggle to Reverse Saddam's Ethnic Cleansing Signals for the Future of Iraq," *New Yorker*, 4 October 2004.

[76] "US Manipulated Public Opinion Before Iraq War," *RT English Channel*, 22 March 2013, accessed 8 July 2013 at http://on.rt.com/ehhicr.

[77] Woods, Palkki, and Stout, *The Saddam Tapes*, p. 36.

buildings belonging to the General Security Directorate and the General Intelligence Directorate building.[78] These included individuals looking for information on missing or deceased family members, Kurdish political parties, and others.[79] When Peter Galbraith traveled to the remains of Iraq's Foreign Ministry shortly after the war, he observed looters "prying open foreign ministry safes. They were visibly disappointed to find the safes held documents and not money."[80] Western reporters did recover thousands of pages of seemingly authentic records from the ruins of Iraq's Foreign Ministry, yet countless additional records are irretrievably lost for lack of interest by Coalition forces.[81] Many records were also destroyed during Coalition airstrikes and other attacks on Iraqi targets.

Another potential source of selection bias involves whether the records that the CRRC makes available are representative of the larger body of documents captured by U.S. and U.S.-allied forces. The CRRC derives the records that it adds to the CRRC Research Database from a "Source Database" consisting of a much larger number of records. Of over 2,300 captured recordings of conversations in which Saddam was a participant, the CRRC has made available just over 200, though it is constantly adding additional records.[82] The fraction of hard copy records that the CRRC has made available is similarly small.

Certain types of records are systematically excluded from release through the CRRC's Research Database. Records that U.S. officials deemed particularly sensitive and marked as

---

[78] "Basra," Human Rights Watch, 2 June 2003, accessed 9 July 2013 at www.hrw.org/print/reports/2003/06/02/basra.

[79] "Iraq: State of the Evidence," Human Rights Watch, 3 November 2004, accessed 9 July 2013 at www.hrw.org/print/reports/2004/11/03/iraq-state-evidence.

[80] Peter W. Galbraith, *The End of Iraq: How American Incompetence Created a War Without End* (New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc., 2006), p. 112.

[81] The *Daily Telegraph*'s Baghdad reporter, for instance, recovered what appear to be more than 2,500 documents. A Forensic Document Examiner informed a UK parliamentary committee, "I find no evidence that any [of the 2,500+ documents] are forgeries or altered and I consider this possibility to be extremely unlikely." See United Kingdom, House of Commons, Committee on Standards and Privileges, "Report by Mr. Oliver Thorne on the Daily Telegraph documents," 19 January 2007.

[82] Woods, Palkki, and Stout, *The Saddam Tapes*, p. 4 note 14.

highly classified are not necessarily available to CRRC staff. When Coalition forces captured

Iraqi records, they triaged the records in Qatar, gave each document a unique identification

number, scanned the records, and added digital copies of the records (along with translations,

when available) to a Department of Defense database called the Harmony database. The

Harmony database, which consists of captured enemy records, is available to the entire U.S.

intelligence community. "Documents deemed sensitive," however, are neither scanned nor

added to the Harmony database. Whether by accident or design, a key recording from January

1991 is not available in the source database. The CRRC's Standard Operating Procedures also

strictly prohibit CRRC staff from making records available from this source database that

contain scientific and technical information, classified information, or diplomatically sensitive

data. Thus, one should not expect to find records containing U.S. classified information in the

CRRC records, even if U.S.-led Coalition forces captured relevant documentation.[83]

In practice, the greatest roadblocks to adding records from Saddam's Iraq to the Research

Database have nothing to do with classification restrictions. Concerns about classified data,

diplomatic sensitivity, and scientific and technical information have not prevented the CRRC

from adding a single audio file, in which Saddam was a participant, to the Research Database.

---

[83] On the process of capturing, digitizing, and adding digitized copies of records to the Harmony database, see
United Kingdom, House of Commons, Committee on Standards and Privileges, Annex of the Sixth Report,
"Combined Media Processing Centre-Qatar/UK CI Report: Authenticity of Harmony File ISGP-2003-00014623,"
17 July 2007; and Department of Defense, Defense Intelligence Agency, "Combined Media Processing Center-Qatar
Standard Operating Procedures," current as of 4 February 2005, accessed 9 July 2013 at www.dia.mil/public-
affairs/foia/reading-room/. For an identification of the Harmony database as a DOD database, see Combating
Terrorism Center at West Point, "Harmony Program," accessed 9 July 2013 at www.ctc.usma.edu/programs-
resources/harmony-program. For the description of the Harmony database as a "database of captured enemy
documents," see Institute for Defense Analyses, Force and Strategy Assessments, "Non-Traditional Security
Challenges," accessed 9 July 2013 at
www.ida.org/researchareas/forceandstrategyassessments/irregular%20warfare%20planning%20and%20experimenta
tion.php. On the accessibility of the Harmony database to "the entire intelligence community," see U.S. House of
Representatives Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, "The Iraqi
Documents: A Glimpse into the Regime of Saddam Hussein," 109th Congress, 2nd session, 6 April 2006, Hearing
transcript (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2006), p. 25 and 34. For the January 1991
recording that is unavailable to CRRC staff, see Woods, Palkki, and Stout, *The Saddam Tapes*, p. 246 note 65.

Overwhelmingly the rate limiter on the growth of the CRRC's collections is translation costs. Most of the records in the CRRC were originally translated in support of U.S. government military operations, legal investigations, Iraqi Perspectives Project studies conducted at the Institute for Defense Analyses, and intelligence efforts—most notably the Iraq Survey Group. Though the CRRC has spent a considerable amount of money translating captured records, the availability of existing translations, which were initially conducted for Department of Defense and Intelligence Community studies, has largely determined which types of records the CRRC has added, and failed to add, to the database.

Iraqi officials' awareness that they were being taped may also have introduced bias into the recordings' contents. Since meeting attendees at least sometimes knew that their meetings were being recorded, it is possible that this knowledge led to disingenuous discourse. In certain meetings with senior advisers, Saddam made offhand comments about the meeting being recorded.[84] A photograph of Saddam in a meeting with Barzan Ibrahim al-Tikriti reveals an electronic device, apparently an audio recorder, on the table between the two men.[85] On at least a few occasions Iraqi leaders' used recordings to undermine domestic rivals, sometimes publicly.[86] Even foreign diplomats were aware that the regime had recorded their private meetings with Saddam.[87]

Knowledge of the recordings, however, probably played only a relatively small role in discouraging ingenuous discourse during these meetings. Fears of how they might sound on tape and of how the tapes might later be used presumably played a far lesser role in inhibiting candid

---

[84] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-269, "Saddam and his advisors discuss Iraq's compliance with UN Inspectors, UN sanctions on Iraq, Iraqi tribes, and other issues," 29 February 1992; CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-000-732, "Meeting between Saddam Hussein and Iraqi officials regarding the Arab Summit," undated (circa 1989 to 1990).

[85] CRRC, SH-MISC-D-001-271, "Collection of Saddam's Personal and Family Pictures Including Uday's Wedding," undated (circa late 1980s or 1990). See also Woods, Palkki, and Stout, *The Saddam Tapes*, p. 2.

[86] Woods, Palkki, and Stout, *The Saddam Tapes*, p. 6 note 17.

[87] Charles Cullimore interview of Sir Terence Clark, 8 November 2002, British Diplomatic Oral History Programme, p. 30, accessed 8 July 2013 at www.chu.cam.ac.uk/archives/collections/BDOHP/Clark.pdf.

communications than, for instance, did fear of displeasing Saddam. The frequently sensitive discussions in the recordings indicate that neither Saddam nor his advisers expected the regime to lose control of the raw tapes or unedited transcripts.[88]

Another potentially serious bias in the records is that Saddam, at least on occasion, ordered subordinates to turn off the recorder prior to discussions on particularly sensitive and incriminating topics. For instance, in a conversation with his advisers that had turned to the question of missing Iraqis, Saudis, and Kuwaitis from the 1991 Gulf War, Saddam stated, "Not all subjects are for the report. There are some things that are for review and comment by me. Turn off the recording—I will remember and tell you." It is unclear how long the recording had been turned off, but when it resumed there was no discussion on missing persons and the topic had turned to an upcoming trip by Aziz to New York.[89]

Saddam and his trusted lieutenants had access to the recordings, and may have selectively destroyed particularly sensitive or otherwise undesirable portions of the files. In a recording from 25 January 1995, Saddam asked his Secretary: "Hamid, who is going to take this tape out of the recorder?" Saddam also questioned Hamid how he might remove the tapes from the device himself: "How do I do it? Tell me how," he ordered. How long after the recording ended should one wait before removing the tape, he continued. Saddam may have asked these questions so he could alter or destroy particular recordings, though his ignorance of the procedures indicates that he had not done so, at least not personally, anytime shortly prior to this meeting.[90]

Gaps in the documentary record are not the only problem when making sense of the larger body of Iraqi records. Some types of Iraqi records are clearly more authentic than others.

---

[88] Woods, Palkki, and Stout, *The Saddam Tapes*, p. 6.
[89] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-269.
[90] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-000-732..

According to multiple sources, by 1994 the Iraq National Congress had set up "a forgery shop" in an abandoned school in Salahuddin, a small town in Iraq's Kurdish north, to fabricate records that would cast Saddam's regime in an undesirable light.[91] According to George Tenet, then Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, when U.S. forces reached Baghdad they found stacks of purported IIS documents indicating close ties between Saddam's regime and al-Qaeda. Upon close inspection, though, CIA analysts identified the records as forgeries. "It was obvious that someone was trying to mislead us," Tenet writes.[92] Additionally, journalists' unwise payments for documents following the regime's collapse in 2003 may have incentivized the creation of a small black market in sensational, albeit forged, "regime records."

Saddam's regime selectively edited certain state records, including, it is possible, a small number of recordings. According to Richard Butler, a former Executive Chairman of the UN Special Commission on Iraq (UNSCOM), the regime tried to portray Butler in a poor light by delivering an edited recording of one of his meetings with Iraqi officials to international media outlets.[93] Hussein Kamil also accused Iraq, following his defection, of editing a recording that it publicly released to falsely indicate that he had encouraged Saddam to invade Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.[94] The miniscule number of recordings that Iraq publicly released, or prepared to make public, are certainly less reliable than the remainder.

Notwithstanding the various potential problems when using captured documents, the provenance of the CRRC records is extremely reliable. The CRRC makes no records available

---

[91] Jane Mayer, "The Manipulator," *The New Yorker*, 7 June 2004.

[92] George Tenet with Bill Harlow, *At the Center of the Storm: My Years at the CIA* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), p. 356.

[93] Richard Butler, *The Greatest Threat: Iraq, Weapons of Mass Destruction, and the Crisis of Global Security* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2000), p. 113; Cameron Stewart, "Butler Smeared in Iraqi Talks Video," *Weekend Australian*, 15 August 1998.

[94] "Reaction to King Husayn's Speech: Husayn Kamil Says Atmosphere in Saddam Husayn's Family is 'Troubled,'" *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 28 August 1995, Radio Monte Carlo – Middle East, Paris (in Arabic), 25 August 1995.

through the Research Database that analysts within the U.S. Government have identified as forgeries or suspected forgeries. In key instances where the CRRC was in doubt, it submitted the records in question to a specialist in identifying forgeries in the captured Iraqi records, prior to adding the records to the Research Database. Moreover, forging audio files would be extremely difficult given the number of voices on the tapes and other complicating factors.

Other Iraqi Sources

The captured records are crucially important, but constitute only one of many types of sources upon which this study relies. Public speeches by, interviews with, and meeting transcripts involving Saddam and other Iraqi leaders are also insightful. The publicized records are important, in part, in determining what types of signals Saddam wished to send to domestic audiences. These records also provide additional data points for making sense of Saddam's perceptions and beliefs.

One insight from a casual comparison of Saddam's public and private discourses is that his public rhetoric and private rhetoric pointed to the same general worldview. At the heart of both, for instance, one finds a conspiratorial, anti-Semitic worldview. This does not mean, however, that meeting transcripts released in the Iraqi press were complete transcripts. As my first case study makes clear, the Iraqi regime routinely removed undesirable material from its records of meetings that it subsequently released as complete "transcripts" via the Iraqi press.

Saddam took pride in speaking his mind in public. "We speak freely against America without paying much attention to be careful in phrasing our statements," he explained, unlike the Russians, who, he stated, "are very meticulous in their choice of words to the extent of choosing

every letter."[95] Saddam took a very active role in drafting and approving his speeches.[96] It is

not the case, though, as one of Saddam's translators has claimed, that only Aziz and Houda

Ammash had the courage to suggest changes to Saddam's speeches.[97]

Former Iraqi officials' memoirs, oral histories, post-2003 interviews, and interrogation

reports also provide a wealth of important information. Memoirs from regime insiders provide

useful, though sometimes unreliable insights. False information from Iraqi defectors had

disastrous effects on U.S. decision-making, though some of the defectors were more reliable than

others.[98] Memoirs and oral histories from regime loyalists also provide valuable insights.[99]

U.S. interrogation reports of Iraqi principals include remarkable insights, yet are

frequently unreliable. In preparing this study I had access to a variety of declassified

interrogation reports, including FBI interrogators' records of their meetings with Saddam, Tariq

Aziz, Ali Hussein al-Majid (hereafter referred to by his nickname, "Chemical Ali"), and others.

Many of Saddam and Chemical Ali's statements to their interrogators are blatantly misleading

attempts to avoid saying anything that could be used against them in court.[100] Moreover, even

high level detainees were not isolated and were able to speak freely with one another and to

corroborate their stories.[101]

---

[95] Woods, Palkki, and Stout, *The Saddam Tapes*, p. 329.

[96] For one example, see CRRC, SH-RVCC-V-001-402, "Saddam Hussein's speech with the Revolutionary Command members and National Command," undated (circa 1992).

[97] This claim is made in Saman Abdul Majid, *Les années Saddam: Révélations Exclusives* (Paris: Fayard, 2003), pp. 91-93.

[98] For an argument that Sa'ad al-Bazzaz and Wafiq al-Samara'i are generally reliable sources, see F. Gregory Gause, III, "Iraq and the Gulf War: Decision-Making in Baghdad," pp. 24-25, accessed 10 July 2013 at www.ciaonet.org/casestudy/gaf01/.

[99] Raad Majid al-Hamdani, *History*, unpublished memoir by Hamdani, p. 173; Kevin M. Woods, Williamson Murray, Elizabeth A. Nathan, Laila Sabara, and Ana M. Venegas, *Saddam's Generals: Perspectives of the Iran-Iraq War* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 2011).

[100] For a short list of Saddam's claims that are contradicted by contemporary audio recordings, see Woods, Palkki, and Stout, *The Saddam Tapes*, pp. 329-30.

[101] Federal Bureau of Investigation, Interrogation report of Sabir Abd Al Aziz Husayn Al Duri, 23 June 2004, Baghdad, Iraq; dictated 6/25/2004; File number 315E-HQ-1448534-105, declassified, p. 4.

When the detainees spoke to their interrogators, they also did so with their legacies in mind. Saddam's FBI interrogator, cognizant that Saddam would only talk if he felt he stood to gain by so doing, encouraged his prisoner to answer questions "for the sake of history."[102] In the first interview, the former dictator commented that it was important to him what people would think of him 500 or 1,000 years in the future.[103] In a later visit he expressed interest in having the interviews published (he wanted Arabic and English versions) and in granting interviews to others also.[104] Saddam, it seems, viewed his interrogator as the stenographer of his dictated memoir. Saddam's "memoir" includes insights, yet, as with any memoir, must be treated with considerable caution.

American Sources

This study also makes use of American records. The first two case studies rely heavily on declassified records from the George Bush Presidential Library, especially from the Richard Haass files. These files provide amazing insights on American perceptions and decision-making, including memoranda of cabinet meetings and telephone conversations with foreign leaders, intelligence assessments, draft letters, and diplomatic cables. Senior administration officials' memoirs also proved useful, as did personal interviews with former diplomats, oral histories of retired State Department officials, news reports, and secondary sources.

Ironically, captured Iraqi records provide far greater documentation on decision-making in authoritarian Iraq during the Clinton years than do the paltry number of records that are available on U.S. decision-making during this period from the Clinton Presidential Library. The

---

[102] George Piro Interview Session Number 6, 16 February 2004, pp. 5-6.
[103] George Piro Interview Session Number 1, 7 February 2004, p. 2.
[104] George Piro Interview Session Number 4, 13 February 2004, pp. 1-2.

Clinton Library does not seem to have declassified a single national security-related record

relevant to understanding U.S. decision-making about Operation Vigilant Warrior or a host of

other important events and issues relevant to this study. Clinton administration officials'

memoirs also have far less to say about Iraq than did their counterparts' memoirs in the earlier

Bush administration. This relative dearth of documentation greatly hinders, but does not entirely

impede, analysis of the role of audience costs in U.S. thinking during the Clinton administration.

This dissertation has also benefited from a general review of records dealing with Iraq at

the Reagan Presidential Library, the Carter Presidential Library, the United Kingdom's Public

Records Office, Germany's Foundation Archives of Parties and Mass Organizations of the GDR

in the Federal Archives (SAPMO), and the Political Archive of the German Foreign Ministry.

Records from the Digital National Security Archive, Declassified Documents Reference System,

and Margaret Thatcher Foundation have also informed my analysis.

Findings

Chapter 2: Iraq's Invasion of Kuwait

The first case study, on U.S.-Iraq signaling preceding Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, indicates

that Saddam believed that public signals could generate audience costs that made commitments

more credible, and that private signals, by contrast, constituted "cheap talk." Saddam believed

that taking threats public increased the credibility of both U.S. *and* Iraqi commitments, but

considered private communications less informative. Contrary to what most scholars have

written, he did not take from U.S. Ambassador April Glaspie's private communications that he

had received a "green light" to invade Kuwait. This is consistent with ACT. Saddam factored

opposition parties' signals and media reports into his assessments of U.S. commitments, though he sometimes thought the Executive Branch exerted more control over the media and Congress than was actually the case.

American officials' thinking and behavior was in some regards consistent with ACT, though in many crucial ways much less so. Glaspie sought to assess Iraqi signals and threats within the context of Iraqi domestic politics. She favored warning the Iraqis in private not to invade Kuwait, but recommended against the type of public threats that would further tie U.S. hands. There were many reasons why the United States refused to compromise with Iraq over Kuwait, among which audience cost considerations were relatively insignificant. The first reason provided, in the National Security Council's (NSC) first meeting after Iraq's invasion, however, was an argument about domestic audience costs.

Saddam's Perceptions of U.S. Audience Costs and U.S. Signals

Saddam gave little credence to private U.S. signals. This is consistent with ACT, but flies in the face of historical understandings of the Gulf War. A general consensus exists among scholars that Saddam invaded Kuwait largely because U.S. officials, in particular Ambassador April Glaspie, sent private assurances that the United States would do little if Iraq invaded. Most of this chapter is spent refuting this deeply engrained myth. Scholars believe that Saddam accepted these private messages as credible signals, though they fail to address why Saddam would consider such private assurances credible.

It is important to recognize Saddam's intense disinclination to accept U.S. assurances, such as Glaspie's alleged "green light," at face value. A decade and a half of U.S. hostility and

conspiring against Iraq, both real and imagined, had left Saddam deeply suspicious of U.S. intentions toward his regime. As Saddam knew, the United States had armed Kurdish rebels in Iraq's north, via Iran, during the 1970s. Saddam believed, incorrectly, that the United States had sponsored the Islamist revolution that overthrew the Shah as a means of undermining Iraq. During the 1980s the United States had clandestinely armed Iran and provided it with intelligence on Iraq, all while repeatedly, and officially, denying such support. When solid evidence of the U.S. assistance emerged from Iran-Contra scandal revelations, Saddam and his advisers believed the entire affair was aimed at Iraq with the purpose of undermining the Ba'athist regime. When official U.S. policy in 1989 and 1990 was to engage Iraq and seek to improve relations, Saddam believed the United States was attempting to assassinate him and to overthrow his regime. It is far from obvious, given Saddam's longstanding view of U.S. officials as "conspiring bastards," why he would take U.S. assurances at face value, particularly in the case of private assurances.[105]

When Glaspie met with Saddam, she warned him, as she had warned senior Iraqi officials during previous meetings, that the United States could not tolerate Iraqi aggression against Kuwait. Glaspie's comment on the United States taking no sides on Arab-Arab disputes referred to a dispute over delineation of a few kilometers of disputed territory, not Kuwait's sovereignty. Saddam was not interested in gauging U.S. commitment during his meeting with Glaspie; he knew of America's "vital" interest in Kuwait's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Saddam, Iraq's Foreign Minister, Iraq's Deputy Foreign Minister, and an Iraqi interpreter, who were at the meeting, all denied that they had perceived a green light from Glaspie. Other private signals from U.S. officials, including from a delegation of U.S. senators led by Senate Minority Leader

---

[105] Hal Brands and David Palkki, "'Conspiring Bastards': Saddam Hussein's Strategic View of the United States," *Diplomatic History* Vol. 36, No. 3, pp. 625-659.

Bob Dole, were similarly inconsequential. Shortly after the war, Saddam thought that Oscar Wyatt, a Texan oil tycoon, had led this delegation. The notion that Saddam invaded because he perceived a credible assurance via private communications does not withstand serious scrutiny.[106]

Saddam and his advisers understood the "hands-tying," commitment-generating effects of public (as opposed to private) threats. Prior to the invasion, Saddam sought to discourage U.S. officials from taking public their private warnings. Public U.S. threats would engage Iraqi honor and force Saddam to take more bellicose steps than he desired, he and his advisers warned.[107]

Iraqi leaders also worried about the commitment-generating effects of public troop deployments. Iraq should not unambiguously threaten Kuwait, Izzat al-Duri and Chemical Ali advised, since this might lead states to send a tripwire force to deter an Iraqi invasion. While Iraq needed to voice grievances before invading to garner post-invasion support from Iraqis and from Arabs more broadly, al-Duri explained, it must simultaneously indicate that it would not invade to avoid encouraging a deterrent deployment.[108] Iraq's ambiguous mix of threats and assurances indicates that Saddam agreed.

As suggested by ACT, Saddam factored in U.S. opposition party behavior and media reports when assessing the credibility of the administration's threats and assurances. From Saddam's perspective, critical congressional hearings and news stories about Iraq's treatment of its Kurdish population and of its chemical weapon use during the war with Iran signaled American hostility toward Iraq and undermined administration officials' assurances of desire for rapprochement. Saddam described a U.S. delay in approving a tranche of agricultural export

[106] See Chapter 2 of this study.
[107] "Saddam's Message of Friendship to President Bush," 25 July 1990, Bush Presidential Library, National Security Council, Richard N. Haass Working Files, Iraq Pre-2/8/90-12/90 (2 of 6).
[108] Woods, Palkki, and Stout, *The Saddam Tapes*, pp. 170-71.

guarantees for Iraq as "America's first orders, starving the Iraqis, in February '90." He and his

advisers took this, along with U.S. officials' criticisms of Iraq's "Supergun" and criticism over

the execution of a British journalist, as clear signals of American hostility toward Iraq.

Moreover, they noted, these signals of hostility came from the U.S. Congress, not the Executive

Branch.[109]

Saddam viewed democratic institutions such as the U.S. legislature and media outlets

largely through an Iraqi lens. The media and U.S. Congress were controlled by the executive

branch, he explained to his advisers, and were doing its bidding in manipulating public opinion

to prepare it for war with Iraq. Saddam interpreted a February 1990 Voice of America editorial

calling on people to overthrow their dictators as a signal of U.S. enmity. When in late 1988

sanctions legislation worked its way through the Democrat-controlled Congress, which was

opposed by the Reagan administration, Saddam complained to his advisers that "The

administration gave them [the House and Senate] the official framework and official

statements."[110] During the interwar years of 1988-1990, when the administration's policy

toward Iraq was engagement and rapprochement, Saddam believed that signals stemming from

the Congress and media evinced U.S. hostile intentions.

U.S. Perceptions of Iraqi Audience Costs and Iraqi Signals

Some scholars have written that Glaspie and others found credible Saddam's private

assurances that he would not invade Kuwait. I find that Glaspie and other U.S. officials accepted

---

[109] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-000-834, "Saddam Hussein and Political Officials Discussing How to Deal with the Republican Guard and Other Issues Following the First Gulf War," undated; Brands and Palkki, "Conspiring Bastards," p. 656.

[110] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-000-554, "Meeting between Saddam Hussein and Iraqi Officials regarding the Political Relationship between Iraq, Iran and the USA," 17 September 1988.

Saddam's private assurances, yet may have done so only because the assurances accorded with their pre-existing belief that invading Kuwait was not in Iraq's interests. Iraqis were sick of war, Glaspie wrote, and were trying to rebuild their war-torn country.

Glaspie sought to assess Iraq's threats and assurances within the context of Iraqi domestic politics. When Iraq publicly threatened Kuwait on 17 July, causing considerable international concern, Glaspie and a number of Arab ambassadors in Baghdad asked themselves whether the regime had decided to publicly threaten Kuwait in response to concerns about domestic security issues. Glaspie noted that according to Iraqi exile groups, Tikriti general officers were involved in coup plots and that the possibility of discontent over Iraq's deteriorating economic situation existed. She and the Arab ambassadors found no evidence to conclude that Saddam was more afraid of insurrection and bread riots than the Iraqi public was of Saddam's security apparatus. Saddam wanted his deployment of forces to be detected, she concluded, to better coerce the Kuwaitis to hand over cash.[111]

It is not the case, as Schultz has suggested, that Saddam unsuccessfully attempted to signal American leaders that he would invade if Kuwait failed to grant his demands.[112] To the contrary, as mentioned earlier, Iraq publicly threatened Kuwait so it would not be accused of unprovoked aggression, while seeking to persuade Glaspie and other observers that it would not invade to more easily pull off a fait accompli. Glaspie and other U.S. officials' inaccurate assessments of Iraq intentions had nothing to do with difficulties piercing opaque Iraqi domestic politics, as Schultz has suggested. Rather, they stemmed from intentionally deceptive signals from senior regime officials.

---

[111] U.S. Department of State, "Kuwait: Iraq Keeps up the Pressure," declassified (formerly confidential) cable, 22 July 1990, 14 pp., Case No. F-2011-04367, Segment: ER-0002, Document No. C05366363.
[112] Schultz, *Democracy and Coercive Diplomacy*, pp. 41-42.

U.S. Perceptions of U.S. Audience Costs and U.S. Signals

Prior to Iraq's invasion, U.S. officials gave relatively little thought either to how they might credibly reassure Saddam that the United States desired good relations with Iraq and was not trying to undermine the Ba'athist regime, or to how they might signal to him that the United States was credibly committed to the defense of Kuwait. Glaspie recommended against publicly threatening Iraq, since she believed that Saddam thought the United States committed to Kuwait's sovereignty and worried that additional threats, as opposed to private warnings, would exacerbate the situation and cause a conflict spiral. Iraqi leaders were concerned about a recently announced U.S.-UAE refueling exercise, she stated, and believed that it included Kuwaiti cooperation and potentially a deployment of American warships to the Gulf.[113] U.S. officials issued a variety of warnings, generally privately or through semi-private channels. There was no concerted effort during the crisis, however, and perhaps no effort whatsoever, to strengthen America's commitment to Kuwait by generating domestic audience costs.

This does not mean that considerations about domestic audience costs were completely absent from American leaders' calculations. On 3 August, the morning after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, Bush assembled his National Security Council (NSC) to discuss how the United States ought to respond. After the President issued a few introductory remarks and William Webster, the Director of Central Intelligence, provided intelligence updates, Brent Scowcroft, the National Security Adviser, spoke. Scowcroft stated that he detected in Webster's remarks a note that the United States should pursue a compromise solution with Iraq, and that he strongly disagreed. He explained, "There is too much at stake. It is broadly viewed in the United States that a

---

[113] "Saddam's Message of Friendship to President Bush,"; "CB Hearing of the Europe and Middle East Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Subject: Developments in the Middle East, Chaired by: Representative Lee Hamilton (D-IN)," *Federal News Service*, 31 July 1990.

commitment to Kuwait is de facto based on our actions in the Gulf before." The United States

must not let the invasion stand, Bush's influential adviser was explaining, since the American

people believed that America's reflagging of Kuwaiti vessels during the Iran-Iraq War signaled a

U.S. commitment to Kuwait's sovereignty. There are many reasons why the United States went

to war over Kuwait, yet the first reason given, in the first NSC meeting after the invasion, was, at

its heart, an argument about domestic audience costs.[114]

Chapter 3: Iraq's Non-Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction

The second case study addresses whether, and how, U.S. threats and assurances

influenced Saddam's decision not to use chemical or biological weapons during the 1991 Gulf

War. The most widespread explanation for Iraq's non-use is that thinly veiled threats of nuclear

retaliation by U.S. Secretary of State James Baker and by President Bush deterred Iraqi use. In a

9 January 1991 meeting with Iraq's foreign minister, Tariq Aziz, Baker shared a letter from

President George H.W. Bush which warned that "the American people would demand the

strongest possible response" to a WMD attack or other roguish behavior. The letter continued,

"You and your country will pay a terrible price if you order unconscionable acts of this sort."[115]

In Baker's conversation with Aziz, Baker wrote, he "purposely left the impression that the use of

chemical or biological agents by Iraq could invite tactical retaliation."[116]

---

[114] "Meeting of the NSC Meeting," 3 August 1990, Bush Presidential Library, National Security Council, Richard N. Haass Working Files, Iraq 2/18/90 – 12/90 , p. 3.

[115] "Letter to Saddam Hussein," U.S. Department of State Dispatch Vol. 2, No. 2, 14 January 1991, accessed 8 September 2010 at http://dosfan.lib.uic.edu/ERC/briefing/dispatch/1991/html/Dispatchv2no02.html.

[116] James A. Baker with Thomas M. DeFrank, *The Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War & Peace* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1995), p. 359.

A second group of scholars argues that U.S. threats to replace the Ba'athist regime deterred Saddam from using chemical or biological weapons. They point out that Baker also warned Aziz that if Iraq used WMD, "our objective won't just be the liberation of Kuwait, but the elimination of the current Iraqi regime…"[117] The different threats, to attack with nuclear weapons versus seeking regime change, have led scholars to debate which, if either, deterred Iraq.[118]

A third line of interpretation holds that Iraq did not launch WMD because unfavorable weather conditions, Coalition preparations to fight on a chemical battlefield, the ferocity of Coalition airstrikes, the speed of the Coalition's advance, or other such factors deterred Saddam from using chemical weapons by denying Iraq the ability to effectively employ its chemical weapons or by outright preventing Iraqi use of WMD.[119]

Despite the prominence of this case in the literature on nuclear deterrence, key questions remain inadequately addressed and unresolved. Scholars who believe that Baker issued a veiled

---

[117] Baker, *Politics of Diplomacy*, p. 359.

[118] For analysis of Iraq's non-use of "special munitions" during the 1991 Gulf War, see Scott Sagan, "The Commitment Trap: Why the United States Should Not Use Nuclear Threats to Deter Biological and Chemical Weapons Attacks," *International Security* Vol. 24, No. 4 (Spring 2000), pp. 85–115; Norman Cigar, "Chemical Weapons and the Gulf War: The Dog that Did Not Bark," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* Vol. 15, No. 2 (1992), pp. 145–55; William M. Arkin, "Calculated Ambiguity: Nuclear Weapons and the Gulf War," *Washington Quarterly* Vol. 19, No. 4 (Autumn 1996), pp. 2-18; Avigdor Haselkorn, *The Continuing Storm: Iraq, Poisonous Weapons, and Deterrence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999); Victor A. Utgoff, "Nuclear Weapons and the Deterrence of Biological and Chemical Warfare," Occasional Paper No. 36 (Washington: Henry L. Stimson Center, October 1997); Barry R. Posen, "U.S. Security Policy in a Nuclear-Armed World, Or: What if Iraq had had Nuclear Weapons," *Security Studies* Vol. 6, No. 3 (Spring 1997), pp. 1-31; "Project on Nuclear Issues (PONI) Debates the Issues: U.S. Nuclear Declaratory Policy," 25 May 2010 debate between Scott Sagan and Keith Payne at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, D.C., accessed 10 September 2010 at http://csis.org/files/attachments/100525_poni_debates_transcript.pdf.

[119] André Dumoulin, "The Non-Use of Chemical-Warfare Agents During Operation Desert Storm," in Jean P. Zanders, ed., *The 2nd Gulf War and the CBW Threat* (Brussels: Centrum voor Polemologie, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, 1995), pp. 47-50; Al J. Venter, *The Iraqi War Debrief: Why Saddam Hussein was Toppled* (Hermanus, South Africa: Earthbound Publications, 2004), pp. 150-51; "Subj: Iraq's Performance in the Persian Gulf War," accessed 10 September 2010 at www.gulflink.osd.mil/declassdocs/dia/19961031/961031_950825_002mc_91.html; "Memorandum Subject: Iraq: Why Weapons of Mass Destruction were Withheld," accessed 10 September 2010 at www.gulflink.osd.mil/declassdocs/cia/19960715/071596_cia_75701_75701_01.html; William J. Perry, "Desert Storm and Deterrence in the Future," in *After the Storm: Lessons from the Gulf War*, edited by Joseph S. Nye and Roger K. Smith (Colorado Springs, CO: Aspen Institute, 2000), p. 261.

nuclear threat that deterred Iraqi WMD use, for instance, fail to address why Saddam would have considered an ambiguous threat commitment-generating. Would not the ambiguity leave the administration free to do as it wished, and would not Saddam recognize as much? Did Saddam believe that an ambiguous threat by Baker tied President Bush's hands? If so, why? If not, why did the threat matter?

Scholars who believe that the decisive factor for Saddam was Baker's threats to replace the regime fail to acknowledge Saddam's longstanding belief that the United States was unalterably opposed to his rule. In other words, what credible assurance did Saddam have that if he refrained from using WMD that the United States would not seek his removal from power? Domestic audience costs are central to current scholarship on signaling and deterrence, but noticeably absent from discussions of Iraq's non-use in 1991. Did they play a role?

Saddam's Perceptions of U.S. Signals

This case study indicates that Saddam perceived the credibility of U.S. signals in ways largely consistent with ACT. As ACT predicts, ambiguous U.S. threats had no discernible influence on Saddam's beliefs about future U.S. behavior. Contrary to the most widespread accounts for Iraq's non-use, American leaders' ambiguous nuclear threats had little to no effect on Iraqi thinking. Baker's tactical nuclear threat was more than ambiguous or vague—it appears to have been nonexistent. A declassified U.S. State Department transcript of the meeting reveals no ambiguous threat of nuclear retaliation whatsoever. It is unclear what Saddam heard about the letter from Bush since Aziz and other Iraqi officials were apparently instructed not to accept copies. Saddam may have heard about the contents of the letter, but it is unclear that this was the

case and there is evidence that Saddam's subordinates, including Tariq Aziz, focused on Baker's repeated and unambiguous threats of regime change. From an ACT perspective, it is hard to see how an ambiguous threat, if it were issued, even could affect a credibility assessment. An ambiguous statement, by its very nature, cannot constitute a commitment trap.

The United States had no need to generate domestic audience costs to credibly signal to Saddam that the United States might use nuclear weapons in retaliation for Iraqi WMD use. Saddam had long worried that the United States might use nuclear weapons against Iraq under a variety of scenarios.

In contrast to the allegedly ambiguous U.S. threats of nuclear retaliation, Saddam recognized that Baker and Bush had unambiguously, and publicly, threatened to remove him from power should Iraq refuse to withdraw from Kuwait prior to the onset of military activities. He expressed belief that a U.S. failure to remove him from power would disaffect American voters and prevent the president's re-election. Baker would have to distance himself from administration threats to remove Saddam from power, Saddam opined in late 1990, or Baker would not be able to win election during the next election since he would be too closely tied to an unsuccessful public policy to replace the Iraqi regime.[120] When the Bush administration was, in fact, voted out of office, Saddam attributed Bush's electoral loss largely to Americans' disapproval of the administration's threats, and subsequent failure, to replace his regime. [121]

In this case study Saddam assessed credibility in ways largely consistent with ACT, though his struggles to understand U.S. domestic politics and the interplay between the U.S. government and U.S. media outlets negatively affected his credibility assessments. Saddam struggled to make sense of the role of the American media. To a large degree, he saw the U.S.

---

[120] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-042, "Saddam Hussein and the Revolutionary Command Council Discussing the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait and the Expected US Attack," 29 December 1990.
[121] Woods, Palkki, and Stout, *The Saddam Tapes*, p. 42.

media through the context of his own experiences running an authoritarian state. He expressed belief that the American media was largely if not entirely controlled by the administration or the CIA. When American news organizations reported on the destructive effects of Iraqi biological weapons in late 1990, Saddam expressed belief that the Bush administration had distributed the stories with the intent of fomenting domestic opposition to war with Iraq so that the United States would not need to go to war.[122] When media reports broadcast reports of the Baker-Aziz meeting, Saddam described the reports as self-serving American falsehoods.[123]

Saddam as a Signaler

Saddam was a sender, not only a recipient, of signals. In the months following the invasion of Kuwait, he ordered massive evacuation drills of Baghdad and other Iraqi cities both to increase Iraq's ability to face U.S. nuclear coercion, thus changing Iraq's expected utility of conflict, and to signal this readiness to the United States.[124] Iraqi leaders fully recognized that, unlike Iraq's war with Iran, the coming conflict would be a "war of nerves."[125]

Saddam expressed belief that these civil defense procedures were costly signals. He told Soviet envoy Yevgeny Primakov on 6 October that the Iraqi people knew of the evacuations, and, as a result of the evacuations, would more ardently oppose withdrawing from Kuwait under U.S. pressure. Iraqi leaders could not escape their public commitment to the occupation by

---

[122] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-042, "Saddam Hussein and the Revolutionary Command Council Discussing the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait and the Expected US Attack," 29 December 1990.

[123] "Saddam Delivers Gulf War Anniversary Speech," originally broadcast on Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio in Arabic, in FBIS-NES-94-012, 19 January 1994, p. 37.

[124] As Slantchev writes regarding military mobilizations, a civil defense program "simultaneously sinks costs, because it must be paid for regardless of the outcome, and ties hands, because it increases the probability of winning should war occur." See Branislav L. Slantchev, "Military Coercion in Interstate Crises," *American Political Science Review* Vol. 99, No. 4 (November 2005), pp. 533-34.

[125] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-042.

claiming they were surprised by the strong U.S. reaction, he said, since the Iraqi people "will say 'no; your assessment was correct, because we know you evacuated the cities of Baghdad, al-Basra, and Salah ad Din in anticipation of an American nuclear attack. Your assessment was for a situation that is more difficult than war.'" Saddam added, "What would be our answer then?"[126] The evacuations were, he claimed, tying his hands.

This example provides incomplete and imperfect, yet important, evidence for ACT. It is unclear that Saddam ordered the evacuations with the intent of generating audience costs. Moreover, he certainly had incentives to argue that Iraq was committed to the occupation, whether or not he believed that the evacuations had generated costs. Despite these limitations, it is clear that Saddam understood the basic logic of audience costs—that leaders suffer domestically for failing to follow through on public commitments, and that leaders can use these public signals and domestic audience costs to increase the perceived credibility of their commitments. Saddam may or may not have believed that the evacuations were actually tying his hands. What is important here is that Saddam made the argument in the expectation that Primakov might believe that the evacuations had generated audience costs that were, in turn, tying Saddam's hands. It's a mouthful, to be sure, but Saddam grasped the logic and believed that Primakov, another autocrat, would as well.

U.S. Signals and Assessments of Signals

U.S. perceptions and behavior were far less compatible with ACT than were Iraqi thinking and actions. A few weeks before Baker's meeting with Aziz, Bush indicated that he

---

[126] CRRC, SH-PDWN-D-000-533, "Meeting between Saddam Hussein and the Soviet delegation," 10 February 1990.

considered it desirable to send Saddam ambiguous threats and even a cacophony of contradictory signals, which, of course, could not conceivably tie his hands. On 21 December, he told British Prime Minister John Major that he was not worried about the effects of Lt. Gen. Calvin Waller's comment to reporters that U.S.-led forces would not be ready to fight Iraq by the Coalition's 15 January deadline for Iraq to have withdrawn from Kuwait. "We should send Saddam Hussein a confused message," he explained.[127] Whereas Bush did not believe that the clarity or consistency of a threat would increase its credibility, he seems to have believed that direct, person-to-person communications would cause Saddam to accept a threat as credible. Bush told Baker that he wanted him to meet with Saddam and to threaten him in person since "If he hears it from you, he'll know it's for real."[128]

Jerrold Post, the influential father of psychoanalysis at the CIA, writes that Saddam and other Arabs considered private signals more credible than public signals. In the Arab world, he writes, "There is no necessary connection between courageous verbal expression and the act threatened." From a Middle Eastern perspective, he continues, courageous public rhetoric raises a speaker's stature and constitutes a "hallmark of leadership," independent of the speaker's actual behavior. He explains:

> Saddam probably heard the Western words of President Bush through a Middle Eastern filter. When a statement of resolve and intent was made by President George H.W. Bush in a public statement, Saddam may well have discounted the expressed intent to act. This underlines the importance of a private channel to communicate clearly and unambiguously. The mission by Secretary of State Baker afforded the opportunity to resolve any misunderstandings on Saddam's part concerning the strength of resolve and intentions of the United States and the international coalition.[129]

---

[127] Bush Presidential Library, "Telephone Conversation with PM John Major of Great Britain," 21 December 1990. [I need to complete this citation]

[128] Baker, *Politics of Diplomacy*, p. 349.

[129] Jerrold M. Post, "Saddam Hussein of Iraq: A Political Psychology Profile," accessed 30 May 2013 at http://law.cwru.edu/saddamtrial/documents/saddam_hussein_political_psychology_profile.pdf.

There are obvious problems with Post's analysis. For instance, the Iraqis had no expectation that the messages communicated in the meeting would remain private. Toward the conclusion of the meeting, Aziz told Baker that he expected the United States to release a copy of the letter to the press. After the meeting, Aziz and Baker held press conferences. Moreover, whether "the Arab mind" is a useful construct, and whether Arabs consider private threats more credible than public threats, remains very unclear. Regardless, U.S. leaders' and influential intelligence analysts' beliefs that ambiguous, confusing, and private signals are more credible than more explicit and public communications is utterly incompatible with ACT.

Chapter 4: Iraq's Coerced Disarmament

The third case study, on U.S. efforts to deter and roll back Iraqi WMD acquisition, confirms that Iraqi and American leaders understood the basic logic of ACT and, at times, sought to assess and signal credibility within an audience cost framework. This chapter is comprised of three sections. The first part consists of a short case study on UNSCOM's attempt to inspect Iraq's Ministry of Agriculture in 1992, Iraq's refusal, and the resulting crisis. This crisis was important because, for the first time, Iraq had flatly prevented an inspection. It is insightful for ACT, in part, since it took place within the context of an American presidential campaign and of much speculation regarding how American domestic politics were affecting U.S. decision-making toward Iraq, and Iraqi perceptions of U.S. signals.

The second section is a mini case study on Iraq's deployment of Republican Guard forces near its border with Kuwait in 1994, the crisis that ensued when the United States deployed forces to the region and issued public deterrent (and compellent) threats, and the resolution of the

crisis in Iraq's formal, public recognition of Kuwait's sovereignty and borders. It is important because many observers have claimed that credible, public U.S. deterrent signals prevented a second Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. It appropriately fits in this chapter on Iraq's coerced disarmament because, as the captured records document, the Iraqi leadership orchestrated the crisis primarily to encourage Russia to fight more vehemently in the Security Council to lift the sanctions on Iraq and to end the weapon inspections. It is an important case for ACT because it provides insights on Iraqi, and U.S., thinking about the domestic consequences for Saddam of reneging on his unambiguous, longstanding, public commitment to incorporating Kuwait.

The final section provides a broad overview of whether, and to what degree, Saddam's views on Iraqi and American audience costs contributed to Iraq's ambiguous disarmament behavior. The conventional wisdom is that Iraq's disarmament was ambiguous because Saddam wanted to lead UN inspectors and U.S. officials to believe that Iraq had disarmed, while indicating to domestic actors and regional rivals that it had not. Some scholars have written that the disarmament was ambiguous because Saddam did not want his officers to know that he had completely backed down from his longstanding commitment to possessing WMD for fear that they would replace him.[130] This section also reviews and has important insights for how Saddam assessed the credibility of U.S. commitments within the context of American domestic politics.

Saddam's Views on Domestic Audience Costs and the Credibility of Commitments

---

[130] Etel Solingen, *Nuclear Logics: Contrasting Paths in East Asia and the Middle East* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), p. 163; Robert S. Litwak, *Regime Change: U.S. Strategy through the Prism of 9/11* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2007), p. 325; David Hannay, "Three Iraqi Intelligence Failures Reconsidered," *Survival* Vol. 51, No. 6 (December 2009—January 2010), pp. 16-17; Achim Rohde, *State-Society Relations in Ba'thist Iraq: Facing Dictatorship* (New York: Routledge, 2010), p. 53; F. Gregory Gause, III, *The International Relations of the Persian Gulf* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 153.

This chapter makes clear that Saddam had no problems grasping the logic at the heart of ACT. Perhaps the best evidence for this is found in the chapter's third section, where I review Saddam's assessment of the Iraq Liberation Act (ILA). The ILA, when it became law, made it official U.S. policy to seek the replacement of Saddam's regime from power.[131] Consistent with ACT, Saddam told his advisers that Clinton's signing of the ILA generated domestic audience costs that would weaken the President's hold on power since he would inevitably be unable to overthrow the Ba'athist regime. Saddam said that Clinton's failure to make good on this official U.S. policy would enable congressional Republicans to impeach, and, if they desired, remove the President from office. Republicans in the Senate pushed for the ILA, Saddam explained, to weaken Clinton politically since they knew the United States could not overthrow the Iraqi regime. Saddam understood ACT, believed that Senate Republicans understood ACT, and predicted that Clinton would suffer a loss of domestic support for publicly committing himself to a policy that he would be unable to achieve.[132]

Saddam and his advisers also believed that they could use domestic audiences to send credible signals to foreign observers. For instance, from Saddam's perspective, massive Iraqi demonstrations in front of Iraq's Ministry of Agriculture in 1992 had "convinced" Iraq's enemies of the Iraqi people's resolve. In the Middle East, Saddam explained, such demonstrations were commonly used "to send a message, to place a message on the wall." Saddam knew that Westerners publicly derided these demonstrations as orchestrated, yet expressed belief that demonstrations in the West were similarly orchestrated.[133]

---

[131] Iraq Liberation Act of 1998, H.R. 4655, 105th Congress (1998), accessed 23 August 2013 at http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-105publ338/html/PLAW-105publ338.htm

[132] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-000-756, "Saddam and senior advisors discussing a potential military conflict with the United States," 9 February 1998.

[133] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-252, "A meeting between Saddam Hussein and the Council of Ministers concerning UN sanctions, resolutions and the potential for an American invasion," undated.

Saddam and his advisers worried about the domestic support they would lose if they backed down from their public commitment not to allow the inspection of the Ministry of Agriculture. As Taha Ma'ruf explained, "If we retreat, we will lose part of the people's support. They will say, 'Why did you say you will not let them in and now you have let them in?'" Failure to keep its commitment, he continued, would "lose the people's morale" and cause problems within the Ba'ath Party to escalate.[134] Saddam acknowledged that "our people will refer to the message that we addressed to them" and that "it is not easy for our people to be flexible."[135] He explained that the Iraqi people understood the need for compromises, however, and would not be angry with the regime as long as Iraq achieved its core demands while conceding only in more peripheral areas.[136]

American Leaders' Views on Domestic Audience Costs and the Credibility of Commitments

American leaders and leaders of other UN Security Council member states expressed belief that Iraq could strengthen its commitments by generating domestic audience costs. When the United States and other Security Council members demanded that Iraq withdraw its forces from near the border with Kuwait in 1994, they insisted that it commit itself to accepting Kuwait's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Iraq was required to make this commitment credible by issuing it in the same unambiguous, public, and constitutional manner in which it had formally annexed Kuwait four years earlier.

---

[134] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-186, "Saddam Hussein meeting with Ba'ath Party members to discuss UN weapons inspection," 23 July 1992.
[135] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-252.
[136] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-252.

U.S., UK, and French representatives on the Security Council described this formal, public commitment mechanism as constituting a credible signal of Iraqi intentions. France's ambassador to the United Nations said that this procedure provided a means for the Iraqis to "demonstrate their good faith." The procedure was important, he explained, since it constituted "a public political gesture showing that Iraq is entering a new stage in its relations with Kuwait." From the perspective of France's leaders, he continued, it would serve as a "vital gesture" and "constitute a turning point."[137] The procedure "buttressed" Iraq's commitment, strengthening it, the United Kingdom's representative on the Security Council agreed.[138] Iraq's untrustworthiness, U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright explained, is why the U.S. Government considered it "so important" for Iraq to publicly and unambiguously recognize Kuwait according to Iraq's constitutional procedures. Iraq's informal public promises and statements of intent were mere words, she said, unlike the formal actions the Security Council was requiring Iraq to take to recognize Kuwait. "Words are cheap," she stated, whereas "Actions are the coin of the realm."[139]

Albright expressed belief that Iraqi leaders would suffer domestic audience costs for publicly, and formally, reneging on their longstanding commitment to annex Kuwait. Ever since Iraq had made Kuwait its "Nineteenth Province" in August 1990, she told Security Council members, Iraq's state-run media had continued treating Kuwait as part of Iraq by failing to ever

---

[137] United Nations, Security Council, "Provisional Verbatim Record of the 3439th Meeting," 17 October 1994, p. 6, accessed 17 May 2013 at http://www.undemocracy.com/S-PV-3439.

[138] United Nations, Security Council, "Provisional Verbatim Record of the 3439th Meeting," 17 October 1994, p. 13, accessed 17 May 2013 at http://www.undemocracy.com/S-PV-3439.

[139] United Nations, Security Council, "Provisional Verbatim Record of the 3439th Meeting," 17 October 1994, p. 7 and 18, accessed 17 May 2013 at http://www.undemocracy.com/S-PV-3439; United Nations, Security Council, "Provisional Verbatim Record of the 3438th Meeting," 15 October 1994, p. 5, accessed 17 May 2013 at http://www.undemocracy.com/S-PV-3438.

mention the word Kuwait.[140] Forcing Iraqi to renege on its formal, well-known commitment to incorporating Kuwait would cost Saddam domestic support, which could lead domestic groups to remove him from power, Albright opined. She explained, "It is hard to imagine how the current Iraqi Government can continue in power while…giving up its dreams of annexing the sovereign State of Kuwait," along with renouncing terrorism and ceasing to repress the Iraqi people.[141]

Conclusions

The evidence in this chapter demonstrates that U.S. and Iraqi leaders, in some key instances, assessed the credibility of their counterparts' signals in the manner described by ACT. Iraqi and American leaders expressed belief that Iraq, though a personalist regime, could increase the credibility of its signals by issuing them in a manner that would generate domestic audience costs. Domestic audience costs were, at times, crucial to understanding leaders' assessments and state behavior. This is an important finding.

At other times, however, audience cost considerations were relatively insignificant. For instance, Iraq did not refrain from attacking Kuwait in 1994 due to a perception of credible U.S. deterrent signals. Iraqi intelligence officials recognized that U.S. signals were intended to convey America's commitment to Kuwait, yet Saddam had no intention of re-invading his southern neighbor in the first place. Similarly, I identify a variety of reasons for why Iraq disarmed in an ambiguous manner, and failed to more fulsomely cooperate with UN weapon inspectors. Iraqi concerns about Iraqi domestic audience costs, if they played a role at all, were

---

[140] United Nations, Security Council, "Provisional Verbatim Record of the 3438th Meeting," 15 October 1994, p. 5, accessed 17 May 2013 at http://www.undemocracy.com/S-PV-3438.
[141] United Nations, Security Council, "Provisional Verbatim Record of the 3439th Meeting," 17 October 1994, p. 19, accessed 17 May 2013 at http://www.undemocracy.com/S-PV-3439.

nowhere near the top of this list. A more detailed analysis of how American leaders perceived

domestic audience costs during this period must, unfortunately, await release of relevant records.

Chapter 2: Iraq's Invasion of Kuwait

Nearly all scholars who have written on U.S.-Iraq diplomacy preceding Iraq's invasion of Kuwait believe that the invasion was neither irrational nor particularly risky since April Glaspie, the U.S. ambassador to Iraq, had given Saddam Hussein a green light. Kenneth Waltz, for instance, teaches that it is "very clear from the record" that Glaspie "gave Saddam Hussein reason to believe that he could take Kuwait, that…we wouldn't mind it too much if he took Kuwait."[1] Stephen Walt agrees. "It is clear," he writes, that Glaspie "did unwittingly give a green light to Saddam…"[2] Chaim Kaufmann asserts that "no good reason" exists to "doubt the conventional understanding" that Glaspie gave Saddam a "green light" to invade.[3]

As evidence, most scholars cite the Iraqi transcript of a 25 July 1990 meeting between Glaspie and Saddam and newspaper excerpts of a cable that Glaspie sent to Washington about the meeting. They note that according to these documents, Glaspie told the Iraqi leader that the United States took no position on such Arab-Arab conflicts as Iraq's "border disagreement with Kuwait." They further emphasize that according to these records, the ambassador expressed an obsequious desire for improved relations, and in neither did she issue deterrent threats.[4]

---

[1] Kenneth N. Waltz, "Alone in the World," presented for Harry Kreisler's course at Berkeley on 10 February 2003, relevant material is from 1:00:40 to 1:01:15, accessed 15 June 2007 at www.sscnet.ucla.edu/06W/polisci120b-1/waltz.php.ram.

[2] Stephen M. Walt, "What WikiLeaks REALLY tells us about the Glaspie-Hussein Meeting," 8 January 2011, blog post on http://walt.foreignpolicy.com, accessed 10 January 2011.

[3] Chaim Kaufmann, "Threat Inflation and the Failure of the Marketplace of Ideas: The Selling of the Iraq War," *International Security,* Vol. 29. No. 1 (2004), p. 13.

[4] For a few of the most prominent scholars who believe that Glaspie provided a "green light," see John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, "An Unnecessary War," *Foreign Policy*, No. 134 (January-February, 2003), p. 54; Richard K. Betts, "Suicide From Fear of Death?," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 82, No. 1 (Jan/Feb 2003), p. 34; Kaufmann, "Threat Inflation and the Failure of the Marketplace of Ideas," p. 13; Waltz, "Alone in the World," 1:00:40 to 1:01:15; Alexander L. George, *Bridging the Gap: Theory & Practice in Foreign Policy* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1993), p. 71; Efraim Karsh, "Reflections on the 1990-91 Gulf Conflict," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (1996), pp. 307-08; Michael O'Hanlon, "How to be a 'Cheap Hawk,'" *Brookings Review*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (Summer 1995); Barry Rubin, "US Policy: End of a Peace Process, Start of a Gulf Crisis," *Middle East Review of International Affairs* (1990); Martin Kramer, book review of Robert D. Kaplan, *The*

What scholars have not addressed is why Saddam would have considered a private assurance from Glaspie, or any other U.S. official, for that matter, credible. Saddam, after all, had long considered Americans untrustworthy, "conspiring bastards."[5] There is an amazing disconnect between the consensus view among scholars that Saddam invaded Kuwait because of a private assurance, and a different consensus view among scholars that private signals cannot generate or credibly convey commitment. This chapter aims to resolve this tension.

I find that the overwhelming bulk of the evidence refutes the notion that Saddam invaded because of any signals of irresolute resolve or weakness from Glaspie or other U.S. officials. Captured records from Saddam's regime, interviews of U.S. and Iraqi policymakers, and declassified State Department documents all indicate that Glaspie and other U.S. officials repeatedly reminded Saddam and his lieutenants that Kuwait's sovereignty and territorial integrity constituted a vital U.S. interest. The evidence also makes clear that Saddam did not misinterpret these signals.

Glaspie and other U.S. officials' recognition of Saddam's paranoid, conspiratorial worldview and intense distrust of the United States led them to warn Saddam and signal displeasure regarding undesirable Iraqi behavior while also reassuring him of U.S. desire for friendship and improved bilateral relations. Whereas many scholars have treated the (generally private) warnings and reassurances that the United States desired better relations as sycophantic pandering that inadvertently encouraged Saddam to invade, these signals were entirely appropriate given Saddam's ingrained paranoia. By no means did they encourage him to attack Kuwait. In short, the "green light" interpretation is nothing more than a myth.

Arabists, in *Commentary,* Vol. 97, No. 2 (February 1994), p. 53; Walt, "What WikiLeaks REALLY tells us about the Glaspie-Hussein Meeting," 8 January 2011.
[5] Hal Brands and David Palkki, "'Conspiring Bastards': Saddam Hussein's Strategic View of the United States," *Diplomatic History,* Vol. 36, No. 3 (2012): 625-659.

Saddam and his advisers recognized the hands-tying effects of public threats and troop deployments. They sought to deter such commitment-generating deterrent signals by providing Arab leaders and U.S. officials with deceitful assurances about Iraq's intentions toward Kuwait, and by indicating that public U.S. threats would exacerbate a conflict spiral between Iraq and the United States. Glaspie, other U.S. officials, and Arab leaders recommended against public threats and additional deployments, for fear that they would backfire by inadvertently encouraging Iraqi aggression. The absence of hands-tying U.S. behavior reflects, in part, Iraqi leaders' recognition of the commitment-generating effects of such signals. Absence of evidence of hands-tying U.S. behavior stemmed, ironically enough, from Iraqi leaders' recognition of the importance of such commitment-generating behavior.

Within the course of the crisis, American leaders did little to strengthen America's commitment to Kuwait by generating domestic audience costs. This does not mean, however, that domestic audience costs were utterly irrelevant. Brent Scowcroft, the U.S. National Security Advisor, advised Bush the morning after the invasion that the United States could not acquiesce to Iraq's conquest of Kuwait since the American people believed that the United States was committed to defending Kuwait based on U.S. actions in the Gulf during the Iran-Iraq War.

This chapter proceeds as follows. First, I present a brief overview of Saddam's views of the United States and his disinclination to accept U.S. assurances at face value. I show that in the lead-up to the meeting, U.S. officials sent numerous deterrent signals to Iraq. Second, I demonstrate that Iraqi participants have repeatedly denied that Glaspie provided anything approaching a "green light," incentives to claim otherwise notwithstanding. Third, I argue that the frequency with which Iraq distributed falsified recordings and documents renders the Iraqi "transcript" untrustworthy. Forth, I discuss the content of Glaspie's cable and cast light on

common misunderstandings. Fifth, I address alternative explanations for Saddam's decision to invade. Sixth, I address why Glaspie opposed publicly threatening Iraq, officials on the Joint Staff opposed deploying additional forces to the region, and the National Security Council opted not to recommend that Bush more sternly warn Saddam. I find that the decision to invade was extremely foolhardy, and conclude with a discussion of the implications of this case for the study of domestic audience costs and practice of deterrence.

The Context of Glaspie's Meeting

Saddam's Image of the United States

Saddam was not exactly inclined to take U.S. assurances at face value. His language and behavior in the years before his meeting with Glaspie led U.S. diplomats in Baghdad to describe him as "paranoid" and "one of the most suspicious people in the world."[6] Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Saddam and his associates viewed the United States as hostile and conspiratorial. In May 1972 the United States solidified its friendship with Iran when Nixon and Kissinger visited Tehran.[7] Nixon agreed that the United States would "sell Iran those weapons it requested," all while simultaneously arming Iraq's other mortal enemy: Israel.[8] By contrast, in 1972 Iraq signed a 15-year Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with the Soviet Union, America's arch rival.

---

[6] Charles Stuart Kennedy interviews of Haywood Rankin and Joseph C. Wilson, "The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project," 24 July 1998 and 8 January 2001, accessed 4 January 2010 at http://memory.loc.gov.

[7] Gary Sick, "The United States in the Persian Gulf: From Twin Pillars to Dual Containment," in David W. Lesch, ed., *The Middle East and the United States: A Historical and Political Reassessment* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2007), p. 292.

[8] "Memorandum to the Secretary of State, Subject: The Secretary's meeting with the Shah of Iran," 13 May 1977 (declassified) in the documents prepared for "The Carter Administration and the 'Arc of Crisis, 1977-1981," A critical oral history conference, The Woodrow Wilson Center, 25-26 July 2005.

From 1972-75, the United States clandestinely armed Kurdish rebels in Iraq despite its alleged neutrality.[9] A message from the U.S. interest section in Baghdad during this period noted that the "regime is convinced we seek to overthrow them…," and advised that disabusing Saddam and his cohorts of this belief should be the most urgent task regarding Iraq.[10]

Such efforts failed miserably. The "imperialistic American enemy" sought to destroy Iraq, Saddam told Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) members in 1979, and had facilitated peace between Egypt and Israel to more effectively harm his regime.[11] The United States, he explained, had also orchestrated the overthrow of the Shah so it would have an excuse to increase its naval presence in the Persian Gulf.[12] America was Iraq's main "enemy," he announced in 1980, and declared a year later that the United States had been "our enemies all along."[13] As one diplomat who had served in the U.S. interest section in Baghdad recalled, the United States "couldn't in the late '70s and early '80s brake down the residue of [Iraqi] suspicion that had developed."[14]

Relations with the United States improved when faced with the prospect of an Iranian victory over Iraq in the 1980s, yet it is important not to misread how Saddam interpreted U.S. support. The Iraqis, who believed the United States wanted Iraq and Iran to wage a lengthy and mutually destructive war to keep them weak relative to Israel, suspected that America was aiding

---

[9] "Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon," 5 October 1972, accessed 1 May 2011 at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve04/d325; Patricia Lessard and Theodore Lowrie interview of Arthur L. Lowrie, "The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project," 23 December 1989, accessed 4 January 2010 at http://memory.loc.gov.

[10] "Memorandum From the U.S. Interests Section in Baghdad to the Department of State," 21 October 1972, accessed 30 June 2010 at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve04/d326.

[11] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-000-553, "Revolutionary Command Council Meeting," 27 March 1979.

[12] CRRC, SH-SHTP-D-000-559, "President Saddam Hussein Meets with Iraqi Officials to Discuss Political Issues," November 1979.

[13] Carter Presidential Library, NLC-2-28-7-1-3, President's CIA Briefing File, Box 28, "6/21/80-6/25/80"; CRRC, SH-PDWN-D-000-341, "Speech by Saddam Hussein at Al-Bakr University," 3 June 1978; CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-000-711, "Saddam Hussein and Iraqi officials Discussing the King Fahed Initiative, Relations with the USSR, and Perceptions of other Middle Eastern Countries," undated (circa November 1981).

[14] Charles Stuart Kennedy interview of Morris Draper, "The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project," 27 February 1991, accessed 4 January 2010 at http://memory.loc.gov.

its traditional ally, Iran, at the same time and in many of the same ways as it was assisting Iraq.[15]
Israeli arms shipments to Iran, which were widely reported in the media, created a general
impression throughout the Middle East during the early 1980s that the United States was
indirectly supporting Iran.[16] Saddam also claimed that U.S. NATO allies, "prompted by the
United States," were supplying Iran with arms.[17]

U.S. intelligence sharing did little to build trust. According to Wafiq al-Samarra'i, the
deputy director of Iraq's military intelligence during the Iran-Iraq War, Saddam was always
skeptical of the U.S. intelligence. Conviction that the CIA passed information it obtained from
Iraq to the Iranians led Saddam to insist that Samarra'i request only general information from his
American contacts. Saddam frequently returned Samarra'i's memoranda on these contacts with
handwritten notes in the margins warning, "Be careful, Americans are conspirators."[18] Wayne
White, a longtime Iraq analyst in the State Department, claims the CIA generalized the
information it shared for fear that if the intelligence were wrong, Iraq would blame the United
States for arranging its defeat. As a result, he says, the CIA reports he saw uselessly underscored
risk practically everywhere.[19]

Iran-Contra revelations reinforced Saddam's suspicions about U.S. machinations. The
United States, the Iraqis learned, began clandestinely arming Iran, through Israel, even as it re-
established diplomatic relations with Iraq. The United States had even given Iran intelligence on
Iraq immediately prior to Iran's crucial battlefield victory on the Fao Peninsula.[20] From

---

[15] This is discussed in greater detail in Brands and Palkki, "Conspiring Bastards," pp. 625-59.
[16] "Your Meeting with Israeli Defense Minister Ariel Sharon, 4:00–5:00 P.M., Tuesday, May 25," [pp. 1-2, 8, 11 only], declassified (formerly secret), 21 May 1982, Digital National Security Archive (DNSA) IG00071.
[17] "25 Aug Solarz Interview with Saddam Husayn," Baghdad INA in Arabic, 25 August 1982, DNSA IG00075.
[18] Andrew Cockburn and Patrick Cockburn, *Saddam Hussein: An American Obsession* (London: Briddles, Ltd., 2002), p. 35.
[19] Author's phone interview with Wayne White, 7 June 2010.
[20] Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle: the Conflict Between Iran and America* (New York: Random House, 2004), pp. 213, 219.

Saddam's perspective, the United States had helped Iran achieve the victory by providing Iraq with misleading intelligence.[21] President Reagan made matters worse by explaining to Americans that the United States had sold arms to Iran as part of a secret effort to create a strategic opening to Iran.[22] Saddam also knew that Oliver North had told the Iranians that the United States desired regime change in Iraq.[23] According to Tariq Aziz, Saddam's foreign minister, Iran-Contra disclosures reinforced Saddam's image of America as untrustworthy and "out to get him personally."[24] U.S. actions constituted a "stab in the back," Saddam complained to his advisors.[25]

While the United States increased its support for Iraq toward the end of the war, Iraqi distrust persisted. The United States was "no longer able to tolerate us" Saddam told his advisors on 17 September 1988, and expressed belief that it was behind a recent attempt on his life.[26] This intense distrust was not lost on U.S. diplomats. The U.S. deputy chief of mission in Baghdad observed that no "residue of good will" spilled over from the war and the United States "earned no brownie points with them for having done something that was totally in our own interest."[27]

---

[21] "Amman 09648, "TFKI02: Oral Message for the President: King Hussein Advises U.S. Caution on Iraq-Kuwait Dispute," 2 August 1990, 1 of 3, p. 2 (declassified 30 September 2011 in response to a FOIA request); "Iraq Ascribes a Key Defeat in '86 to Misinformation from the U.S.," *New York Times*, 19 January 1987; Efraim Karsh and Inari Rautsi, *Saddam Hussein: A Political Biography* (New York: Grove Press, 2002), p. 161.

[22] Ronald Reagan, "Address to the Nation on the Iran Arms and Contra Aid Controversy," 13 November 1986, accessed 8 August 2008 at www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1986/111386c.htm.

[23] Elaine Sciolino, "World of Terrorism Didn't Halt Overtures," *New York Times*, 27 February 1987; Harmony video file ISGQ-2003-M0006248, in Woods, *Saddam and Terrorism*, Vol. 4, p. 22.

[24] Central Intelligence Agency, *Comprehensive Report of the Special Advisor to the DCI on Iraq's WMD*, Vol. 1, "Regime Strategic Intent," 30 September 2004, p. 31. Hereafter, I will refer to this study as the *Duelfer Report*. The quotes are from the *Duelfer Report*'s summary of Aziz's statement; the words do not belong to Aziz. See also Charles Duelfer, *Hide and Seek: The Search for Truth in Iraq* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2009), p. 54.

[25] Kevin M. Woods, David D. Palkki, and Mark E. Stout, *The Saddam Tapes: The Inner Workings of a Tyrant's Regime, 1978-2001* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 19.

[26] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-000-554, "Meeting between Saddam Hussein and Iraqi Officials regarding the Political Relationship between Iraq, Iran and the USA," 17 September 1988.

[27] Kennedy interview of Wilson, 8 January 2001.

As suggested by ACT, Saddam factored in U.S. opposition party behavior and media reports when assessing the credibility of the administration's assurances. Saddam saw critical congressional hearings and media coverage on Iraq's treatment of its Kurdish population and of its chemical weapon use during the war with Iran as evidence of American hostility, which undermined administration officials' assurances of desire for stronger ties. Saddam described a U.S. delay in approving a tranche of agricultural export guarantees for Iraq as "America's first orders, starving the Iraqis, in February '90." He and his advisers took this action, along with various criticisms, as clear signals of American hostility. Many of these signals, they noted, came from the U.S. Congress, not the Executive Branch.[28]

Saddam viewed democratic institutions such as the U.S. legislature and media outlets largely through an Iraqi lens. The media and U.S. Congress were controlled by the executive branch, he explained to his advisers, and were manipulating public opinion to prepare it for war with Iraq. Saddam interpreted a February 1990 Voice of America editorial calling on people to overthrow their dictators as a signal of U.S. enmity. When in late 1988 sanctions legislation worked its way through the Democrat-controlled Congress, which was opposed by the Reagan administration, Saddam complained to his advisers that "The administration gave them [the House and Senate] the official framework and official statements."[29]

During the interwar years of 1988-1990, when the administration's policy toward Iraq was engagement, Saddam believed that signals stemming from the Congress and media evinced U.S. hostile intentions. In virtually every meeting between Iraqi and U.S. leaders in the years

---

[28] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-000-834, "Saddam Hussein and Political Officials Discussing How to Deal with the Republican Guard and Other Issues Following the First Gulf War," undated; Brands and Palkki, "Conspiring Bastards," p. 656.

[29] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-000-554, "Meeting between Saddam Hussein and Iraqi Officials regarding the Political Relationship between Iraq, Iran and the USA," 17 September 1988.

preceding the invasion of Kuwait, the central element of Iraq's message was that it sought

friendship with the United States but questioned U.S. intentions and willingness to reciprocate.[30]

U.S.-Iraq Interactions before the Glaspie Meeting: No Deterrence Deficit

U.S. officials recognized the need to continue reassuring Iraq while also deterring any

aggressive behavior. U.S. policy from October 1989 through Iraq's invasion of Kuwait was to

engage Iraq in the hope of improving its behavior.[31] This was complimented, however, by the

longstanding U.S. policy to deter and defend against threats to U.S. friends in the Gulf. While

studies of pre-Gulf War diplomacy almost invariably emphasize the former, the latter was at

least as consequential.[32]

In October 1989, General Norman Schwarzkopf, the Commander-in-Chief of U.S.

Central Command, ordered his staff to change the longstanding war plan aimed at defending Iran

against a Soviet invasion to instead defend Kuwait and Saudi Arabia against Iraqi aggression.[33]

He told reporters that the United States was training the air forces of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and

Oman.[34] He noted that no defense agreement existed with Kuwait, but insisted, "We don't need

one" given America's recent demonstration to lose lives in defense of its Gulf allies.[35] "If

---

[30] "Secretary's October 6 Meeting with Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz," State 327801, 13 October 1989, DNSA IG01063; "Assistant Secretary Kelly's Conversation with Saddam Hussein," Baghdad 89528, 13 February 1990, DNSA IG01222; "Visit of Assistant Secretary Kelly to Baghdad," 11-12 February1990, DNSA IG01219; "CODEL Dole: Meeting with Saddam Hussein," Baghdad 02186, 12 April 1990; Baghdad 02914, "NSC/NEA Senior Director Haass' (sic) Meeting with Minister of Petroleum," 5/20/90, Bush Presidential Library, National Security Council, Richard N. Haass Files, Iraq Pre 5/2/90 [3].
[31] See National Security Directive 26, "U.S. Policy Toward the Persian Gulf," 2 October 1989, accessed 30 June 2010 at http://bushlibrary.tamu.edu/.
[32] The U.S. deterrence policy in the Gulf goes back to the Carter Doctrine. See Sick, "The United States in the Persian Gulf," p. 294.
[33] Robert H. Scales, *Certain Victory: The US Army in the Gulf War* (Washington, D.C., Brassey's: 1994), pp. 43-44.
[34] Rick Francona, *Ally to Adversary: An Eyewitness Account of Iraq's Fall from Grace* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1999), p. 41.
[35] Richard Pyle, "Top US Commander Says US Gained Credibility in Gulf," *Associated Press*, 18 October 1988.

Kuwait came to the US and asked for help, I think the US would help," Schwarzkopf stated.[36]

Iraq's General Military Intelligence Directorate (GMID) took from these statements that

"America has pledged to defend the Gulf States, especially Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, to protect

them from any aggression they might encounter."[37]

Iraqi leaders certainly understood that U.S.-Kuwaiti military collaboration was aimed at

Baghdad, as it was clearly observable that all of the guns at Kuwait's military installations

pointed north, toward Iraq.[38] Saddam, on several subsequent occasions, claimed that

Schwarzkopf's "visit and 'sand planning' or wartime preparations for the invasion of Iraq

confirm[ed] what [he] and the leadership already believed" about the existence of a U.S.-Kuwait

conspiracy against Iraq. Belief in this conspiracy, Saddam explained, led him to "defend by

attacking."[39]

In early 1990, Baghdad and Washington came to see each other as increasingly

threatening. News reports of the Pentagon's new Defense Planning Guidance document, signed

by Secretary of Defense Richard (Dick) Cheney, most likely heightened Iraqi concerns. On 7

February, the *Washington Post* informed readers that the document included a "strategic shift."

Since the Carter administration, the United States had envisioned the primary threat to the Gulf

---

[36] "US outlines commitment to Gulf," *MidEast Markets*, 30 October 1989.

[37] CRRC, SH-GMID-D-000263, "General Military Intelligence Directorate Correspondence Regarding First Gulf War," October 1989-August 1990.

[38] H. Norman Schwarzkopf with Peter Petre, *It Doesn't Take a Hero: The Autobiography of General H. Norman Schwarzkopf* (New York: Bantam Books, 1992), pp. 282-83.

[39] George Piro Interview of Saddam Hussein, Session 9, 24 February 2004, pp. 3-5, accessed 2 September 2009 at www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv (all subsequent citations to Piro's interrogation reports and reports of informal conversations are also found at the National Security Archive website); "Iraqi Leader Apologizes to Kuwaiti People, Criticizes Kuwaiti Officials," *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 7 December 2002, originally broadcast via Iraqi Satellite Channel, 7 December 2002.

as a Soviet invasion of Iran, whereas the new plan focused on defending the states on the

Arabian peninsula from an unspecified aggressor.[40]

The following day Schwarzkopf's testimony before a Senate Armed Services Committee

hearing cast what for Saddam were unsettling insights into the commander's views on the U.S.

role in the region. He began by describing U.S. interests in the region as "vital," and specifically

listed Kuwait and other Gulf states as "good friends" of America. Ominously, especially for

individuals from a country with a history of Western imperialism, the general explained that

"Mideast oil is the West's lifeblood…it's going to fuel us when the rest of the world has run

dry." Schwarzkopf followed this comment by noting that the weakened Soviets were unlikely to

"use their power" in the region, at least not at the moment. Notwithstanding the lack of a Soviet

threat, he noted that a local conflict could "become a threat to our interests and warrant the

commitment of US forces."[41]

On 13 February, Schwarzkopf returned to testify yet again before the Senate Armed

Services Committee. He (presciently) singled out Iraq and Afghanistan as states of particular

concern and said that if the United States became militarily involved in the region, it would

receive port and logistic facilities, oil, an invitation to intervene, and other support from

America's friends in the gulf.[42]

Not to be outdone, the State Department instructed its embassies in the region that the

Persian Gulf "remains of vital importance to the US." It also suggested that they convey to host

governments,

---

[40] Patrick E. Tyler, "US Finds Persian Gulf Threat Ebbs; a 'Strategic Shift' over Iran's Oil", *Washington Post*, 7 February 1990.

[41] Hearing of the Senate Armed Services Committee on "US Defense Strategy," *Federal News Service*, 8 February 1990.

[42] Senate Armed Services Committee Hearing, *Federal News Service*, 13 February 1990.

This administration has reaffirmed both publicly and privately, our commitment to deter external threats in the Gulf, and when deterrence fails, to *defend our vital interests there, if necessary through the use of US military force*. These interests include…the stability and security of friendly countries in the area.[43]

A 15 February *Voice of America* (VOA) editorial calling on Iraqis to overthrow the regime exacerbated Saddam's paranoia, in part because it corroborated a variety of reports from late 1989 that the United States sought regime change.[44] Saddam's mirror image belief that democratic states also controlled their media indicated to him hostile intent on the part of at least elements of the U.S. government.[45] Glaspie, acting upon instructions from Washington, expressed "regret" that the editorial could be interpreted as calling for regime change and reiterated that overthrowing Iraq's Ba'athist regime was not U.S. policy.[46] She was not, however, under romantic illusions about the brutal nature of the regime or the threat that Iraq posed to Kuwait. To the contrary, she was almost alone among her peers in providing early warnings of potential Iraqi aggression.[47]

Saddam, in response to his perceptions of hostile U.S. intentions, publicly excoriated the United States through the Iraqi media. As Glaspie summarized, beginning in February, Iraq's

---

[43] State 046070, "Reaffirmation of Persian Gulf Policy", 02/11/90, Bush Presidential Library, National Security Council, Richard N. Haass Files, Iraq Pre 8/2/90 [1]. Italics added.

[44] F. Gregory Gause, III, "Iraq and the Gulf War: Decision-Making in Baghdad," p. 8, October 2001, accessed 10 December 2009 at www.ciaonet.org; Kevin M. Woods, *The Mother of all Battles: Saddam Hussein's Strategic Plan for the Persian Gulf War* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2008), pp. 42-43; "Secretary's October 6 Meeting with Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz," State 327801, 13 October 1989; "An Interview with Tariq Aziz," accessed 30 June 2010 at www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/saddam/interviews/aziz.html.

[45] Saddam made this accusation repeatedly, at times asserting that Israel and Jews controlled Western media outlets. Baghdad 02186, "CODEL Dole: Meeting with Saddam Hussein," 4/12/90, Bush Presidential Library, National Security Council, Richard N. Haass Working Files, Iraq Pre 8/2/90 [2]; "Saddam makes Statement to Iraqi Journalists," FBIS-NES-91-009, 14 January 1991, p. 44, originally in Baghdad INA (in Arabic), 13 January 1991; Kevin M. Woods and Mark E. Stout, "Saddam's Perceptions and Misperceptions: The Case of 'Desert Storm'," *Journal of Strategic Studies,* Vol. 33, No. 1 (February 2010), p. 17.

[46] A statement of "regret" is less than a full apology. See Barry O'Neill, *Honor, Symbols, and War* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001), pp. 182-86.

[47] Well before Saddam began massing his troops near the border, Glaspie had been outspoken among U.S. diplomats in warning of the possibility of an Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Charles Stuart Kennedy interview of Chas W. Freeman Jr., 14 April 1995, "Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training," accessed 28 July 2008 at http://memory.loc.gov.

media, "literally every day – was full of these [conspiracy theory-based] accusations." Saddam genuinely believed them, she concluded.[48] Samara'i likewise observed, based on his private conversations with Saddam, the dictator's growing fear of U.S. conspiracies during the first few months of 1990.[49]

In an address to the Arab Cooperation Council on 24 February, Saddam gave a particularly scathing speech. He accused the United States of leaving its fleet in the gulf in order to control Gulf states' oil production and sales. He exclaimed that with the demise of the Soviet Union, the United States would have a window of opportunity to do whatever it wished in the Gulf before a balance of power arose. America "needs an aggressive Israel" in order to achieve its goals in the region, he fumed, and encouraged Soviet immigration to Israel in order to facilitate Israeli aggression and further territorial expansion.[50]

U.S. officials were not silent in the face of Iraqi criticism. On 27 February, National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft complained to Iraq's ambassador in Washington, Mohammed al-Mashat, about Saddam's anti-U.S. rhetoric. Edward ("Skip") Gnehm, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near East and South Asian Affairs, told Mashat that Saddam's language was "atrocious." On 2 March, the United States instructed its embassies throughout the Arab world to point out U.S. "fundamental differences" with Iraq on proliferation issues and in other areas.[51]

---

[48] "Senate Foreign Relations Committee Informal Public Discussion, Subject: Issues Related to the Gulf War," *Federal News Service*, 20 March 1991.

[49] F. Gregory Gause, III, "Iraq and the Gulf War: Decision-Making in Baghdad," October 2001, accessed 10 December 2009 at www.ciaonet.org.

[50] "Iraqi President Addresses ACC Summit Issue of Soviet Jews and US Presence in Gulf," *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 26 February 1990.

[51] James A. Baker III with Thomas M. DeFrank, *The Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War & Peace, 1989-1992* (New York: Putnam, 1995), pp. 268-69.

On 11 April, a U.S. demarche warned Baghdad that if it continued engaging "in actions that threaten the stability of the region" then "it will be on a collision course with the US.…"[52] A delegation led by Senate Minority Leader Bob Dole reiterated the message in the demarche during a meeting with Saddam the following day. While the Iraqis released a "transcript" of the meeting that portrayed the senators as sycophantic wimps, David Newton, who had preceded Glaspie as ambassador to Baghdad and now accompanied the senators, claims that the Iraqis heavily edited their transcript to make "the Senators look like a bunch of saps" and to avoid embarrassing Iraq.[53] Senator Alan Simpson, another delegation member, likewise accused Iraq of inaccurately reporting parts of the meeting.[54] The contemporary notes of a member of Dole's staff closely resemble the Iraqis' public record, but indicate that the Iraqis selectively excised dialogue from their public "transcript."[55]

In any case, Saddam does not seem to have considered this meeting with senior U.S. politicians particularly noteworthy or memorable. In a conversation with advisors a few years later, he thought that Oscar Wyatt, a Texan oil tycoon, had led the delegation.[56] To the limited degree that the meeting affected Saddam, it left him more concerned than emboldened. During the meeting, he explained to the Senators that his 2 April threat to burn half of Israel in response to an Israeli attack on Iraq stemmed from fear that "we might be in Baghdad holding a meeting with the Command when the atomic bomb falls on us." The United States had known in advance

---

[52] "Tensions in U.S.-Iraqi Relations: Demarche," declassified (formerly secret) cable, 12 April 1990, DNSA IG01316.

[53] Phone interview with David Newton, 25 March 2008.

[54] Alan Simpson, "Simpson on Thin Skins, and Saddam Hussein," *Roll Call*, 1 October 1990; Ted Gup, "History A Man You Could do Business With," *Time*, 11 March 1991.

[55] Absent from the public "transcript," for instance, was Saddam's comment that Zionist control over the United States might burden the Arabs with a duty to "liberate certain dark corners of [the] world from Zionism" – not merely to free the Arabs, "but also [the] West from Zionism." See Dole Archive at the Dole Institute of Politics, Leadership Collection, Legislative, Assistant Leader Files, Folder – Foreign Policy – Iraq Visit, 1990, handwritten notes (incorrectly) titled "Assad" on "Office of the Republican Leader" letterhead, p.10.

[56] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-000-850.

of Israel's attack on the Osiraq reactor, Saddam insisted, and suggested that it was paving the

way for Israel to once again strike Iraqi WMD facilities.[57] In a meeting with Arafat the

following week, he said that rising tension with the United States had led him to order studies on

"how we are going to react" when "Baghdad is struck by the atomic bombs…"[58]

In July, the Iraqi leadership increasingly excoriated the U.S.-Israeli alliance for

attempting to destroy Iraq. It accused the United States of using Kuwait and the United Arab

Emirates (UAE) as pawns to destroy Iraq's economy by encouraging them to exceed their OPEC

production quotas, thus lowering the price of oil. Iraq, strapped of cash due to debt incurred

while fighting Iran, began complaining loudly about its border dispute with Kuwait, massing its

troops near the border, and insisting that if Kuwait did not grant Iraq concessions then Iraq knew

how to take them. Iraqi forces had crossed the border on many occasions since Kuwaiti

independence, including an incursion roughly a year earlier, though the number of troops near

the border this time was unprecedented.[59]

Glaspie sought to assess these Iraqi threats within the context of Iraqi domestic politics.

When Iraq publicly threatened Kuwait on 17 July, she and a number of Arab ambassadors

discussed whether the regime had publicly threatened Kuwait in response to concerns about

domestic security issues. According to Iraqi exile groups, senior military officers were involved

in plotting coups. She and the Arab ambassadors found no evidence, however, to conclude that

---

[57] "Document: Saddam Hussein and Senator Dole," *Mednews - Middle East Defense News*, 25 June 1990.

[58] Harmony video file ISGQ-2003-M0006248, in Kevin M. Woods with James Lacey, *Saddam and Terrorism: Emerging Insights from Captured Iraqi Documents*, (Alexandria, VA: Institute for Defense Analyses, March 2008), Vol. 4, p. 21, accessed 23 August 2008 at www.jfcom.mil/newslink/storyarchive/2008/pa032008.html.

[59] Iraqi soldiers crossed the Kuwaiti border on numerous occasions from 1960 through 1990, including in 1961, 1963, 1967, 1971-72, 1973, 1976, and a little-known incursion roughly a year before the 2 August conquest. The number of incursions could even have been considerably higher. Paul Pillar, unpublished presentation, "Deterring Rogue States" Conference, George Washington University, 5 April 2007. Pillar mentions all of these dates except 1967 and 1976. For Iraq's incursion in 1967, see "Kuwait and Iraq Move Up Troops in a Dispute," *New York Times,* 21 April 1967. For the 1976 incursion, see Abdullah Yusuf al-Ghunaim, et al, *Kuwait-Iraq Boundary Demarcation: Historical Rights and International Will* (Al-Mansoria: Center for Research and Studies on Kuwait, 1994), pp. 48-51. See also "Testimony of April Glaspie, US Ambassador to Iraq," Senate Foreign Relations Committee's Informal Public Discussion on Issues Related to the Gulf War, Washington, DC, 20 March 1991.

Saddam was more afraid of insurrection than the Iraqi public was of the regime's security apparatus. Saddam wanted his deployment of forces to be detected, she concluded, to better coerce the Kuwaitis to hand over cash.[60]

In response to the Iraqi threat to Kuwait, on 18 July State Department spokespersons Richard Boucher and Margaret Tutwiler stated, respectively, that America was "strongly committed to supporting the individual and collective self-defense of our friends in the Gulf with whom we have deep and longstanding ties" and that "Iraq and others know that there is no place for coercion and intimidation in a civilized world." Boucher would not specify, however, what exactly the United States would do in response to yet another Iraqi incursion into Kuwait. Tutwiler, for her part, acknowledged that no formal U.S.-Kuwaiti defense commitments existed.[61]

Later in the day, David Mack, the U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near East Affairs, provided a strong, unambiguous warning. He told Mashat that Washington remained committed "to support the *sovereignty and integrity* of the Gulf States. Our actions during the Gulf War [Iran-Iraq War] illustrated this commitment. We will continue to *defend our vital interests* in the Gulf."[62] In response to a question from Mashat about what Mack meant when he said that the United States had its fleet in the Gulf and would defend U.S. interests, Mack responded that Mashat "knew very well that we had deployed and used force against Iran" when it was threatening to attack the Gulf states. According to Mack, "Mashat got the point. He said

---

[60] U.S. Department of State, "Kuwait: Iraq Keeps up the Pressure," declassified (formerly confidential) cable, 22 July 1990, 14 pp., Case No. F-2011-04367, Segment: ER-0002, Document No. C05366363.

[61] Donald Oberdorfer, "Missed Signals in the Middle East," *Washington Post*, 17 March 1991.

[62] "Iraqi Letter to Arab League Threatening Kuwait," declassified (formerly confidential) cable, 19 July 1990, p. 3, DNSA IG01465. Italics added.

that Iraq would never make war on its Arab neighbors."[63] Mack requested that Mashat deliver the message to Saddam.

The next morning the State Department sent the same message in a cable to its embassy in Baghdad under Secretary Baker's name. Obtaining approval for the cable was easy, Mack recalls, as it merely reiterated standing U.S. policy. After all, in February the United States had encouraged its embassies in the region to remind host governments, as necessary, that this was U.S. policy.[64] Mack and Joseph McGhee, The Deputy Director of the State Department's Office of Northern Gulf Affairs, were skeptical that Mashat would pass on such an unpleasant message to Saddam, who was known to punish couriers of unwelcome news; therefore, they instructed Glaspie to reiterate the warning with senior Iraqi policymakers.[65] This same day—18 July— Glaspie delivered a copy of the press release, which contained the warnings, to Nizar Hamdoon, Iraq's deputy foreign minister.[66]

On 19 July, when reporters asked Cheney if a U.S. commitment from the Iran-Iraq War to defend Kuwait still applied, he responded, "Those commitments haven't changed."[67] A few days later a Pentagon spokesman claimed that unspecified press reports had quoted Cheney "with some degree of liberty," but emphasized yet again that U.S. policy was to support "the individual and collective self-defense of our friends in the Gulf with whom we have deep and long-standing ties." The spokesman did not dispute reporters' claims that Cheney had said the United States was committed to defend Kuwait should it be attacked, and even confirmed that

[63] David Mack, unpublished "Notes on Gulf War for BBC Interview," November 1994, p. 301.
[64] State 046070, "Reaffirmation of Persian Gulf Policy", 02/11/90, Bush Presidential Library, National Security Council, Richard N. Haass Files, Iraq Pre 8/2/90 [1].
[65] Mack, "Notes on Gulf War for BBC Interview"; Author's Interview with Joseph McGhee, Washington, DC, 6 June 2007.
[66] Baghdad 04208, "Israeli/American 'Coordination' in the Gulf," 24 July 1990, Bush Presidential Library, National Security Council, Richard N. Haass Working Files, Iraq Pre 8/2/90 [3].
[67] Caryle Murphy, "Iraqi Leader Gets New Title as Kuwaiti Anxiety Grows," *Washington Post*, 20 July 1990.

the U.S. policy to support Kuwait in case of attack had not changed.[68] His refusal to explain

how exactly the United States would respond to Iraqi aggression probably had little or no

influence on Saddam's thinking, given that Saddam considered such "hypothetical questions"

silly, undignified, and best ignored.[69]

Washington also sent copies of the State Department cable to U.S. embassies in eight

other Arab capitals, instructing recipients to share the language with senior officials in their

countries and to ask what these states would be willing to do to defend Kuwait.[70] It is highly

likely that Saddam knew that the United States had distributed the language throughout the

region. After all, weeks earlier he complained to a reporter that "the Americans and the British

have been warning Gulf states against dangers emanating from Iraq. Whatever is said in

Morocco, we get to hear about. Isn't that hostile and tendentious?"[71] In a meeting of Saddam's

inner circle, Ali Hasan al-Majid ("Chemical Ali") noted that the U.S. strategy was "to make the

Gulf [states] afraid of us before the war so that we will lose."[72] The Arab League agreed with

Saddam that U.S. warnings were hostile, and denounced the United States for threatening Iraq.[73]

In the week before her meeting with Saddam, Glaspie repeatedly reminded her Iraqi

counterparts of U.S. policy—as articulated in the cable from Mack. Her standing instructions

from Washington during this period were to press for "an urgent clarification of Iraq's

---

[68] "CB Defense Department Regular Briefing, Briefer: Pete Williams," *Federal News Service*, 24 July 1990.
[69] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-048, "A TV interview with Saddam Hussein regarding various issues with the U.S.," 13 February 1993.
[70] State 241042, "US Reaction to Iraqi Threats in the Gulf," 24 July 1990, Bush Presidential Library, National Security Council, Richard N. Haass Working Files, Iraq Pre 8/2/90 [3].
[71] "Wall Street Journal Interviews Saddam," FBIS-NES-90-128, 3 July 1990, Baghdad INA (in Arabic), 1 July 1990, p. 25.
[72] Woods, Palkki, and Stout, *The Saddam Tapes*, p. 171.
[73] "Statement of Arab League Council Session on the Palestinian Question," *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 18 July 1990; State 239591, "NEA DAS Mack's Meeting with Arab League Representative Maksoud," 21 July 1990, Bush Presidential Library, National Security Council, Richard N. Haass Working Files, Iraq Pre 8/2/90 [3]; Baghdad 04204, "Demarche on Arab League Resolution," 7/24/90, Bush Presidential Library, National Security Council, Richard N. Haass Working Files, Iraq Pre 8/2/90 [3].

intentions" toward Kuwait and to reiterate established U.S. policy in the region.[74] To this end, Glaspie traveled seven straight days to the foreign ministry to reiterate the U.S. message and to attempt to obtain clarifications.[75] On 19 July, she emphasized to Hamdoon that Iraq "must" use only "peaceful means."[76] When she reminded Hamdoon of U.S. policy on 21 July, the exchange became "vigorous."[77] On 24 July, she told Abd Al-Hamid, the First International Division Chief in Iraq's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, that the State Department's press release accurately reflected U.S. policy.[78]

For Aziz, U.S. deterrent warnings had gotten through. On 24 July, he publicly complained about "recent US statements frankly saying that the Kuwaiti Government can take refuge under US forces…" He added that these security guarantees encouraged Kuwait in its aggression against Iraq, and described the conflict in terms of "two neighboring countries" arguing only "over inches of territory."[79]

Unclear U.S. military signals also concerned Iraqi leaders. On 24 July, the United States announced that two of its tanker aircraft would take part in a U.S.-UAE refueling exercise. Shortly after 1:30am on 25 July, Hamdoon called on Glaspie to request information on the "purpose, timing, and targets" of the recently announced U.S. military "maneuvers" in the Gulf.[80] In response to his question whether it were true that the U.S. fleet had deployed, she records that she tried looking "suitably enigmatic" since she did not know but thought it would

---

[74] "Iraqi Letter to Arab League Threatening Kuwait," 19 July 1990, DNSA.

[75] Thomas L. Friedman, "Envoy to Iraq, Faulted in Crisis, Says she Warned Hussein Sternly," *New York Times*, 21 March 1991.

[76] "Iraqi Letter to Arab League Threatening Kuwait," 19 July 1990, DNSA.

[77] "Kuwait: Iraq Keeps up the Pressure," declassified (formerly confidential) cable, 22 July 1990, DNSA IG01473. While key parts of this cable remain redacted, it seems clear from the context of the cable that Glaspie's forceful enunciation of U.S. policy led to the "vigorous" exchange.

[78] Baghdad 04208, "Israeli/American 'Coordination' in the Gulf," 24 July 1990, Bush Presidential Library, National Security Council, Richard Haass Working Files, Iraq Pre 8/2/90 [3].

[79] "Tariq 'Aziz Reacts to Kuwaiti Government Memo," FBIS-NES-90-142, 24 July 1990, Baghdad INA (in Arabic), 24 July 1990.

[80] "Iraqi Query Re US/UAE "Manoeuvers"," Baghdad 04221, 24 July 1990.

not hurt if Iraq thought it had.[81] As Glaspie recorded later in the day, the announcement worried the Iraqi leader. Why else, she questioned, would Saddam take what for him was a nearly unprecedented move of summoning an ambassador? The refueling exercise was only with the UAE, yet Saddam expressed belief that it also included Kuwaiti participation.[82] Moreover, while the United States had not deployed its fleet to the Gulf, U.S. officials' unwillingness to discuss military deployments might have led Iraqi leaders to conclude otherwise.[83]

The Joint Staff agreed with Glaspie that the joint U.S.-UAE military maneuver signaled America's firm commitment to the Gulf states, and that Saddam understood the signal. A 26 July Joint Staff position paper, prepared by J5, the Strategic Plans and Policy directorate, found that the U.S. military maneuver with the UAE "demonstrated [America's] willingness and ability" to help the Gulf states. Moreover, "the signal was received by many states in the area." A U.S. Army Europe intelligence report likewise found that "The signal to Husayn is that the US…is prepared to support its gulf friends (eg. Kuwait, the UAE and Saudi Arabia)."[84]

U.S. officials were not alone in believing that the United States had sent, and Iraq had received, a credible signal of America's commitment to defend Kuwait. Iraqi intelligence analysts reached the same conclusion. U.S. signals led Iraq's GMID to report on 25 July that the United States had declared its intention to intervene on behalf of Kuwait.[85]

---

[81] "CB Hearing of the Europe and Middle East Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Subject: Developments in the Middle East, Chaired by: Representative Lee Hamilton (D-IN)," *Federal News Service*, 31 July 1990.

[82] As Glaspie wrote in her cable, "Coming to one of his main points, Saddam argued that USG maneuvers with the UAE and Kuwait (sic) encouraged them …" See "Saddam's Message of Friendship to President Bush," 25 July 1990, Bush Presidential Library, National Security Council, Richard N. Haass Working Files, Iraq Pre-2/8/90-12/90 (2 of 6).

[83] "CB Defense Department Regular Briefing, Briefer: Pete Williams," *Federal News Service,* 24 July 1990.

[84] PCC [Policy Coordinating Committee]; "Subject: PCC on Protection of US Interests in the Persian Gulf," formerly Secret//NF, Position Paper, July 26, 1990, 4 pp., accessed through the Digital National Security Archive; USAREUR Daily Intelligence Report, Part 1, 26 July 1990, [Iraq-Kuwait Dispute Over Oil Pricing and Border], Secret, Intelligence Report, July 25, 1990, 5 pp., accessed through the Digital National Security Archive.

[85] Woods, *The Mother of All Battles*, p. 62.

During the morning of 25 July, Glaspie asked Hamdoon repeatedly for clarifications of Iraq's intentions toward Kuwait and "stressed" that "Washington is waiting with some impatience for a response…"[86] These "vigorous," constant reminders of America's "vital" interest in Kuwait's "sovereignty and integrity," along with her unsuccessful efforts to receive clarifications on Saddam's intentions, provide the backdrop for Glaspie's meeting with Saddam.

Later in the morning of 25 July, Glaspie was unexpectedly summoned to meet with the Iraqi president. Lacking enough time to obtain approval for the ambassador to share new language with Saddam, the State Department's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs (NEA) instructed her to reiterate the message she had been delivering to Hamdoon and her other Iraqi interlocutors.[87] When she entered Saddam's room, she noticed that he had copies of Tutwiler's warning and the U.S. press release on the refueling exercises in his hands.[88] But what happened in the meeting?

Iraqi Recollections

Surprisingly, advocates of the "green light" interpretation neglect Iraqi leaders' claims regarding what they learned from the meeting. Iraqi participants in the meeting offered recollections similar to Glaspie's, though they possessed extremely different incentives. Aziz, Saddam's "pre-eminent foreign policy advisor,"[89] told ABC-TV's *Good Morning America* that Glaspie did not give Iraq a green light: "She didn't do anything of the like, and we didn't have that false illusion that the United States would watch and would not react severely to any move

---

[86] Baghdad 04221, "Iraqi Query Re US/UAE "Manoeuvers", 24 July 1990.
[87] Charles Stuart Kennedy interview of Joseph McGhee, "The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project," 21 August 1998, accessed 4 January 2010 at http://memory.loc.gov.
[88] Oberdorfer, "Missed Signals in the Middle East."
[89] *Duelfer Report*, Vol. 1, "Regime Strategic Intent," p. 7.

towards Kuwait."[90] He told *USA Today* that neither he nor Saddam believed they had received a

"green light" from Glaspie.[91] Aziz informed Bulent Ecevit, a former prime minister of Turkey,

that "She didn't give a green light and she didn't mention a red light because the question of our

presence in Kuwait was not raised in the meeting."[92] Aziz told the *New Yorker* that he and

Saddam realized they had given Glaspie no time to receive new guidance from Washington after

summoning her for the short-notice meeting. Consequently, he added, "She spoke in vague

diplomatic language and we knew the position she was in. Her behavior was a classic diplomatic

response and we were not influenced by it."[93]

      Aziz insisted yet again in a PBS *Frontline* interview that "There were no mixed

signals…this is fiction. About the meeting with April Glaspie—it was a routine meeting…He

[Saddam] wanted her to carry a message to George Bush—not to receive a message through her

from Washington."[94] "I asked Saddam Hussein not to invade Kuwait," he told *The Guardian* in

2010. "But I had to support the decision of the majority. When the decision was taken, I said to

him this is going to lead to war with the U.S., and it is not in our interests to wage war against

the US."[95] To accept the argument that the United States issued Iraq a green light, and that this

factored into Iraq's decision to invade, requires rejecting not only Glaspie's testimony before

Congress, but Aziz's repeated denials as well.

      It is highly unlikely that Aziz's denials were disingenuous. Whereas his incentives to

portray the meeting one way or another shifted considerably from his tenure as the regime's

---

[90] Martin Sieff, "Saddam Expected Trouble: US Opposition Clear, Aziz Says," *Washington Times*, 28 November 1992.

[91] Lee Michael Katz, "Iraq had no Illusions," *USA Today*, 27 November 1992.

[92] "US Attack was Expected on Aug. 2 Iraqi Says," *Toronto Star*, 31 May 1991.

[93] As quoted in Janice Gross Stein, "Deterrence and Compellence in the Gulf, 1990-91: A Failed or Impossible Task?," *International Security*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (Fall 1992), p. 154.

[94] "An Interview with Tariq Aziz," accessed 30 June 2010 at www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/saddam/interviews/aziz.html.

[95] "Tariq Aziz says West misjudged Saddam Hussein," *The Guardian*, 5 August 2010.

leading diplomat to his later interview from U.S. captivity, his story remained constant. The Iraqi leadership had reason to cast blame for the war on U.S. duplicity or incompetent diplomacy, yet no obvious ulterior motivation existed for Aziz to deny the "green light" interpretation during the Saddam years. In fact, since existence of a "green light" would steer blame from Iraq to the United States, and denial could worsen Saddam's image and thus put Aziz's life at stake, Aziz had every incentive to support the "green light" interpretation. Aziz's position was particularly precarious given that he would have been the perfect scapegoat for the failed policy. After all, he was Saddam's primary foreign policy advisor prior to the invasion, a Christian, and lacked ties to Tikrit or to important Iraqi tribes. Aziz had reportedly advised Saddam against invading, which further suggests that Aziz did not perceive a "green light."

Hamdoon, the second ranking Iraqi diplomat, was "emphatic" in denying that Iraq's leadership garnered from the meeting with Glaspie that it had received a "green light." In April 2003 Hamdoon told Joseph Wilson, whom he knew from Wilson's days as a diplomat in Iraq, that he was present at the meeting between Saddam and Glaspie and that Glaspie's comments "had not encouraged Saddam to invade Kuwait." He continued,

> The Iraqi leadership had not come away thinking she had tacitly indicated that the United States condoned the use of force. On the contrary, he knew exactly what the American position was – opposition to Iraqi military action, under any and all circumstances.[96]

It is unlikely that Hamdoon misinterpreted Saddam's perceptions of the meeting, as he was one of Iraq's most "astute and capable" diplomats.[97] Hamdoon had been present at

---

[96] Joseph Wilson, *The Politics of Truth: A Diplomat's Memoir: Inside the Lies that Led to War and Betrayed my Wife's CIA Identity* (New York: Carrol & Graf, 2004), pp. 100-02; Author's interview with Ambassador Joseph Wilson, Santa Fe, New Mexico, 27 July 2007.

[97] Michael R. Gordon and Bernard E. Trainor, *The Generals' War: the Inside Story of the Conflict in the Gulf* (New York: Little Brown and Company, 1995), p. 15. For examples of Hamdoon's acumen, see Amatzia Baram and Barry Rubin, eds., *Iraq's Road to War* (New York: St. Martin's Press), pp. 153, 244-45, 257-60.

Saddam's meeting with Glaspie, and, as with Aziz, was intimately familiar with Iraq's propaganda blitz in the Western media at the time that Iraq released the transcript.[98] Moreover, Hamdoon had no incentive to lie to Wilson given that he recalled the story as a terminally ill man with only months to live, and did so in an off-the-wall manner over lunch with an old acquaintance.[99]

Sadoun al-Zubaydi, the Iraqi official who translated the meeting between Saddam and Glaspie, has likewise indicated that Glaspie did not signal U.S. acquiescence to an invasion of Kuwait. He reports that when Glaspie stated that the United States took no sides on Arab-Arab border disputes, she was not referring to an Iraqi invasion as Saddam had kept her in the dark about his intention to invade.[100]

Even Saddam denied the "green light" account, at least on most occasions. Saddam's initial public response was to blame only France, not Glaspie or the United States, for deceiving him with a green light. In an interview with a French reporter shortly after the invasion, Saddam stated, "We address no blame at the United States, nor at Great Britain, because they never had objective or friendly positions regarding us, and that, everybody knows very well." France, on the other hand, "profoundly deceived" Saddam by sending ships and troops to the Gulf: "France is the only country we blame."[101]

---

[98] Aziz was Saddam's former Minister of Information and editor of an Iraqi newspaper, and was accustomed to disseminating Iraqi propaganda. White House officials suspected that Hamdoon, who had spent years as Iraq's ambassador to the United States, was heading the propaganda effort. See Randa Takieddine, "US Ambassador to Baghdad tells Al-Hayat the Story of her Famous Meeting with Late Iraqi President," *Dar al Hayat* (Lebanon), 15 March 2008; John Cassidy, "Bush Calls in Guru to Fight Saddam Propaganda Blitz," *Sunday Times* (London), 26 August 1990.
[99] Wilson, *The Politics of Truth*, p. 100.
[100] Slobodan Lekic, "Saddam's Translator Emerges from Obscurity," *Associated Press*, 10 September 2005.
[101] William Drozdiak, "Paris Restricts Iraqi Citizens: Baghdad Still Holds Foreigners, French Foreign Ministry Notes," *Washington Post*, 30 August 1990; "Iraq Will Free 'Guests' Foreign Women, Children Expected to Leave Today," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* (Missouri), 30 August 1990.

Glaspie could not have threatened that the United States would send 200,000 soldiers to the Gulf to reverse an Iraqi invasion, Saddam explained in October 1990, since "I did not inform her that we would be entering Kuwait…" Moreover, he added, "Can your ambassador make decisions at such a level in matters of this kind? And even if we assume that we had told one of your ambassadors that we would be going to Kuwait under the circumstances explained in the communiqué on sending troops at that point, could an ambassador decide how to confront our forces…?" Saddam clearly understood that he had given Glaspie no time to receive new instructions from Washington, and that she was not in a position to declare new policy.[102]

In early February 1992, however, Saddam provided the public with a different story. Glaspie, the Iraqi leader now argued,

> said they would not interfere. In so doing they washed their hands. What response should I have waited for? We entered Kuwait four days later. Regardless [however], Bush rallied the world…and attacked Iraq. What was the problem? They had said that they would not intervene![103]

The next day, on 11 February 1992, Saddam exclaimed "We decided to occupy Kuwait until we resolve the problem[s with it] peacefully [*sic*!]. An [unexpected] uproar was created after this!"[104] Saddam's assertion that the goal of the occupation was to peacefully resolve Iraq's dispute with Kuwait is utter nonsense, of course, unless peaceful resolution means killing one's interlocutors and negotiating with handpicked replacements.

By February of the following year, Saddam had reverted to his original story. When a Western reporter asked him whether he expected such a strong military reaction at the time he

---

[102] "Saddam Husayn Interview for CNN on Peace Prospects Broadcast by Iraqi Radio," *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 2 November 1990, originally broadcast on *Republic of Iraq Radio*, 31 October 1990.

[103] Amatzia Baram and Barry Rubin, "Calculation and Miscalculation in Baghdad", in Dan Keohane and Alex Danchev, eds., *International Perspectives on the Gulf Conflict, 1990-91* (New York: Palgrave McMillan, 1994), p. 28. Saddam says that Iraq invaded four days after receiving a green light, though Glaspie's meeting was more than four days beforehand. It is clear in the interview, however, that Saddam was referring to his meeting with Glaspie. See Saddam's interview in Hurriyet, 10 February 1992, in FBIS-DR, 13 February 1992, pp. 22-23.

[104] Baram and Rubin, "Calculation and Miscalculation in Baghdad," p. 28.

was sending his forces into Kuwait, Saddam responded, "We expected this and more." "Really?" the reporter questioned; "Exactly," Saddam replied. The incredulous reporter repeated the question, two additional times, but received the same denial that Saddam had perceived a green light.[105] When the regime released a "transcript" of this interview through the Iraqi press, however, this section of the interview was nowhere to be found.[106]

The inconsistency in Saddam's statements makes it difficult to take his public claims seriously. As Amazia Baram insightfully questions, "Was it logical to expect the United States to plot with Kuwait against Iraq, only to give Iraq a green light to invade Kuwait?" And, if Saddam really believed the United States were so hostile, would it not be problematic for him to also think he could believe everything it said?[107]

In private meetings, Saddam discounted the notion that he had perceived a green light. Prior to invading, Saddam had expressed concern to his RCC that the United States might retaliate for an invasion by using nuclear weapons against Iraq.[108] Two days after the invasion, he confided to the president of Yemen that while he did not expect U.S. or Israeli ground attacks, he thought they might strike with aircraft, missiles, and their fleets – and use atomic weapons.[109] Shortly after the Gulf War, Saddam recalled for his advisors that "we expected the entire world to react; we could not believe how long it took them to enter [the area]."[110] According to Jean-

---

[105] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-048, "A TV interview with Saddam Hussein regarding various issues with the U.S.," 13 February 1993.
[106] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-048.
[107] Amatzia Baram, "The Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait: Decision-making in Baghdad," in Baram and Barry Rubin, eds., *Iraq's Road to War* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), p. 24.
[108] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-042, "Saddam Hussein and the Revolutionary Command Council Discussing the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait and the Expected US Attack," 29 December 1990.
[109] Woods, *The Mother of all Battles*, p. 127.
[110] Woods, *The Mother of all Battles*, pp. 169-70.

Pierre Chevènement, France's former defense minister, Saddam told him he "never had any illusion about the United States' resolve to go to war."[111]

The Iraqi Transcript

The Iraqi "transcript," which scholars have overwhelmingly accepted as accurate and complete, is clearly not credible. Iraq was engaged in what major media outlets described as a "propaganda war" at the time when Iraqi officials provided ABC with the Glaspie "transcript." The day before ABC first revealed excerpts from the document, *Newsweek* noted that Saddam had chosen the media as "his weapon for his opening battle with the United States…"[112]

Iraq possessed an incentive to increase doubts abroad about U.S. motives and to defend itself against charges of reckless adventurism. The need was urgent, as only days before Iraq provided ABC with the transcript, Bush had accepted Iraq's offer to speak to the Iraqi people on national television.[113] The White House announced that the president would address why he had deployed troops to the Gulf, and press reports indicated that he would seek "to place the Iraqi government on the defensive" and "to paint doubts in the minds of the Iraqi people about the true motives and risks of Saddam's Aug. 2 invasion of Kuwait."[114]

Saddam might have tried to preempt such attacks by fostering the impression that the United States had encouraged him to invade. He had good cause to believe that the United States would leak Glaspie's cable to the media, given that quotes from the meeting had appeared in the

---

[111] Mohammad-Mahmoud Mohamedou, *Iraq and the Second Gulf War: State Building and Regime Security* (San Francisco: Austin & Winfield, 2001), p. 146.
[112] Christopher Walker, "Saddam Launches Propaganda Blitz," *The Times* (London), 28 August 1990; "The US-Iraqi Propaganda War," *Nightline/ABC News*, 17 September 1990; Jonathan Alter, "Hand-to-Hand Video Combat," *Newsweek*, 10 September 1990.
[113] Rita Beamish, "Bush Will Tape Address for Iraqi Television," *Associated Press*, 6 September 1990.
[114] Norman D. Sandler, "Bush Tapes Message for Saddam," *United Press International*, 12 September 1990.

Washington Post on 29 July and that the language from his 7 August meeting with the U.S.

Deputy Chief of Mission in Baghdad had found its way into the *New York Times*.[115] He might

have hoped that providing an altered transcript would strengthen the case of those who opposed

U.S. military intervention. It is also quite possible that a lower-level official edited the tape

before distribution, out of fear for his life should his work make Saddam appear weak or Glaspie

insufficiently deferential. It was Saddam's habit, after all, to manipulate meetings with guests to

make them appear deferential, and the Iraqis who recorded Saddam's meetings consistently

assisted him in this regard.[116]

Regardless who altered the transcript, and why, it would have been a stunning departure

from Iraqi standard operating procedures during this period for Iraq to have released anything

other than an incomplete, doctored, or fabricated record. As mentioned, earlier in the summer

Iraq presented a selectively edited transcript of a meeting between Saddam and a group of

visiting U.S. senators.[117] In late June, the Iraqi press published what it labeled a complete

transcript of Saddam's interview with ABC's Diane Sawyer, though this excluded many parts of

the interview that cast Saddam in an undesirable light.[118]

Days before ABC first showed excerpts from the Iraqi "transcript" of the Glaspie meeting

on the news, the *Associated Press* reported that Iraq had quietly cut eight to ten minutes of

embarrassing material from the recording it had provided of Jesse Jackson's 90-minute interview

---

[115] Baghdad 04326, "President Bush's Response to Saddam's Message – Next Steps," 29 July 1990, Bush Presidential Library, National Security Council, Richard N. Haass Working Files, Iraq Pre-2/8/90-12/90 (3 of 6); Wilson, *The Politics of Truth*, p. 125.

[116] Wilson, *The Politics of Truth*, p. 483.

[117] See notes 51-53, in this chapter.

[118] ABC presented footage of Sawyer and Saddam discussing whether Saddam had ever personally killed anyone or condoned torture. The two talk about Iraq's killing of Kurds during the war with Iran and thereafter. Saddam reveals his ignorance by expressing disbelief that the United States does not compel Native Americans to live on reservations. The discussion also reveals Saddam's surprise that the United States does not punish citizens who criticize the president. These are only a few examples of the differences between the ABC footage and what appeared in the Iraqi press on 30 June as a complete transcript. See "Saddam Speaks," ABC NEWS: Primetime Live, 28 June 1990; "ABC's Diane Sawyer Interviews Saddam Husayn," FBIS-NES-90-127, 2 July 1990, Baghdad INA (in Arabic), 30 June 1990.

with Saddam on 31 August.[119] In December, several French journalists claimed that the Iraqi record of their interview with Saddam had "toned down" their questions.[120] After the Iraqis released a "transcript" of Saddam's 13 January 1991 meeting with the UN Secretary General, a UN spokesman described the Iraqi record as a rather "self-serving" version of what had transpired.[121]

Iraq continued its policy of disseminating falsified recordings throughout the war as well as the following decade.[122] Given Iraq's propaganda campaign in fall 1990 and its history of distributing doctored records and incomplete and dishonest disarmament declarations, treating the Iraqi record as more trustworthy than Glaspie's testimony is indefensible. According to Glaspie, approximately 80 percent of the Iraqi "transcript" was correct, yet Iraqi editors had done away with her deterrent warnings.[123]

Glaspie's Cables

No U.S. Position on an Invasion of Kuwait?

---

[119] "Producer Says Iraqi TV Censored Warning from Jackson Interview," *Associated Press*, 10 September 1990; Jay Sharbutt, "Iraqi TV Censors Saddam Hussein Warning to Foreigners in Kuwait," *Associated Press*, 4 September 1990.

[120] "Saddam Husayn Tells French Journalists there is a Fifty-Fifty Chance of War," *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 4 December 1990, originally on Antenne2 TV, Paris, 2 December 1990.

[121] USUN New York 00489, "Transcript of Saddam Hussein-Perez De Cuellar Meeting: UN Spokesman Replies" 12 February 1991, p. 2. This cable was declassified 30 September 2011 in response to a FOIA request.

[122] Todd Leventhal, *Iraqi Propaganda and Disinformation During the Gulf War: Lessons for the Future* (Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, Emirates Occasional Paper Number 36, 1999), pp. 29-32, 54-55, 60-61; Richard Butler, *The Greatest Threat: Iraq, Weapons of Mass Destruction, and the Crisis of Global Security* (Cambridge: PublicAffairs, 2000), p. 113; Cameron Stewart, "Butler Smeared in Iraqi Talks Video," *The Weekend Australian*, 15 August 1998; Woods, *Saddam and Terrorism*, Vol. 4, pp. 83-103.

[123] "CB Hearing of the Europe and Middle East Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Subject: Developments in the Middle East, Chaired by: Representative Lee Hamilton (D-IN)," *Federal News Service*, 31 July 1990.

The Iraqi transcript and Glaspie's reporting cable were very similar, but not identical. Glaspie concluded the brief summary section of her cable by emphasizing that she had "made clear" to Saddam that the United States would "*never* excuse settlement of disputes by other than peaceful means."[124] According to McGhee, Glaspie also mentioned in a phone conversation later in the day that she was concerned she might have pushed too hard in the meeting and made Saddam angry. "The next day we all looked for this in her cable, but it wasn't there," he recalls.[125] Whether or not McGhee's memory serves him well, the cable makes clear that there was no "green light." If her comment that the United States "took no position on these Arab affairs" did not refer to potential Iraqi military aggression against Kuwait, though, then on what exactly did the United States "take no position"?

Context is essential to understanding Glaspie's comment. At the time, a large percent of the world's un-delineated borders involved Arab states: at least ten border disputes existed involving states on the Arabian peninsula alone.[126] Longstanding U.S. policy was not to take a stance on the merits of any of these Arab-Arab border delineation disputes. Taking a legal position on the proper border between Arab states, Glaspie put it at the time, would have "change[d] radically our policy."[127] The day before Glaspie met with Saddam, the State Department instructed its embassies in Arab League states to tell their hosts that the United

---

[124] "Saddam's Message of Friendship to President Bush," 25 July 1990, Bush Presidential Library, National Security Council, Richard N. Haass Working Files, Iraq Pre-2/8/90-12/90 (2 of 6). Italics added.

[125] McGhee is "quite confident" that Glaspie had this conversation with Mack over a secure phone, and that Mack told him about it when McGhee arrived in the office. Mack does not remember the conversation, but confirms that he had a number of conversations with Glaspie over secure phones during this period. See McGhee interview; Mack interview.

[126] Border disputes existed between Saudi Arabia-Oman, Saudi Arabia-Yemen, Saudi Arabia-Kuwait, Saudi Arabia-Qatar, Oman-Yemen, Oman-UAE, Iraq-Kuwait, Bahrain-Qatar, Kuwait-Iran, and UAE-Iran. See Richard Schofield, "Finalising the Arabian Territorial Framework," *Geopolitics*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (1997), pp. 90-105; *The World Factbook 2008* (Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, 2008), accessed at www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ae.html#Issues. Of course other Arab states also possessed border disputes.

[127] As quoted in Christian Alfonsi, *Circle in the Sand: Why we Went Back to Iraq* (New York: Doubleday, 2006), p. 45.

States took "no position on the border *delineation* issue raised by Iraq…" The cable also noted

that Glaspie had emphasized this to her interlocutors in Baghdad.[128]

Glaspie's cable of her meeting indicates that her reference to "these Arab affairs" dealt

merely with the merits of the two sides' positions regarding where and how to go about

demarcating their border. She reported:

> On the border question, Saddam referred to the 1960 agreement and a "line of patrol" it
> had established. The Kuwaitis, he said, had told Mubarak Iraq was 20 kilometers "in
> front" of this line. The ambassador said that she had served in Kuwait 20 years before,
> then, as now, we took no position on these Arab affairs.

Saddam's complaint that elicited Glaspie's response dealt with a "line of patrol" along the

unmarked border and was limited to a dispute of 20 kilometers of territory. Glaspie responded

by comparing the tension between Iraq and Kuwait to that which existed some twenty years

earlier when the two states were wrangling over creation of a bilateral commission to delineate

their common border.[129]

According to Robert Jervis, "a standard system of coding and decoding messages" exists

that is "clearly understood" by diplomats, but not always by outsiders.[130] U.S. diplomats, the

targeted audience of Glaspie's cable, understood the phrase "these Arab affairs" to clearly refer

to the region's unresolved border delineation disputes, not a potential invasion.[131]

---

[128] Declassified Documents Reference System (DDRS), "Cable from Secretary of State James Baker III regarding U.S. concern over Iraq's threats against Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates," declassified (formerly secret) Department of State (cable, 24 July 1990.

[129] In 1967, Iraq agreed to create a bilateral commission with Kuwait to delineate their common border. However, Iraq dragged its feet in implementing the agreement and some of its troops entered Kuwait and briefly occupied a small border area. See "Kuwait and Iraq Move Up Troops in a Dispute," *New York Times,* 21 April 1967.

[130] Jervis is not referring to the type of shorthand that Glaspie employed, yet usefully highlights the importance of careful, contextual interpretations of diplomatic messages. See Robert Jervis, *The Logic of Images in International Relations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), pp. 113-18.

[131] Newton interview; Interview with Ambassador Patrick Theros, Washington, DC, 27 March 2008; Interview with Nancy Johnson, Washington, DC, 6 March 2008; Interview with Ambassador John W. Limbert, Alexandria, Virginia, 25 April 2008; Phone Interview with Ambassador Larry Pope, 13 February 2008; "CB Hearing of the Europe and Middle East Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Subject: Developments in the Middle East, Chaired by: Representative Lee Hamilton (D-IN)", *Federal News Service*, 31 July 1990.

U.S. intelligence analysts also understood that Glaspie was speaking about the longstanding Iraq-Kuwait border delineation dispute when she referred to "Arab-Arab" affairs, and not to Kuwaiti sovereignty or the possibility of an invasion. The day after Glaspie's meeting, a U.S. intelligence report noted that "The 1961 territorial dispute over borders remains."[132]

Nat Howell, the U.S. ambassador to Kuwait, read Glaspie's cable and took from it that she had warned Saddam. On 26 July, he cabled Washington that "our statement of support for the Gulf States gave Kuwait just the assurance it needed, and put Saddam on notice that, however puny, Kuwait was not alone."[133] From Howell's perspective, U.S. signals constituted a credible commitment.

Barbara Bodine, the Deputy Chief of Mission in Kuwait, read the cable carefully at the time and was equally satisfied that it signaled neither a green nor yellow light.[134] For the diplomats, who were familiar with the context of Glaspie's statements and the common practice among diplomats to provide only brief phrases as a form of shorthand when reporting that a commonly understood message was delivered, the ambassador's language was clear and unproblematic.[135]

Saddam's senior advisors also understood that Glaspie's professed lack of interest in "these Arab affairs" was limited to the merits of border delineation disputes—not the potential use of force. The day before her meeting with Saddam, Glaspie reported to Washington that she

---

[132] USAREUR Daily Intelligence Report, Part 1, 26 July 1990, [Iraq-Kuwait Dispute Over Oil Pricing and Border], Secret, Intelligence Report, July 25, 1990, 5 pp., accessed through the Digital National Security Archive.

[133] Kuwait 04258, "Iraq Kuwait Tensions –What's Really at Stake," 26 July 1990, Bush Presidential Library, National Security Council, Richard N. Haass Working Files, Iraq Pre 08/02/1990 [Folder 1].

[134] Bodine recalls, "I read April's cable at the time, and nothing looked like a green light or even a flashing yellow light. If it had, Nat Howell or I would have been on the phone immediately saying April needs to go back in and to clarify, or at least what did she mean?…We had a huge vested interest in this since we were on the ground. We never thought 'uh-oh'…" Author's phone interview with Barbara Bodine, 19 March 2008.

[135] Author's interview with Ambassador Joseph Wilson, Santa Fe, New Mexico, 27 July 2007.

had told Hamdoon, "as he well knew," that the merits of Iraq and Kuwait's positions were "not

our business" and that Washington "did not want clarification" of the sources of the dispute. By

contrast, she stressed that Washington was waiting with "impatience" to the "important

question" of what Iraq's intentions were regarding Kuwait.[136]

U.S. Unwillingness to Bleed for Kuwait?

A common critique of Glaspie is that she did not correct Saddam when he told her that

"public opinion in the USG, to say nothing of geography, would have made it impossible for the

Americans to accept 10,000 dead in a single battle [during the Iran-Iraq War], as Iraq did." The

lack of a rebuttal, critics claim, left Saddam with the impression that the United States would

take no serious military action in response to an invasion.

While Saddam and his advisors viewed the United States as casualty-averse, they seem to

have believed that this aversion was limited to American casualties. If fighting went poorly for

the superpower, they reasoned, it might use nuclear weapons to prevent American deaths from

further escalating. The Iraqi record adds the following to Saddam's reference to 10,000

casualties: "I assure you, had the Iranians overrun the region, the American troops would not

have stopped them, except by the use of nuclear weapons." Rather than criticizing Iraq for using

chemical weapons and for seeking WMD, Saddam was implying, U.S. leaders should consider

their own reliance on nuclear weapons to limit American casualties. The key point to take from

this is not that the United States would not have stopped Iran, but that Saddam believed it

---

[136] DDRS, "U.S. Ambassador April Glaspie reports on Iraqi concern over the purpose, timing, and targets of combined U.S.-Egyptian military maneuvers," declassified (formerly secret) Department of State cable, 24 July 1990.

possible that the United States would have used nuclear weapons to do so.[137] Inasmuch as

Glaspie's silence confirmed Saddam's perceptions of U.S. casualty-aversion, it would seem to

have also solidified his suspicion that U.S. nuclear attacks awaited his country.[138] But Saddam

invaded regardless.

Glaspie's "Obsequious" Behavior?

Accusations that Glaspie "slobbered all over Saddam," gave him a "fawning audience,"

or behaved in an "obsequious" manner are also untenable.[139] It is true that Glaspie asked

Saddam "in the spirit of friendship, not confrontation," regarding his intentions toward Kuwait.

Additionally, she reminded Saddam that Bush had expressed desire for friendship in his

messages to Iraq on Eid and Iraq's national day. However, such signals were entirely

appropriate given that Saddam had reminded Glaspie that his trust in the United States remained

badly scarred from Iran-Contra.[140]

Moreover, as Glaspie knew, in February Saddam had asked Assistant Secretary of State

for Near Eastern Affairs John Kelly to "Assure [Bush] of my genuine desire to establish warm

and true friendship for our mutual benefit...," but cautioned that "It is in the Iraqi nature not to

establish friendships until it is sure that there is a real desire for it from the other side. Thus, Iraq

---

[137] While the Iraqi "transcript" is less trustworthy than Glaspie's cable or congressional testimony, Glaspie confirmed in her testimony that most of what Iraq's public record says is correct, though the Iraqis had excised her warnings. The changes to the transcript appear to have been limited to excisions.

[138] For more on Saddam's concerns that the United States might attack Iraq with nuclear weapons, see Chapter Three.

[139] Leslie H. Gelb, "Mr. Bush's Fateful Blunder," *New York Times*, 17 July 1991; William Safire, "Glaspie Matter: Machinations Work Overtime at Foggy Bottom," *The Oregonian*, 27 March 1991; B.W. Nelan and W. Dowell, "Who Lost Kuwait," *Time Magazine*, 1 October 1990, p. 54.

[140] "Saddam's Message of Friendship to President Bush," 25 July 1990, Bush Presidential Library, National Security Council, Richard N. Haass Working Files, Iraq Pre-2/8/90-12/90 (2 of 6).

proposes friendships and waits for the response."[141] Glaspie's confirmation of Bush's recent

messages of friendship was particularly fitting given that Saddam had expressed considerable

concern earlier in the month after *Agence France-Presse* incorrectly reported that a White House

spokesperson denied that Bush had sent Eid greetings to Iraq.[142]

   If expressions of desire for friendship and good relations evince obsequity, then Saddam

was far more fawning and obsequious than Glaspie. Glaspie reported in her cable that Saddam

told her at least five separate times that he wanted to be friends with the United States, though he

repeatedly expressed concerns about possible U.S. plots against Iraq and unwillingness to

reciprocate amity. While journalists and scholars almost always handpick statements from this

meeting that make Saddam look threatening and his intentions obvious, the title of Glaspie's

cable, "Saddam's Message of Friendship to George Bush," was neither inept nor accidental.

      Glaspie's denigration of the Diane Sawyer show was far from craven. Glaspie's cable

reports that she told Saddam that Bush had no control over the American media, at which point

he interrupted to tell her he already knew that. She then commented that "she had seen the Diane

Sawyer show and thought that it was cheap and unfair. But the American press treats all

politicians without kid gloves – that is our way." When Glaspie told Saddam that Bush did not

control the U.S. media, she was taking on his claim that American citizens were not allowed to

criticize the president and that the American media were not free, which he had expressed in his

interview with Sawyer.[143] After Saddam backed down from his earlier assertions, Glaspie

apparently denigrated the show in an attempt to save him face. The ambassador's criticism of

---

[141] "Assistant Secretary Kelly's Conversation With Saddam Husayn," declassified (formerly secret) Department of State cable, 13 February 1990, DNSA IG01222.

[142] Baghdad 03783, "Public Iraqi Gesture Toward the USG," 12 July 1990, DNSA IG01446.

[143] "Saddam Speaks," ABC NEWS: Primetime Live, 28 June 1990; "ABC's Diane Sawyer Interviews Saddam Husayn," FBIS-NES-90-127, 2 July 1990, Baghdad INA (in Arabic), 30 June 1990.

the show might be regrettable, but her reminder of Saddam's public gaffe and attempt to correct his dangerous misunderstanding were anything but timorous.

Alternative Explanations

Only a Woman's Warning?

While it is nearly certain that nothing Glaspie said encouraged Saddam, some individuals have argued that her gender undermined U.S. deterrent signals. In other words, Saddam, a "Bedouin thug," ignored U.S. threats more because of the messenger than the message.[144] This rival hypothesis has never received serious analysis, though in most honor societies, "challenges coming from . . . women can be ignored."[145] Saddam's Bedouin honor, if we take his public rhetoric as a guide, certainly had a strong element of male chauvinism.[146] To the degree that Saddam's sexist comments reflect his inner feelings and are not merely tactical, he might have seen weakness in Glaspie and in the United States based on her gender.

It seems unlikely, however, that Saddam discounted U.S. signals because they came from a woman. Baghdad was a secular city and many women in the capitol had careers.[147] Ba'ath Party doctrine called for the full integration of women into all areas of society, and took steps toward achieving this goal. Diplomats who served in Baghdad, as well as elsewhere in the Arab

---

[144] Robert D. Kaplan, *Arabists: The Romance of an American Elite*, 3rd Edition (New York: Free Press, 1995), pp. 285-86.

[145] O'Neill, *Honor, Symbols, and War*, pp. 121-22.

[146] Ofra Bengio, *Saddam's Word: Political Discourse in Iraq*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 155-56.

[147] Author's interview with Ambassador Joseph Wilson, Santa Fe, New Mexico, 27 July 2007; Author's phone interview with Ambassador David Newton, 25 March 2008.

world, are emphatic that no special problems existed in sending female diplomats or ambassadors to Iraq or elsewhere in the region.[148]

Besides, Glaspie was not known for exhibiting "traditional" feminine qualities. Her former colleagues describe her as "tough," "direct," "outspoken," "nobody's fool," and "no shrinking violet."[149] While physically attractive, added one, "Glaspie was the most masculine woman in the foreign service." "She hadn't gotten where she was by using feminine wiles," he continued. "She was tough and direct, spoke with a hoarse voice, and when she smoked she would inhale so hard that the end of the cigarettes turned white."[150]

Saddam seems to have respected and discounted expertise regardless of gender. He chose female ministers and appointed a woman, Rihab Taha (Dr. Germ), to oversee his biological weapons program—one of the regime's most important and sensitive programs. Taha was no exception: Huda Ammash (Mrs. Anthrax) was a senior leader in the Ba'ath party, was present in meetings of Saddam's war cabinet, and was reportedly one of very few party leaders to criticize Saddam's draft speeches or suggest changes.[151] According to the CIA's *Duelfer Report*, Saddam considered women excellent sources of information.[152] Even if Saddam did look down on women, it would not automatically follow that he would perceive a female messenger as indicative of weakness. Rather, it seems at least as likely that he would see U.S. selection of a female ambassador as a symbol of displeasure with his regime.

---

[148] Author's following interviews: Phone interview with David Newton, 25 March 2008; Interview with Joseph Wilson, Santa Fe, New Mexico, 27 July 2007; Phone interview with Barbara Bodine, 19 March 2008; Interview with David Mack, Washington, DC, 17 August 2007; Interview with Patrick Theros, Washington, DC, 27 March 2008; Interview with Nancy Johnson, Washington, DC, 6 March 2008; and, Interview with Joseph McGhee, Washington, DC, 6 June 2007.

[149] Amb. Barbara Bodine: "April is about as tough and direct as you can imagine"; Amb. David Newton: April was a "tough person," "outspoken," "nobody's fool," and "no shrinking violet"; Amb. Patrick Theros: Glaspie was "tough" and "direct"; Amb. Larry Pope: "April could be tough as nails"; Nancy Johnson: Glaspie could be "tough." Authors' interviews, Washington DC and via telephone, February – March 2008.

[150] Author's interview with Ambassador Patrick Theros, Washington, DC, 27 March 2008.

[151] Saman Abdul Majid, *Les Annees Saddam: Révélations Exclusives* (Paris: Fayard, 2003), pp. 91-93.

[152] *Duelfer Report*, vol. 1, p.10.

An Arab "Green Light"?

Another possibility is that Saddam believed he could get away with the invasion thanks to anticipations of support from Arab states or the proverbial "Arab street." More than a few scholars have concluded that Saddam's anti-Israel rhetoric during spring and summer 1990 were intended, at least partly, to prepare the Arab street to support Iraq and deter any U.S. intervention following the invasion.[153] To some degree, high levels of support in the Arab world probably did encourage Saddam to invade Kuwait. As he told Arafat in late April, "When the enemy comes and there is no heavy foot that would stop it, the Palestinian issue and Arab situation won't be as good, so it is not our timing. If it were our choice we would choose the right time, but it is a matter of necessity."[154] Saddam also boasted to Arafat that the Arabs could target Americans throughout the region, and even send a terrorist strapped with bombs to throw himself on Bush's car.[155]

In the weeks preceding and following the invasion of Kuwait, Saddam strengthened Iraq's ties with various terrorist organizations.[156] In April, he warned visiting U.S. senators that Arab states thought alike and, when provoked, would respond "in one direction."[157] Days after the invasion, he threatened the U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission in Baghdad that should the United

---

[153] For one example, see Shibley Telhami, "Between Theory and Fact: Explaining American Behavior in the Gulf War," *Security Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (August 1992), p. 104.

[154] Harmony video file ISGQ-2003-M0006248, in Woods, *Saddam and Terrorism*, Vol. 4, p. 22.

[155] Harmony video file ISGQ-2003-M0006248, in Woods, *Saddam and Terrorism*, Vol. 4, p. 21.

[156] "The Terrorist Threat From Iraq," declassified (formerly secret) Information Memorandum, 7 August 1990, DNSA IG01502; "Returning Iraq to the Terrorism List," declassified (formerly secret) Action Memorandum, 1 September 1990, DNSA IG01522; "Iraq and Terrorism," declassified (formerly secret cable, 27 June 1990, DNSA IG01441.

[157] Dole Archive at the Dole Institute of Politics, Leadership Collection, Legislative, Assistant Leader Files, Folder – Foreign Policy – Iraq Visit, 1990, handwritten notes on "Office of the Republican Leader" letterhead, (incorrectly) titled "Assad,' p.4.

States attack Iraq, Iraq "will not remain idle against your interests in the region" and warned that military hostilities would cause the United States to "lose the whole area" [i.e. Middle East].[158] During this same period, Iraq-supported terrorist groups began threatening to use terrorism against America in the event of U.S. military activities against Iraq.[159]

Saddam correctly assessed that his actions would be viewed sympathetically by many on the "Arab Street," yet recognized that obtaining Arab state support would be more difficult. He and his advisors knew they needed to publicly air grievances against Kuwait if they hoped to obtain Arab post invasion acceptance of Iraq's aggression, but feared that if they made their intentions completely manifest then Arab states would send tripwire forces to Kuwait to deter Iraqi aggression. Iraq should not unambiguously threaten Kuwait, Izzat al-Duri and Chemical Ali advised Saddam, since this might lead states to send forces to deter an Iraqi invasion. While Iraq needed to voice grievances before invading to garner post-invasion support from Iraqis and from Arabs more broadly, al-Duri explained, it must simultaneously indicate that it would not invade to avoid encouraging a deterrent deployment. Iraq's ambiguous mix of threats and assurances indicates that Saddam agreed. By misleading Arab leaders and Glaspie about his intentions, Saddam sought to surprise the world with the invasion, while simultaneously engaging in a public propaganda campaign against Kuwait to secure post-invasion support from the proverbial Arab street.[160]

Iraq did get state support from Jordan, yet King Hussein had warned Saddam not to invade. On 29 July 1990, the king told Saddam that the United States would not stand for an invasion of Kuwait and would intervene to reverse any Iraqi conquest. All of the Jordanian

---

[158] Baghdad 04566, "Main Points of Charge's Meeting with President Saddam Hussein", Bush Presidential Library, National Security Council, Richard N. Haass Working Files, Iraq 2/8/90 (4 of 6), p.1.
[159] "The Terrorist Threat from Iraq," declassified (formerly secret) Information Memorandum, 7 August 1990, DNSA IG01502.
[160] Woods, Palkki, and Stout, *The Saddam Tapes*, pp. 169-71.

delegation members who were at the meeting agree that King Hussein delivered this warning.[161]

On 1 August, the king informed the U.S. chargé d'affaires in Amman that he had also sent

Saddam an earlier message in which he "was rather harsh urging him to back off of

Kuwait…"[162] Saddam was accustomed to receiving U.S. messages through the Jordanians, who

had passed U.S. intelligence to Iraq during the Iran-Iraq War. Now, days before his invasion, the

Jordanian intermediaries reiterated what U.S. officials had long been signaling in public and

private.

Moreover, Saddam's pursuit of rapprochement with Iran and support for radical Islamist

groups undermined Iraqi efforts to acquire Arab state support. Saddam went to lengths before

and after the invasion to improve his ties with regional competitors in an attempt to deter a U.S.

military response. Notwithstanding his brutal eight-year war with Iran, in the weeks surrounding

the invasion he sought rapprochement with the Ayatollah.[163] Despite the Ba'ath party's secular

philosophy, after invading Kuwait Saddam appears to have pursued closer relationships with

Egyptian Islamic Jihad (which later merged with Al Qaeda) and other terrorist groups in the face

of plummeting relations with the United States.[164] Saddam's shift toward these groups

undermined efforts to acquire state support from Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and others. Saddam had

particularly little cause to expect a favorable Egyptian response to the invasion, given Iraq's

historical rivalry with Egypt and Saddam's decision to mislead Mubarak about his intentions

toward Kuwait.[165] While Arab tolerance of western troops in Saudi Arabia might have been

---

[161] Nigel Ashton, *King Hussein of Jordan: A Political Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), p. 266.
[162] Amman 09648, "TFKI02: Oral Message for the President: King Hussein Advises U.S. Caution on Iraq-Kuwait Dispute," 2 August 1990, 2 of 3 p. 2. This cable was declassified 30 September 2011 in response to a FOIA request.
[163] Woods, *The Mother of all Battles*, pp. 104-06.
[164] Harmony document ISGP-2003-00300189, in Woods, *Saddam and Terrorism*, Vol. 3, Section 30.
[165] "Egypt President Mubarak Comments on Gulf Crisis," *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 10 August 1990.

unthinkable to Saddam, so too, for most Arabs, was the notion that one Arab state would occupy another—even the detested Kuwaitis. Saddam was entering uncharted territory.

A Soviet "Green Light"?

Some analysts suggest that Saddam decided to invade based on expectations of support, or at least acquiescence, from the Soviet Union. Shibley Telhami, for one, notes that Aziz and Saddam both expressed surprise to foreign officials at the Soviet Union's active opposition to Iraq's aggression.[166] These signals might not have been genuine, though, as at this time Iraq was trying to shame the Soviets into providing increased diplomatic support.[167]

This is not to say that Soviet signals were completely red. Saddam and Hussein Kamil's meetings with the Soviet Union's Minister of Defense Industry on 23-24 July probably did nothing to dissuade Iraqi adventurism; according to Iraqi press reports, the participants reviewed industrial cooperation between the countries and agreed to "large-scale" joint projects in the future.[168]

Possible indications that the Soviet Union would support Iraq, however, at most played only a minor role in Saddam's decision to invade. Saddam spoke repeatedly about the Soviet decline and emerging U.S. hegemony, making it unlikely that he would deem support from a crumbling power sufficient.[169] In February, Saddam had expressed suspicion that the United

---

[166] Telhami, "Between Theory and Fact," p. 119 note 49.

[167] See, for instance, Saddam's 24 February 1991 letter to Gorbachev read aloud in CRRC Record SH-SHTP-A-000-630, accessed 9 March 2011 at www.ndu.edu/inss/docUploaded/SH-SHTP-A-000-630_TF.pdf.

[168] "Soviet Defense Industry Minister Holds Talks," FBIS-NES-90-143, 25 July 1990, Baghdad INA (in Arabic), 23 July 1990; "Meets with Saddam Hussein," Baghdad INA (in Arabic), 24 July 1990.

[169] See, for instance, "Iraqi President Addresses ACC Summit Issue of Soviet Jews and US Presence in Gulf," *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 26 February 1990.

States would begin feeling less constrained since "the Soviets are busy internally."[170] Moreover, only a few years previously, Soviet emissaries had informed their Iraqi counterparts that Mikhail Gorbachev "absolutely supports Kuwait's sovereignty and territorial integrity."[171]

Every indication suggests that Soviet leaders believed they had sent no green light. The invasion appears to have caught them by surprise as much as anyone. Eduard Shevardnadze's reaction was particularly illustrative. When Baker informed him that Iraq was poised to invade Kuwait, the Soviet diplomat replied, "The man is perhaps sort of a thug, but he is not irrational, and this would be an irrational act and I don't think this is something that could happen."[172]

Seeing Red, not Green?

Shevardnadze was wrong about the invasion, but might well have been right to describe it as an irrational act. A variety of sources report that Saddam, in a fit of anger, decided to conquer Kuwait upon hearing of insulting Kuwaiti negotiating behavior. These sources point to this temper tantrum as a driving force behind Saddam's decision, rather than a purely rational cost-benefit calculation.[173] While Saddam often held lengthy meetings in which he and his advisors assessed the utilities of different policies, he had what one lieutenant described as a "double personality" in the sense that his personality at times changed, almost instantly, from an

---

[170] "Assistant Secretary Kelly's Conversation With Saddam Husayn," declassified (formerly secret) cable, 00920, 13 February 1990, DNSA IG01222.

[171] DDRS, "Summary of Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Vorontsov's 10/29-10/30/87 visit to Iraq regarding the conflict in the Persian Gulf region between Iran and Iraq," Department of State cable (formerly confidential), 2 November 1987.

[172] Lawrence Freedman and Efraim Karsh, *The Gulf Conflict, 1990-1991: Diplomacy and War in the New World Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), pp. 77, and 449 note 20.

[173] My suggestion that anger negatively affected Saddam's decision to invade is case-specific and should not be understood as endorsing the view that emotions, even anger, are inherently irrational and lead to poor decisions. On the compatibility of emotions with rationality, see Jonathan Mercer, "Rationality and Psychology in International Politics," *International Organization*, Vol. 59, No. 1 (Winter 2005), pp. 77-106; Rose McDermott, *Political Psychology in International Relations* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), pp. 153, 170.

intellectual and good decision-maker to a "naïve and backward farmer," or from a cold-blooded killer to a sentimental humanitarian.[174]

When Jordanian officials met with Saddam on 29 July, they found him in a furious mood. Mudar Badran, Jordan's Prime Minister, reported that this was the only time he had seen Saddam, who was threatening to "throw sand in the eyes" of the Kuwaitis, really angry.[175] According to King Hussein, "The attitude of the president [Saddam Hussein] was one of extreme anger…"[176] On 31 July, King Hussein assured Bush that though Saddam was angry with the Kuwaitis, Iraq would not attack.[177] By the end of the following day, however, King Hussein's report had changed. On the night of 1 August, the king summoned Patrick Theros, the U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission in Jordan, to his palace. The king informed Theros that he had just spoken with Saddam on the phone and that while the king did not know what Saddam would do, Saddam was furious about the negotiations and "anger had made the dictator irrational."[178] One of the Kuwaiti negotiators, according to Saddam, had flipped-off his Iraqi counterparts and uttered an expletive. The Iraqi delegation had reportedly tried to keep Saddam from knowing exactly what the Kuwaitis had said, which angered Saddam all the more once he found out. "He is climbing the wall, he is so pissed-off I could hardly get a word in edgewise," the king explained.[179] Hours later, Iraq invaded Kuwait.

Saddam, while in U.S. custody, further indicated that anger played a role. George Piro, Saddam's interrogator, reported that he never saw Saddam angrier than when the prisoner

---

[174] Kevin M. Woods, et al, *Saddam's War: An Iraqi Military Perspective of the Iran-Iraq War*, McNair Paper 70 (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 2009), p. 42.

[175] Ashton, *King Hussein of Jordan*, p. 266.

[176] Michael Emery, "King Hussein: The Man in the Middle is Now the Man in Deep Water," *Los Angeles Times*, 3 March 1991.

[177] "Telephone Conversation with King Hussein of Jordan," 31 July 1990, Bush Presidential Library, National Security Council, Richard N. Haass Working Files, Iraq Pre-2/8/90 (4).

[178] Wilson, *The Politics of Truth*, p. 124. The quote belongs to Wilson, not Theros.

[179] Author's interview with Ambassador Patrick Theros, Washington, DC, 27 March 2008.

described Iraq's negotiations with the Kuwaitis. "His face got extremely red. And his voice changed," said Piro. Saddam's eyes filled with "a lot of hate…" According to Saddam, when his foreign minister met with the Emir Al Sabah to discuss repayment of Kuwaiti loans and Kuwaiti oil pumping, the Emir responded that Kuwait would continue its policies until it had turned all Iraqi women into ten dollar prostitutes. Piro recounts that this "really sealed it for him, to invade Kuwait. He wanted to punish, he told me, Emir Al Sabah, for saying that."[180] Hamdoon and Saad al-Bazzaz, who headed the Iraqi News Agency and the Radio and Television Establishment, provided similar accounts.[181]

Inasmuch as Saddam misrepresented the contents of his meeting with Glaspie and others in order to justify the invasion, it is appropriate to question the sincerity of his indications that Kuwaiti insolence provided a *casus bellum*. It is altogether possible, even likely, that Saddam feigned anger because, as Baram suggests, he "needed to demonstrate even to himself and to his senior lieutenants that Iraq was being humiliated, and that he was enraged."[182] As Saddam once explained to his subordinates, "If you decide to fight your enemy, then you have to make him look like the aggressor."[183] If his furor were only for show, though, the longevity of the performance and Saddam's ability to convince his associates were quite impressive. He might have faked his anger and made up stories of Kuwaiti effrontery, yet scholars have not seriously

---

[180] "Interrogator Shares Saddam's Confessions: Tells 60 Minutes Former Iraqi Dictator Didn't Expect US Invasion," *CBS News*, 27 January 2008; Meeting with George Piro at the Institute for Defense Analyses, Alexandria, VA, 26 February 2008.

[181] Wilson, *The Politics of Truth*, p. 124; "Saad al-Bazzaz: An Insider's View of Iraq," *Middle East Quarterly*, Vol. 2, No. 4 (December 1995).

[182] While Baram raised this as a possibility in 1998, in 2010 he expressed belief that "the reason why he invaded Kuwait prematurely is that the emir of Kuwait made him very angry." See Amatzia Baram, "The Missing Link: 'Badu' and 'Tribal' Honor as Component in the Iraqi Decision to Invade Kuwait," in Joseph Ginat and Anatoli Hazanov, eds., *Changing Patterns of Nomads in Changing Societies* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 1998), p. 163; "Iraqi Decision Making Under Saddam Hussein," Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 20 September 2010, 1:24:30–1:24:47, accessed 9 March 2011 at www.c-spanvideo.org.

[183] Woods, *The Mother of all Battles*, p. 69. The context in which Saddam gave the quote is unclear.

addressed, let alone disproved, the hypothesis that his temper played a direct role in his decision to invade.

In any case, Saddam's temper almost certainly indirectly contributed to his decision to invade. He may have made good decisions when he received correct information, yet his infamous fury with messengers of unwanted news or analysis ensured that his inputs were all too often sycophantic confirmations of his previous analyses and policies.[184] Such toadyism lay at the heart of Iraq's dysfunctional decision-making.[185]

Aziz and Hamdoon, both of whom were at the Saddam-Glaspie meeting and knew that Iraq had received no "green light," opposed the invasion but were too afraid to clearly say so. According to Hamid Hummadi, Saddam's secretary, when Aziz was asked his opinion about whether to invade Kuwait, he provided

> a subtle, indirect warning without openly opposing [Saddam] Hussein's judgment. Aziz explained if an invasion were conducted, predictable consequences would follow. At this point, Aziz took 10 minutes to lay out the sure-to-follow adversarial responses of the Arab League, the United Nations (UN), the United States, and the rest of the Western world. But, Aziz knew that if he did not approve Hussein's plan, he would be thrown out.[186]

Zeid Rifai, a Jordanian politician, claimed that Aziz told him he tried to indirectly warn Saddam not to invade by recommending an even riskier move, in the hope that this would cause Saddam to reconsider the dangers involved in seizing all of Kuwait. Aziz warned, "The Americans may come to Saudi Arabia and counterattack. Why don't we go all the way and take Saudi Arabia

---

[184] One of Saddam's scientists claimed that Saddam was "like a computer" in that reliable information led to good decisions, but poor inputs resulted in policy failures. See *Duelfer Report*, Vol. 1, "Regime Strategic Intent," p. 11.
[185] Kevin M. Woods, *et al*, *Iraqi Perspectives Project: A View of Operation Iraqi Freedom from Saddam's Senior Leadership* (Washington, DC: Joint Center for Operational Analyses, 2006), pp. 7–10, accessed 2 February 2009 at www.jfcom.mil/newslink/storyarchive/2006/ipp.pdf; Woods and Stout, "Saddam's Perceptions and Misperceptions," pp. 18-19.
[186] Federal Bureau of Investigation, Prosecutive Report of Investigation Concerning Saddam Hussein, 10 March 2005, declassified 11 May 2009, p. 65.

too?" Saddam criticized Aziz for his impetuosity, but the invasion went forward.[187] Iraqi Vice

President Taha Ramadan recalled that Aziz expressed skepticism about the plan to invade, but

"could only do so on preparedness grounds."[188] Hamdoon also confirmed that Aziz advised

Saddam, but only once, not to invade."[189]

Hamdoon was similarly opposed to the invasion, but insisted that he "couldn't stand up

and say it. I was against it, but I didn't have the means to stop anything."[190] As he later

explained to Duelfer, he recognized that the new U.S. president and end of the Soviet Union had

changed things, but "he could find no way to convey that to his leadership. His leaders had been

out of touch for so long, if he stated fully what he thought it would be received very badly."[191] It

is highly likely that Saddam's advisors would have more strongly warned him against invading

were his wrath not so terrible; however, even then he probably would not have listened. Glaspie,

after all, had warned him, as had Schwarzkopf, Cheney, Mack, King Hussein, and Saddam's own

GMID, yet he paid no heed.

Why There Were Not Stronger, Commitment-Generating, U.S. Deterrent Threats

Saddam received a plethora of warnings, yet it is conceivable that he would not have

invaded had he found himself on the receiving end of hand-tying, audience cost generating,

deterrent threats. For this, he had only himself to blame. In the prelude to the invasion, Saddam

sought to deter commitment-generating U.S. deterrent threats. He told Glaspie that Iraqis knew

war, warning, "Do not push us to it; do not make it the only option left with which we can

[187] Andrew Cockburn and Patrick Cockburn, *Out of the Ashes: The Resurrection of Saddam Hussein*, (New York: HarperCollins, 1999), p. 78.
[188] *Duelfer Report*, Vol.1, "Regime Strategic Intent," p. 7.
[189] Interview with Ambassador David Mack, Washington, DC, 17 August 2007.
[190] "'Thank you for everything. But do not stay.' An exchange with the late Nizar Hamdoon," *Middle East Quarterly* (Fall 2003), accessed 10 July 2007 at www.meforum.org/article/563.
[191] Duelfer, *Hide and Seek*, pp. 63-64.

protect our dignity." Iraq "will accept no threat against itself," he insisted. He "spoke at length" about Iraqi pride and desire for "liberty or death." He asked Glaspie not to use "methods like arm-twisting" (i.e. deterrence or coercive diplomacy), since Iraq would then need to respond. He warned Glaspie that the United States should "not force Iraq to the point of humiliation it (sic) which logic must be disregarded."[192]

According to the Iraqi transcript, Saddam told Glaspie that if the United States attempted to humiliate Iraq or undermine Iraqis standard of living, then "death will be the choice for us. Then we would not care if you fired 100 missiles for each missile we fired. Because without pride life would have no value." Saddam's public speeches in the weeks preceding the invasion similarly reveal less interest in exploring U.S. resolve than in fostering a view that if U.S. officials were to issue humiliating deterrent threats, that this would lead to irrational Iraqi behavior.[193] As if he had read Schelling, Saddam signaled that explicit threats would be "self-defeating" by humiliating Iraqis, and that "vague demands," while "hard to understand, can be less embarrassing to comply with."[194]

Far from attempting to clarify U.S. interests and resolve, Saddam repeatedly sought to deter the United States from issuing any manner of threat that might increase the U.S. commitment to the defense of the Gulf States. In addition to trying to deter U.S. threats by signaling that they would backfire, he also indicated that they were unnecessary. Lawrence Freedman and Ephraim Karsh write, "Saddam encouraged American self-delusion with regard to

---

[192] "Saddam's Message of Friendship to President Bush," 25 July 1990, Bush Presidential Library, National Security Council, Richard N. Haass Working Files, Iraq Pre-2/8/90-12/90 (2 of 6).

[193] See, for instance, Amatzia Baram, "The Missing Link," p. 165; Baghdad 04089, "Saddam's National Day Speech: Warning to OPEC Over-Producers," 18 July 1990, accessed through the Declassified Documents Reference System.

[194] Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, p. 84.

the crisis blowing over. Consequently, no attempt was made to provide explicit warning of the likely response to an overt act of aggression."[195]

Iraqi efforts seem to have persuaded Glaspie to favor private warnings over public deterrent threats. The ambassador noted three days before meeting with Saddam that Arab diplomats favored America's "calm, public reiteration of our policy" combined with "privately pointing out to Iraq the dangers of escalating tensions." The Baghdad embassy would "continue to use opportunities quietly to make our views known to the GOI . . ." Such discussions were quiet only in the sense that they were not public, as Glaspie reported in the same cable that she had a "vigorous" exchange with Hamdoon on July 21.[196]

After she met with Saddam, Glaspie cabled Washington, "If Iraq is publicly humiliated by the USG, it will have no choice but to 'respond,' however illogical and selfdestructive (sic) that would prove." She further commented that "He cannot allow himself to be perceived as caving in to superpower bullying (as US/Hamdun frankly warned us in late 1988)".[197] Again on July 29, Glaspie advised Washington to be extremely careful not to take measures that the Iraqis would consider "equivalent to thumbing our nose at him and doing it in public" since these would complicate the negotiations.[198]

J5 and the National Security Council agreed with Glaspie that the United States should not take additional steps to strengthen the U.S. commitment. Saddam recognized U.S. vital interests in the region, a Joint Staff position paper from 26 July assessed. The United States should not deploy additional forces to the region, the position paper stated, since even though

---

[195] Freedman and Karsh, *The Gulf Conflict*, p. 63.

[196] "Kuwait: Iraq Keeps up the Pressure," Baghdad 04191, 22 July 1990, accessed through the Declassified Documents Reference System.

[197] "Saddam's Message of Friendship to President Bush," 25 July 1990, Bush Presidential Library, National Security Council, Richard N. Haass Working Files, Iraq Pre-2/8/90-12/90 (2 of 6).

[198] "President Bush's Response to Saddam's Message," Baghdad 04326, 29 July 1990, accessed 17 August 2013 at http://www.margaretthatcher.org/archive/search.asp.

Saddam was rational, he would act like a "madman" if he felt Iraq were "facing the abyss."[199]

The National Security Council agreed with this general line of thought. It considered

recommending "a strong presidential message to Saddam," but concluded that "it might overload

the circuits now" and should be held in reserve.[200] Iraqi leaders successfully dissuaded

American leaders from sending stronger, commitment-generating threats, which might have

deterred them from invading. For this deception and, perhaps, subsequent self-deception,

Saddam has only himself to blame.

Conclusions

A number of findings emerge from this chapter. First and foremost, Saddam did not

invade Kuwait because Glaspie or other U.S. officials had signaled a "green light" in private

meetings. Glaspie neither signaled a green light, nor did Saddam or his advisers think otherwise.

In any case, Saddam thought his private meetings with U.S. officials of little importance. One is

hard pressed to find any mention whatsoever in the captured records of these meetings. Iraqi

officials had received many warnings about America's vital interest in Kuwaiti sovereignty, and

Saddam's private and semi-private statements indicate that he thought the United States might

even respond to his *fait accompli* by attacking Baghdad with nuclear weapons.

In addition to revising the historical record, this study has important theoretical

implications. Saddam and his senior advisers understood the commitment-generating effects of

troop deployments and public, as opposed to private, threats. U.S. officials opposed publicly

---

[199] PCC [Policy Coordinating Committee]; "Subject: PCC on Protection of US Interests in the Persian Gulf," formerly Secret//NF, Position Paper, July 26, 1990, 4 pp., accessed through the Digital National Security Archive.
[200] NSC Deputies Committee Meeting; on Iraq, April 16, 1990, White House Situation Room, 4:00; p.m. [Talking Points and Document Entitled "Discussion Paper for Iraq PCC" Attached], Classification Excised, Memorandum, c. April 16, 1990, 10 pp., accessed through the Digital National Security Archive.

threatening Iraq and deploying additional forces, at least in part, due to successful Iraqi efforts to deter the types of U.S. deterrent signals that would generate domestic audience costs. Iraqi officials understood that public signals are commitment-generating in a manner that is not true, or is at least less true, of private commitments.

Deterrence models suggest that status quo powers should respond to potential aggressors with credible deterrent threats, whereas spiral models find that when states are in conflict spirals, such threats merely foster the aggression they were intended to avert.[201] In conflict spirals, credible assurances may be more appropriate than threats. How policymakers might behave when confronted with mixed signals, however, is less clear.

Uncertain as to whether Saddam's belligerent rhetoric and troop maneuvers stemmed more from perceptions of opportunity or threat, Glaspie favored hedging U.S. bets by "warning" rather than "threatening" the Iraqis. As Thomas Schelling uses the terms, a warning is a reminder or notification that an actor will punish in response to misbehavior. This punishment, though, must be in the rational interest of the party sending the signal. For a warning to constitute a threat, it must be issued in a manner that makes it more credible, such as publicly committing to carry out the threatened action.[202]

Glaspie told Saddam and his lieutenants in private that the United States had a vital interest in Kuwait's sovereignty and territorial integrity, but advocated against sending signals "equivalent to thumbing our nose at him and doing it in public." Such behavior, she continued, would undermine efforts to mediate the crisis.[203] To the extent that deterrence involves threats

---

[201] Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), Chapter 3.

[202] Thomas C. Schelling, *Strategies of Commitment and other Essays* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), pp. 3-4; Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960), p. 123 note 5.

[203] "President Bush's Response to Saddam's Message – Next Steps," Bush Presidential Library, National Security Council, Richard N. Haass Working Files, Iraq Pre-2/8/90-12/90 (3 of 6), p. 2.

rather than warnings, it is, strictly speaking, accurate to claim that Glaspie did not attempt to "deter" Iraq.[204] The private warnings that she did issue, however, refute the idea that she gave Saddam anything approaching a "green light."

Lack of a deterrent "threat" is not equivalent to a green light. Nuclear deterrence theory has focused on how to make incredible threats credible, since following through on a threat to initiate a nuclear exchange seemed so irrational. Theorists' preoccupation with costly signals and reputation, however, has too often come at the expense of recognizing that many warnings are inherently credible since they are in the deterrer's self-interest to fulfill.[205] Saddam had held for years that U.S. officials saw it in the U.S. national interest to prevent Iraq from emerging from its war with Iran as a regional hegemon.[206] Why, then, would lack of a deterrent "threat" against invading Kuwait constitute in Saddam's eyes a green light to acquire regional hegemony by expanding south rather than east?

Brent Scowcroft, the U.S. National Security Adviser, thought America credibly committed to Kuwait's defense even in the absence of a commitment-generating U.S. threat. Scowcroft agreed with Cheney and Mack that U.S. actions in the Gulf during the Iran-Iraq War demonstrated America's commitment to Kuwait's sovereignty and security. On 3 August, the morning after the invasion, Bush assembled his National Security Council (NSC) to discuss how the United States ought to respond. Scowcroft, who offered the first substantive advice, expressed strong opposition to any form of compromise with Iraq. He stated, "There is too much at stake. It is broadly viewed in the United States that a commitment to Kuwait is de facto based

---

[204] Mearsheimer and Walt, "An Unnecessary War," p. 54. See also Richard Ned Lebow and Janice Gross Stein, "Rational Deterrence Theory: I Think, Therefore I Deter," *World Politics*, Vol. 41, No. 2 (January 1989), pp. 213 and 220.

[205] Vesna Danilovic, "The Sources of Threat Credibility in Extended Deterrence," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 45, No. 3 (June 2001), pp. 341-69.

[206] Brands and Palkki, "Conspiring Bastards." p. 648.

on our actions in the Gulf before." The United States must not let the invasion stand, Bush's influential adviser was explaining, since the American people believed that America's reflagging of Kuwaiti vessels during the Iran-Iraq War signaled a U.S. commitment to Kuwait's sovereignty. There are many reasons why the United States went to war over Kuwait, yet the first reason given, in the first NSC meeting after the invasion, was, at its heart, an argument about domestic audience costs. [207]

---

[207] "NSC Meeting on the Persian Gulf," 3 August 1990, Bush Presidential Library, National Security Council, Richard N. Haass Working Files, Iraq 2/8/90-12/90, p. 3.

Chapter 3: Iraq's Non-use of Weapons of Mass Destruction

During Saddam's war with Iran, Iraq used more than 100,000 chemical munitions against its Persian enemies and Iraqi Kurds. As the war progressed, Iraq's chemical weapon use increased: roughly two-thirds of the use came in the final 18 months of the conflict.[1] The Central Intelligence Agency's *Duelfer Report* concluded, based on interrogations of Iraqi principals and captured records, that Saddam believed that chemical weapon attacks on Iranian troops and ballistic missile strikes on Iranian cities had kept Iraq from losing to Iran and helped lead it to victory.[2] By contrast, during the 1991 "Mother of all Battles," Iraq appears not to have used any chemical or biological weapons.[3]

Scholars have forwarded three general explanations to account for this non-use. The conventional wisdom holds that intentionally ambiguous threats of U.S. nuclear retaliation deterred Saddam.[4] While U.S. officials issued a number of ambiguous threats in the months prior to the beginning of military hostilities, analysts have overwhelmingly focused on Secretary of State James Baker's meeting with Tariq Aziz, Iraq's foreign minister, in Geneva on 9 January 1991.[5] In this meeting, he shared a letter from President George H.W. Bush which warned that

---

[1] Central Intelligence Agency, "Transmittal Message," *Comprehensive Report of the Special Advisor to the DCI on Iraq's WMD* (hereinafter, *Duelfer Report*), 23 September 2004, Vol. 3, pp. 5, 10; *Duelfer Report*, Vol. 1, p. 72; Javed Ali, "Chemical Weapons and the Iran-Iraq War: A Case Study in Noncompliance," *Nonproliferation Review* (Spring 2001), pp. 43-58.

[2] *Duelfer Report*, Vol. 1, "Regime Strategic Intent," p. 1. While Iraq never attacked Tehran with chemical weapons, widespread panic in Tehran over the prospect of an Iraqi chemical weapon strike led roughly two million residents to flee their homes in a massive evacuation. The collapse in civilian morale helped show Iran's leadership that it could not win the war. Jonathan B. Tucker, *War of Nerves: Chemical Warfare from World War I to Al-Qaeda* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2006), p. 285.

[3] For a dissenting view, see Jonathan B. Tucker, "Evidence Iraq Used Chemical Weapons during the 1991 Persian Gulf War," *Nonproliferation Review,* Vol. 4, No. 3 (Spring-Summer, 1997), pp. 114-22.

[4] For examples, see Norman Cigar, "Chemical Weapons and the Gulf War: The Dog that Did Not Bark," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (1992), pp. 145-55; Barry R. Posen, "U.S. Security Policy in a Nuclear-Armed World, Or: What if Iraq had had Nuclear Weapons," *Security Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (Spring 1997), pp. 1-31; Keith Payne in "Project on Nuclear Issues (PONI) Debates the Issues: U.S. Nuclear Declaratory Policy," 25 May 2010 debate between Scott Sagan and Keith Payne at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, DC, accessed 10 September 2010 at http://csis.org/files/attachments/100525_poni_debates_transcript.pdf.

[5] For a concise discussion of a few of the most prominent threats, see Keith B. Payne, *The Great American Gamble:*

"the American people would demand the strongest possible response" to a WMD attack, burning

of Kuwaiti oil fields, or terrorism against Coalition members. The letter continued, "You and

your country will pay a terrible price if you order unconscionable acts of this sort."[6] In Baker's

conversation with Aziz, Baker wrote, he "purposely left the impression that the use of chemical

or biological agents by Iraq could invite tactical nuclear retaliation."[7]

The second group of scholars argues that U.S. threats to replace the Ba'athist regime

deterred Saddam from using chemical or biological weapons.[8] They point out that Baker also

warned Aziz that if Iraq used WMD, "our objective won't just be the liberation of Kuwait, but

the elimination of the current Iraqi regime…"[9] The different threats, to attack with nuclear

weapons versus seeking regime change, have led scholars to debate which, if either, deterred

Iraq.[10]

A third interpretation holds that Saddam was not deterred; rather, Iraq did not launch

WMD because unfavorable weather conditions, the ferocity of Coalition airstrikes, the speed of

the Coalition's advance, or other such factors prevented Iraq from launching WMD.[11] Other

Deterrence Theory and Practice from the Cold War to the Twenty-First Century (Fairfax, VA: National Institute Press, 2008), p. 414.

[6] "Letter to Saddam Hussein," U.S. Department of State Dispatch, Vol. 2, No. 2, 14 January 1991, accessed 8 September 2010 at http://dosfan.lib.uic.edu/ERC/briefing/dispatch/1991/html/Dispatchv2no02.html.

[7] James A. Baker with Thomas M. DeFrank, *The Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War & Peace* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1995), p. 359.

[8] For examples, see Scott Sagan, "The Commitment Trap: Why the United States Should Not Use Nuclear Threats to Deter Biological and Chemical Weapons Attacks," *International Security*, Vol. 24, No. 4 (Spring 2000), pp. 85-115; William M. Arkin, "Calculated Ambiguity: Nuclear Weapons and the Gulf War," *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 19, No. 4 (Autumn 1996), pp. 2-18.

[9] Baker, *Politics of Diplomacy*, p. 359.

[10] See, for instance, "Project on Nuclear Issues (PONI) Debates the Issues: U.S. Nuclear Declaratory Policy," 25 May 2010 debate between Scott Sagan and Keith Payne at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, DC, accessed 10 September 2010 at http://csis.org/files/attachments/100525_poni_debates_transcript.pdf.

[11] André Dumoulin, "The Non-Use of Chemical-Warfare Agents During Operation Desert Storm," in Jean P. Zanders, ed., *The 2nd Gulf War and the CBW Threat* (Brussels: Centrum voor Polemologie, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, 1995), pp. 47-50; Al J. Venter, *The Iraqi War Debrief: Why Saddam Hussein was Toppled* (Hermanus, South Africa: Earthbound Publications, 2004), pp. 150-51; "Subj: Iraq's Performance in the Persian Gulf War," accessed 10 September 2010 at www.gulflink.osd.mil/declassdocs/dia/19961031/961031_950825_002mc_91.html; "Memorandum Subject: Iraq: Why Weapons of Mass Destruction were Withheld," accessed 10 September 2010 at

explanations also exist, but with too little supporting evidence to justify explication or analysis.[12]

Saddam and some of his advisors touched on why Iraq did not use WMD, yet analysts have

generally received these public claims with healthy skepticism.[13]

Scholars who believe that Baker issued a veiled nuclear threat that deterred Iraqi WMD

use fail to address why Saddam would have considered an ambiguous threat commitment-

generating. Would not the ambiguity leave the administration free to do as it wished, and would

not Saddam recognize as much? Did Saddam believe that an ambiguous threat by Baker tied

President Bush's hands? If so, why? If not, why did the threat matter? Scholars who believe

that the decisive factor was Baker's threats to replace the regime fail to address the implications

of Baker's threats to remove Saddam from power whether or not Iraq used WMD, as well as

Saddam's longstanding belief that the United States was unalterably opposed to his rule. What

credible assurance did Saddam have that if he refrained from using WMD that the United States

would not pursue regime change? Domestic audience costs are central to current scholarship on

signaling and deterrence, but noticeably absent from discussions of Iraq's non-use in 1991. Did

they play a role?

I argue in this chapter that newly released records indicate that fear of nuclear retaliation

dissuaded Saddam from launching WMD. Long before Baker met with Aziz in Geneva, Saddam

was concerned that the United States and Israel might use nuclear weapons against Iraq under a

---

www.gulflink.osd.mil/declassdocs/cia/19960715/071596_cia_75701_75701_01.html; William J. Perry, "Desert Storm and Deterrence in the Future," in *After the Storm: Lessons from the Gulf War*, edited by Joseph S. Nye and Roger K. Smith (Colorado Springs, CO: Aspen Institute, 2000), p. 261.

[12] Jonathan Tucker, for instance, finds that Iraq did use chemical weapons. Judith Yaphe, as another example, claims that captured Iraqi records reveal that Saddam tried to persuade his commanders to use WMD, but was rebuffed. Tucker provides inadequate evidence, and no evidence has emerged supporting Yaphe's claim. See Tucker, "Evidence Iraq Used Chemical Weapons during the 1991 Persian Gulf War," *Nonproliferation Review*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (Spring-Summer, 1997), pp. 114-22; Walter Pincus, "U.S. Plans Appeal to Iraqi Officers," *Washington Post*, 30 September 2002.

[13] Arkin, "Calculated Ambiguity"; Sagan, "Commitment Trap," pp. 95-96; Stansfield Turner, *Caging the Genies: A Workable Solution for Nuclear, Chemical, and Biological Weapons* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999), p. 56.

variety of scenarios. Saddam did not consider nuclear use by Iraq's enemies as inevitable, though, since Iraq had a powerful WMD deterrent of its own. Baker's oral threats did nothing to reinforce Saddam's fears of U.S. nuclear use, since, according to the U.S. and Iraqi meeting records, Baker failed to deliver even an ambiguous nuclear threat. It remains unclear whether Saddam was aware of the contents of Bush's letter. Baker's explicit threats to replace the Ba'athist regime were recognized in Baghdad and considered sincere, yet played a far less important role in Iraqi calculations than fear of nuclear retaliation. The Iraqis, after all, were convinced that the United States sought to replace the regime regardless of Iraqi compliance.

Evidence in this case study indicates that Saddam sometimes assessed credibility within an audience cost framework. Consistent with ACT, ambiguous U.S. threats had no discernible influence on Saddam's beliefs about future U.S. behavior. By contrast, unambiguous U.S. threats to pursue regime change in the event of military hostilities, and Saddam's political survival, led Saddam to conclude that American voters removed Bush from office for failing to make good on his public commitment to replace the Iraqi regime. Saddam at times struggled to understand the role of American domestic politics and of the American media, yet had no problems understanding how domestic audience costs could generate credibility.

Saddam believed that he, too, could signal credible commitments by generating domestic audience costs. During the period between Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and the onset of the Coalition airstrikes, he ordered massive WMD evacuation drills of Baghdad and other cities, in part, to credibly signal to American leaders the Iraqi people's commitment to the occupation of Kuwait. Saddam told Soviet envoy Yevgeny Primakov that the Iraqi people knew of the evacuations, and, as a result of the evacuations, would be angry with the Iraqi leadership should Iraq withdraw from Kuwait under U.S. pressure. Domestic audience costs were, he claimed,

tying his hands. Saddam grasped the audience cost logic and believed that Primakov, another autocrat, would as well. U.S. officials' beliefs that ambiguous, confusing, and private signals are more credible than explicit and public communications, by contrast, are utterly incompatible with ACT.

This chapter proceeds as follows. First, I discuss Saddam's views on the utility of Iraq's chemical weapons and the potential danger of U.S./Israeli nuclear weapon strikes in the years preceding Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. Second, I address why Iraq refrained from using WMD in the Gulf War. I find that Saddam and his lieutenants thought U.S. nuclear use possible, and took countermeasures, prior to the Baker-Aziz meeting of 9 January. Third, I address Baker's various threats in Geneva and their influence—and lack thereof—on Iraqi decision-making. Fourth, I discuss alternative explanations for Iraq's non-use involving U.S. threats of regime change and an Iraqi inability to deliver WMD warheads. I close with conclusions for history and theory and recommendations for policy.

Background: Saddam's Views on Weapons of Mass Destruction

To understand how Saddam perceived the utility of Iraq's chemical weapons and the U.S. nuclear arsenal during the Gulf War, it is useful to briefly review his private comments and behavior during earlier years.[14] Saddam had long considered chemical weapons effective on the battlefield, particularly against poorly protected individuals.[15] The threat of chemical attack compelled enemy forces to disperse, Saddam explained to his generals in 1985, which kept them

---

[14] Daryl Press correctly notes that decisionmakers' threat perceptions are best discerned from their private communications and relevant behavior. See Press, *Calculating Credibility: How Leaders Assess Military Threats* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), p. 11.

[15] SH-SHTP-A-001-023, "Saddam Hussein and Ba'ath Party Members Discussing the Iran Iraq War," 6 March 1987, CRRC, Washington, DC. All future document citations, unless otherwise noted, are to CRRC records.

from mobilizing their forces and attacking.[16] Iraq used its "special munitions" to soften enemy

positions and create disarray behind the opponent's front lines.[17] From Saddam's perspective,

however, the psychological effects of using and threatening to use chemical munitions were

more important than their physical effects. He explained to senior air force officials, "It is

possible that when you bomb him [with chemical weapons] the material effect will be 40

percent, but if you stick it up to his face the material and the spiritual effect will be 60 percent, so

why hit him? Keep getting 60 percent!"[18]

One of Iraq's central lessons from the Iran-Iraq War was that its chemical weapon attacks

enabled it to repel and defeat its more populous and casualty-acceptant adversary.[19] Iran

possessed three times the population of Iraq, which led Saddam to be very concerned about

relative casualties.[20] As massive Iranian human wave attacks repeatedly demonstrated, the

Iranian regime, caught up in post-revolutionary religious fervor, was also far more casualty-

acceptant. Chemical weapons proved a useful neutralizer of these human-wave assaults.

Without WMD use, Saddam concluded, the Iranians would have overrun Iraqi forces.[21]

According to Saddam, Iraq had won at least in part due to its superior chemical weapon and

missile capabilities.[22] In assessing how others perceived the utility of nuclear weapons, Saddam

was predisposed to interpret their behavior and rhetoric in light of his own recent lessons

---

[16] SH-SHTP-A-001-045, "Saddam Hussein and High Ranking Officers Discussing Plans to Attack Kurdish 'Saboteurs' in Northern Iraq and the Possibility of Using Special Ammunition (Weapons)," undated.

[17] Ali, "Chemical Weapons and the Iran-Iraq War," pp. 43-58.

[18] SH-SHTP-A-001-035, "Saddam Hussein and Air Force Officers Discussing the Movements and Performance of the Iraqi Air Force during the Iran-Iraq War," 7 July 1984.

[19] Central Intelligence Agency, *Comprehensive Report of the Special Advisor to the DCI on Iraq's WMD*, 30 September 2004, "Regime Strategic Intent," p. 1. Hereafter, this report will be referred to as the *Duelfer Report*.

[20] William O. Staudenmaier, "Military Policy and Strategy in the Gulf War," *Parameters,* Vol. XII, No. 2 (June 1982), pp. 28-29.

[21] *Duelfer Report*, Vol. 1, "Regime Strategic Intent," p. 42; "Excerpts From Iraqi Document on Meeting with U.S. Envoy," *New York Times*, 23 September 1990.

[22] As he recalled years after the war had ended, "When we attacked Iran with our missiles they came and told us, 'let's agree'…" See SH-SPPC-D-000-334, "Meeting between Saddam Hussein and Russian Delegate for Special Mission," 18 July 2001; *Duelfer Report*, Vol. 1, "Regime Strategic Intent," p. 1.

learned.[23]

Saddam frequently described nuclear weapons as unique in their coercive capacity, yet also indicated, on occasion, that he conceptualized them within the framework of conventional weapons.[24] On 18 October 1984, for instance, he and an advisor identified only as "Sami" discussed Iraqi attempts to obtain research from foreign sources on how to mobilize forces on a nuclear battlefield. Mobilization plans for a nuclear battlefield "will have a positive impact on a war," noted an unidentified advisor. Iraq needed to "study the Second World War thoroughly and consider every aspect" to gain the appropriate insights, the men concluded.[25]

A July 1988 doctrinal manual on the tactical use of nuclear weapons, approved by the chief of staff of the Iraqi army for widespread training of the Armed Forces, indicates that Iraqi military leaders in subsequent years saw atomic bombs more as conventional weapons than as unusable weapons of last resort, solely for existential deterrence largely within a conventional framework. The study found that nuclear weapons were not fundamentally different from conventional weapons; rather, they were merely much more destructive. It reports, "Ordinarily, nuclear fires are used in the same way and with the same objectives for which non-nuclear fires have always been used." Moreover, it prominently notes in the foreword, "There are usually no clearly distinct boundaries between the conditions of nuclear and non-nuclear war, so long as one or both of the fighting parties possesses nuclear weapons."[26]

---

[23] For the importance of "availability" as an unmotivated bias, see Robert Jervis, "Perceiving and Coping with Threat," pp. 22-23, in Robert Jervis, Richard Ned Lebow, and Janice Gross Stein, eds., with contributions by Patrick M. Morgan and Jack L. Snyder, *Psychology and Deterrence* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985).

[24] For Saddam's views on the utility of nuclear weapons, see Hal Brands and David Palkki, "Saddam, Israel, and the Bomb: Nuclear Alarmism Justified?," *International Security* Vol. 36, No. 1 (2011): 133-166.

[25] SH-SHTP-A-000-735, "Saddam and Officials Discussing Military Operations and Secret Projects during the Iran-Iraq War," 18 October 1984.

[26] SH-IZAR-D-001-490, "Military Manual on the Tactical Use of WMD, Vol 2 Part 2," July 1988, pp. 3, 35; Norman Cigar, "Contributions to War Studies Number 3: Iraq's Vision of the Nuclear Battlefield," U.S. Marine Corps Command and Staff College: Marine Corps University Foundation, March 2003, pp. V and 3, accessed 24 August 2009 at www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/iraq/2003/iraq-nuclear-battlefield-study.pdf.

Saddam presumably shared these views. Iraq's generals, who had cause to please him, explicitly based their doctrine on his "pronouncements and directives."[27] Saddam was no casual consumer of such doctrine. According to one expert, Saddam personally "reviewed all draft military doctrine."[28]

U.S. behavior in the decades prior to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait may have reinforced Saddam's inklings that U.S. leaders viewed WMD much as he did, and might use them under similar scenarios. As Saddam well understood, the United States had used nuclear weapons to reduce American casualties in its war with Japan: "Japan was forced to surrender by atomic bombs, but the Arabs will not surrender," he told a Japanese visitor shortly before the onset of Coalition air strikes.[29] If Saddam was aware that Cheney had publicly stated that the United States was correct to attack Japanese cities with atomic bombs during World War II, this would have given him little cause to think that U.S. thinking had changed.[30]

Saddam may have gathered from U.S. intelligence provided on Iranian targets, which the Iraqis reportedly made good use of in their chemical weapon strikes, that U.S. policymakers were not very opposed to Iraq's WMD use and would have acted similarly had they found themselves in Iraq's predicament.[31] Saddam stated, repeatedly, that the United States had used chemical weapons in the Vietnam War.[32] Senior officials in Iraq's Republican Guard expressed

---

[27] SH-IZAR-D-001-414, "The Art of War - Manual on the Principles of the Use of Force," December 1987, p. 13.

[28] Joseph Sassoon, *Saddam Hussein's Ba'th Party: Inside an Authoritarian Regime* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 134.

[29] "More on Meeting," Tokyo KYODO, 14 January 1991, in English, Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS)-Near East Service (NES)-91-009, 14 January 1991.

[30] Nina Tannenwald, *The Nuclear Taboo: The United States and the Non-Use of Nuclear Weapons since 1945*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 312.

[31] For Iraq's use of U.S. intelligence in its chemical weapon strikes, see Charles Duelfer, *Hide and Seek: The Search for Truth in Iraq* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2009), p. 36.

[32] "Saddam Husayn's Interview for Spanish Television," *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 29 December 1990, taken from *Republic of Iraq Radio*, 26 December 1990; Cigar, *Chemical Weapons and the Gulf War*, p. 146; U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, George Piro Interview Session Number 4 of Saddam Hussein, 13 February 2004, p. 4, accessed 26 August 2009 at www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB279/index.htm. Subsequent references to FBI reports on Piro's

similar beliefs.[33] If the United States had used chemical weapons against a Soviet ally (Vietnam)

at the heart of Soviet strength, he might have reasoned, it would be even more willing to do so

against Iraq in the emerging unipolar world. Moreover, Iraq's military concluded that desert

conditions favored employment of nuclear weapons more than other terrains.[34]

U.S. declaratory policy suggested that the United States would, when circumstances

warranted, quickly resort to battlefield use of nuclear weapons. For decades the United States,

smaller and more casualty-averse than the Soviet Union, had relied on nuclear weapons to deter

and, if necessary, repulse Soviet aggression against U.S. allies.[35] As the January 1988 U.S.

National Security Strategy (NSS) explained, without 300,000 military personnel forward

deployed in Europe, the United States would find itself "resorting to nuclear weapons to achieve

essential deterrence and warfighting objectives," thereby "risking an early transition to nuclear

war…"[36] The March 1990 NSS affirmed that in defending Europe, "Our nuclear power remains

the ultimate deterrent of aggression, even at lower force levels."[37]

The logic that led the United States to rely on tactical nuclear weapons to deter an

invasion of Western Europe extended quite naturally to deterring aggression in the Persian Gulf.

As U.S. Defense Secretary Harold Brown and Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) Chairman David Jones

pointed out in September 1980, inadequate U.S. conventional capabilities made U.S. efforts to

deter a Soviet invasion of Iran analogous to efforts to defend Western Europe in the 1950s.[38]

---

interviews and casual conversations with Saddam are identified by meeting numbers, dates, and pages, and are located at the Internet address listed above. As I discuss later in this article, Saddam's claims to his interrogator are frequently unreliable and must be treated with caution.

[33] SH-RPGD-D-001-454, "Training Documentation Pertaining to Nuclear, Chemical and Biological Threats to the Iraqi Republican Guard," 16 October 2002, p. 34.

[34] SH-IZAR-D-001-414, p. 13.

[35] Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, 3rd ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 67.

[36] National Security Strategy of the United States, The White House, January 1988, p. 18.

[37] National Security Strategy of the United States, The White House, March 1990, p. 27.

[38] Jimmy Carter Library, Donated Historical Material, Zbigniew Brzezinski Collection, Geographic File, Southwest Asia/Persian Gulf 6/80-12/80, Box 16, Folder 9/80, Special Coordination Committee Meeting, "Subject: Followup on Security Framework in the Persian Gulf," 2 September 1980, p. 2; Jimmy Carter Library, Donated Historical

The JCS made clear to Brown that no military option existed to prevent the Soviets from taking

Iran's oilfields other than tactical nuclear weapon strikes, and senior U.S. officials responded to

the invasion of Afghanistan by hinting that Soviet aggression against Iran might lead to

American use of nuclear weapons.[39]

Foreign officials saw things similarly. West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt

worried that in a U.S.-Soviet conflict in the Gulf, the United States would resort to nuclear

weapons "given the lack of a strong U.S. military potential" in the region.[40] East German leader

Erich Honecker warned Iraqi Vice President Taha Ramadan in 1981 that a third world war would

be nuclear and would not spare Iraq.[41]

Saddam also understood that U.S. casualty aversion, poorly defended U.S. friends, and

insufficient forward deployed conventional forces created a heavy U.S. reliance on nuclear

weapons in defending regional allies. As he explained to the U.S. ambassador to Iraq in 1990,

geographic distance between the United States and the Gulf and U.S. casualty-aversion had led

him to conclude, "Had the Iranians overrun the region [in the Iran-Iraq War], the American

troops would not have stopped them, except by the use of nuclear weapons."[42] When Saddam

discussed his desire for a bloody land war against Israel on a separate occasion, he predicted that

a U.S. nuclear ultimatum, not conventional threats, would deter Iraq from invading.[43]

Material, Zbigniew Brzezinski Collection, Geographic File, Southwest Asia/Persian Gulf 6/80-12/80, Box 16, Folder 9/80, National Security Council Meeting, "Subject: Soviet Military Threat to Iran," 12 September 1980, p. 4.

[39] Richard K. Betts, *Nuclear Blackmail and Nuclear Balance* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1987), p. 130; Jimmy Carter, "President Carter's Rebuttal," *Foreign Policy* (March/April 2010), p. 11; Benjamin F. Schemmer, "Was the U.S. Ready to Resort to Nuclear Weapons for the Persian Gulf in 1980?," *Armed Forces Journal International*, Vol. 123, No. 9 (September 1986), pp. 92-105; Richard Halloran, "Washington Talk: How Leaders Think the Unthinkable," *New York Times*, 2 September 1986.

[40] Jimmy Carter Library, Donated Historical Material, Zbigniew Brzezinski Collection, Box 20, Subject File Alpha Channel (Miscellaneous) 1/80-3/80, Brzezinski Memorandum for the Secretary of State, "Subject: Schmidt Memcon," 27 February 1980. The quote is Vance's language from page 8 of the attachment.

[41] Potsdam, Germany, Foundation Archives of Parties and Mass Organizations of the GDR in the Federal Archives (SAPMO), DC20/5121, p. 7. The meeting took place 17 March 1981 in Berlin.

[42] "Excerpts from Iraqi Document on Meeting with U.S. Envoy."

[43] SH-SHTP-A-000-553, "Revolutionary Command Council meeting headed by Saddam Hussein after Baghdad

Saddam also seems to have believed that the United States and/or Israel might have been willing to use nuclear weapons in counterproliferation strikes, perhaps as bunker-busters, to prevent Baghdad from acquiring the bomb. He explained to his advisors, "For all the advancement that Baghdad has reached, people will not tolerate such advancement, and I am telling you now, Baghdad will be attacked by an atomic bomb one day. I mean, this is a strong possibility…. Baghdad will be attacked chemically, atomically, and by germs."[44] He noted, not long after Israel's attack on Iraq's nuclear reactor, that Iraq's enemies "are right in all of their attempts to harm Iraq. I do not rule out that they might even hit Iraq with the atomic bomb someday…"[45] Israel had threatened the Arabs, Saddam alleged, "stating that if they did not keep up with them, they would use the nuclear bomb against them."[46]

From Saddam's perspective, Iraqi civil defenses would help shore up morale enough for Iraq to withstand nuclear coercion until it had acquired a suitable deterrent. However, he warned, until the Arabs had a sufficient deterrent Iraq's enemies would use nuclear threats to "blackmail Arabs politically." He explained that Iraq must hold "awareness sessions" to teach its citizens that by following certain precautions, "dealing with the attack will become a regular matter. This way, the Iraqi citizen will not be scared from the process and be blackmailed…"[47]

Saddam and his advisors discussed potential nuclear threats and the importance of civil defenses in countering nuclear coercion on a variety of occasions during the years preceding the Osiraq attack. For instance, in 1979, one of Saddam's advisors warned that the lack of atomic shelters in Iraq was dangerous for Iraq's leadership since, if Iraq went to war with Israel, Israel would attack Baghdad with atomic bombs to undermine the morale of Iraqi troops. Iraq needed

---

Conference in 1979," 27 March 1979.

[44] SH-SHTP-A-001-039, "Saddam and his Senior Advisors Discussing Israel's Attack on the Tamuz (Osirak) Reactor and Iraqi Civil Defenses," undated (circa late 1981).

[45] SH-SHTP-A-000-635, "President Saddam Hussein Meeting with Ministers," undated (circa 1982).

[46] SH-SHTP-A-000-858, "Meeting between Saddam Hussein and Iraqi Officials," undated (circa 1981).

[47] SH-SHTP-A-001-039.

to begin constructing shelters, he warned, or "time will pass us by and we may be forced to retreat out of fear of an atomic war." Saddam agreed.[48]

Between Israel's successful attack on the Osiraq reactor and the end of the war, Saddam spoke far less frequently about an Israeli nuclear attack on Iraq. During this period Iraq was nowhere near having nuclear weapons, so Israel's preventive motivation was perceived to be less intense. As Saddam was far from acquiring the weapons, he had little incentive to emphasize what he lacked and had no hope in the immediate future of obtaining. Inasmuch as his regime was predicated on hostility toward Israel, emphasizing that Iraq could not attack Israel and had not even retaliated after the attack on Iraq's reactor would only delegitimize his regime. Desire to keep nuclear developments hidden from Israel and the United States may have also contributed to this period of relative silence on the issue.

U.S. Nuclear Weapons and Iraq's Invasion of Kuwait

Saddam's concerns about U.S./Israeli nuclear coercion and preventive attacks on its WMD facilities resurfaced after Iraq emerged triumphant from its war with Iran and on the verge of acquiring nuclear weapons of its own. Such concerns led Saddam to threaten, on 1 April 1990, to burn half of Israel in response to an Israeli attack. This declaration stemmed from fear, he explained to a delegation of visiting U.S. senators on 12 April, that "we might be in Baghdad holding a meeting with the Command when the atomic bomb falls on us." The United States had assisted Israel's attack on the Osiraq reactor, Saddam insisted, and suggested that Israel and the

---

[48] SH-SHTP-A-001-040, "Meeting between Saddam Hussein and Members of the Ba'ath Party regarding Sadat's Peace Initiative with Israel," undated (circa 1979).

United States were planning to once again strike Iraqi WMD-related facilities.[49]

The senators denied U.S. complicity in the Osiraq attack and that the United States would support such an Israeli attack in the future, yet delivered a U.S. demarche which warned that if Iraq did not cease its WMD proliferation activities and threatening rhetoric, "Iraq will be on a collision course with the U.S."[50] In a meeting with Arafat on 19 April, Saddam referred to his meeting with the senators and commented that rising tension with the United States had led him to order studies on "how we are going to react" when "Baghdad is struck by the atomic bombs…"[51] This apparently was not the only conversation in which Saddam told Arafat of such concerns. Arafat reported that Saddam, after invading and occupying Kuwait, continued to wonder whether the United States would punish Iraq for the invasion by attacking Baghdad with nuclear weapons.[52]

Saddam also expressed concerns to Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) members, before invading Kuwait, that the United States might retaliate by attacking Iraqi cities with nuclear weapons. In a 29 December 1990 RCC meeting, he claimed to regret having undermined his advisors' morale by voicing such concerns. He recalled, "I have only scared you once throughout my entire life before a war and I have rectified my action in the manner of which you already know, when I scared you and told you that we will be hit by atomic bombs."

---

[49] "Saddam Husayn Addresses Visiting U.S. Senators," FBIS-NES-90-074, 17 April 1990, p. 7. This transcript was originally published in the Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic, 16 April 1990.

[50] "Tensions in U.S.-Iraqi Relations: Demarche," declassified (formerly secret) cable, 12 April 1990, DNSA IG01316.

[51] It is also possible that Saddam exaggerated in this meeting the risks Iraq would soon take on behalf of the Palestinians in an effort to recruit Arafat to engage in equally risky behavior in defense of Iraq. See "Video containing a recorded meeting that took place on 19 Apr 90 among President Saddam Hussein, the Iraqi Cabinet, President Yasser Arafat and the Palestinian Delegation," in Kevin M. Woods with James Lacey, *Saddam and Terrorism: Emerging Insights from Captured Iraqi Documents*, (Alexandria, VA: Institute for Defense Analyses, March 2008), Vol. 4, p. 21, accessed 23 August 2008 at www.jfcom.mil/newslink/storyarchive/2008/pa032008.html.

[52] Eric Herring, *Danger and Opportunity: Explaining International Crisis Outcomes* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1995), p. 212.

He continued, "I asked you, 'Are you ready [to take Kuwait]?' And you responded, 'Yes, we are ready,' and then I rectified my action and I told you to erase all that I had said.…"[53]

On 4 August, only two days after invading, Saddam confided to the president of Yemen that he thought the United States might respond to the invasion with nuclear strikes. Saddam commented, "We considered that America and Israel might attack us without ground forces, they might attack us with planes and missiles, [but] we will destroy them, and we'll attack their fleets in the Gulf… They also said they might attack us with atomic bombs. We said, we are ready for that. And we vacated Baghdad Center…"[54] Saddam's reference to U.S. and/or Israeli nuclear threats is unclear, as no such threats were issued.[55]

The studies that Saddam mentioned to Arafat in April refer, at least partly, to evacuation plans for Iraqi cities. These plans were apparently also a major factor leading to Saddam's claim to Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh that Iraq was "ready" to be struck by nuclear weapons. In preparation for the anticipated U.S. attack, Sa'di Mahdi, a Regional Command Member, prepared a plan to evacuate the capital within 72 hours of 2 August. This was not good enough for Saddam, who reportedly insisted that the plan arrange the evacuation within 48 hours.[56] On the morning of 1 August, Mahdi headed a meeting of the special committee for the evacuation of

---

[53] SH-SHTP-A-001-042, "Saddam Hussein and the Revolutionary Command Council Discussing the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait and the Expected U.S. Attack," 29 December 1990.

[54] SH-MISC-D-000-652, "Meetings between Saddam Hussein and the Yemeni President, and between Saddam and Dr. George Habash, Secretary General of the Popular Front of the Palestinian Liberation," August-September 1990.

[55] Saddam's confusion might have stemmed from hyped intelligence from Palestinian sources. Two examples from this period are telling. First, on 8 August 1990 the GMID delivered to Saddam a report from "the ambassador of Palestine" claiming he had received information "from their source inside Israel" that "Israel's junior ministers' council decided to attack Iraq within 72 hours," though there was reportedly disagreement among the ministers over whether to attack with tactical nuclear weapons. GMID discounted the information as a "guess," though it is unclear that Saddam accepted their assessment. Second, on 4 June 1990, the PLO provided Iraq with 134 pages of analysis detailing alleged American support for Israeli biological and chemical weapon programs and use against the Palestinians. See SH-MISC-D-000-901, "Various Telegrams, Memos, and Intelligence Reports on the First Gulf War 1990-1991," 1 August 1990 - 31 September 1990; SH-MISC-D-000-736, "Report on Israeli Nuclear, Chemical, and Biological Capabilities and Scenarios," May 1985-May 1992, especially pp. 19, 21, 55, and 57.

[56] "Saddam makes statement to Iraqi journalists," originally in Baghdad INA in Arabic, 13 January 1991, in FBIS-NES-91-009, 14 January 1991.

the city of Baghdad to further plan the evacuation drill. Iraqi television and radio outlets would

announce the evacuation by way of a coded message, and the Ba'ath Party had already informed

citizens of the code and the drill so that they would know what to do.[57] The secrecy surrounding

this round of evacuations indicates that Iraqi leaders did not intend these drills to signal resolve

or toughness to Iraq's enemies.

In the days after the invasion, Saddam put Iraq's evacuation plans into action.[58]

According to an Iraqi transcript of a 6 October meeting between Saddam and Soviet envoy

Yevgeny Primakov, Saddam expressed concern to the Soviet that it would be problematic for

Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait under U.S. pressure. He argued that Iraq's leaders could not claim

that they were surprised by the strong U.S. reaction since the Iraqi people "will say 'no; your

assessment was correct, because we know you evacuated the cities of Baghdad, al-Basra, and

Salah ad Din in anticipation of an American nuclear attack. Your assessment was for a situation

that is more difficult than war.'" Saddam added, "What would be our answer then?"[59]

The nuclear evacuation procedures, Saddam was trying to signal, made his commitment

to the occupation more credible. The secrecy surrounding the evacuation indicates that Saddam

did not initially order the evacuations with the intent of generating audience costs. Moreover, he

certainly had incentives to argue that Iraq was committed to the occupation, whether or not he

believed that the evacuations were tying his hands. It is clear, though, that Saddam understood

the basic logic of audience costs—that leaders suffer domestically for failing to follow through

on public commitments, and that leaders can use audience costs to signal the credibility of their

commitments. Saddam may or may not have believed that the evacuations were actually tying

---

[57] SH-IDGS-D-001-431, "Correspondence between the Presidential Diwan and Several Other Iraqi Authorities, Discussing an Emergency Evacuation Plan of Different Iraqi Cities in Case of a Nuclear Attack," 29 December 1990, p. 68.

[58] Norman Cigar, *Saddam Hussein's Nuclear Vision: An Atomic Shield and Sword for Conquest*, Middle East Studies Occasional Papers (Quantico: Marine Corps University Press, 2011), p. 76 note 138.

[59] SH-PDWN-D-000-533, "Meeting between Saddam Hussein and the Soviet delegation," 10 February 1990.

his hands. What is important here is that he made the argument in the expectation that Primakov might believe that the evacuations had generated audience costs that were, in turn, tying Saddam's hands. Saddam understood the logic, and believed that Primakov did as well.

While Saddam's private statements to Arafat, the U.S. ambassador, RCC members, Saleh, and Primakov all indicate that he worried considerably about a U.S. nuclear strike, he asked his RCC "to erase" (i.e. forget about) his concerns and indicated to Primakov that he wished the Iraqi people would as well. When U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Sam Nunn told a reporter on 8 August that he would not rule out a U.S. attack on Iraq with tactical nuclear or chemical weapons to "prevent a war" or Iraqi chemical weapon use, and announced his support for sending B-52 bombers, viewed primarily as strategic nuclear delivery systems, to the Middle East in response to Iraq's recent invasion, Saddam downplayed the danger.[60]

In a speech Saddam drafted on 10 August, he acknowledged Nunn's threats but discounted them as incredible. International public opinion, Iraq's WMD deterrents, and other factors made the United States "the furthest from using nuclear weapons," he claimed. If "Iraq were forced to engage in self-defense against a massive assault," Saddam continued, it would use all weapons at its disposal to "slam back the attack."[61] Saddam's public claim that he was not worried about U.S. nuclear weapon strikes was disingenuous, as evidenced by his private statements on the matter.

Moreover, captured Iraqi documents indicate that Iraqi intelligence officials, military officers, and senior political advisors considered U.S. nuclear use against Iraq credible and that

---

[60] "U.S. Conflict or War with Iraq," *ABC News: Nightline*, 8 August 1990. For the symbolism of B-52 aircraft, see Richard K. Betts, *Nuclear Blackmail and Nuclear Balance* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1987), 130.
[61] SH-MISC-D-000-783, "Drafts for Various Speeches by Saddam Hussein in 1990," 12 August 1990. For evidence that Saddam drafted his own speeches, see Saman Abdul Majid, *Les Années Saddam: Révélations Exclusives* (Paris: Fayard, 2003), 91-93.

Iraq took countermeasures to mitigate the effects of a nuclear attack. Iraq's General Military

Intelligence Directorate (GMID) appears to have believed that U.S. officials considered

American nuclear weapons tactically useful. On 7 September, the GMID issued corps

commanders a study on the U.S. nuclear arsenal and doctrine. It listed weapons in the U.S.

arsenal that had been absent for years, such as the Sergeant York Guided Missile (retired in

1977). More significantly, its analyses of U.S. nuclear doctrine appear to have come straight out

of the 1950s. It assessed, "[American] nuclear use plans are set up the same in the corps,

division, and the brigade" and "the preliminary nuclear bombardment starts twenty to thirty

minutes before the main attack and it lasts for fifteen minutes."[62] Inasmuch as the Iraqis were

forty years behind in their study of U.S. nuclear doctrine, and believed that Pentomic thinking

continued to guide U.S. thinking, this seems likely to have fostered belief that the United States

might use nuclear weapons.[63]

Concerns about a U.S. nuclear attack led to various Iraqi countermeasures. On 29

October, the Iraqi Chief of Staff ordered all branches of the Iraqi military to take precautions

against possible Coalition use of nuclear weapons. These instructions included destroying any

nuclear missiles that might enter Iraqi airspace, dispersing supply stations, and preparing

alternative routes to be used following a nuclear attack. In a separate order, he requested a report

investigating how electromagnetic radiation would affect Iraq's electronic and wireless

communication equipment.[64] According to the commander of Iraq's surface-to-surface missile

corps, Iraqi reports indicated that 15 November "was the date for the so-called Dark Night air

---

[62] Woods, *Mother of all Battles*, p. 169 note 109; SH-MISC-D-000-901, "Various Telegrams, memos, and Intelligence Reports on the First Gulf War 1990-1991," 1 August 1990 - 31 September 1990.

[63] Pentomic doctrine organized army divisions to fight on atomic battlefields. For a brief overview of Pentomic thinking in the United States in the 1950s and early 1960s, see Adrian R. Lewis, *The American Culture of War: The History of U.S. Military Force from World War II to Operation Iraqi Freedom* (New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 158-60.

[64] Ibrahim Al-Marashi, *The Nineteenth Province: The Invasion of Kuwait and the 1991 Gulf War from the Iraqi Perspective,* DPhil dissertation, Centre for Middle Eastern Studies, University of Oxford, July 2004, pp. 211-12.

strike" when "the United States might carry out an air strike using nuclear-like bombs…"[65]

According to Republican Guard (RG) Commander Lt. Gen. Sayf al-Din al-Rawi, the RG carefully studied U.S. nuclear and biological warfare capabilities, particularly nuclear-tipped Pershing missiles that the Iraqis believed the United States had deployed to Saudi Arabia, and decided on a wide deployment as a countermeasure.[66]

Iraq's Army Chief of Staff assessed in January 1991 that the United States had transferred 80 medium-range rockets with three nuclear warheads, as well as chemical and conventional warheads, to Israeli bases.[67] GMID sent a letter with this information to Saddam via his presidential secretary.[68]

A variety of reports indicated that the United States might use nuclear weapons to limit its casualties. A 1 September Iraqi intelligence report noted that Israel's Major General Avigdor Ben-Gal had encouraged the United States to use tactical nuclear weapons to limit American casualties. It assessed that in the event of a confrontation, "there is a possibility that the United States will use tactical nuclear bombs to limit their losses" since "the present American forces in the area have nuclear weapons."[69] Publicly available opinion polls revealed that nearly half of Americans thought the United States should go nuclear, even in the absence of an Iraqi WMD attack, "if it might save the lives of U.S. troops."[70] As mentioned earlier, Senator Nunn had refused to rule out a U.S. first use of nuclear or chemical weapons to "prevent a war" with Iraq

---

[65] Hazim Abd al-Razzaq al-Ayyubi, "Forty-Three Missiles on the Zionist Entity," *Al-Arab al-Yawm* (Amman, Jordan) 27 October 1998.

[66] SH-SHTP-V-001-194, "Iraqi Minister of Defense and Republican Guard Commanders discussing the Republican Guards' Role in the 1990-1991 Gulf War," 16 May 1993, 5:00-15:00, 20:00-25:00; Woods, *Mother of all Battles*, p. 154. Though the Iraqis almost certainly dispersed their mobile Scud launchers during this period, I have been unable to confirm that fear of nuclear retaliation did, in fact, lead Iraq to disperse its troops.

[67] SH-MISC-D-000-298, "Statements about the Iraq War in 1991," undated (1992 or later). This information is from the 7 February 1991 entry of an Iraqi daily report from the Gulf War.

[68] SH-GMID-D-001-047, "Collection of Intelligence Reports," 1 March 1991, p.191.

[69] SH-MISC-D-000-901.

[70] Arkin, "Calculated Ambiguity."

that would lead to American casualties.[71]

Saddam recognized that the United States loathed losing American lives, yet from his perspective this increased the likelihood that the United States would cross the nuclear threshold. For Saddam, there was no uncertainty about the causal link between American causality aversion and U.S. initiation of nuclear strikes. He claimed to "know perfectly well" that one led inexorably to the other. In October 1990 he told former British Prime Minister Edward Heath,

> I know perfectly well that if the going gets hard then the British and the Americans will use atomic weapons against me and the chances are that Israel will as well, and the only thing I've got is chemical weapons and biological weapons and I shall have to use them. I have no alternative.[72]

Izzat Ibrahim al-Duri, who as Vice Chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) was one of Saddam's closest advisors, reinforced Saddam's belief that the United States might attack Iraq with nuclear weapons. He advised Saddam on 2 November that the United States might use nuclear weapons to limit its casualties:

> We must also expect that the United States could hit us with a nuclear bomb…if the United States hits us and after six or seven months did not get the result and saw that the war is going to start tearing the [American] people apart, it is possible that it will use nuclear bombs to strike two or three cities.[73]

It seems likely that al-Duri had cause to believe Saddam would agree, given the former's reputation for telling the latter only what he thought he wanted to hear.[74] Iraq's ambassador to Austria also described U.S. options as suffering huge numbers of casualties in a ground war and losing, or attacking Iraq with nuclear weapons.[75]

In a 30 November RCC meeting, an unidentified advisor encouraged Saddam to reissue

---

[71] "U.S. Conflict or War with Iraq," *ABC News: Nightline*, 8 August 1990.

[72] "Hearing of the House Armed Services Committee, Subject: Situation in the Persian Gulf," *Federal News Service*, accessed 24 May 2013 at www.lexisnexis.com/hottopics/lnacademic.

[73] SH-SHTP-A-000-670, "Audio Recording of a Revolutionary Command Council Meeting," 2 November 1990.

[74] *Duelfer Report*, Vol. 1, "Regime Strategic Intent," p. 10.

[75] "Envoy to Austria Sees No Policy Change in Geneva," *Vienna Kurier* in German, 6 January 1991, in FBIS-NES-90-004, 7 January 1991.

his deterrent threats of early April: "In case of aggression, we shall use all weapons we have, including the binary chemical weapon…" Several very senior advisors, however, objected. "It is dangerous for us to reveal our intention to use chemicals; we should not do that," Al-Duri noted. "We would give them an excuse for a nuclear attack," Aziz added. Aziz's comment evinces concern that even threatening to use WMD, and not solely using it, could lead to an American nuclear strike. From at least Aziz's perspective, the possibility of a U.S. nuclear strike was great enough that Iraq should even steer clear from threats to use WMD that were purely deterrent in nature.[76] A U.S. nuclear strike was by no means considered incredible. Rather, Aziz suggested on this and at least one other occasion, the United States might want to use nuclear weapons against Iraq and take advantage of an appropriate "excuse" to do so.[77]

Saddam, showing machismo, stated "We will strike them with everything." Backtracking, or at least clarifying, he made Iraqi use more conditional: "If we want to use chemicals, we will exterminate them" since "we discovered a way with destructive power that is 200 times more than the destructive power of the same type of chemical we used on Iran. I mean the destructive power is 200 times more than what we used to use."[78]

Saddam most likely reached this conclusion based on exaggerated reports of Iraqi WMD accomplishments from Hussein Kamil and other Iraqi officials. Kamil reportedly informed Saddam that production of the chemical warfare agent VX was much more advanced than was actually the case.[79] He was terrified of Saddam, a leading Iraqi nuclear scientist recalled, and

---

[76] SH-SHTP-A-000-848, "Saddam Hussein and his Advisors Discussing Potential War with the United States," 1990.
[77] SH-SHTP-D-000-760, "Saddam Hussein and Political Advisors Discussing the Production of Biological Materials in Iraq, the Iran-Iraq War, UN Inspections, and the Arab-Israeli Conflict," undated.
[78] SH-SHTP-A-000-848.
[79] United Nations Monitoring, Verification, and Inspection Commission, "Compendium Chapter II: The Organizational Structure of Iraq's Proscribed Weapons Programmes," 27 June 2009, p. 39.

was scared to report anything but progress and good news.[80] Kamil was not alone in embellishing accomplishments in his reports to Saddam. Amir al-Saadi, the "architect of Iraq's chemical and biological weapons programs," encouraged his subordinates to share only good news with Saddam. "Why didn't you tell the president what he wanted to hear," al-Saadi screamed at one excessively forthright scientist. "Did you fear for your neck? You should be more afraid to disappoint him now than to disappoint him later!"[81]

In late December, Saddam set civil defense plans into action by ordering massive practice evacuations of parts of Baghdad and other major cities in case "of a nuclear or weapons of mass destruction [attack] by America or its allies."[82] Numerous workshops and lectures also took place on how to survive in a WMD-contaminated environment. When Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega came to Baghdad to speak with Saddam on 10 January 1991, the meeting took place in an atomic bombproof shelter.[83] Saddam's longstanding desire to create civil defenses that could protect Iraqi morale against nuclear coercion suggests that the evacuations were intended primarily to bolster Iraqi spirits. A 29 December 1990 report to Saddam from Iraq's General Security Director, moreover, noted that the recent evacuation of Saddam City was a success as evidenced by the "excitement and motivation of the citizens…."[84] For Saddam, a people's morale was the key to any military conflict.[85]

It is clear, though, that Iraq's civil defense measures severely undermined Iraqi morale.

---

[80] Mahdi Obeidi and Kurt Pitzer, *The Bomb in My Garden: The Secrets of Saddam's Nuclear Mastermind* (Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2004), p. 97.

[81] Obeidi and Pitzer, *The Bomb in My Garden*, p. 97. For the description of al-Saadi as the "architect" of the programs, see Craig S. Smith, "A Nation at War: Weapons Minister; Hussein's Top Science Adviser Surrenders to U.S. Marines," *New York Times*, 13 April 2013.

[82] Woods, *Mother of all Battles*, pp. 153-54.

[83] "Comments on 'Bombproof' Shelter," originally on Caracas Venezolana de Television Canal 8 in Spanish, 10 January 1991, in FBIS-NES-91-009, 14 January 1991.

[84] SH-IDGS-D-001-431, pp. 3-4.

[85] On the importance to Saddam of morale see Woods et al, *Iraqi Perspectives Project*, pp. 15, 29, 98-99; Woods, *Mother of all Battles*, pp. 137, 175, 229, 237, 240, etc.

A Western diplomat observed that the evacuations and civil-defense programs "makes people more and more depressed," and the *New York Times* reported that they resulted in a "wave of national gloom…over the Iraqi capital."[86] Saddam confirmed, in a captured recording, that the civil defense measures were undermining rather than bolstering Iraqi morale.[87] The results probably reduced his willingness to engage in WMD warfare since they revealed the vulnerability of Iraqis' morale to U.S. WMD coercion, which he had long seen as a prerequisite for major warfare with nuclear weapon states. With conflict approaching, Iraqi morale was flagging and Saddam knew it.

This is not to say that these evacuation drills and civil-defense programs were solely intended to boost morale. Saddam ordered the committee responsible for evacuating Baghdad, for instance, with doing its work in a way that would allow Iraqis to signal resolve for a military conflict to Iraq's enemies. The civil defense activities would "terrorize the enemies and instill fear in them that Iraq is ready to face all types of war," Iraq's Minister of Interior predicted.[88]

Iraqi leaders wanted the drills to demonstrate resolve, though some aspects were clearly more secretive. For instance, preparations of alternate locations for key General Security Directorate and Baghdad Security offices, and efforts to protect large document files against WMD strikes, were clearly not intended as signals to Iraq's enemies.[89] By late December, when the evacuations were undermining Iraqi morale, Saddam waffled over the value of using the evacuations to send a signal to the United States. On one hand, he told his advisers that the United States delayed waging war against Iraq because it had seen Iraq's evacuations and took from these preparations that the United States would suffer many casualties in a conflict with

[86] Patrick E. Tyler, "Standoff in the Gulf: Wave of Gloom over War Peril Covers Baghdad," *New York Times*, 20 December 1990.
[87] SH-SHTP-A-001-042.
[88] SH-IDGS-D-001-431, p. 14, 30, 39, 42.
[89] SH-IDGS-D-001-431, p. 69, 82.

Iraq. On the other hand, he asked his advisers whether the evacuations had become known to the United States, and, if so, indicated that it made little sense for the citizens of Baghdad to evacuate to be bombed in tents rather than staying in Baghdad to be bombed in their houses.[90]

Saddam and his advisers struggled to understand why, when Iraq was trying to prepare its people for a war of nerves and thereby signal resolve to American leaders, American media outlets were undermining support for war in the West by reporting on the potential effects of Iraq's biological weapons. Iraq had not, he said, released information on its biological warfare capabilities since it considered this information a state secret. The United States had fully committed itself to war by deploying its entire navy to the Gulf, Taha Ma'ruf explained, but then "they have published this report for some reason, but it has created a state of fear among the American forces… I am not sure what their motive for posting this report and creating this state of fear within the American and European public opinion is, with regard to their troops." Saddam agreed that it was a rational act, explaining, "They probably have smart people like us." "This way war will not take place, "Izzat al-Duri and Taha Ma'ruf concluded. The administration had publicly committed to use military force if necessary to liberate Kuwait but was untying its hands, Saddam's advisers seem to have been suggesting, by releasing information on Iraq's biological weapons to the media that would diminish public support for war.[91]

The Baker-Aziz Meeting

---

[90] SH-SHTP-A-001-043, "A Revolutionary Command Council meeting about Coalition Operations against Iraq," 18 January 1991.
[91] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-042, "Saddam Hussein and the Revolutionary Command Council Discussing the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait and the Expected US Attack," 29 December 1990.

<u>Crafting the Signals</u>

While Saddam and his advisers were unsuccessfully attempting to signal Iraqi resolve to American leaders via Iraq's WMD evacuation drills and other measures, and struggling to make sense of U.S. signals, American leaders were trying to figure out how best to deter and compel the Iraqis. In the weeks and months preceding the Baker-Aziz meeting, there was much disagreement in the American camp over the optimal manner in which to signal Iraq. American officials were torn as to how the amount of information provided, directness of delivery, explicitness of messages, and other factors would affect Iraqi perceptions of U.S. intentions and resolve.

Bush seems to have believed that direct, person-to-person communications would cause Saddam to assess a threat as credible. Prior to scheduling the meeting between Baker and Aziz in Geneva, Bush's plan was to meet with Aziz in Washington and for Baker to meet with Saddam in Baghdad. Bush told Baker that he wanted him to meet with Saddam and to threaten him in person since "If he hears it from you, he'll know it's for real." From Baker's perspective, sending and receiving signals via "face-to-face talks was the ultimate expression of George Bush's personal style of politics and diplomacy."[92] Baker also considered it important since Soviet officials had warned that Saddam's subordinates were too terrified of Saddam to provide him with bad news.[93]

Bush was not alone in considering private, face-to-face diplomacy the key to sending Saddam a credible signal. Jerrold Post, the father of psychoanalysis at the CIA, concluded that Saddam and other Arabs considered private signals more credible than public signals. Bush's

---

[92] Baker, *Politics of Diplomacy*, 349.
[93] Bob Woodward, *The Commanders* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991), p. 336.

willingness to send Baker to Baghdad for one-on-one diplomacy with Saddam was "extremely

important," Post told the House Armed Services Committee in December 1990.[94] Post later

explained,

> Saddam probably heard the Western words of President Bush through a Middle Eastern
> filter. When a statement of resolve and intent was made by President George H.W. Bush
> in a public statement, Saddam may well have discounted the expressed intent to act. This
> underlines the importance of a private channel to communicate clearly and
> unambiguously. The mission by Secretary of State Baker afforded the opportunity to
> resolve any misunderstandings on Saddam's part concerning the strength of resolve and
> intentions of the United States and the international coalition.[95]

In short, Post believed, private diplomacy would enable the United States to send more credible

signals of U.S. resolve than public threats.

Although Bush favored signaling Saddam directly through Baker, he worried that

Saddam would interpret U.S. interest in having Baker and Aziz meet in Geneva as a sign of U.S.

vacillation and weakness. When the United States proposed the meeting, Bush explained,

Saddam probably told his advisers, "They are weak, they will not attack us, or why is Bush

continuing to make peace feelers?"[96] Prince Bandar complained to American leaders that

requesting the meeting signaled weakness to Arabs, including the Iraqis.[97] Indicating

willingness to negotiate may only constitute "cheap talk," yet, Bush realized, this "cheap talk"

could affect Iraqi assessments of U.S. resolve.[98] Bush writes that he agreed to the Geneva

---

[94] Jerrold M. Post, "Explaining Saddam Hussein: a Psychological Profile," presented to the House Armed Services Committee, December 1990. Accessed 30 May 2013 at www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/iraq/saddam_post.htm.
[95] Jerrold M. Post, "Saddam Hussein of Iraq: A Political Psychology Profile," June 2006, accessed 30 May 2013 at http://law.cwru.edu/saddamtrial/documents/saddam_hussein_political_psychology_profile.pdf.
[96] George Bush and Brent Scowcroft, *A World Transformed* (New York: Knopf, 1998), p. 437.
[97] Woodward, *The Commanders*, p. 336.
[98] For a discussion of how cheap talk can affect bargaining partners' assessments prior to negotiation, see Joseph Farrell and Robert Gibbins, "Cheap Talk Can Matter in Bargaining," *Journal of Economic Theory* Vol. 48 (1989), pp. 221-37, especially p. 222.

meeting only to satisfy Congress and American and European audiences that he was still pursuing peace.[99]

If seeking to meet in Geneva signaled irresolute resolve by indicating that some form of compromise solution were desired, so might talking in the first place. Joseph Wilson, the Deputy Chief of Mission in Baghdad, cabled Foggy Bottom several months earlier that "The GOI [Government of Iraq] is of the belief that so long as you are talking…then you are not seriously considering the prospects of hostilities." U.S. "silence will terrify the Iraqis" far more than any threats, he advised.[100] The most resolute states, Wilson may have reasoned, refrain from issuing threats so they can more easily attack their target unprepared. For this reason, silence can be terrifying.[101]

U.S. officials disagreed among themselves regarding how explicitly the United States should threaten Iraq. Schwarzkopf told Powell in late fall 1990, "You've got to understand the Arab mind." Arabs understand brute force, he explained, and needed an unambiguous U.S. threat that the United States would retaliate with nuclear weapons if Iraq used chemicals.[102] Bush, by contrast, seemed less concerned about sending unambiguous signals. On 21 December, he told British Prime Minister John Major that he was not worried about the effects of Lt. Gen. Calvin Waller's comment to reporters that U.S.-led forces would not be ready to fight Iraq by the Coalition's 15 January deadline for Iraq to have withdrawn from Kuwait. "We should send Saddam Hussein a confused message," he explained.[103]

---

[99] Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, p. 437.

[100] Baghdad 07062, "Future Moves on the Gulf Crisis," 21 December 1990, Bush Presidential Library, National Security Council, Haass Files, Iraq – December 1990 [3].

[101] For a discussion on how a state's leaders might assess another's silence as threatening, see Robert F. Trager, "Diplomatic Calculus in Anarchy: How Communication Matters," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 104, No. 2 (May 2010), p. 363.

[102] Rick Atkinson, *Crusade: the Untold Story of the Persian Gulf War* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1993), p. 86.

[103] Bush Presidential Library, "Telephone Conversation with PM John Major of Great Britain," 21 December 1990. [I need to complete this citation]

The Signals

Baker seems to have agreed with the President that ambiguous, confusing signals could enhance the credibility of the threat. In Geneva, he issued threats that were far vaguer than is generally believed and that at most only reinforced Saddam's longstanding concerns about potential U.S. nuclear weapon use against Iraq. As Sagan notes, Baker never even mentioned the words "nuclear weapons."[104] Whereas Baker claimed in his memoir that he had "purposely left the impression that use of chemical or biological agents by Iraq would invite tactical nuclear retaliation," neither the declassified State Department Memorandum of Conversation (MEMCOM) of the meeting nor publicly released Iraqi minutes of the meeting reveal anything that could reasonably be considered a threat of tactical nuclear retaliation.

The detailed State Department MEMCOM presents only an extremely vague threat by Baker. According to this record, Baker warned that "if conflict ensues and you use chemical or biological weapons against U.S. forces, the American people will demand vengeance. And we have the means to exact it. Let me say with regard to this part of my presentation, this is not a threat, it is a promise."[105] Baker confirms that this was the content of his message. Though the wording he provides in his memoir differs slightly from that in the MEMCON, the meaning is identical.[106] The Iraq minutes of the meeting also present the same content.[107] Nothing in any of

---

[104] Sagan, "The Commitment Trap," p. 93.

[105] "U.S. Department of State Memorandum of Conversation between Secretary James A. Baker III and Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz," 9 January 1991, Geneva, Switzerland., accessed 8 September 2010 at www.bakerinstitute.org/vm_baker_aziz.pdf. Hereafter, this document will be cited only as "Baker-Aziz MEMCON," followed by the page number.

[106] He writes in his memoir that he delivered the following warning: "If the conflict involves your use of chemical or biological weapons against our forces, the American people will demand vengeance. We have the means to extract it. With regard to this part of my presentation, this is not a threat, it is a promise." It is unclear whether Baker made use of a written record other than the MEMCON when compiling his memoir, relied on his memory or the memory

these versions indicates that this "vengeance" referred to tactical as opposed to high-yield nuclear weapons, neutron bombs, chemical weapons, biological weapons, a switch to countervalue targets, targeting of Iraqi dams, pursuit of regime change, execution of regime leaders, or any of a number of forms of punishment advocated by senior U.S. officials.

Brent Scowcroft, for instance, had proposed bombing Iraq's oil fields and additional industrial facilities, Paul Wolfowitz wanted to attack military targets that were off limits due to proximity to civilian neighborhoods, and Buster Glosson suggested targeting Iraqi dams as a means of flooding Baghdad.[108] Colin Powell proposed threatening Saddam that if Iraq used chemical or biological weapons, the United States would "destroy your merchant fleet, destroy your railroad infrastructure, destroy your port facilities, destroy your highway system, destroy your oil facilities, [and] destroy your airline infrastructure." He also wanted the United States to threaten to destroy the dams on the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, which would have flooded Baghdad, though only as a bluff.[109] Given the wide array of potential forms of U.S. retaliation, Baker's "tactical nuclear" threat was ambiguous indeed.

Baker's threat to replace the regime in retaliation for Iraqi WMD use was much more explicit than his alleged "tactical nuclear" threat, and easier for the Iraqis to correctly interpret, but the inelastic nature of the threat rendered it rather inefficacious. He warned Aziz,

> If there is any use of weapons like that [i.e. chemical or biological weapons], our
> objective won't just be the liberation of Kuwait, but the elimination of the current Iraqi

---

of other meeting attendees, or simply took liberties in drawing quotes from the MEMCON. In any case, the quotes Baker uses in his memoir are consistently different from the wording presented in the MEMCON, though the substance is nearly identical. See Baker, *Politics of Diplomacy*, p. 359.

[107] Baker warned, according to the Iraqi minutes, "If the conflict starts, God forbid, and chemical or biological weapons are used against our forces—the American people would demand revenge, and we have the means to implement this. This is not a threat, but a pledge…" See "INA Reports Minutes of 'Aziz-Baker Meeting: Part I,'" *Daily Report, Near East & South Asia*, FBIS-NES-92-009, 14 January 1992, p. 27. Because the Iraqi minutes so closely resemble the MEMCON, future references are provided for only one of the sources unless the content of the two differs.

[108] Atkinson, *Crusade*, pp. 86-87.

[109] Colin L. Powell with Joseph E. Persico, *My American Journey* (New York: Random House, 1995), p. 504.

regime, and anyone responsible for using those weapons would be held accountable. As the President said in his letter, we also will not tolerate terrorism against Americans or our coalition partners, or the destruction of Kuwaiti oil fields, as has been threatened.[110]

The Secretary repeatedly indicated, however, that the United States would pursue regime change even if Iraq refrained from using WMD, thus removing any added incentive that his threat might have otherwise created for Iraq to comply. The United States, he threatened, would replace Iraq's leadership if Iraq refused to leave Kuwait prior to the onset of military hostilities. If Iraq withdrew peacefully, he explained, "those in power in Iraq today will have a say in Iraq's future. If withdrawal takes place by force, others will determine that future." [111]

"Catastrophic consequences" awaited Iraq "if military force has to be used," he reiterated, which "will really destroy your ability to run the country. And they will destroy your ability to command your own forces." If Saddam were unable to run his country or control his security forces, it clearly followed, he would no longer be ruling Iraq. Other dictators had paid "the ultimate price" for thinking that the United States would not fight, Baker stated, warning Aziz, "We urge you not to repeat those mistakes." If fighting ensued, Baker was implying, Saddam would end up dead.[112]

Baker's inability to signal a conditional assurance of regime survival stemmed not from a failure to recognize the inherently complementary nature of threats and assurances, but from a problem matching a threat with its inverse assurance. After telling Aziz that U.S. forces would dominate Iraq in the event of war, Baker threatened that if Iraq used WMD, the American people would demand vengeance and the United States would pursue regime change, which, he told Aziz, constituted "the dark side of this issue." "The other, brighter side," he continued, was that the United States would not attack Iraqi forces if they withdrew from Kuwait. He explained, "I

[110] Baker-Aziz MEMCON, p. 5.
[111] Baker-Aziz MEMCON, pp. 3-5.
[112] Baker-Aziz MEMCON, pp. 3-5.

am told you worry about being attacked whether you withdraw or not. Let me repeat, face-to-face, the assurances that I myself and President Bush have made publicly. If you comply with UNSC resolutions we won't attack your country…"[113]

The problem with this threat and assurance is that the "dark side" addressed one issue and the "brighter side" another altogether; they do not match. The threat involved what the United States would do to Iraq if it used WMD, yet the assurance dealt with what the United States would not do to Iraq if it withdrew from Kuwait. The two have no logical connection. Whereas Baker expressed belief that his contrast between the dark side and brighter side constituted a carrot and stick approach, a more appropriate analogy would be comparing apples and oranges.[114]

The nature of Baker's threat to replace the Ba'athist regime was not lost on Iraqi participants, who interpreted it as an indication that the United States would seek to replace Iraq's leadership whether or not Iraq used WMD. Baker told Aziz, according to the Iraqi minutes, "If there is a peaceful settlement of the crisis and you withdraw, those who are living in Iraq now will have a say in the future of Iraq. But if the withdrawal happens as a result of the use of force, others will decide that future."[115] Aziz objected to this threat. He told Baker, "You've said if Iraq doesn't do certain things, the present leadership won't determine Iraq's future, others will." This was a miscalculation, he continued, since "The present leadership will continue to lead Iraq now and in the future."[116]

Saddam also recognized that the United States had threatened to replace his regime whether or not Iraq used WMD, and later concluded that Bush lost re-election because of his

---

[113] Baker-Aziz MEMCON, pp. 5-6.
[114] Baker-Aziz MEMCON, pp. 5-6.
[115] "INA Reports Minutes of 'Aziz-Baker Meeting: Part I," p. 26.
[116] Baker-Aziz MEMCON, p. 9.

failure to follow through on this threat. When Americans voted the Bush administration out of office, Saddam attributed Bush's electoral loss largely to Americans' disapproval of the administration's threats, and subsequent failure, to replace his regime. As Saddam summarized, Bush's political opponents campaigned against him, saying, "You raised the topic of overthrowing the regime. Even in this, where you say you succeeded, you failed." Saddam continued,

> Bush's failure to achieve his goal was a basic reason for his fall. In other words, he put himself in—in the position that it's either him or Iraq. That is, within this—this—this concept. So when that was not achieved, his competitors used it against him, to weaken him, I mean.

From Saddam's perspective, Bush had failed to improve the American economy, which forced him to focus his campaign on his foreign policy record. When Bush based his campaign on the notion that he had "saved the West from the regime in Iraq," however, his domestic opponents gained great advantage from reminding voters that he had failed to replace Saddam from power.[117]

In contrast to Baker's oral threats, no threats of regime change appear in Bush's letter to Saddam. Bush did threaten that if Iraq refused to fully comply with various UN Security Council resolutions that the "Iraqi military establishment" would be destroyed, yet this did not constitute a threat of regime change and was threatened whether or not Iraq used WMD. It is odd that Bush's letter made no mention of regime change, given that, according to Baker, the President had decided in December that the best way to deter Iraqi WMD use was to threaten to replace the regime.[118] The most likely explanation for the lack of this threat in Bush's letter is

---

[117] Woods, Palkki, and Stout, *The Saddam Tapes*, p. 42.
[118] Baker, *Politics of Diplomacy*, p. 359.

that the President's thinking was evolving. "What [warning] do we give to Saddam Hussein,"

Bush wrote in his journal on 1 January, indicating that he had not yet settled on an answer.[119]

Neither, it is clear, had his advisers. One 2 January, Gates convened a deputies'

committee meeting to assign the group the task of drafting the letter.[120] Richard Haass, the

senior director for Near East and South Asian affairs on the National Security Council staff, was

the primary drafter. Haass considered adding a threat that the United States might occupy Iraq

and remove the regime from power. A two-page handwritten insertion, which Haass kept in a

file next to his initial draft of Bush's letter, included a clear threat of regime change: "The lesson

of Vietnam is that we won't fight the way we have fought in the past. Do not make the same

mistake that Hitler and Tojo made of miscalculating the will of the American people and you

will be able to avoid their fate." As with Baker's threat of regime change, this warning was tied

to a military conflict with the United States rather than retaliation for Iraqi WMD use.[121] It is

unclear why Haass decided against incorporating it.

Unlike Baker, who merely referred to "vengeance," Bush's warning hinted more clearly

of a nuclear response. Bush's letter warned,

> The United States will not tolerate the use of chemical or biological weapons or the
> destruction of Kuwait's oil fields and installations. Further, you will be held directly
> responsible for terrorist actions against any member of the coalition. The American
> people would demand the strongest possible response. You and your country will pay a
> terrible price if your order unconscionable acts of this sort.[122]

The threat to pursue "the strongest possible response" remains ambiguous, but is much less so

than Baker's "vengeance." After all, with the possible exception of attacking Iraqi dams to flood

Baghdad, one is hard pressed to conjecture a stronger response than a nuclear weapon strike.

---

[119] Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, p. 436.
[120] Woodward, *The Commanders*, p. 354.
[121] "POTUS to Saddam Hussein RE [Invasion of Kuwait]," Bush Presidential Library, National Security Council, Richard N. Haass Working Files, File: Iraq – January 1991 [7], Document number 5b, Handwritten Draft Letter, pp. 1-2.
[122] "Letter to Saddam Hussein," 14 January 1991.

Haass considered inserting language indicating that the United States might attack with nuclear weapons to minimize American casualties, but, once again for unknown reasons, did not. If the United States went to war, the language threatened,

> The American people will support any use of force that is necessary to reduce American casualties. Do not make the mistake of thinking about Vietnam. The lesson of Vietnam is that when we fight we will fight to win and without restrictions.[123]

This rejected language about attacking Iraq with "any use of force" certainly included a nuclear element.

The threat to pursue "the strongest possible response"—the ambiguous nuclear threat—was inserted into the draft at the request of Paul Wolfowitz, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, and David Jeremiah, Vice-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. When they read a 4 January draft of Haass's letter they deemed the language insufficiently tough. Haass's draft read, in part, "Let me state too that the United States will not tolerate the use of chemical or biological weapons, support of any kind for terrorist actions, or the destruction of Kuwait's oil fields and installations." After "tolerate," one of the men had scribbled, "and the American people would demand the strongest possible response."[124] On 5 January, Bush signed the letter, which included the ambiguous threat.[125]

The threats and assurances delivered in Bush's letter and Baker's oral message provide valuable insights regarding how American leaders thought the Iraqis might assess the credibility of U.S. commitments. The American leaders clearly sought to signal that their commitments

---

[123] "POTUS to Saddam Hussein RE [Invasion of Kuwait]," Bush Presidential Library, National Security Council, Richard N. Haass Working Files, File: Iraq – January 1991 [7], Document number 5b, Handwritten Draft Letter, pp. 1-2.

[124] The handwritten words "Jeremiah &Wolf" appear on the top right hand of the first page, thus identifying the copy as coming from Jeremiah and Wolfowitz. "Draft 2 RE Letter to Saddam Hussein from the President," 4 January 1991, [formerly Secret], Bush Presidential Library, National Security Council, Richard N. Haass Working Files, File: Iraq – January 1991 [7], Document number 8, p. 2. Bob Woodward confirms that Jeremiah and Wolfowitz had toughened up the language in Woodward, *The Commanders*, p. 354.

[125] Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, p. 440.

were credible because domestic groups were tying the leaders' hands. The threats noted that "the American people" would "demand" that the White House pursue "vengeance" or "the strongest possible response" if Iraq used WMD. If the administration refused to accept the people's demand, it followed, it would be punished—presumably at the ballot box.

On the other hand, Baker and Bush worried that Iraq's leaders might conclude that domestic groups could tie the administration's hands in a manner that would prevent the White House from making good on its threat to liberate Kuwait. Baker warned Aziz, "Don't misinterpret the voices you hear coming from our democratic society.… Americans will unite to fight a war if they are left with no other choice." Earlier authoritarian leaders had misinterpreted American willingness to fight, he explained, only to pay "the ultimate price" for their mistake.[126] Bush's letter provided a similar warning:

> You may be tempted to find solace in the diversity of opinion that is American democracy. You should resist any such temptation. Diversity ought not to be confused with division. Nor should you underestimate, as others have before you, America's will.

Whether they were attempting to convince Iraqi leaders that their threats were credible because their hands were tied or that their threats were credible because their hands were not tied, the key variable, Bush and Baker indicated, was how Iraqi leaders understood U.S. domestic politics.

Bush and Baker sought to persuade Iraqi leaders that their threats were credible, but did not signal to the Iraqis that their threats were credible because they had tied their hands. To the contrary, the language about pursuing "vengeance" or "the strongest possible response" constituted only ambiguous threats about how the United States would respond to Iraqi WMD use. An ambiguous threat cannot tie hands or generate commitment because it is, by definition, open to multiple interpretations. If Iraq refused to comply with the administration's demand, the

---

[126] Baker-Aziz MEMCON, p. 5.

United States could respond in a variety of ways since the ambiguous threat would not require U.S. officials to pursue any one specific retaliatory response.

It is unclear whether Saddam knew exactly what was in the letter as his subordinates refused to accept a copy. Aziz described the letter as an attempt by Bush to "state his position very clearly"[127] but refused to accept either the letter or a copy, claiming that the threatening language was too disrespectful to share with the leader of a sovereign state.[128] Iraq's embassy in Geneva also refused to take a copy.[129] Iraq's ambassador in Washington refused to accept an Arabic translation of the letter.[130]

Haass noted that since Aziz refused to deliver the letter, "We were forced to find another means of getting it to Baghdad."[131] Haass might have been referring to a pointed State Department message, sent through international channels, indicating that Iraqi chemical weapon use against U.S. troops would lead the United States to destroy Iraq's ability to extract oil for many years and in a manner that would prevent it from recovering from the economic devastation for decades.[132] Primakov, who met with Saddam on several occasions in the months preceding the war, recalled that the Soviets had received "statements from American quarters suggesting the possibility of using tactical nuclear weapons in the ground war against the Iraqi army."[133] The White House also gave copies of the letter to the press.[134] A declassified U.S.

---

[127] "Reportage Continues on Baker-'Aziz Talks: Meeting Delegates Noted," originally on Baghdad INA in Arabic, 9 January 1991, in FBIS-NES-91-007, 10 January 1991.

[128] "Aziz Refuses Bush Message," originally on Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic, 9 January 1991, in FBIS-NES-91-007, 10 January 1991, p. 27.

[129] Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, p. 443.

[130] "Secretary Baker, January 9, 1991 News Conference Following Bilateral Meeting with Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz, Geneva, Switzerland," *U.S. Department of State Dispatch*, 14 January 1991.

[131] Richard N. Haass, *War of Necessity, War of Choice: A Memoir of Two Iraq Wars* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010), p. 109.

[132] Rick Francona, *Ally to Adversary: An Eyewitness Account of Iraq's Fall from Grace* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1999), p. 137.

[133] Yevgeny Primakov, *Russian Crossroads: Toward the New Millennium*, translated by Felix Rosenthal (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), p. 78.

[134] "Confrontation in the Gulf: Text of Letter from Bush to Hussein," *New York Times*, 13 January 1991.

Strategic Command (STRATCOM) study reports, "everywhere they [UN inspectors] went

individuals had copies of the Bush letter, even though there was almost no other document in

common."[135] This STRATCOM claim, however, finds no confirmation in UN Special

Commission (UNSCOM) or International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors' memoirs.[136]

If Saddam did not know the details of the meeting or the ambiguous U.S. nuclear threat

against Iraqi WMD use, it was probably because he wanted it that way. This is possible, given

his foreign minister and ambassador's refusals to take copies of the letter. As Roland Dumas,

France's foreign minister, noted, "Saddam is poorly informed by his aides.…He doesn't want to

hear, and thus he doesn't get told very much."[137]

Saddam's Claims from Captivity

In U.S. captivity, Saddam said he did not know that Baker or Bush had threatened nuclear

retaliation for Iraqi WMD use. According to FBI Special Agent George Piro, Saddam's

interrogator, "[Saddam] Hussein denied knowledge that part of this discussion concerned the

position of the United States regarding Iraq's possible use of chemical weapons should hostilities

occur."[138] This denial should not be altogether surprising, given the incredible level of

---

[135] "Essentials of Post-Cold War Deterrence," United States Strategic Command Policy Subcommittee of the Strategic Advisory Group, 1995, accessed 15 February 2008 at www.nautilus.org/archives/nukestrat/U.S.A/Advisory/essentials95.PDF.

[136] Duelfer, *Hide and Seek*; Rod Barton, *Weapons Detective: The Inside Story of Australia's Top Weapons Inspector* (Melbourne, Australia: Black Inc. Agenda, 2006); Richard Butler, *The Greatest Threat: Iraq, Weapons of Mass Destruction, and the Growing Crisis of Global Security* (New York: Public Affairs, 2000); Tim Trevan, *Saddam's Secrets: The Hunt for Iraq's Hidden Weapons* (London: HarperCollins, 1999); Hans Blix, *Disarming Iraq* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2004); Scott Ritter, *Iraq Confidential: The Untold Story of the Intelligence Conspiracy to Undermine the UN and Overthrow Saddam Hussein* (New York: Nation Books, 2006); Mohammed ElBaradei, *The Age of Deception: Nuclear Diplomacy in Treacherous Times* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2011).

[137] Baker, *Politics of Diplomacy*, p. 347. See also Brit Hume, "Interview with Dennis Ross," *Fox News Network*, 17 March 2003.

[138] George Piro Interview Session Number 13, 11 March 2004, p. 4.

ambiguity in Baker's threat and questions regarding what Saddam knew about the ambiguous nuclear threat in Bush's letter.

Saddam also objected to Piro's question about why Iraq had not used chemical weapons, complaining that it was "strange" that he would ask about "unrealistic hypotheticals."[139] Such "hypothetical questions," Saddam had explained on an earlier occasion, were insufficiently deferential to be asked of a head of state.[140] Piro reports that when he asked Saddam how people would have described Iraq had it used chemical weapons, Saddam responded, "We would have been called stupid."[141] Saddam also claimed that he and his advisors did not discuss the possibility of using chemical weapons before or during the Gulf War, and that such an idea did not even "cross our mind."[142]

Piro's interrogation reports are not without value, yet they are unreliable guides to Saddam's intentions and behavior. Many of Saddam's statements to Piro are blatantly misleading attempts to avoid saying anything that could be used against him in court.[143] Moreover, when Saddam spoke, he did so with his image and legacy in mind. Piro, cognizant that Saddam would only talk if he felt he stood to gain by so doing, encouraged his prisoner to answer questions "for the sake of history."[144] In the first interview, the former dictator commented that it was important to him what people would think of him 500 or 1,000 years in

---

[139] George Piro Interview Session Number 13, 11 March 2004, p. 4. The two quotes are Piro's words, not Saddam's.

[140] Years earlier, Saddam told a journalist that he thought it unfair "to put a hypothetical question and then expect a head of state to answer on the basis of those hypothetical questions" because "A head of state has to deal with facts and with tangible things so that whatever he says is treated, is regarded, with significance." See SH-SHTP-A-001-048, "A TV interview with Saddam Hussein regarding various issues with the U.S.," 13 February 1993.

[141] Piro Interview Session Number 13, 11 March 2004, p. 4.

[142] For Saddam's claim, see Piro Interview Session Number 13, 11 March 2004, p. 4. For a captured audio recording in which Saddam and his advisors discuss potential Iraqi chemical and biological weapon use, see *Duelfer Report*, Vol. 1, "Regime Strategic Intent," pp. 97-100.

[143] Woods, Palkki, and Stout, *The Saddam Tapes*, pp. 329-30.

[144] Piro Interview Session Number 6, 16 February 2004, pp. 5-6.

the future.[145] In a later visit he expressed interest in having the interviews published, in granting interviews to others also, and in whether Piro would write a book in both English and Arabic based on the interviews.[146] Saddam, it seems, viewed Piro as the stenographer of his dictated memoir.

Saddam wanted to be remembered as brave, daring, and not one to back down. Much of his language, Jerrold Post correctly observed, is "designed to demonstrate his courage and resolve to the Iraqi people and the Arab world." [147] When Iranian troops forced an Iraqi retreat from Iran in 1982, Saddam told senior military officials, "We did not withdraw because of the enemy…. I swear to God, if the whole world wanted us to withdraw, we would never have withdrawn…"[148] When Iraq's RCC announced its agreement on 23 February 1991 to withdraw from Kuwait as part of a Soviet initiative, it emphasized that it did so "not out of fear of Bush's threats or a sign of respect for him, because we neither respect him nor are we afraid of his aggressive force."[149] In the official biographies on Saddam, Saddam and his fellow heroes never gave in to fear.[150] Saddam's defiant grandstanding was particularly noticeable at his trial.[151] As these examples indicate, Saddam may have denied knowledge of the warning because he did not want to dwell on instances in which threats had forced his hand.

Aziz's Accounts

---

[145] Piro Interview Session Number 1, 7 February 2004, p. 2.

[146] Piro Interview Session Number 4, 13 February 2004, pp. 1-2.

[147] Jerrold M. Post, *Leaders and Their Followers in a Dangerous World: The Psychology of Political Behavior* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), pp. 212, 224.

[148] SH-SHTP-A-001-022, "Meeting between Saddam Hussein and High Ranking Officers regarding Military Operations During the Iran-Iraq War," February 1984.

[149] "War in the Gulf: Statement by Iraqi Revolutionary Council," *New York Times*, 23 February 1991.

[150] Sassoon, *Saddam Hussein's Ba'th Party*, p. 164.

[151] Christiane Amanpour et al, "Saddam Hussein Defiant in Court," *Cable News Network*, 19 October 2005.

Fear of nuclear retaliation deterred Saddam from using WMD, yet it remains unclear how Aziz and his associates relayed Baker's oral message and what exactly Saddam heard or read about the meeting. Saddam's inclination to punish messengers of unwanted news led to a dysfunctional decision-making process in which his minions all-too-frequently shied away from sharing unfavorable news or unwanted assessments.[152] Saddam sent four Iraqis to the meeting along with Aziz, including his half-brother who was serving as Iraq's representative to the United Nations in Geneva, which Baker interpreted as "an unmistakable sign that Saddam wanted an independent report of the meeting."[153] Of the five Iraqis, however, only Aziz had seen the letter. Aziz was known, at least on occasion, for telling Saddam only what his boss wanted to hear.[154] Moreover, it appears that Aziz was reluctant to share the contents of Bush's letter with Saddam. According to Baker, Aziz's hands began trembling when Baker told him that he might be the only means of delivering the letter to Saddam, since the United States might not publish it.[155]

How Aziz described Baker's threats would also have been important since according to Saddam, Aziz "had the most knowledge regarding the West of all the Ba'ath Party officials."[156] If Aziz did not share part of the message, or spun it a certain way, it is possible that Saddam would think media reports on this missing part unimportant or hyped. Only days after the Baker-Aziz meeting, Saddam publicly accused the Voice of America and CNN of broadcasting lies and

---

[152] Woods *et al*, *Iraqi Perspectives Project: A View of Operation Iraqi Freedom*, 7-10; Woods and Stout, "Saddam's Perceptions and Misperceptions," pp. 18-19.

[153] Baker, *Politics of Diplomacy*, p. 357; "Reportage Continues on Baker-'Aziz Talks: Meeting Delegates Noted," originally on Baghdad INA in Arabic, 9 January 1991 FBIS-NES-91-007, 10 January 1991.

[154] Howard Teicher, "Testimony before the United States District Court, Southern District of Florida," 31 January 1995, accessed 2 June 2009 at www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB82/iraq61.pdf; William Simpson, *The Prince: The Secret Story of the World's Most Intriguing Royal, Prince Bandar Bin Sultan* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008), pp. 184-85.

[155] Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy*, p. 358.

[156] Casual conversation between Saddam and Piro, 17 June 2004, p. 1.

news agencies of slanting their reports.[157] When Iraq released its minutes of the meeting through

the Iraqi English language newspaper *The Baghdad Observer*, it did so, *The Observer* wrote,

because "A whole lot of lies are being aired by the United States and its allies about what

happened in this meeting."[158] Several years after the war, Saddam recalled that Baker used to

threaten "about the effect of their weapons once they would be used against Iraq." He further

complained, "Some of their political and military officials made statements to the same effect,

not to mention the false and deceptive news blared out by their media."[159]

Not surprisingly given Baker's repeated threats of regime change and non-existent

nuclear warning, when Aziz referred in his meeting with Baker to Baker's threats, he neglected

to mention anything about a nuclear warning. He recounted, "You've said if Iraq doesn't do

certain things, the present leadership won't determine Iraq's future, others will." Moreover, he

noted, the United States believed it would "destroy" Iraq in any war.[160]

On various other occasions Aziz described Baker as having warned that the United States

would destroy Iraq and replace the Ba'athist regime. In November 1992, he recalled for Saddam

that Baker had threatened to "hit" Iraq until it was reduced to a pre-industrial state, and to replace

the regime. "They hit us," he observed, indicating that he saw Baker's threat to "hit" Iraq as

non-nuclear, yet the leadership remained.[161] On a later occasion, he told Saddam yet again that

Baker had warned that if the United States were to bomb Iraq, it would return it to the "pre-

---

[157] "Saddam makes Statement to Iraqi Journalists," originally in Baghdad INA in Arabic, 13 January 1991, in FBIS-NES-91-009, 14 January 1991, p. 44. After the war, in a nonpublic meeting, he attributed the difference between Iraqi and U.S. estimates of aircraft casualties to a "total media cover-up" by the West. See Woods and Stout, "Saddam's Perceptions and Misperceptions," p. 10.

[158] "INA Reports Minutes of 'Aziz-Baker Meeting: Part I," Daily Report, Near East & South Asia, FBIS-NES-92-009, 14 January 1992, p. 1.

[159] "Saddam Delivers Gulf War Anniversary Speech," originally broadcast on Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio in Arabic, in FBIS-NES-94-012, 19 January 1994, p. 37.

[160] Baker-Aziz MEMCON, p. 9.

[161] SH-SHTP-A-000-838, "Meeting between Saddam Hussein and Ba'ath Party Members concerning the Election of Bill Clinton and the Effects of that Change on Iraq," undated (circa 4 November 1992).

industrialized era." The United States had bombed Iraq with this intent, Aziz stated, but had failed to achieve its goal.[162] In public interviews, he tended to emphasize Baker's threats to reduce Iraq to the "pre-industrial" age and to replace the leadership in the event of a military confrontation or Iraqi noncompliance with UN demands—not ambiguous nuclear threats in response to Iraqi WMD use.[163]

In discussions with UN weapon inspectors, by contrast, Aziz described the U.S. nuclear threat in Geneva as decisive. In a discussion with Rolf Ekeus shortly after Hussein Kamil's August 1995 defection, Aziz stated that Iraq had "interpreted" the letter from Baker as threatening nuclear retaliation and was consequently deterred from employing chemical and biological weapons.[164] Other inspectors provided similar accounts of conversations with Aziz.[165]

A captured recording of a meeting involving Saddam and Aziz from summer 1995 and minutes of a 30 September 1995 meeting between Ekeus and Aziz confirm the inspectors' accounts and cast additional light. Aziz informed Saddam, in the first meeting, that he had told Ekeus that Iraq had sought WMD solely for existential deterrence against Iran and to deter Israeli attacks. During the Gulf War, he explained, the Iraqi leadership concluded that WMD was unusable "in this type of conflict because the opposing party possessed a nuclear weapon; therefore, if you were to use this weapon, the other party would use it as an excuse to use nuclear weapons against you.[166] In the 30 September meeting, Aziz told Ekeus, "I confirm that the

---

[162] SH-SHTP-A-000-850, "Revolutionary Command Council and Regional Command Meeting about UN Inspections and Security Council Resolutions," 29 February 1992.
[163] Tariq Aziz, PBS *Frontline* Interview, 25 January 2000, accessed 10 September 2010 at www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/gulf/oral/aziz/2.html; "Iraq's Tariq Aziz News Conference on Anniversary of Gulf War," *Al-Jazirah*, 16 January 2001. However, see Ted Koppel interview of Tariq Aziz, "'Nightline in the Eye of the Storm," *ABC News Transcripts*, 4 December 2002.
[164] Victor A. Utgoff, "Nuclear Weapons and the Deterrence of Biological and Chemical Warfare," Washington, DC, Occasional Paper, No. 36, 1997, p. 2 note 4.
[165] Butler, *The Greatest Threat*, p. 37; Tim Trevan, *Saddam's Secrets*, p. 45.
[166] SH-SHTP-D-000-760.

command had no intention to initiate use of the chemical and biological weapons, but for deterrence in case Baghdad is attacked with nuclear weapons."[167]

Evidence in the recording indicates that Aziz had incentives to misrepresent the truth, however, and is therefore not an entirely reliable source. The tape reveals that Aziz anticipated that the inspectors would share his statements with member states. He told Saddam that he expected "a recorded proceeding [of the summer 1995 meeting] to reach all parties" since Ekeus's delegation included individuals from various countries. He also reportedly told Ekeus, "Go tell the Security Council, tell them this is what Tariq Aziz told me." In the second meeting, he told Ekeus that the fact that "these weapons are not to be used…need[ed] to be explained in an honest and fair manner." Aziz, it appears, wanted to undermine support for sanctions and inspections by easing international concerns about how Iraq would behave had it retained, or should it reacquire, WMD. In short, he had an incentive to portray Iraq as deterred.[168]

Aziz misinformed Ekeus about Iraq's biological weapons in the same breath with which he claimed Iraq had been deterred. In the first meeting, he introduced and followed his claim that U.S. nuclear possession deterred Iraq with the assertion that Iraq, fearing U.S. surgical strikes, destroyed its stockpile of biological material in fall 1990. As the defection of Hussein Kamil and subsequent Iraqi admissions made apparent, however, Iraq had weaponized its biological agents and did not destroy them until after the war.[169] Additionally, while Aziz told Ekeus that Iraq "did not think of [using] biological weapons," in a captured recording of a high-level Iraqi meeting from mid-January 1991 Saddam told his senior advisers to target a U.S. military base in Saudi Arabia for a potential Iraqi biological weapon attack "in case we are

---

[167] SH-MISC-D-000-772, "Meeting minutes from meeting between Tariq Aziz and Rolf Ekeus regarding Iraqi chemical and nuclear programs," 30 September 1995.
[168] Sagan makes this same argument in "The Commitment Trap", p. 95.
[169] United Nations, "Letter from Richard Butler to the President of the Security Council," 25 January 1999, www.un.org/Depts/unscom/s99-94.htm. See section 37.

obliged and there's a great necessity to put them into action."[170]

In the end, it is difficult to know what Aziz told Saddam about his meeting in Geneva and what to make of Aziz's claims that Iraq was deterred. Aziz clearly had incentives to lie, and did so in the meeting before Kamil's defection. In the months immediately after the defection, by contrast, Iraq cooperated with UN inspectors and provided information about its WMD program far more than at any other period. In the latter meeting, none of Aziz's earlier lies resurface. It is unclear whether Aziz's 30 September claim that Iraq was deterred stemmed from incentives to lie or incentives to tell the truth for fear that Kamil would expose the lie.

Defector Accounts

Iraqi defectors, with incentives very different than Aziz's, consistently confirmed that U.S. nuclear threats had deterred Saddam. It appears, in several of their statements, that the warnings from Bush's letter had reached Saddam. Wafiq al-Samarrai, the head of Iraqi Military Intelligence during the 1991 Gulf War, reported, "We told him [Saddam] very clearly that should he use chemical weapons they will use their nuclear weapons." Saddam, he said, did not use WMD "because the warning was quite severe, and quite effective. The allied troops were certain to use nuclear arms and the price will be too dear and too high."[171]

Saad al-Bazzaz, who had headed the Iraqi News Agency and the Radio and Television Establishment, concurred. After defecting, he wrote a book in which he claimed that Saddam did not use WMD during the Gulf War "Because Tariq Aziz told him that James Baker indicated in

---

[170] *Duelfer Report*, Vol. 1, "Regime Strategic Intent," pp. 97-100.
[171] Wafiq al-Samarrai, PBS *Frontline* interview, 2 May 2002, accessed 10 September 2010 at www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/gulf/oral/iraqis.html. See also "Defector Reveals Saddam's 'Hidden Arsenal,'" originally in *The Sunday Times*, 19 February 1995, in FBIS-NES-95-034, 21 February 1995.

Geneva that Iraq would be punished for using chemical or nuclear weapons, that it would be wiped away by the same weapons a minute after."[172] According to Saddam, Bazzaz wrote the book without first interviewing any senior political or military leaders. "How dare he write a book on the Mother of all Battles," Saddam complained to his advisors. The book, Saddam noted, needed a rebuttal. Whereas it is unclear which sources led Bazzaz to conclude that Saddam had been deterred, that Baker's threat in Geneva had played a role, or that Baker had threatened to use "the same weapons a minute after" Iraq used them—which differs considerably from the State Department MEMCON and Iraqi minutes of the meeting—he certainly was not speaking on behalf of the regime.[173]

Hussein Kamil, Saddam's son-in-law who had headed Iraq's Military Industrial Commission prior to defecting, said in numerous interviews that fear of a U.S. nuclear response deterred Iraq from using WMD. In an August 1995 meeting with Ekeus, Kamil was explicit: "During the Gulf War, there was no intention to use chemical weapons as the Allied force was overwhelming." He reiterated, later in the interview, "There was no decision to use chemical weapons for fear of retaliation. They realized that if chemical weapons were used, retaliation would be nuclear."[174]

No obvious ulterior motive emerges for why Kamil and the other defectors provided accounts that so closely match that told by Aziz. Whereas Aziz had an incentive to portray Saddam as easily deterred, the defectors went out of their way to present Saddam as either

---

[172] "Saad al-Bazzaz: An Insider's View of Iraq," *Middle East Quarterly,* Vol. 2, No.4 (December 1995).

[173] SH-SHTP-A-000-830, "Saddam Hussein and other Officials Discussing Ba'ath Party Support to its Lebanese Branch, its Ideology, and other Party Affairs," 1992.

[174] "General Hussein Kamal UNSCOM/IAEA Briefing," 22 August 1995, meeting between Rolf Ekeus and Hussein Kamil in Amman, Jordan, accessed 21 August 2009 at www.un.org/Depts/unmovic/documents/hk.pdf. See also "Comments on Iraq's Non-use of Chemical or Biological Weapons during the Gulf War," Central Intelligence Agency, August 1995, accessed 10 September 2010 at www.gulflink.osd.mil/declassdocs/cia/19960702/070296_cia_74531_74531_01.html; Dean Fischer, "Inside Saddam's Brutal Regime," *Time*, 18 September 1995.

extremely difficult to deter or undeterrable. Immediately after claiming that fear of nuclear

retaliation deterred Saddam from using WMD in 1991, Samarrai added, "Saddam might use this

weapon when he's about to die. Perhaps he will use it before he dies. And perhaps he would say

to himself that he will be immortalised in history text books."[175] Kamil alleged that Saddam had

planned to invade Kuwait and part of Saudi Arabia on 31 August 1995, and had only decided

against invading due to increased security risks stemming from Kamil's defection.[176] Saddam,

Kamil was clearly implying, had not learned correct lessons about U.S. resolve from the 1991

Gulf War and Operation Vigilant Warrior the preceding year. Clearly, neither of these defectors

was bending the truth to present Saddam as easily deterred.

Alternative Explanations for Iraq's Non-Use

Fear of Regime Change

Despite the confluence of claims by Iraqi defectors and Saddam's loyal foreign minister

that nuclear threats deterred Saddam, some analysts believe that Baker's threats to replace the

Ba'athist regime played a more important role. These analysts fail to demonstrate, however, that

Saddam believed that Iraqi restraint would prevent the United States from seeking to remove him

from power.

Saddam had long believed that the United States sought to remove him from power

whether or not he used WMD. Kevin Woods finds that "Saddam was convinced the United

States was actively supporting efforts to destroy Iraq during the decade leading up to the 1990

---

[175] Samarrai, PBS *Frontline* interview.
[176] "General Husayn Kamil Hasan on Iraq's Nuclear Weapons Programme, Opposition Plans," *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 10 November 1995; "General Hussein Kamal UNSCOM/IAEA Briefing," 22 August 1995; Jamal Halaby, "Defector Says Iraq was set to Invade: The Reported Targets: Kuwait, Saudi Arabia," *Chicago Sun-Times*, 21 August 1995. Kamil's claim seems highly unlikely, given the lack of any corroborating evidence.

crisis."[177] The Americans were "conspiring bastards," Saddam complained, who secretly sought to undermine and assassinate him while proclaiming friendly intentions.[178] As a former U.S. ambassador to Iraq observed, in early 1990 Saddam "remained as convinced as he had been for the previous 20 years [that] the United States was irredeemably hostile to Saddam Hussein's Government.…It is very hard to persuade somebody of anything if they think you are irredeemably hostile."[179] This observation was widely shared by U.S. diplomats who had served in Baghdad, who described him as "paranoid" and "one of the most suspicious people in the world."[180]

While U.S. officials threatened regime change in response to Iraqi WMD use, U.S. assurances that Saddam would remain in power should he refrain from launching WMD were woefully inadequate. As discussed earlier, Baker repeatedly threatened regime change in the event of *any* military confrontation between the United States and Iraq—even if Iraq refrained from attacking with WMD. These explicit threats of regime change, impervious as they were to Iraqi WMD restraint, gave Saddam little incentive to comply. As Schelling wrote nearly fifty years ago, "Both sides of the choice, the threatened penalty and the proffered avoidance or reward, need to be credible."[181]

In spite of the lack of assurances in Baker's threat, Saddam may have believed that Iraqi use of WMD would provide additional incentives for the United States to replace his regime, thus increasing the likelihood of a regime change. In other words, Saddam may have questioned

---

[177] Woods, *Mother of all Battles*, pp. 308-09.

[178] Hal Brands and David Palkki, "'Conspiring Bastards': Saddam Hussein's Strategic View of the United States," *Diplomatic History* Vol. 36, No. 3 (2012): 625-59.

[179] "Hearing of the Europe and the Middle East Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Subject: Views of U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, Chaired by: Representative Lee Hamilton (R-IN)," *Federal News Service*, 21 March 1991.

[180] Charles Stuart Kennedy interviews of Haywood Rankin and Joseph C. Wilson, "The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project," 24 July 1998 and 8 January 2001, accessed 4 January 2010 at http://memory.loc.gov.

[181] Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), pp. 74-75.

Baker's threats to replace the regime in the event of any military hostilities, but concluded, for reasons having nothing to do with Baker's threats, that Iraqi use of WMD would lead the United States to pursue regime change. Saddam certainly knew that the United States had the military capabilities to remove the regime, either through nuclear decapitation strikes or an occupation of Iraq. He had also long believed that U.S. officials desired regime change. The question is whether he believed, independent of anything Baker did or did not say, that using WMD would place his regime's survival at significantly increased risk.

Saddam certainly feared the prospects of U.S. and Israeli nuclear decapitation strikes. As this chapter has also demonstrated, he feared that Iraqi use of WMD would incite a U.S. nuclear weapon attack against his regime. Saddam held his chemical and biological weapons in reserve both because he feared that using them would further incentivize U.S. nuclear use, and because he believed that the threat of chemical and biological retaliation helped deter enemy WMD strikes in the first place. In the case of U.S. nuclear decapitation strikes, the question was not whether Saddam's fear of nuclear strikes or of regime change led to his non-use, since the two fears were one and the same.

Whether Saddam believed that Iraqi WMD use would lead to a march on Baghdad to replace his regime is another matter. There is reason to suspect that Saddam did not believe that Iraqi WMD use would have led to a march on Baghdad. At the heart of Saddam's wartime strategy was the belief that if Iraq could kill a sufficient number of Americans, then the American people would lose its stomach for war and the war would end. If Iraq could kill 5,000 American soldiers, Saddam predicted, the United States "will not be able to continue the war."[182] According to Saddam, "The plan of the leadership was to draw the enemy inside Iraq," not to

---

[182] *Gulf War Air Power Survey, Vol. 1: Planning and Command and Control* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1993), p. 64, accessed 30 May 2013 at www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a279741.pdf.

keep the fighting out. Part of Iraq's plan, he continued, was to send its tanks into Iraqi cities to

entice Coalition forces to "enter Iraq" so the fighting would take place with rifles, tanks, and

cannons, rather than with missiles and aircraft.[183] The United States did not march on Baghdad,

al-Samarrai suggested, since "they thought they would incur heavy losses, and this contradicts

Bush's commitments to the U.S. people."[184] These "commitments" presumably existed whether

or not Iraq used WMD.

It is unclear whether Saddam saw Iraq's WMD as an important deterrent to a U.S. march

on Baghdad. One of the *Duelfer Report*'s key findings is that Saddam believed that Iraqi WMD

had provided such a deterrent. One struggles to locate evidence in the report, however, that

would allow readers to independently confirm the validity of this assessment.[185]

Duelfer probably reached this conclusion based on Saddam's claims to his interrogator

that he was not deterred from using chemical weapons in the Gulf War since he had no need for

the "special munitions." Saddam explained that whereas he used chemical weapons during the

Iran-Iraq War to defend Iraqi sovereignty, he refrained from such use during the Gulf War since

Iraq's sovereignty was not at stake.[186] By contrast, he claimed that had he possessed WMD

when Coalition troops marched to Baghdad in 2003, he would have used them.[187] Aziz had also

told UN inspectors that Iraq had seen its WMD only as a deterrent of last resort, to preserve the

regime. As discussed earlier in this chapter, though, Aziz had incentives in his conversations

with UN inspectors to present Iraq as easily deterred and Saddam's statements to his interrogator

---

[183] SH-SHTP-A-001-481, "Meeting between Saddam Hussein and high ranking technical officers regarding Iraqi army weapons development," undated (circa 1995).

[184] Al-Samarrai, PBS *Frontline* interview, 2 May 2002.

[185] *Duelfer Report*, Vol. 1, "Regime Strategic Intent," p. 1; *Duelfer Report*, Vol. 3, "Iraq's Chemical Warfare Program," p. 1 and 9; and, *Duelfer Report*, Vol. 1, "Transmittal Message," p. 8.

[186] Casual conversation between Piro and Saddam, 13 May 2004.

[187] He averred, "By God, if I had such weapons [in 2003], I would have used them in the fight against the United States." "If I had the [prohibited] weapons, would I have let United States forces stay in Kuwait without attacking?" See Piro Interview Session Number 4, pp. 4-6.

are frequently unreliable. For more trustworthy insights, we must turn to earlier records.

Saddam and his advisers' 1990-1991 threats to use WMD to prevent an invasion of Iraq do not indicate that they saw Iraq's WMD as weapons of last resort to deter a march on Baghdad. To the contrary, at the time that Iraqi leaders issued these threats, "Iraq," as the Ba'athist leadership had made abundantly clear, included the newly returned "19th Province"—Kuwait. When a CNN reporter asked Saddam if Iraq would use chemical weapons in a land war in Kuwait, Saddam responded, "Under no circumstances will we relinquish Iraq…Iraq's border extends from Zakhu [a city near Iraq's northernmost border with Turkey] to the sea [south of Kuwait]."[188] This statement indicates that Saddam was trying to use Iraqi WMD as a shield with which to preserve the fruits of Iraq's aggression, not a weapon of last resort to prevent a march on Baghdad.[189]

Nowhere in Iraq's public deterrent threats does one find any indication that the threats were aimed at deterring a penetration of Iraq's pre-invasion borders or a march on Baghdad, as opposed to the liberation of Kuwait. The *Duelfer Report* states that in early 1991, prior to the onset of Operation Desert Storm, "Saddam decided to use CW [chemical weapons] if Coalition forces crossed a parallel extending west from Al Amarah or if Iranian troops crossed the border into Iraq, according to reporting.[190] This does not indicate, though, that Saddam believed Iraq's chemical weapons had deterred a march on Baghdad. Additionally, until more data becomes available, it will remain impossible to assess the validity of this information.

In Saddam's private meetings with his advisers, he attributed the U.S. decision to halt combat operations to Bush's fear of Iraqi armor, an Iraqi Scud missile attack in Saudi Arabia that

---

[188] "Saddam Husayn Reviews Course of War in CNN Interview," *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 2 February 1991. See also "Baghdad Radio Airs Saddam Interview with CNN," as published in Daily Report, Near East & South Asia, FBIS-NES-91-021, 31 January 1991, p. 23.
[189] For a more detailed analysis of Saddam's views on the utility of WMD as a shield for aggression, see Brands and Palkki, "Saddam, Israel, and the Bomb."
[190] *Duelfer Report*, Vol. 3, Annex G, "Chemical Warfare and the Defense of Baghdad," p. 107.

killed Americans, and Iraq's excellent fighting spirit on the field of battle. By contrast, nowhere

in the captured records discovered to date does one find evidence that Saddam or other Iraqi

leaders believed that Iraq's WMD constrained coalition war aims by deterring a march on

Baghdad.[191] Avigdor Haselkorn has argued that Iraq fired a concrete warhead at Israel as a

veiled threat that if the Coalition advanced further into Iraq, Iraq would attack Israel with WMD.

Haselkorn also writes that this veiled threat deterred the United States from marching on

Baghdad.[192] His evidence, however, is purely speculative and more plausible explanations

exist.[193] No evidence in the captured Iraqi records supports this claim.

Deterrence by Denial or Brute Force

Some analysts have suggested that unfavorable weather conditions, technical difficulties,

the speed of the Coalition's advance, Coalition air strikes on Iraqi delivery systems, or Coalition

chemical defense measures deterred Iraqi WMD use by denying Iraq the fruits of a successful

attack or flatly prevented Iraqi WMD strikes.[194] Some of these factors may have contributed to

Iraqi restraint. Wind conditions affected when and where Iraq used chemical weapons during its

recent war with Iran, and may have played a similar role in 1991.[195] Saddam, al-Majid, al-Duri,

and other senior leaders knew that wind patterns at the time of the 1991 conflict were

inconducive to Iraqi chemical weapon use since the winds were blowing northward, away from

---

[191] Woods, Palkki, and Stout, *The Saddam Tapes*, pp. 211-12, especially note 77.

[192] Avigdor Haselkorn, *The Continuing Storm: Iraq, Poisonous Weapons, and Deterrence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), pp. 82, 84, and 89-92.

[193] Duelfer, *Hide and Seek*, pp. 71–72; and Ofra Bengio, *Saddam's Word: Political Discourse in Iraq* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 194–202.

[194] See note number 12.

[195] For an example from the Iran-Iraq War, see SH-SHTP-A-000-568, "Saddam Hussein and High Ranking Officers Discussing the Liberation of al-Fao," undated (circa Summer 1988).

expected battle lines in Kuwait and southern Iraq and toward Iraqi forces.[196] Al-Majid advised

Saddam against polluting Kuwait's sewers with chemicals, which some Iraqi strategists had

reportedly suggested, since the chemicals would dissipate and be ineffective, would be difficult

to sanitize, and, after spreading to sea, might harm Iraqis.[197] In both of these conversations, al-

Majid's concerns dealt with blowback and delivery difficulties rather than any form of Coalition

retaliation.

Coalition chemical weapon protections may also have played a role in dissuading

Saddam from using WMD for fear that his weapons would have too little effect, though the

evidence for this is weak. Iraqi commanders, captured by Coalition forces during the Gulf War,

told their interrogators that they did not regret not using chemical weapons since they considered

Iraqi chemical weapons a greater threat to "poorly equipped Iraqi soldiers" than to Coalition

troops. Most of them, however, expressed belief that Saddam's restraint stemmed from fear of

U.S. retaliation.[198]

No information in the captured records discovered to date, or in the post-2003

interrogation reports of more senior Iraqi officials indicates that Coalition chemical defenses

played a significant role in Saddam's decision-making. Saddam seems to have believed his

WMD perfectly capable of killing large numbers of Coalition forces. He explained to his

advisors on 30 November 1990, "If we want to use chemicals, we will exterminate them" since

"we discovered a way with destructive power that is 200 times more than the destructive power

of the same type of chemical we used on Iran. I mean the destructive power is 200 times more

---

[196] "Memorandum Subject: Iraq: Why Weapons of Mass Destruction were Withheld," Central Intelligence Agency, March 1991, accessed 12 March 2013 at
www.gulflink.osd.mil/declassdocs/cia/19960715/071596_cia_75701_75701_01.html.
[197] SH-SHTP-A-001-043.
[198] "Memorandum for the Record, 'The Gulf War: An Iraqi General Officer's Perspective,'" declassified Joint Debriefing Center Report #0052, 11 March 1991, p. 6,. Origin: U.S. Department of the Army, 513th Military Intelligence Brigade, Joint Debriefing Center.

than what we used to use."[199]

Saddam appears to have believed Iraq fully capable of effectively employing WMD. Around the second week of January 1991 Saddam and his inner circle discussed Iraqi preparations to deploy, and possibly use, chemical and biological weapons against targets in Saudi Arabia and Israel. Hussein Kamil, who oversaw Iraq's WMD programs, informed Saddam that technical issues would not prevent Iraqi WMD use. He explained, "Sir, we are in an excellent and prepared situation regarding the missile warheads and fighters' bombs. They're all modified and ready for launching any time, the chemical & the germ." Saddam ordered his subordinates to target King Khalid Military city, the major U.S. base in Saudi Arabia, with biological weapons. He added, however, that Iraq would only use its WMD "in case we are obliged and there's a great necessity to put them into action."[200] No evidence has emerged indicating that Saddam desired to use chemical or biological weapons, but was unable. Until at least the beginning of the Coalition's air offensive, Saddam stated his intent to use WMD against Israel only "in return for the warheads they use."[201]

Conclusions

This case study presents mixed evidence for ACT. U.S. signals were generally incompatible with the theory. Senior administration officials and influential intelligence analysts expressed belief that ambiguous, confusing, and private communications were effective in deterring and compelling Iraq. American leaders gave inadequate thought about how to make either their threats or assurances credible. Fear of U.S. nuclear retaliation deterred Saddam from

---

[199] SH-SHTP-A-000-848.
[200] *Duelfer Report*, Vol. 1, "Regime Strategic Intent," pp. 97–100.
[201] SH-SHTP-A-001-043.

using chemical or biological weapons, yet Baker's signals in Geneva had no measurable effect on longstanding Iraqi fears of U.S. or Israeli nuclear strikes.

Saddam's thinking was much more compatible with an audience cost framework. Saddam realized that Baker and Bush had unambiguously, and publicly, threatened to remove him from power should Iraq refuse to withdraw from Kuwait prior to the onset of military activities. Saddam believed that Baker would have to distance himself from White House threats of regime change if Baker wanted to run for president, he explained, since otherwise voters would vote against Baker for too closely tying himself to a failed commitment. When the Bush administration was voted out of office, Saddam attributed the electoral outcome to Americans' disapproval of the administration's threats, and subsequent failure, to replace his regime.

Saddam seems to have believed that the audience cost mechanism worked similarly in democratic and authoritarian regimes. He believed that he could signal resolve, and strengthen his commitment to the occupation of Kuwait, by use of massive Iraqi WMD evacuation procedures. He indicated belief that Soviet officials, also autocrats, would accept that his public signals, and generation of audience costs, were tying his hands. He and his advisers expressed belief that the White House had a good deal of control over American media outlets, and leaked information and otherwise influenced the Western media to pursue its desired ends. When American news organizations reported on the effects of Iraq's biological weapons, in late 1990, several of Saddam's key advisers suggested that the Bush administration had distributed the stories with the intent of fomenting domestic opposition to war with Iraq so that the United States would not need to go to war. White House influence over the media, they seem to have suggested, would enable it to escape its public commitment to go to war.

The evidence and analysis in this chapter also lead to several major historical findings.

First, concern about a U.S. attack with nuclear weapons deterred Saddam from using chemical or biological weapons against Coalition targets. Fear of nuclear retaliation was paramount, with other factors playing, at most, ancillary roles. Second, the 9 January meeting between Baker and Aziz was far less important than scholars have supposed. Saddam believed the possibility of a U.S. nuclear attack existed long before the Geneva meeting in which Baker failed to ambiguously threaten Iraq in his oral comments and Iraqi officials refused to accept copies of Bush's letter. Since U.S. threats clearly stated that the United States would seek to replace Saddam's regime whether or not Iraq used WMD, the "regime change" element in the threats is extremely unlikely to have deterred Saddam.

Fear of U.S. nuclear retaliation deterred Saddam from using chemical or biological weapons, yet concerns about U.S. nuclear attacks might be less likely to work in future scenarios. Analysts from around the world took from U.S. leaders' memoirs and public statements that they never intended to go nuclear in response to Iraqi chemical weapon attacks. Baker, Scowcroft, and Powell had all written this in their memoirs or discussed it publicly.[202] Saddam had read, or at least claimed to have read, Schwarzkopf and Peter de la Billiere's memoirs.[203] Aziz appears to have read at least Powell's.[204]

Saddam described the memoirs he had reportedly read as full of lies, however, and later events indicate that these statements did not lead Saddam or his sons to question America's willingness to go nuclear.[205] For instance, in April 2003, Saddam and his son Qusay ordered Iraqi military officers to warn their forces that the United States might attack Baghdad with nuclear weapons. Also in early 2003 an article appeared in *Babil*, a paper operated by Uday,

[202] Baker, *Politics of Diplomacy*, p. 359; Powell with Persico, *My American Journey*, pp. 485-86; Payne, *The Great American Gamble*, pp. 415, 443 notes 24-25.

[203] Woods and Stout, "Saddam's Perceptions and Misperceptions," p. 26. See also SH-SHTP-A-000-830.

[204] Stephen Farrell, "Trial Opens for Former Hussein Aide," *New York Times*, 30 April 2008.

[205] Woods and Stout, "Saddam's Perceptions and Misperceptions," p. 26. See also SH-SHTP-A-000-830.

Saddam's other son, suggesting that the United States would use nuclear weapons on Iraqi bunkers rather than fighting its way into Iraqi cities.[206]

The Iraqis also remained concerned about limited U.S. chemical weapon attacks. In late 2002, concern about a U.S./U.K. chemical weapon attack on Iraqi forces and presidential palaces led the Chief of Staff of Iraq's Republican Guard to request increased Republican Guard training wearing protection masks. In the same vein, Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Military Industrialization wrote Saddam urging that at least ten percent of Iraqi forces always wear chemical protection gear lest, "as in Hollywood movies," Iraq's enemies resorted to chemical weapon strikes "with temporary immobilizing ability" on presidential locations and other sites.[207]

Caution is in order when deriving insights about U.S. declaratory policy from Iraq's non-use. Scholars and policymakers should not take from the Gulf War that ambiguous threats of nuclear retaliation present the optimal means of deterring an adversary from using chemical or biological weapons. The degree to which U.S. declaratory policy influenced Iraqi calculations, after all, remains very much unclear. Saddam might have worried about U.S. nuclear use based primarily on a capabilities assessment, his understanding of U.S. behavior during previous conflicts, lessons he had learned about the value of WMD superiority in the Iran-Iraq War, his worldview of a hostile Zionist-Persian-Imperialist alliance seeking to destroy Iraq, Iraqi misinformation about the U.S. nuclear arsenal and doctrine, or other factors.

In any case, Saddam was perpetually skeptical of U.S. statements. Revelations from the Iran-Contra scandal that the United States had clandestinely armed Iran and provided it with intelligence on Iraq, all while denying such assistance and publicly supporting Iraq, decimated

---

[206] Cigar, *Saddam Hussein's Nuclear Vision: An Atomic Shield and Sword for Conquest*, p. 38.
[207] SH-RPGD-D-001-454, p. 40.

Iraqi leaders' trust in U.S. declarations. The United States tended to do "the opposite" of its declared policies, Ramadan observed. When U.S. declaratory policy in 1989-1990 was to engage Iraq in the hope of improving its behavior, Saddam suspected that the United States sought his overthrow.[208]

Any level of ambiguity in U.S. threats, even when unintended, gave Saddam additional room to idiosyncratically interpret the warnings as he saw fit. As he explained to his inner circle on 10 November 1990, he wanted only raw intelligence on the United States from his intelligence agencies, not analysis, since he would reach his own conclusions "through intuition and making connections between issues, all without having hard evidence." Later in this meeting, Saddam interpreted a statement by Cheney that the United States would send an unlimited number of troops as an ambiguous refusal to commit even a hundred.[209] This creative misinterpretation of relatively straightforward information undermines confidence in Saddam's ability to make sense of more ambiguous signals.

---

[208] Brands and Palkki, "'Conspiring Bastards'"; Duelfer, *Hide and Seek*, p. 54.
[209] Woods, Palkki, and Stout, *The Saddam Tapes*, pp. 35-38.

Chapter 4: Iraq's Coerced Disarmament

U.S. attempts to coercively disarm Iraq between the wars of 1991 and 2003, and Iraq's

counter-maneuvering during these years, provide important evidence relevant to ACT. This

chapter, on Iraq's coerced disarmament, makes clear that Saddam understood the basic logic of

ACT, assessed (at times) the credibility of American signals within the context of an audience

cost framework, indicated privately that sending public signals tied his hands in a manner

consistent with ACT, and sought to use Iraqi domestic audiences to signal resolve and

commitment. Iraqi and U.S. leaders did not always assess threats and assurances during this

period in ways compatible with ACT, and sometimes other factors were more decisive. The

frequency with which audience cost considerations influenced leaders' assessments and decision-

making, however, is noteworthy.

This chapter consists of three parts. The first section is a mini case study on UNSCOM's

efforts to inspect Iraq's Ministry of Agriculture in 1992. Throughout the crisis, Iraqi leaders

assessed the likelihood of a U.S. military strike within the context of U.S. domestic politics.

Saddam expressed belief that Iraq's obstinacy during the crisis, juxtaposed with Bush's public

claims that he had tamed Iraqi power, were weakening Bush in the ongoing presidential election.

Bush, by contrast, sought to undermine Saddam's hold on power by repeatedly emphasizing that

Saddam had failed to follow through on a public threat not to allow the inspection.

Saddam sought to signal resolve by use of Iraqi domestic audiences. Massive, unruly

Iraqi demonstrations in front of Iraq's Ministry of Agriculture had "convinced" Iraq's enemies of

the Iraqi people's resolve, he exclaimed. Demonstrations were a common method in the Middle

East "to send a message, to place a message on the wall," he observed. He acknowledged that

committing publicly to a certain position would upset Iraqis if the regime were to subsequently back down, but stated that the people would accept a pragmatic approach in which Iraq compromised while obtaining its core demand.

The second section consists of a mini case study on Iraq's deployment of Republican Guard forces near its border with Kuwait in 1994, and what followed. Whereas various scholars and administration officials concluded that public U.S. verbal threats and military deployments had deterred an invasion, the preponderance of evidence indicates that Saddam sought only to instigate a crisis and had no intention of reinvading. The Iraqi intelligence agencies recognized that U.S. officials were attempting to signal a credible commitment to fight on behalf of Kuwait, but these signals had no discernible effects on Iraqi decision-making.

In response to Iraq's deployment, the United States and other UN Security Council members insisted that Iraq withdraw its forces and recognize Kuwait's sovereignty and territorial integrity using the same official procedures with which it had annexed Kuwait in 1990. This required Iraq, which had formally, publicly, and repeatedly signaled that Kuwait was Iraq's "19th Province," to renege on a widely recognized commitment. U.S., U.K., and French officials described Iraq's public, official recognition of Kuwait's sovereignty and borders as constituting a credible signal of Iraqi intentions. Reneging on his commitment to incorporate Kuwait would make it extremely difficult for Saddam to retain power, Albright opined.

The third section addresses the ways, and degree to which, Saddam's views on Iraqi and American audience costs influenced Iraq's disarmament behavior. Iraqi audience costs play a central role, albeit an implicit one, in many accounts of why Iraq refused to verifiably disarm. Saddam, who by word and deed had made it known that Iraq possessed WMD and considered this possession necessary to defend Iraq and extend Iraqi influence, was supposedly worried

about the audience costs of making it clear to what degree Iraq had complied with coercive

disarmament demands. Scholars have written that Saddam intentionally sent mixed signals

about whether Iraq had disarmed by hinting that Iraq retained WMD and refusing to allow

certain inspections. Saddam reportedly wanted to signal UN inspectors and the United States

that Iraq had disarmed, while simultaneously signaling domestic actors and regional rivals that it

had not. According to one line of thinking, Saddam did not want his officers to know that he had

backed down for fear that they would replace him.[1] I find no evidence that Saddam misled his

subordinates about Iraqi WMD capabilities, though there are indications that Chemical Ali

attempted to do so.

The evidence that Saddam sought to retain the appearance of WMD capabilities to deter a

U.S. attempt to replace his regime is also problematic, but wonderfully insightful for ACT.

Saddam, it seems, did not consider American politicians' rhetoric about changing his regime, and

even legislation in the form of the Iraq Liberation Act (ILA), credible. Saddam believed that

American leaders were hostile conspirators, yet assessed the credibility of U.S. threats and

assurances within the confines of his understanding of American domestic politics. As he

explained to his advisers, Senate Republicans pushed publicly for regime change in the late

1990s to undermine Clinton's domestic support by pointing out that the President was unable to

achieve the stated goal of removing Saddam from power. Saddam said that Republicans did not

actually want to remove Clinton from power, though, since then Gore would benefit from being

the incumbent in the next presidential election. There is an idiosyncratic element to Saddam's

understanding of how American domestic politics would influence U.S. policy toward Iraq, to be

---

[1] Etel Solingen, *Nuclear Logics: Contrasting Paths in East Asia and the Middle East* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), p. 163; Robert S. Litwak, *Regime Change: U.S. Strategy through the Prism of 9/11* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2007, p. 325; David Hannay, "Three Iraqi Intelligence Failures Reconsidered," *Survival* Vol. 51, No. 6 (December 2009—January 2010), pp. 16-17; Achim Rohde, *State-Society Relations in Ba'thist Iraq: Facing Dictatorship* (New York: Routledge, 2010), p. 53; F. Gregory Gause, III, *The International Relations of the Persian Gulf* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 153.

sure, yet at the core of Saddam's thinking one frequently finds, as in this case, a logic involving

domestic audience costs.[2]

UNSCOM's Inspection of Iraq's Ministry of Agriculture

In July 1992, UNSCOM received intelligence from two European countries that a

building in Baghdad contained Iraq's archives from its previous WMD programs. When

UNSCOM inspectors showed up at the building for a no-notice inspection, they learned that the

building was Iraq's Ministry of Agriculture and were denied entrance. For the first time, Iraq

had flatly denied inspectors access to suspected site. The inspection team received instructions

to camp out, observe the exits, and ensure that the Iraqis removed no documents from the

building. The Iraqi regime inaccurately declared that UNSCOM had taken 250 employees

hostage, instigated massive Iraqi demonstrations, and continued to deny the inspectors entrance.

The standoff constituted one of the greatest UNSCOM-Iraq crises. It is revealing for how

Saddam assessed the possibility of U.S. attacks within the context of American domestic politics,

how Saddam attempted to signal the Iraqi people's resolve to Iraq's enemies, and what Saddam

and his advisers thought about domestic audience costs should Iraqis come to see the regime as

giving in on its core public positions.[3]

From Saddam's perspective, demands that Iraq allow UNSCOM officials to inspect the

Ministry were extremely dangerous since they infringed on Iraq's sovereignty. The selection of

---

[2] Saddam also noted that the United States would not allow the emergence of a new state in Iraq's south or north, at least not at the moment, since the state would fall under Iranian influence. He also considered European opposition to a weak Iraq an important factor. See CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-000-756, "Saddam and Senior Advisors Discussing a Potential Military Conflict with the United States," 9 February 1998.

[3] Timothy Trevan, *Saddam's Secrets: The Hunt for Iraq's Hidden Weapons (London: HarperCollins, 1999)*, pp. 182-98; Christian Alfonsi, *Circle in the Sand: Why We Went Back to Iraq* (New York: Doubleday, 2006), pp. 305-06.

the Department of Agriculture over the Ministry of Industry or Military Industrialization Commission, however, constituted a "gift from heaven" since it would "mobilize our people." Saddam told his advisers, "From now on, Comrades, I want you to clearly inform your people and tell them, 'This war is yours…'" The Iraqi people should deny the inspectors food, not sell them anything, and "not cooperate with them, period. They [the inspectors] have to feel that when they come to Iraq, it is as if they're going inside an oven. Finish their work as quickly as possible and hurry them up with their reports."[4]

The regime sent large numbers of Iraqis, in buses marked with government registration plates, to demonstrate in front of the Ministry. It also sent a truck full of eggs, fruit, and vegetables for Iraqis to throw at the inspectors. On 6 July, Ekeus and the President of the Security Council drafted a Security Council resolution that warned Iraq that "continuation of such a material breach will give rise to serious consequences"—an apparent reference to military action. When the full Council met in open session later that day, however, the U.S. representative insisted upon the removal of the phrase "serious consequences" from the resolution, thus signaling U.S. reluctance to use force to compel Iraq to allow the inspection. From the perspective of Tim Trevan, Ekeus's chief strategist, the lack of a U.S. threat encouraged and enabled Iraq to defy UNSCOM. Iraq would only comply when threats were "imminent and credible," he writes. Soon, thousands of Iraqis were storming the area, egging and shaking inspectors' cars, and throwing rotten vegetables at the inspectors. One Iraqi even attempted to stab an inspector through a car window.[5]

Trevan concluded that the Iraqi regime intended to intimidate rather than actually harm the inspectors, but had created demonstrations in which it was not fully in control in an attempt

---

[4] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-252, "A meeting between Saddam Hussein and the Council of Ministers concerning UN sanctions, resolutions and the potential for an American invasion," undated.
[5] Trevan, *Saddam's Secrets*, pp. 182-98.

to coerce a favorable end to the standoff. While it would have been unwise for Iraq to harm the inspectors or even to clearly threaten to do so, since this would presumably have incited undesirable U.S. military retaliation, the Iraqi leadership was willing to unleash a threat that left something to chance.[6] Saddam was a risk-taker, and Aziz used the regime's incomplete control over the crowds as bargaining leverage. He could not guarantee that Iraqi security personnel could prevent the furious crowds from harming the inspectors, he ominously warned. The crowd would be less angry, though, Aziz noted, if the inspection team included fewer Americans. Trevan agreed with Aziz that not even in Saddam's police state could the security forces adequately control such sizeable and excited crowds.[7]

Iraqi intimidation and the threat of violence led UNSCOM to withdraw the team. Weeks later, when the inspectors were granted access, they found nothing. The inspectors found empty rooms, but no documents since, as the Iraqis much later admitted, Iraqi officials had ample time in the intervening weeks to remove the incriminating evidence.[8]

Saddam expressed belief that Iraqi demonstrations against the inspection of Iraq's Ministry of Agriculture had sent a powerful signal to Iraq's foreign enemies of the Iraqi people's fury and opposition to the inspections. Iraq's enemies "have seen and were convinced and really scared," he explained, by the demonstrators' fury, anger, and hatefulness. "By God, we [the Iraqi leadership] have not scared them as much as our people did, those dogs!" The emotions of the Iraqi people could terrify outsiders, Saddam explained, telling of an instance in which Todor Zhivkov, Bulgaria's former ruler, visited Iraq and was terrified that Iraqis who were angry with Bulgaria would harm him. Zhivkov's face turned yellow with fear, Saddam told his advisers.

---

[6] On the logic of threats that leave something to chance, see Thomas C. Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1960), pp. 187-203.
[7] Trevan, *Saddam's Secrets*, pp. 189-90.
[8] Trevan, *Saddam's Secrets*, pp. 182-98; Scott Ritter, PBS/Frontline Interview, "Spying on Saddam."

The Iraqi people "can be scary when expressing their allegiance emotionally," he added. [9]

Saddam recognized that Westerners had criticized the Iraqi demonstrations for being "pre-orchestrated," but expressed belief that demonstrations throughout the West were similarly orchestrated, even those that would lead to a mob. Even demonstrations in England, Saddam told his advisers, were organized by unions, associations, and party branches. "The most certain thing," Saddam exulted, was that Iraq's enemies had seen the demonstrations and were "convinced" of the Iraqi people's anger and resolve. Others in the Middle East also used demonstrations "to send a message, to place a message on the wall," Saddam observed. [10]

Saddam instructed Aziz to present Iraq's core demand that Iraq would allow only neutral, agreed upon inspectors to enter the Ministry. Offices within the Ministry of the most senior officials, and certain types of records, including personnel records and all statistics, however, were Iraqi state secrets to which Iraq would not grant the inspectors access. [11]

Saddam and his senior advisers recognized that the regime would incur domestic audience costs should it back down after having made its position abundantly clear to the Iraqi people and inciting the people to anger against UNSCOM's demands. As Taha Ma'ruf explained, "If we retreat, we will lose part of the people's support. They will say, 'Why did you say you will not let them in and now you have let them in?'" Moreover, he continued, a retreat from Iraq's public insistence that it would only allow inspection teams comprised of individuals from neutral countries would "lose the people's morale" and cause an unspecified but clearly negative "situation" within the Ba'ath Party to "escalate." [12] Saddam shared these general concerns, noting that "our people will refer to the message that we addressed to them" and "it is

---

[9] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-252.
[10] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-252.
[11] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-252.
[12] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-186, "Saddam Hussein meeting with Ba'ath Party members to discuss UN weapons inspection," 23 July 1992.

not easy for our people to be flexible."[13]

Saddam recognized, however, that how the regime framed Iraqi concessions would have a great effect on the domestic audience costs it would incur for backing down, or partially backing down, from its public positions. Saddam explained that if the leadership maintained its core demand, while being flexible on more peripheral issues, the Iraqi people would be angry with the United States and UNSCOM rather than the regime. From his perspective, the people would reward pragmatic, albeit incomplete, progress—but not weakness. If the leadership caved in on its core demands, he noted, it would lose public support since the Iraqi people would feel its leadership had disappointed them. [14]

From Saddam's perspective, "give and take" was acceptable so long as Iraq achieved its core demands. Perhaps the United States would settle for less than satisfaction of all of its demands regarding the inspection of the Ministry, he suggested, referencing an ancient Chinese proverb in which Muhammad Ibn al-Qasim al-Thaqafi's associates helped him renege on a public commitment. Al-Thaqafi had sworn to step a foot in China, so, Saddam explained, his associates told him, "Man, you swore to step a foot in China, and here we brought you some of its dirt." U.S. and UNSCOM officials might also settle for such a face-saving compromise solution, Saddam suggested. [15]

Saddam didn't apply the analogy to the framing of Iraqi concessions, though the shoe certainly fit his foot as well as those of American leaders. Saddam's advisers recognized the Ba'athist regime's need, and ability, to partially escape domestic audience costs by properly framing concessions. Tariq Aziz emphasized the need to convince Iraqis of Iraq's need to retreat. Taha Ma'ruf concurred. The need existed due to fear of U.S. airstrikes. Taha Ma'ruf

---

[13] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-252.
[14] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-252.
[15] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-252.

made clear that he expected U.S. airstrikes. Aziz thought that a U.S. military attack was more

likely than not.[16]

Saddam and many of his key advisers assessed the likelihood of U.S. airstrikes within the

confines of their knowledge of American domestic politics. This should not be surprising given

that it was election time in the United States, Bush was struggling, and more than a few

commentators wondered in the media whether the President might turn to military action against

Iraq to reverse his flagging domestic support. Iraqi leaders were uncertain as to how domestic

politics would affect U.S. military actions.

Comrade Sa'di noted that the Iraqi leadership was in agreement that Bush was looking

for a way to strengthen himself domestically during the campaign. The Democratic Party had

successfully attacked Bush for focusing on foreign affairs rather than domestic issues, which,

Sa'di opined, meant that Bush would not attack Iraq unless he could do so under the cover of a

UN Security Council decision. Aziz, who had expressed similar views earlier in the meeting,

fully agreed. The United States would not attack, Sa'di predicted, since the United States could

destroy Iraq's material base through sanctions and the crisis over this particular inspection was

aimed at shoring up continued support for the sanctions.[17]

Saddam was uncertain whether the United States would respond to Iraq's resistance with

military strikes. He told advisers that he placed no hope in the Security Council to restrain U.S.

aggression, but believed that U.S. domestic institutions might provide more meaningful

constraints.[18] He asked,

> Can the President, in light of the current competitive race with another nominee [for president], take such a decision by himself without consulting other institutions? Because he had resorted to those institutions in the past, so how will he be able to handle

---

[16] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-186.
[17] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-186.
[18] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-252.

matters now without seeking their consultation? Perhaps he could, and perhaps he could not. Either case is possible.[19]

Saddam was also uncertain how the timing of the ongoing election campaign would affect Bush's decision-making. On the one hand, he explained, "it is known" that Westerners, including American presidents, could not take military actions, especially immediately prior to elections. Iraqi leaders had always heard this from journalists, Western media outlets, and everyone else, he said—except at the present. During the past four months, he continued, Iraqi leaders began hearing analyses indicating that Bush might attack Iraq to generate domestic support prior to the election. This recent line of analysis could be correct, or it could be intended to deceive Iraq, he concluded. Since Bush's political opponents controlled Congress, Saddam noted, they would seek to prevent him from attacking Iraq if they thought that Bush wanted to attack to win votes. Even though from Saddam's perspective it would be more difficult for Bush to attack Iraq during the election campaign than was the case a year earlier, Saddam did not exclude the possibility. When UNSCOM withdrew its inspectors, he told his advisers, "I expected the attack." Bush sought to fabricate reasons to attack Iraq, and, if he saw an opportunity, "could attack at any minute."[20]

Eventually, three weeks after Iraq had prevented the inspectors from entering the Ministry, and well after it had removed all incriminating documents from the premises, the Iraqis allowed the inspection. Bush's language to reporters hints that he wanted to weaken Saddam domestically by focusing on Saddam's failure to make good on his threats. Bush gloated that "This standoff now has been resolved by his caving in," that Saddam, once again, had 'caved in," and that Bush was glad "that he cratered once again on this threatening…"[21] Nizar Hamdoon

---

[19] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-252.
[20] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-186.
[21] Bush Presidential Library, Public Papers, "Remarks and an Exchange With Reporters on Arrival From Camp

had warned U.S. officials in 1988 that domestic politics within Iraq were such that Saddam could

not allow a perception among Iraqis that he was "caving in" to coercion by the United States or

Soviet Union. Glaspie reiterated this point in a key cable to Washington in July 1990.[22] Now,

only a few years later, Bush sought to undermine Saddam's legitimacy at home by emphasizing

that Saddam had issued public threats, only to cave in.

Ironically, Saddam took from the crisis that Iraq's resistance to American demands and

his continued hold on power, in the face of Bush's public threat to replace Saddam and Bush's

claim that he had tamed Iraqi power, undermined Bush's domestic legitimacy and helped lead to

the president's electoral defeat. He explained,

> The issue inside America now—the big issue—is the foreign situation and its
> accomplishments…they point to him that even the tasks that he brags about didn't
> accomplish anything.… My notes for the few things I read—I'm not like Comrade Tariq
> [Aziz]—their main thing is the domestic situation and it's addressed like "President Bush
> is busy with the foreign situation, forgetting about us as a society. His responsibility is
> for our well-being and he did not focus on us as he should have."[23]

It is not difficult to see how Saddam reached these conclusions. "If President Bush and Vice

President Quayle are such whizzes in foreign policy," Vice Presidential candidate Al Gore

publicly questioned, "why is it that Saddam Hussein is thumbing his nose at the world?"[24]

From the perspective of one thoughtful historian, Saddam had so skillfully timed the

crisis "to exploit Bush's political vulnerability" that many Americans began wondering whether

the United States had won a battle militarily but, by failing to remove Saddam, had lost the

war.[25] Bush, Cheney, and other White House officials all wondered whether Saddam had timed

---

David, Maryland," 26 July 1992; accessed 17 June 2013 at
http://bushlibrary.tamu.edu/research/public_papers.php?id=4610&year=1992&month=7.

[22] US Embassy Baghdad to Washington, "Saddam's Message of Friendship to President Bush," 25 July 1990, Bush
Library, NSC (Richard Haass Files), Working Files Iraq Pre-2/8/90-12/90 (2 of 6), p. 4.

[23] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-186.

[24] Alfonsi, *Circle in the Sand*, p. 308.

[25] Alfonsi, *Circle in the Sand*, pp. 336-37.

the crisis to coincide with the presidential campaign.[26] No evidence discovered to date shows

that Saddam timed the crisis to weaken Bush by reminding American voters that their president

had failed to deliver on his public commitments to remove Saddam from power and to coercively

disarm Iraq. After the crisis, however, Saddam did say that Iraqi defiance, combined with

Bush's inability to deliver on public commitments involving Iraq, had led to Bush's electoral

defeat.[27]

Saddam took from the crisis over the inspection that Iraqi obstructionism led to crises

with UNSCOM, which would divide the great powers and facilitate improved outcomes for Iraq.

This crisis had led to "an accommodating solution," he told advisers, which led to a clear trend in

the Security Council to listen to and engage in dialogue with Iraq. In a joint meeting of the

Regional Command and Revolutionary Command Council from sometime in Fall 1994, Saddam

said, Iraq had determined that the sanctions would never be lifted without such crises. If Iraq

were to suspend its obligations regarding all UNSC resolutions until the Security Council lifted

the sanctions, Saddam predicated, this would divide the Security Council and lead to dialogue,

negotiations, and beneficial results.[28] In fall 1994, Iraq created such a crisis by threatening to

invade Kuwait.

Operation Vigilant Warrior and Iraq's Recognition of Kuwait

The second mini-case study involves Iraq's decision in October 1994 to deploy several

elite Republican Guard (RG) divisions to Basra in southern Iraq, near the border with Kuwait,

---

[26] For more on these suspicions, see Alfonsi, *Circle in the Sand*, pp. 315-16, 322.
[27] Woods, Palkki, and Stout, *The Saddam Tapes: The Inner Workings of a Tyrant's Regime*, *1978-2001 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).* pp. 41-42.
[28] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-000-989, "Saddam Hussein Meeting with Council of Ministers," 15 April 1995.

and how American and Iraqi leaders attempted to send credible signals and assessed the credibility of the other's signals. Iraq's 5 October deployment of the divisions brought Iraqi strength in the region to roughly 80,000 troops, which caused considerable alarm among American policymakers when U.S. intelligence analysts promptly detected the deployment. The United States responded by publicly threatening Iraq that the United States would defend Kuwait and by rapidly deploying Navy and Marine forces to the region. France and the United Kingdom also deployed warships. On 10 October, Saddam announced that Iraq would withdraw its additional forces from the border region.[29]

A widespread view among American policymakers for why Iraq deployed Republican Guard troops near the border with Kuwait in fall 1994 is that it intended to re-invade its southern neighbor, but was deterred by credible, hand-tying U.S. deterrent signals. "The key difference between August 1990 and October 1994," Secretary of State Madeleine Albright told Security Council representatives, was "the resolute security response" of the United States and other countries.[30] The deployment of military forces to the region had deterred another invasion of Kuwait, she repeatedly opined.[31] Secretary of Defense William Perry also expressed belief that U.S. threats had deterred Iraq from invading Kuwait and compelled it to pull back its forces.[32] According to the White House, post-crisis intelligence reports demonstrated that Iraq's threat to Kuwait was "real," but that the U.S. deployment of 30,000 troops and the UN Security Council resolution condemning Iraq's deployments successfully contained Iraqi aggression and forced

---

[29] For a more detailed overview of the crisis, see W. Eric Herr, "Operation Vigilant Warrior: Conventional Deterrence Theory, Doctrine, and Practice," MA Thesis, The School of Advanced Airpower Studies, Air University, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, June 1996, accessed 4 May 2013 at www.fas.org/man/eprint/herr.htm.

[30] United Nations, Security Council, "Provisional Verbatim Record of the 3439th Meeting," 17 October 1994, p. 19, accessed 17 May 2013 at http://www.undemocracy.com/S-PV-3439.

[31] United Nations, Security Council, "Provisional Verbatim Record of the 3439th Meeting," 17 October 1994, p. 7, accessed 17 May 2013 at http://www.undemocracy.com/S-PV-3439; United Nations, Security Council, "Provisional Verbatim Record of the 3438th Meeting," 15 October 1994, p. 5, accessed 17 May 2013 at http://www.undemocracy.com/S-PV-3438.

[32] Jared Diamond, "Perry Sees Iraqi 'Long-Term Threat'," *The Associated Press*, 13 October 1994.

Saddam to back down.[33] Leading scholars have also found that the existence of a credible deterrent threat or lack thereof accounts for why Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990 but opted not to do so four years later.[34] Miroslav Nincic goes so far as to claim that deterrent signals in late 1994 constitute "the only instance of an effective threat against Iraq" in all of its encounters with the United States.[35]

Other policymakers concluded that Iraq sought by the deployment, in one way or another, to undermine and end the UN sanctions and inspections, but not to invade. Colin Powell, for instance, described Iraq's action as "a paltry attempt to look tough while trying to get relief from UN sanctions."[36] From Schwarzkopf's perspective, the most plausible explanation for the Iraqi troop movements was that Saddam thought that if he created a crisis Jimmy Carter would travel to Iraq, as he recently had to North Korea and Haiti, to pursue a compromise that would benefit Iraq.[37] Former British Prime Minister Edward Heath expressed belief that Saddam had no intention of invading, but sought to draw attention to the plight of the Iraqi people under the sanctions.[38] Warren Christopher, the U.S. Secretary of State, believed Iraq had intended its behavior as a threatening signal but expressed bafflement at the logic behind Saddam's move: "It is very difficult for me to get inside his mind. He has a very warped mind."[39]

Why Iraq Deployed Its Forces

---

[33] White House, "Containing Saddam Hussein's Iraq," accessed 17 June 2013 at http://clinton5.nara.gov/WH/EOP/NSC/html/nsc-11.html.

[34] Mearsheimer and Walt, "An Unnecessary War," pp. 54-55; Joseph S. Nye Jr., *Power in the Global Information Age: From Realism to Globalization* (New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 43.

[35] Miroslav Nincic, *Renegade Regimes: Confronting Deviant Behavior in World Politics (*New York: Columbia University Press, 2007*)*, p. 142.

[36] Colin L. Powell and Joseph E. Persico, *My American Journey* (New York: Random House, 1996) p. 526.

[37] "Threats in the Gulf; Schwarzkopf on Hussein: Calculating 'Carter Factor,'" *New York Times*, 13 October 1994.

[38] Gavin Cordon, "Heath Urges Saddam Talks," *The Press Association*, 9 October 1994.

[39] "Hussein must not be allowed to provoke future crises: Christopher," *Agence France Press*e, 12 October 1994.

To better understand what Saddam was thinking, it is useful to review in greater detail the period preceding the crisis. In fall 1994, Iraq was experiencing hyperinflation, deaths from malnourishment were commonplace, and the economy was in a shambles. According to Saddam, economic desperation had driven him to instigate the crisis. Iraqis who could not feed themselves were bound to lose faith in the government, he explained. If Iraqi soldiers lacked vehicles due to the sanctions, he said, they would lose their training, discipline, and desire to even be in the military. Under these circumstances, "The country will gradually eat itself," he predicted, and all would be lost. Since Iraq found itself in these dangerous circumstances, he continued, and knew that continued Iraqi compliance would not lead the Security Council to lift the sanctions anytime soon, it was better for it to act now than later when it would be even worse off. [40]

Saddam exclaimed, "If we had a couple of warehouses stored with food to feed the Iraqis, I would have said, 'Delay this suggestion for now.' However, we have reached the bottom; ask the Minister of Commerce—he will tell you how much sugar and wheat he has left to feed the Iraqis…" Iraqi leaders needed to explain to their people that the regime would take bold actions to prevent the Iraqi people from starving to death, he said, and that more Iraqis had died from the sanctions than during the Mother of all Battles. [41]

The internal Iraqi records make clear that Iraq's deployment of RG to southern Iraq was neither a normal military maneuver nor in preparation for an invasion of Kuwait. The Iraqi leadership had held a series of meetings in the months prior to the crisis about what to do if the sanctions on Iraq were not lifted in conjunction with the UN Secretary-General's sixth semi-annual report on implementation of Ongoing Monitoring and Verification, which was scheduled

---

[40] CRRC, SH-SHTP-D-000-712 "Saddam Hussein Meeting with the Revolutionary Command and the State Command," 1994.
[41] CRRC, SH-SHTP-D-000-712.

for 10 October.[42] The Secretary-General did not release the report until several days after Iraq

had deployed its forces, but Ekeus had made clear on 3 October, several days prior to Iraq's

deployment, that he would report to the Secretary-General that Iraq had not yet fulfilled all of its

obligations.[43]

Iraqi leaders had concluded, Saddam said, that if the sanctions were not lifted "then we

have to proceed to a crisis, and this crisis might open new horizons through which the political

environment will be more conducive…"[44] From Saddam's perspective, a review of the literature

on politics revealed that crises entail "give and take," which would produce positive results for

Iraq.[45] As Aziz explained, "We have created a crisis, and this crisis was intentionally

designed."[46] The Iraqi leadership deployed its forces southward in an attempt to create

dissension between the United States and Russia, which, it hoped, would further divide the

Security Council and undermine the UN sanctions regime. From the Iraqi perspective, the

deployment had everything to do with ending the sanctions and inspections. Iraq's dire

economic straits drove Iraqi behavior, as did an Iraqi belief that Iraq could use the crisis to

incentivize Russia to end its complacency and to side squarely with Iraq in support of lifting the

sanctions.

A captured recording of a meeting between Saddam and his most senior advisers from

August 1994 provides insights on how Saddam, Al-Duri, Aziz, and Abd-al-Ghani conceptualized

---

[42] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-253, "Meeting between Saddam Hussein and Top Political Advisors regarding Relations with Saudi Arabia and other Neighbors," undated.

[43] Ian Black and Julie Flint, "Monitors in Place as UN Denies Rift," *The Guardian*, 4 October 1994. For the text of the Secretary General's report, see United Nations Security Council, Sixth Report of the Secretary-General on the Status of the Implementation of the Plan for the Ongoing Monitoring and Verification of Iraq's Compliance with Relevant Parts of Section C of Security Council Resolution 687 (1991), S/1994/1138, 7 October 1994; accessed 11 May 2013 at www.un.org/Depts/unscom/sres94-1138.htm.

[44] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-253.

[45] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-253.

[46] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-541, "A Meeting Between Saddam Hussein, Taha Yasin Ramadan and Several Unidentified Ministers," undated.

the crisis within the context of an evolving geopolitical landscape. When the Soviet Union fell,

the United States had pursued its interests at the expense of other great powers, al-Duri

explained, particularly in terms of controlling Middle Eastern oil. American unipolarity was

quickly leading to multipolarity, Iraq's senior leaders agreed, which provided Iraq new

opportunities. According to al-Duri, the United States was already clashing with Japan and with

Europe economically, and French and Germany would increasingly support Iraq in an attempt to

obtain Iraqi oil. Britain and France had recently submitted proposals for business ventures

involving Iraqi oil, al-Duri claimed. So had Spain and Italy, Aziz added.[47]

China was also increasingly willing to assist Iraq, Aziz and al-Duri explained. When

Iraq's Foreign Minister traveled to Beijing along with Iraqi experts in military industrialization

and defense, Aziz stated, the Chinese were initially shocked to see such a delegation. The next

day, however, China made a decision "at the highest level" to engage in negotiations, working

"day and night" on proposals and projects. Shortly after this trip, Aziz noted, the Chinese

summoned Ekeus—"the first time they showed interest in him." China, Aziz and al-Duri

suggested, wanted to trade with Iraq and was beginning to take a helpful interest in lifting the

sanctions.[48]

Russia wanted to discuss "the largest business proposals ever," Saddam told his advisers,

which would be worth "billions of dollars." Iraq should immediately provide Russia's Minister

of Defense with an Iraqi shopping list of Russian weapons, he continued. At Russia's request,

however, it should take steps to keep these developments confidential. China had also separated

Iraq's visiting delegation into two groups dealing with civilian and military applications and

taken delegates involved in Iraq's military industrial sector to a separate location, Aziz told

[47] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-238, "Saddam Hussein and his Political Advisors Discuss International Interest in Iraqi Oil, Iraqi Army Dissenters, and an initiative to Settle Disputes with Saudi Arabia," 3 September 1994.
[48] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-238.

Saddam, presumably to keep the visit secret.[49]

This broad discussion about shifting polarity and great powers' desire for deeper economic ties with Iraq transitioned into a discussion of the role of Kuwait as a bargaining chip in lifting the sanctions. Ramadan agreed with Aziz that economic factors were "crucial and primary" to lifting the sanctions, yet expressed skepticism that Russia, France and other states could lift sanctions via a Security Council resolution without U.S. consent. Pursuit of an agreement with the United States remained important, he suggested. The Iraqi leadership had agreed that it would recognize Kuwait's borders and acknowledge its sovereignty in exchange for U.S. recognition that Iraq had satisfied its obligations under paragraph 22, he said.[50]

Saddam clearly agreed, instructing Aziz that during his next meeting with Americans he should try to negotiate Iraq's recognition of Kuwait's borders and sovereignty in exchange for progress on lifting the sanctions. During this part of the meeting, Saddam repeatedly spoke of Iraqi recognition of Kuwait's borders and sovereignty as a bargaining chip with which to receive relief from the sanctions.[51] U.S. officials were apparently uninterested, though Iraqi leaders did express belief, after the crisis had begun, that the United States was trying to get former Secretary of State George Shultz to "act as a conduit" to the Iraqis.[52]

Iraq placed much more hope in Russia. If the United States relented on lifting the sanctions, Iraqi leaders believed, it would be because of pressure from Russia and American concerns about a newly energized, and antagonistic, Russia. The heart of Iraq's plan was to transform Russia into Iraq's protector and great power patron. As Saddam explained to his inner circle, "we want to place obligations upon Russia and we want to present to it the role that we

---

[49] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-238.
[50] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-238.
[51] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-238.
[52] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-253.

want it to play, the role that will benefit us and them."[53] In this client-patron arrangement, Aziz stated, "We should enhance the strength of our ally. We should strengthen our ally, and it should strengthen us…"[54]

Iraq would encourage Russia to play a greater role, Aziz suggested, by encouraging Russia to send forces to patrol the border between Iraq and Kuwait. If U.S. forces refused to leave the region following Iraq's recognition of Kuwait, Saddam and Aziz agreed, then Iraq should invite and encourage Russia to place Russian military forces within Iraq itself. Russia and Iraq's friendship would not be limited to security arrangements, the Iraqis made clear. Once Russia had helped Iraq end the sanctions, Aziz told Kozyrev, "You can come and build roads and bridges for us." Iraq had told Russia how it could involve itself in Iraqi affairs as a means of reclaiming its earlier position in the region and stature as a great power, Saddam explained, to which Russia had responded with a "clear decision for friendship."[55]

Iraqi leaders expressed hope that the United States would decide it better for the United States to cease its hostile behavior toward Kuwait than to experience a return to Cold War levels of hostilities with Russia. Comrade Hatim told Saddam that the United States had worked for 50 years to defeat the Soviet Union, but now faced renewed hostilities with its former adversary over the issue of Iraq. It would be better for the United States "to give us Kuwait for free" than to face a renewed rivalry with a nuclear-armed superpower, he said, since, unlike Russia, even an Iraq that included Kuwait would not pose an existential threat to the United States. Saddam agreed that the return of Russia, "a country with nuclear teeth," would pose problems for the

---

[53] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-196, "Meeting Between Saddam and Unidentified Iraqi Leaders," undated.
[54] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-541.
[55] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-494, "Saddam Hussein Meeting with Cabinet Ministers to Discuss Recent United Nations Resolutions and the Relationship between Iraq and Kuwait," 13 October 1994.

United States. [56] Iraqi officials could only look on with pleasure when, as one veteran reporter

observed, an open argument erupted between the Russian and American ambassadors in a

Security Council meeting, the like of which had not been seen since the end of the Cold War.[57]

Russia's heightened support for Iraq "will no doubt rattle our enemy's cage," Saddam

exclaimed.[58]

Iraq's Assessments of Threats and Assurances

Iraq agreed to recognize Kuwait's sovereignty and borders in exchange for a Russian

assurance that if Iraq did so, Russia would fight to lift the sanctions in the Security Council.

Aziz told his colleagues that Kozyrev and other senior Russian officials had privately assured

him that if Iraq recognized Kuwait's sovereignty and borders, then Russia would fight to end the

sanctions. According to Aziz, Kozyrev had provided Aziz with a clear commitment that Russia

would fight for implementation of paragraph 22. Kozyrev, Aziz recalled, said "'Rest assured

that our determination is decisive and strong.' I told him, 'I know that, but I want more

assurance.' He told me, 'We will fight for it, I mean we will fight for your sake.'"[59] According

to Aziz, Kozyrev said that Yeltsin had asked him to tell Iraqi leaders that Russia would take

strong, ongoing, actions to help find a comprehensive solution. Moreover, Ivanov had reportedly

shared the same message with Saddam.[60]

Despite Russia's public assertions to the contrary, Iraq's leaders were confident that they

---

[56] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-196.
[57] Stanley Meisler, "U.S. and Russia Exchange Barbs Over Iraq at U.N.," *Los Angeles Times*, 18 October 1994.
[58] CRRC, SH-SHTP-D-000-759, "Saddam Hussein Meeting with Members of Al-'Ubur Conference, National Command, Iraqi Regional Command and Revolutionary Command Council," undated.
[59] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-540, "A Meeting Between Saddam Hussein and Several Unidentified Individuals," undated.
[60] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-494.

had privately struck a deal. In public, Kozyrev denied that Russia had made any sort of "deal"
with Iraq. To the contrary, he explained, he had merely relayed the "simple and obvious
message" that "the sanctions against Iraq will be needless if it complies with all Security Council
Resolutions."[61] From the perspective of Iraqi leaders, however, Kozyrev had made a deal.
According to Saddam, Kozyrev had told Iraq that if it recognized Kuwait's borders, Russia
would "use its weight to lift the sanctions" within six months of Iraq's recognition. The
Russians had promised him, he later lamented, but "breached their promise."[62] While in U.S.
captivity following the 2003 U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, Aziz and other senior Iraqis confirmed
that Kozyrev had struck a deal with Iraq.[63]

This is not to say that the Iraqis naively took Kozyrev's assurances at face value.
Saddam and Aziz were both skeptical of Russia's private assurances. In a 25 October missive
from Saddam to Iraq's RCC and State Command, in which he asked these institutions to
formally accept Kuwait's sovereignty and borders, Saddam addressed the question of Russian
assurances head on:

> Are there any guarantees that the Russians and other countries will continue to cooperate
> with us and…be capable of confronting the American expansionist policy in presenting
> additional requests, once our actions with regard to Kuwait is hinged upon our signature?
> The answer is that we are not capable of presenting to you any guarantees…there are no
> other guarantees except what God, the merciful, will grant us.

Iraq had no guarantees, yet Russian assurances seemed credible, Saddam continued, since "they
are dealing with us on the basis of their own interests…" In other words, from at least Saddam's
perspective, no Russian hand-tying behavior was necessary since it was already in Russia's

---

[61] "Russian Foreign Minister Sums Up Talks with Hussein," *Tass*, 28 October 1994.
[62] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-298, "Meeting between Saddam Hussein and Iraqi Ministers regarding Iraq under
sanctions," undated.
[63] Charles Duelfer, *Hide and Seek: The Search for Truth in Iraq* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2009), p. 96.

interest to make good on its commitment.[64]

Aziz seems to have accepted that Russia's private assurances made Russian support more likely, but he was skeptical of Russia's ability to deliver. Russia, after all, could not guarantee that the Security Council would lift the sanctions. Lifting the sanctions could be vetoed by any permanent member of the Security Council, he later reminded his colleagues, and Russia was not capable of preventing the United States from using its veto. Iraq never asked Kozyrev for a guarantee, nor was he able to offer any, Aziz recalled. [65]

Saddam and Aziz realized the guarantees were not entirely credible, yet considered the crisis's outcome a general success. From Aziz's perspective, Iraq's relationship with Russia and France became "stronger and more even-handed" following the crisis, which Aziz considered important since no one or two members of the Security Council had complete control over the inspections and sanctions.[66] In February 1995, Saddam expressed belief that Russia's intervention in October 1994 had made the crisis a success. Iraq needed to create another such crisis in April, he said, to strengthen international support for Iraq.[67]

While Iraq had no intention of invading, captured intelligence reports indicate that the Iraqis had no problems recognizing that the United States was trying to send a clear, credible commitment by deploying forces to the region and engaging in joint military maneuvers with the Kuwaitis. Foreign media reports made this intent quite obvious. As Iraq's GMID observed, the French media reported an announcement by the U.S. embassy in Kuwait on 6 October that joint military maneuvers between the United States and Kuwait were intended "to show the American

---

[64] CRRC, SH-SHTP-D-000-759.
[65] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-187, "Saddam Hussein Meeting with High-ranking Officers about UN Security Council Resolutions, 2 May 1995.
[66] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-187
[67] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-000-988, "Saddam Hussein meets with members of Revolutionary Command Council in 1998," undated (circa 1998).

commitment to ensure security and stability in the Arab Gulf region…"[68] A GMID report also

made mention of a radio report from the United Arab Emirates stating that joint U.S.-Kuwaiti

military maneuvers were, "first and foremost…a clear warning addressed to the regime of

Baghdad."[69] A naval exercise involving the United States and Britain, GMID noted, "was to

express their willingness to defend Kuwait."[70] U.S. maneuvers from early November were

perceived as intended to "show the so-called commitment of the United States of America to

defend and preserve the security of Kuwait," among a number of more nefarious motives.[71]

Iraqi leaders recognized that crises are, by definition, uncontrollable, and that Iraq might

find itself on the receiving end of a U.S. attack. As Aziz articulated, "No one will ever design a

crisis and know 100 percent that it will come to his benefit."[72] One unidentified adviser

concluded that if the United States were to attack, it would limit its attacks to air strikes "instead

of sending troops, based on their horrific experience in Somalia." A "Comrade Salim," likely

General Salim Khalaf al-Jumayli, an Iraqi intelligence officer who at one point served as chief of

the American desk of the Iraqi Intelligence Service, opined, "We understand as well that

America will not utilize its troops as a method of attack, even if it were capable of doing so;

instead, they will use their best technology to damage and harm us." "Comrade Mohammed,"

citing comments from an American actress who had publicly criticized U.S. policy, noted that

"The American people totally disagree with the American government." Saddam, however,

refused to rule out that the United States might attack Iraq with ground forces. "We must work

on a plan, in the event that our enemy sends troops, we must decide what size of troops we need

---

[68] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-252,

[69] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-252, p. 64.

[70] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-252,, p. 25.

[71] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-252, p. 44, 61.

[72] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-541. Ramadan expressed agreement with Aziz's statement.

for the battle. We do not have much time…"[73]

Aziz suggested that Iraq would be better off being attacked by the United States than continuing to suffer under the sanctions with little international sympathy or attention. "When one has a case like ours, which was largely forgotten," he explained, "forgetfulness is the most dangerous of hostile attacks…"[74] If the United States attacked Iraq without a better cause than it could currently muster, Taha Ramadan and Comrade Sa'di stated, this could benefit the regime "internally," in the Arab world, and internationally.[75]

Saddam and his advisers discussed the meaning of UN Security Council Resolution 949, which demanded that Iraq recognize Kuwait's borders and return military forces from southern Iraq to their earlier locations, but it is hard to believe that the resolution led them to consider military action against Iraq any more likely.[76] Russia publicly stressed that it would only vote for the resolution since the resolution "does not contain any provisions that could have served as justification for the use of strikes or force."[77]

France confirmed this interpretation. According to Aziz, a French diplomat, who from the context of the conversation was apparently France's Ambassador to the United Nations, told Aziz that he had insisted during the negotiations over the resolution "that the Americans and the British do not misconstrue this resolution as an authorization for the use of force" should they wish to resume military actions against Iraq. The United States and United Kingdom would have to "come back one more time" to the Security Council for an additional resolution authorizing

---

[73] CRRC, SH-SHTP-D-000-712.
[74] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-541.
[75] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-541.
[76] United Nations, Security Council, "Resolution 949," 15 October 1994, accessed 13 June 2013 at www.casi.org.uk/info/undocs/scres/1994/9440171e.htm.
[77] United Nations, Security Council, "Provisional Verbatim Record of the 3438th Meeting," 15 October 1994, p. 5, accessed 17 May 2013 at http://www.undemocracy.com/S-PV-3438.

any use of force, he continued.[78] France was, perhaps for the first time, dissenting from the "Western" view that a UNSC finding that Iraq was noncompliant constituted "authorization" for military action.[79]

On the other hand, Saddam told his advisers that Iraq had received a written ultimatum, including a deadline, threatening it that if it did not comply with the international demands that "we would endanger our existence." Saddam described the message as a "memo" coming from Russia, the United States, England, and France, all countries, he noted, which possessed "nuclear bombs, missiles, and so on."[80] It is unclear why Saddam said that the ultimatum contained a threat to the Iraqis' very existence and referred to the countries' nuclear arsenals. This comment may indicate concern that the United States and United Kingdom would use the resolution to justify an end to their cease-fire with Iraq, which would place Iraq once again against a country whose previous president had vowed to replace the Ba'athist leadership in the event of any military hostilities.

Another possibility is that Saddam hyped the nuclear threat before key domestic actors to better justify Iraq's need to back down. This may have been particularly important for powerful groups, such as Iraq's Republican Guard (RG), whose support Saddam required. Saddam gathered his RG commanders prior to the crisis to inform them, through his son Qusay, that he had decided to re-invade Kuwait.[81] These commanders also knew that Iraq's deployments to

---

[78] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-262, "Meeting between Saddam Hussein and Top Political Advisors concerning the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait and International Positions on Iraq," undated.

[79] David M. Malone, *The International Struggle Over Iraq: Politics in the UN Security Council, 1980-2005 (Oxford; Oxford UP, 2006)*, p. 100.

[80] Saddam neglected to mention the final permanent member of the Security Council, China. Woods et al, *The Iraqi Perspectives Project: Saddam's Senior Leadership on Operation Iraqi Freedom From the Official U.S. Joint Forces Command Report*, (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2006), p. 14.

[81] The date of this meeting is unclear. In one place Hamdani describes the meeting as taking place in October, but in another he indicates that it took place prior to 11 September. Woods et al, *Iraqi Perspectives Project*, pp. 12-13; Staff Lt. General Raad Majid al-Hamdani, *History*, unpublished memoir by Hamdani, p. 173. Hussein Kamil alleged, after he had defected to Jordan, that Saddam intended in 1994 to invade Kuwait and the eastern portion of Saudi Arabia but was deterred. Kamil's claim, however, seems likely to have been a dishonest allegation intended

southern Iraq were not normal maneuvers or training activities, which was not as apparent to the population more broadly. Backing down from invading Kuwait and redeploying his RG forces risked incurring audience costs among RG leaders, especially after he had told his commanders that Iraq would invade and had deployed extra forces to Iraq's south.

These costs, however, were probably fairly low. According to Raad Hamdani, one of Saddam's senior Republic Guard commanders, Hamdani met with Saddam not long after the meeting in which Saddam had told his RG commanders that he intended to invade. In the course of this second meeting, Hamdani convinced Saddam that Iraq lacked the military capabilities required for another invasion. Saddam, according to Hamdani, deployed forces near Kuwait only in a desperate attempt to escape the sanctions.[82] Inasmuch as Hamdani shared the news of this meeting with fellow RG commanders, Saddam would not suffer audience costs among RG commanders since the commanders would have known that he did not plan to invade. As Saddam rhetorically asked his advisers when discussing Iraq's need to withdraw its RG forces from southern Iraq, "The Republican Guard forces are indeed that [i.e. to guard the Republic], who can argue with their coming to Baghdad?" At this point in the recording one hears coughing and burping, most likely coming from Saddam, but no objections.[83]

The Iraqi regime faced only limited risks of losing widespread domestic support for its decision against re-invading Kuwait. After all, it had never clearly signaled to the general Iraqi public an intention to invade. Moreover, the state-controlled media flatly denied American

---

to convince the United States to replace Saddam and to make Kamil the new leader of Iraq. Kamil also claimed, for instance, that Saddam had decided to invade Kuwait and Saudi Arabia on 31 August 1995, but had called off the attack due to Kamil's defection—an allegation for which there is absolutely no corroborating evidence. See "General Husayn Kamil Hasan on Iraq's Nuclear Weapons Programme, Opposition Plans," *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 10 November 1995; "General Hussein Kamal UNSCOM/IAEA Briefing," Note for the File, 22 August 1995, Amman, Jordan, accessed 17 May 2013 at www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/iraq/un/unscom-iaea_kamal-brief.htm; Jamal Halaby, "Defector Says Iraq was set to Invade: The Reported Targets: Kuwait, Saudi Arabia," *Chicago Sun-Times*, 21 August 1995.

[82] al-Hamdani, *History*, , p. 173.
[83] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-494.

media reports that Iraq had mobilized the RG to the south in the first place. In an Iraq News Agency interview with Iraq's Minister of Information, the Minister stated that "not even one battalion was sent to enforce the Republican Guard in the south."[84] The state's control over the news meant, at least to some degree, that the regime could minimize and avoid domestic audience costs by misinforming the Iraqi people about the state's behavior.

Iraq's Recognition of Kuwait

Recognizing Kuwait's sovereignty and borders, by contrast, meant reneging on a very widely recognized public commitment. Days after Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, Saddam publicly declared Kuwait the "19th Province" of Iraq. Iraq did so in what was presumably the most credible, binding manner it could devise: in a statement formally ratified by the RCC and Iraqi parliament and published in Iraq's *Official Gazette*, as required for such an action by Iraq's constitution. In the years since the invasion, Iraqi officials and Iraqi media reports reinforced this ultimate commitment to Kuwait's territory by continuing to refer to Kuwait as Iraq's nineteenth province.[85]

This declaration was intended, at least in part, to send a powerful signal to foreign actors. Tahir advocated publicly incorporating Kuwait to send a clear signal of Iraq's commitment to fight to retain its newly acquired territory. If Iraq expeditiously integrated Kuwait, he explained,

> Everything would become clearer when we say "Anyone who acts with hostility toward Iraq," and Iraq will become a concept in the world because defending Iraq becomes easily attainable and without any discussion when we say defending Iraq and Kuwait is our responsibility.

---

[84] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-253.
[85] Albright drew attention to this in United Nations, Security Council, "Provisional Verbatim Record of the 3438th Meeting," 15 October 1994, p. 5, accessed 17 May 2013 at http://www.undemocracy.com/S-PV-3438.

Europeans had accepted Iraq's earlier deterrent threat to attack Israel if Israel attacked Iraq, he

continued, but did not accept or understand (i.e. consider credible) Iraq's threat to attack Israel if

Israel attacked Arabs outside of Iraq. In other words, formally incorporating Kuwait would

benefit Iraq because Iraq's direct deterrent threats were considered more credible than were its

threats aimed at extended deterrence.[86]

American leaders recognized that Saddam's public incorporation of Kuwait had raised

the stakes considerably for the Iraqi regime. Given Saddam's public commitment to retain

Kuwait, U.S. officials predicted, forcing Iraq to ignominiously cede Kuwait would lead to a

domestic backlash that would remove Saddam from power within a year.[87] Baker explained,

"We did not think—the president nor any of us thought at that time that Saddam would continue

in power, having suffered such a resounding defeat."[88] According to Bush, "We all, the world

assumed…that Saddam could not survive a humiliating defeat. I miscalculated."[89] American

leaders were wrong—but, as the massive uprisings following Iraq's withdrawal suggest, only

barely.

The White House sought to force Saddam to take personal ownership for his policy

failure. When Baghdad Radio announced that Iraq accepted a U.N. resolution for an

unconditional withdrawal, and Iraq provided a letter to the Security Council in which it promised

to leave Kuwait, the administration insisted that Saddam "personally and publicly" accept the

Coalition's conditions. Administration officials explained that Bush was "following an endgame

---

[86] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-233, "Saddam Hussein and Iraqi Officials Discussing Turkish, Russian and Chinese Perceptions of Iraq's Occupation of Kuwait," 7 August 1990.

[87] Michael R. Gordon and Bernard E. Trainor, *The Generals' War: The Inside Story of the Conflict in the Gulf* (New York: Little Brown & Co., 1995) p. 457; Michael R. Gordon and Bernard E. Trainor, *Cobra II: The Inside Story of the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq (New York: Pantheon, 2006)*, p. 11.

[88] Michael Kirk and Louis Wiley Jr., producers, "The Long Road to War," *Frontline*, 17 March 2003; accessed 18 June 2013 at www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/longroad/etc/script.html.

[89] James Gerstenzang, "Bush Airs Thoughts on End of Gulf War; Leadership: Former President Tells Interviewer that U.S.-Headed Coalition Might Have Done More to Weaken Saddam Hussein," *Los Angeles Times*, 15 January 1996.

strategy designed to make Saddam commit political suicide by admitting his errors, discrediting himself and possibly opening himself to an internal coup."[90] After the war Bush acknowledged that "there's room for some ex post facto criticism" for the administration's failure to remove Saddam, observing that the United States might have demanded that Saddam or an official one level below Saddam attend a humiliating surrender ceremony to demonstrate that Iraq was "throwing in the towel."[91]

Now, four years after Iraq had generated domestic audience costs by declaring Kuwait an integral unit of Iraq, the United States and other Security Council members required it to commit itself to respect Kuwaiti's sovereignty and borders in the exact manner in which it had earlier committed itself to the occupation and incorporation of Kuwait. Iraq must recognize Kuwait's sovereignty and borders via an RCC decree, signed by Saddam, ratified by Iraq's National Assembly, and published in the *Official Gazette* of Iraq. U.S. French, and British officials were adamant on this point.[92]

Representatives from these countries to the Security Council made clear their belief that Iraq's formal confirmation of its informal assurances, ratified through Iraqi institutions, would tie Iraq's hands and limit its future maneuverability in a way that public, but less formal, assurances would not. France's ambassador to the United Nations said that the proposed procedure provided a means for the Iraqis to credibly "demonstrate their good faith." The procedure was important, he explained, since it constituted "a public political gesture showing that Iraq is entering a new stage in its relations with Kuwait." From the perspective of France's leaders, he

---

[90] David Hoffman, "No Martyrdom for Saddam," *Washington Post*, 27 February 1991.

[91] James Gerstenzang, "Bush Airs Thoughts on End of Gulf War; Leadership: Former President Tells Interviewer that U.S.-Headed Coalition Might Have Done More to Weaken Saddam Hussein," *Los Angeles Times*, 15 January 1996.

[92] United Nations, Security Council, "Provisional Verbatim Record of the 3439th Meeting," 17 October 1994, accessed 17 May 2013 at http://www.undemocracy.com/S-PV-3439.

continued, it would serve as a "vital gesture" and "constitute a turning point."[93] The procedure "buttressed" Iraq's commitment, strengthening it, the United Kingdom's representative on the Security Council agreed.[94]

Kozyrev did not discuss this specific procedure during the Security Council discussions but he did indicate belief that when Iraq issued official statements and publicized them widely in the Iraqi media, so the Iraqi people knew the content of the state's agreements, that this increased the credibility of the agreement. He highlighted for Security Council members the merits of the recent Russia-Iraq Joint Communique in which "Iraq affirmed its readiness to resolve in a positive manner the issue of recognizing Kuwait's sovereignty and borders, as laid down in Security Council resolution 844 (1993)." He stated, "It is significant that this document was given wide coverage in the Iraqi mass media. Thus its content, including those parts relating to the need to recognize Kuwait and its borders, is now known to the Iraqi people."[95]

The United States, according to Albright, considered Iraq's assurances in the Joint Communique no more credible than any of its earlier broken promises, even though the Joint Communique was an official agreement and Iraqi leaders had made the agreement known to the Iraqi people. To have any value whatsoever, she said, the Communique would need to be followed by unambiguous Iraqi actions. Iraq had begun redeploying its RG from southern Iraq, she acknowledged, but the redeployment was far too ambiguous and easily reversible. Iraq had shown years of "continued disdain for adherence to its commitments," she stated, and should not be trusted. Moreover, she suggested, Iraq should especially not be trusted on this particular issue since from its invasion of Kuwait until its recent deployment of troops Iraq's state-run media

---

[93] United Nations, Security Council, "Provisional Verbatim Record of the 3439th Meeting," 17 October 1994, p. 6, accessed 17 May 2013 at http://www.undemocracy.com/S-PV-3439.
[94] United Nations, Security Council, "Provisional Verbatim Record of the 3439th Meeting," 17 October 1994, p. 13, accessed 17 May 2013 at http://www.undemocracy.com/S-PV-3439.
[95] United Nations, Security Council, "Provisional Verbatim Record of the 3439th Meeting," 17 October 1994, p. 3, 14, accessed 17 May 2013 at http://www.undemocracy.com/S-PV-3439.

continued to treat Kuwait as Iraq's 19th province by never mentioning "Kuwait." Iraq's lack of

credibility, she continued, is why the U.S. Government considered "so important" the procedure

requiring Iraq to recognize Kuwait according to Iraq's constitutional procedures. Iraq's public

promises and official statements of intent were mere words, she said, unlike the actions the

Security Council was requiring Iraq to take to recognize Kuwait. "Words are cheap," she stated,

whereas "Actions are the coin of the realm."[96]

Albright expressed belief that forcing Iraq to renege in this manner on its earlier

commitment to incorporate Kuwait would cost Saddam crucial domestic support, which could

lead domestic audiences to remove him from power. She explained, "It is hard to imagine how

the current Iraqi Government can continue in power while…giving up its dreams of annexing the

sovereign State of Kuwait," along with renouncing terrorism and ceasing to repress the Iraqi

people.[97]

Iraqi leaders also seem to have believed that a formal, institutional commitment would be

costly in the sense that it would commit Iraq in ways that a less formal and less official

arrangement would not. Originally, Iraq tried to deescalate the crisis via an Iraqi statement of

intent in an Iraq-Russia joint declaration. The relevant stated read, "Iraq affirmed its readiness to

resolve in a positive manner the issue of recognizing Kuwait's sovereignty and borders, as laid

down in Security Council resolution 833 (1993)." The resolution did not specify the conditions

under which Iraq would actually recognize Kuwait's sovereignty and borders, but did speak of

unspecified "measures to build confidence among the States of the region, removing mutual

---

[96] United Nations, Security Council, "Provisional Verbatim Record of the 3439th Meeting," 17 October 1994, p. 7 and 18, accessed 17 May 2013 at http://www.undemocracy.com/S-PV-3439; United Nations, Security Council, "Provisional Verbatim Record of the 3438th Meeting," 15 October 1994, p. 5, accessed 17 May 2013 at http://www.undemocracy.com/S-PV-3438.
[97] United Nations, Security Council, "Provisional Verbatim Record of the 3439th Meeting," 17 October 1994, p. 19, accessed 17 May 2013 at http://www.undemocracy.com/S-PV-3439.

suspicion and creating a climate of trust…"[98] When faced with Western demands that Iraq recognize Kuwait in the same manner as it had officially incorporated it in 1990, Saddam found it expedient to walk back from this public commitment, despite the costs in domestic legitimacy that Iraqi leaders recognized that this action could incur.

Saddam sought to minimize these costs by downplaying the role of Kuwait in the 1991 Gulf War. Iraqis must understand that the war in 1991, the "Mother of all Battles," was not primarily about Kuwait, Saddam repeatedly emphasized to his advisers. Iraq's invasion of Kuwait on 2 August 1990 did not constitute the basis of the West's animosity toward Iraq, he explained, since the West had already imposed sanctions on food imports and technology transfers to Iraq and was trying to weaken Iraq to prevent it from accruing additional power after its victory over Iran. If the invasion of Kuwait was not the source of Iraq's conflict with the United States and its allies, it followed, then recognizing Kuwait's borders would not constitute a betrayal of everything for which Iraqis had fought and bled in the ensuing years.[99]

Saddam's worst fear, he told his advisers, was that Iraq's conflict with the West would be interpreted within the framework of "the Kuwait issue." The Iraqi leadership needed the Iraqi people "to feel in every step it is taking that it is victorious," Saddam explained. Inasmuch as Iraqis believed that the "Mother of all Battles" and the crisis in 1994 revolved around Kuwait, he continued, they would feel defeated. If, however, they believed that Kuwait was at the heart of a conspiracy against Iraq in 1990, and that the Iraqi leadership concluded in 1994 that Iraq could

---

[98] United Nations, "Joint Communiqué on the Outcome of the Meeting in Baghdad," Annex to the "Letter Dated 14 October 1994 from the Representatives of Iraq and the Russian Federation to the United Nations Addressed to the President of the Security Council," S/1994/1173, 15 October 1994, p. 2, accessed 17 June 2013 at http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N94/401/35/PDF/N9440135.pdf?OpenElement.

[99] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-262. Saddam's reference to sanctions on food imports apparently refers to the $600 million drop, from 1989 to 1990, in the Department of Agriculture's export credit guarantees to Iraq. The amount dropped from $1.1 billion to $500 million. See U.S. Government Accountability Office, "Report to the Chairman, Task Force on Urgent Fiscal Issues, Committee on the Budget, House of Representatives," "International Trade: Iraq's Participation in U.S. Agricultural Export Programs," NSIAD-91-76, 14 November 1990; accessed 17 June 2013 at www.gao.gov/products/NSIAD-91-76.

best defend itself and prosper by ceasing to attack the colonial powers' "forward preparation

base" [i.e. Kuwait], he explained, then the people would maintain its morale. As ACT would

predict, Saddam was concerned about how Iraqis would perceive and react to his decision to

renege on an unambiguous, public commitment. His concern seemed to revolve around the

notion that backing down on his commitment would lead to discouragement and lethargic

support, however, which would not necessarily have put his regime at risk.[100]

How to educate Iraqis about the regime's position became a matter of some concern to

Iraqi leaders. In a meeting sometime relatively soon after Iraq had publicly recognized Kuwait's

borders, Taha Ma'ruf observed that Iraqis were scared that now that Iraqi leaders had recognized

Kuwait, Kirkuk, an oil-rich Kurdish city, would also gain formal independence from Iraq. The

regime needed to hold a public meeting or take other actions to mobilize the Iraqis and to

strengthen pro-regime morale, he advocated, for the people to "trust us again" so Iraq could

survive its economic crisis. Al-Majid disagreed. Mobilizing the population was dangerous and

could backfire, he warned, and could terrify Iraqis just as had occurred in 1990 when the regime

evacuated part of Baghdad in a civil defense exercise to prepare for nuclear strikes. Iraqi leaders

and the Iraqi media should say nothing at all about Kuwait, he said, since in 1990 Iraq had signed

papers stating that Kuwait was merely a province or region of Iraq. In this disagreement

between Ma'ruf and al-Majid, Saddam sided with al-Majid. Iraq's newspapers should not

mention Kuwait at all, he ordered, until Aziz would provide new guidance at some point in the

future.[101]

Iraq had formally recognized Kuwait's sovereignty and its borders, yet, from at least

Aziz's perspective, this would have no long-term restrictive effect on Iraq's behavior. As Aziz

---

[100] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-262.

[101] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-294, "Saddam Hussein meeting with the Revolutionary Command Council regarding sanctions and Kuwait," 9 March 1994.

reminded his colleagues, Iraq had recognized the borders in a time of weakness and would

change its stance on Kuwait once it found itself in more favorable circumstances. Recognizing

Kuwait, he said, was merely a temporary, tactical move that was necessary for Iraq to escape the

economic sanctions.[102]

Once Iraq had escaped the sanctions, he continued, "we will have missiles and we will

have atomic bombs, because we believe in having them when we can." He explained,

> The United States' main goal is to overthrow the Iraqi regime, because they don't trust
> Iraq's leadership. They say, 'If we leave Iraq alone now, Iraq will get better in time and
> then they will do the same thing [i.e. invade Kuwait] again.' In my opinion, they are
> right.[103]

When Iraq had nuclear weapons and appropriate delivery systems, Aziz was clearly suggesting,

it would find itself in a much more favorable circumstance to re-invade and re-occupy Kuwait.

Iraq's formal commitment to recognize Kuwait's borders would mean little, Aziz made clear,

once Iraq had nuclear weapons to facilitate conventional aggression.[104] From Aziz's perspective,

Iraq's presence or absence of nuclear weapons would determine Kuwait's future, not whether

Iraqi domestic audiences would punish the Iraqi regime for reneging on its new, public

commitment to respect Kuwait's borders.

Iraq's public commitment might prevent it in the near-term from deploying RG forces to

southern Iraq and from explicitly questioning Kuwait's sovereignty or borders, yet, Aziz stated,

---

[102] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-294.

[103] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-294. Aziz is probably referring to Albright's comments at a recent meeting of the Security Council. Albright said, "The threshold question this Council faces is not how long Iraq must cooperate with United Nations requirements on weapons of mass destruction before the oil embargo is suspended; the real question is whether Iraq will continue to cooperate with United Nations inspectors after the embargo is suspended." Albright also expressed wholehearted U.S. agreement with the UK representative's statement that "the continued presence of President of Saddam Hussein as President of Iraq" made it more difficult to conclude that Iraq would refrain from pursuing WMD with which to threaten its neighbors after the sanctions had ended. See United Nations, Security Council, "Provisional Verbatim Record of the 3439th Meeting," 17 October 1994, p. 8, 14, and 19, accessed 17 May 2013 at http://www.undemocracy.com/S-PV-3439.

[104] For evidence that Saddam believed that Iraqi nuclear weapons would facilitate Iraqi conventional aggression, see Hal Brands and David Palkki, "Saddam, Israel, and the Bomb: Nuclear Alarmism Justified," *International Security* Vol. 36, No. 1 (Summer 2011) pp. 133-66.

it would not prevent Iraq from initiating future crises or undermining the Kuwaiti government in ways less easily attributable to Iraq. Until Iraq was able to re-invade Kuwait, Aziz recommended, the Iraqi Intelligence Service should blow things up in Kuwait to terrify the Kuwaitis. He explained that unlike threatening Kuwait through Iraq's newspapers, conducting terrorism against Kuwait was a good idea since Iraq could avoid attribution.[105]

Iraq could avoid attribution, he continued, "Just like when they accused the Iraqi intelligence member in Basra of the Bush assassination attempt when we said 'No, we didn't do it; that was an Iranian job.'" Aziz's statement is somewhat odd given that the Clinton administration blamed Iraq for the attempted assassination and retaliated by attacking Iraq's intelligence headquarters with 23 Tomahawk missiles. According to Saddam and al-Majid, this attack came within 30 minutes of when Saddam had left the building.[106] Aziz was probably referring to widespread skepticism of the evidence linking Iraq to the attack.[107]

Terrorizing the Kuwaitis was important, Aziz and his colleagues believed, since the Kuwaitis allegedly bribed UNSCOM officials to find Iraq in noncompliance with its disarmament obligations and bribed other officials not to lift the sanctions on Iraq. If Iraq could sufficiently terrify the Kuwaitis, Iraqi thinking went, perhaps it could compel them to drop their support for the sanctions.[108] Mohammed told Saddam that Kuwait and other gulf states were indirectly responsible for the sanctions because they bribed governments and officials not to lift the sanctions. Kuwait could end the sanctions simply by asking the United States to do so, he opined. Barzan Al-Tikriti agreed. The Kuwaiti people were natural cowards, he said. If Iraq pressured the Kuwaiti people, the people would pressure their rulers, he predicted, which would

---

[105] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-294.
[106] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-294.
[107] For one very skeptical account of the evidence, see Seymour M. Hersh, "A Case Not Closed," *The New Yorker*, 1 November 1993.
[108] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-294.

lead Kuwait to end its support for the sanctions. Al-Tikriti even expressed belief that once

Kuwaitis heard that the RG was heading their way from Basra, they would begin bandwagoning

with Iraq against their rulers. [109]

Saddam did not discount the possibility. He stated that if guerrilla wars ensured in

Kuwait, Iraq could promise various tribes that they could keep the spoils from areas they were

able to "liberate." [110] The Iraqi state may promise to respect Kuwait's sovereignty, he seems to

have implied, but this would not commit the tribes. As Kamil would learn in 1995 when he

returned from Jordan to Iraq, lured by Saddam's promise that Iraq would not harm him upon his

return, in Saddam's Iraq one also needed a binding promise restricting tribal behavior. Upon

Kamil's return, Saddam allowed (and encouraged) Kamil's tribe to kill him, all while state

security personnel looked on. Iraq had committed itself, which imposed certain limitations on

Iraqi state behavior, but retained room to maneuver by taking advantage of attribution difficulties

stemming from ambiguous actor-agent relationships.

This was, of course, not the first time in this study that Iraq or the United States had made

use of ambiguity in pursuit of strategic advantage. As described in chapter two, Iraq had issued

intentionally ambiguous signals about its intentions prior to invading Kuwait. As described in

chapter three, Baker sought to deter Iraq from using chemical or biological weapons, along with

other actions, by issuing what he described as intentionally ambiguous threats of U.S. tactical

nuclear retaliation. Nor, from the perspective of most scholars who have written after 2003 on

Iraq's coerced disarmament, was it the last.

---

[109] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-487, "Saddam and his Senior Advisors Discuss Kuwait, the Importance of Mobilizing Public Opinion, and American Opposition to Iraq," undated (circa 11 October 1990 to January 1991.
[110] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-487.

Iraq's Ambiguous Disarmament

When Iraq Survey Group weapon inspectors failed to locate stockpiles of prohibited

weapons and active WMD programs following the 2003 invasion of Iraq, analysts began asking

why, if Iraq had given up its WMD, it did not signal this more clearly to the international

community. Analysts wondered why, given that Iraq had no WMD, it had not allowed UN

inspectors to verify its disarmament. Doing so, after all, would have undermined the White

House's case for war and perhaps averted the coalition's invasion. Scholars have

overwhelmingly reached the conclusion that Saddam pursued a strategy of strategic ambiguity.

Saddam, scholars have concluded, sought to signal UN inspectors that Iraq had disarmed, while

retaining a certain level of ambiguity about Iraq's disarmament to deter various threats to the

regime. These threats included domestic actors seeking to replace the regime for failing to make

good on a perceived commitment to retaining WMD, attacks by regional rivals, and an attack by

the United States.

Ambiguity to Avoid Domestic Audience Costs

Many scholars have written that Saddam refused to come completely clean for fear of

appearing weak in the eyes of domestic opponents, thereby inciting challenges to his regime.

Iraqi audience costs play a key role, though only implicitly, in these accounts. Saddam and his

senior advisers, who for many years had spoken publicly and privately about Iraq's need for

WMD to deter attacks against Iraq and to extend Iraq's regional influence, were reportedly

concerned that the regime would incur domestic audience costs if it became clear to Iraqis in the

military and security services that the regime had not made good on this perceived
commitment.[111]

This argument is not implausible. The regime, on several occasions, had reportedly
bluffed about possessing and using WMD as a means of suppressing domestic uprisings and
preserving its power. For instance, it appears that Chemical Ali ordered his lieutenants to drop
flour on resisters during the 1991 Shi'a uprising as a means of terrifying them into submission
with the appearance of a chemical strike.[112] According to an unconfirmed defector report, Iraqi
security personnel, dressed in white uniforms and gas masks, terrified an angry Shi'a crowd in
Najaf and compelled it to disperse with the implicit threat of chemical warfare following the
assassination of Ayatollah Mohammed Sadeq al-Sadr in 1999.[113] According to Waleed al-Rawi,
an Iraqi Brigadier General who had served as Secretary to Minister of Defense Sultan Hashim
prior to the 2003 war,

> A friend of mine heard from Chemical Ali that if Iran attacked us, we would use 'small
> bombs'. By 'small bombs,' my friend understood that Chemical Ali was referring to
> nuclear weapons. He thought maybe Iraq had nuclear weapons based on this comment.
> People who heard Chemical Ali say this kind of thing would believe that it had come
> from Saddam." [114]

If accurate, these examples reveal the utility the regime derived from bluffing before domestic
audiences about its WMD capabilities and intentions.

Saddam might have sought to mislead his generals about Iraqi capabilities to avoid a
deterioration of Iraqi military morale. Shortly before December 2002, Saddam reportedly told

---

[111] Etel Solingen, *Nuclear Logics: Contrasting Paths in East Asia and the Middle East* (Princeton: Princeton
University Press, 2007), p. 163; Robert S. Litwak, *Regime Change: U.S. Strategy through the Prism of 9/11*
(Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2007, p. 325; David Hannay, "Three Iraqi Intelligence Failures
Reconsidered," *Survival* Vol. 51, No. 6 (December 2009—January 2010), pp. 16-17; Achim Rohde, *State-Society
Relations in Ba'thist Iraq: Facing Dictatorship* (New York: Routledge, 2010), p. 53; F. Gregory Gause, III, *The
International Relations of the Persian Gulf* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 153.
[112] Federal Bureau of Investigation, interrogation report of Ali Hassan al-Majid, 9 April 2004, p. 11, accessed 12
August 2013 at http://vault.fbi.gov.
[113] Patrick Cockburn, "Saddam Seizes the Moment," *Independent*, 11 April 1999.
[114] Author's interview with Waleed al-Rawi, Washington, DC, 8 November 2012.

his generals to do their jobs and leave the rest to him since he had "something up his sleeve."[115]

According to Aziz, the generals were surprised when he informed them in December 2002 that

Iraq had no WMD, "because his boasting had led many to believe Iraq had some hidden

capability." According to the *Duelfer Report*, "Military morale dropped rapidly when he told

senior officers they would have to fight the United States without WMD."[116]

Saddam might also have favored incremental compliance with disarmament demands, in

part, to preserve the morale and loyalty of employees and bureaucratic supporters of Iraq's

WMD establishments. According to Saddam's FBI interrogator, Saddam acknowledged that

some Iraq government employees were reluctant to cooperate with inspectors as they were

dedicated to their work. He explained, "It was difficult for them to be told one day to open all of

their files and turn over all of their work and government secrets to outsiders. It took time and

occurred in steps."[117]

This might have been Saddam's way of shifting blame to his subordinates, yet Iraqi

officials appear, on various occasions, to have violated UN *and* Iraqi prohibitions on weapons-

related research and import activities. Amir Rashid explained to Saddam sometime around

November 1995 that Iraqi officials had imported prohibited gyroscopes through Jordan, without

informing their superiors, since "some of the [Iraqi] specialists or others think that we are strict

on them, especially Husam and I, concerning the issue of freezing the activity, and that is

causing U.S. a problem with the Special Commission." Saddam responded, "What is the truth?

Where is the truth in this?"[118] While on later occasions Iraqi officials reportedly disregarded

Saddam's orders to comply with inspectors out of belief that Saddam secretly wanted continued

---

[115] *Duelfer Report*, vol. 1, "Regime Strategic Intent," p. 65.
[116] *Duelfer Report*, vol. 1, "Regime Strategic Intent," p. 65.
[117] George Piro, Casual Conversation with Saddam, 13 May 2004, p. 1.
[118] Woods, Palkki, and Stout, *The Saddam Tapes*, pp. 280-81.

obstructionism, Saddam might well have seen in this merely the determination of patriotic, excessively dedicated officials.[119]

In any case, the bulk of the available evidence indicates that Saddam did not attempt to mislead senior regime officials about his WMD capabilities. In late August 1991 he told his advisors, "I have given them [the Americans] everything. I mean, I have given them everything: the missiles, and the chemical, biological and nuclear weapons."[120] In 1995 he told his inner circle, in a discussion about chemical and biological weapons, "We don't have anything hidden."[121] In August 1995, Saddam complained to his advisors that Iraq had presented everything required of it, and "We don't have anything left," yet the sanctions remained.[122] On a separate occasion he stated that the inspectors "destroyed the weapons," yet wondered, given the inspectors' demands for documents, whether Iraq could "guarantee that somebody didn't forget a file."[123]

In a meeting from around late November 1998, he recalled for his inner circle a declaration he had ordered at a Council of Ministers meeting stating that Iraq had no prohibited rockets, biological research, chemical weapons, enriched uranium production or armaments. To drive home the point, he added, "I am afraid, comrades, after all I said that you might think we still have hidden chemical weapons, missiles and so forth. We have nothing; not even one screw."[124] In a different meeting he told his inner circle, "They destroyed everything. So what is left?…We cooperated with the resolutions 100% and you all know that…"[125] In January 2002

---

[119] *Duelfer Report*, vol. 1, "Regime Strategic Intent," pp. 9-10.
[120] Woods, Palkki, and Stout, *The Saddam Tapes*, p. 254.
[121] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-000-990, "Meeting between Saddam Hussein and the Security Council regarding Iraqi biological and nuclear weapons programs," 5 February 1995.
[122] CRRC, , "Iraqi Leaders Discuss Oil Sales, Ekeus, a Possible Biological Project, and the Iraqi Media," undated.
[123] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-202, "Saddam Hussein Meeting with the General Command of the Armed Forces," undated.
[124] Woods, Palkki, and Stout, *The Saddam Tapes*, p. 293.
[125] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-198, "Meeting between Saddam Hussein and the Revolutionary Command Council

Saddam asked his ministers, "What can they discover, when we have nothing?"[126] In late 2002,

Saddam declared in meetings with his Revolutionary Command Council, National Command,

ministerial council, and military commanders that Iraq had no WMD.[127]

According to Saddam's FBI interrogator, Saddam "claimed on several occasions he held

meetings with all of his ministers and asked them specifically if Iraq had WMD that he was

unaware of. All of his ministers stated no, as they cited they knew Hussein's position on WMD

matters clearly."[128] When Hamdani asked Saddam in 2003 if he was planning to use chemical

weapons against Coalition forces, Saddam did not indicate that he had "special munitions" up his

sleeve, but neither did he deny Iraqi possession. He responded, "No, there is no use for that."[129]

When Saddam told his ministers in March 2003 to "resist one week and after that I will take

over," it appears he was referring to an Iraqi insurrection against the US-led occupiers rather than

a hidden WMD capability.[130]

Iraqi officials who questioned whether Saddam had truly disarmed, or who wondered if

he was trying to send ambiguous signals, do not provide evidence that Saddam was trying to be

ambiguous. While Huwaysh wondered in 2002 if Iraq had completely disarmed, he attributed

his doubts to Bush's accusations rather than Saddam's rhetoric or Iraqi behavior.[131] Similarly,

General Raad Hamdani, who served from 1991-2003 as a Division Commander and Chief of

Staff of Iraq's Republican Guard, believes that Saddam "used the technique of vagueness, i.e.

deterrence through doubt, to avoid war, if possible." He came to this conclusion, however,

because of reports in "our enemy's media outlets" of Iraqi WMD, as well as Saddam's firm

---

regarding the rules of the United Nations Security Council," circa April 1993 to December 1993.
[126] *Duelfer Report*, vol. 1, "Regime Strategic Intent," p. 62.
[127] *Duelfer Report*, vol. 1, "Regime Strategic Intent," p. 65.
[128] George Piro, Casual Conversation with Saddam, 13 May 2004.
[129] Woods, et al, *Saddam's War*: *An Iraqi Perspective of the Iran-Iraq War* (Fort McNair, Washington DC: Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University, 2009) pp. 55-56.
[130] *Duelfer Report*, vol. 1, "Regime Strategic Intent," pp. 65-66.
[131] *Duelfer Report*, vol. 1, "Regime Strategic Intent," p. 62.

political stances and high morale. While during this 13-year period Hamdani attended most

Republican Guard meetings with Saddam, he makes clear that Saddam "never signaled the

existence of WMD, neither in a statement of any kind nor by any hints."[132]

General Waleed provides additional evidence that Saddam had not sought to cultivate

uncertainty among Iraqi military officers. "I knew that Iraq had no WMD," he recalled, "It was

perfectly clear." Waleed stated that he had never seen nor heard of Saddam hinting that Iraq

retained WMD. According to Waleed, Iraq's lack of WMD was also clear to Sultan Hashim,

Iraq's Minister of Defense.[133]

Iraqi concerns about regime security did lead to increased uncertainties about Iraq's

WMD stockpiles and programs, yet the ambiguity does not appear to have been more than an

unintended byproduct of policies intended to protect the regime. For instance, Iraq fiercely

resisted certain UN inspections and intelligence collection techniques for fear that they would

provide the United States with targeting information on the Ba'ath leadership.[134] UNSCOM

efforts to inspect Republican Guard, Special Republican Guard, and Iraqi intelligence facilities

proved particularly contentious, as these groups had responsibilities not only for securing Iraq's

WMD but also for protecting the regime.[135] The regime also opposed inspectors' interviews of

scientists for fear that inspectors would obtain information endangering regime security.[136]

Compartmentalization of Iraq's WMD programs and security apparatus, intended largely

to secure the regime, also led to a good deal of ambiguity. While Saddam's lieutenants told U.S.

interrogators that they were unaware of any remaining Iraqi WMD, some expressed uncertainty

about whether other elements within the government might have maintained secret stockpiles or

---

[132] David Palkki's e-mail correspondence with General Raad Hamdani, 11 January 2011. I am grateful to Khalid Seirafi for translating this correspondence.

[133] Author's interview with General Waleed, Washington, DC, 8 November 2012.

[134] *Duelfer Report*, vol. 1, "Regime Strategic Intent," p. 64; CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-000-786.

[135] *Duelfer Report*, vol. 1, "Annex C: Iraq's Security Services," pp. 85-95.

[136] *Duelfer Report*, vol. 1, "Regime Strategic Intent," p. 62.

programs.[137] Coming clean would be extremely difficult, Hussein Kamil explained to Saddam

and a handful of other senior advisors on 2 May 1995, since "Some of our teams are working in

one direction, where another team does not know that they are working above in the same

direction." Teams "not known to anyone" continued working on nuclear issues, he added, "even

though everything is done and we are through with it…"[138]

In its totality, the evidence discovered to date casts doubt on the notion that Saddam

refused to signal Iraq's disarmament for fear that domestic audiences would punish him for

reneging on a widely perceived commitment to retaining and obtaining WMD. No clear

evidence supports this explanation, whereas Saddam repeatedly told his advisers, generals, and

others that Iraq was disarmed. Saddam might have done more to limit bureaucratic

compartmentalization and infighting, though it is far from clear that the resulting ambiguity was

a goal as opposed to a mere byproduct of a bureaucratic structure and procedures designed to

protect the Iraqi leader.

Ambiguity to Deter Regional Threats

Some analysts have concluded that Saddam pursued a policy of "strategic ambiguity" to

deter aggression by regional adversaries while simultaneously complying enough with

disarmament demands to lift the sanctions.[139] As evidence, they cite a June 2000 speech in

which Saddam said that if the Israelis "keep a rifle and then tell me I have the right to possess

only a sword, then we would say no. As long as the rifle has become a means to defend our

---

[137] *Duelfer Report*, vol. 1, "Regime Strategic Intent," p. 62.

[138] Woods, Palkki, and Stout, *The Saddam Tapes*, p. 275-279.

[139] The phrase "strategic ambiguity" comes from James H. Lebovic, *Deterring International Terrorism and Rogue States* (New York: Routledge, 2007), p. 31.

country against anybody who may have designs against it, then we will try our best to acquire the

rifle." The Iraqi people would "view their right that lies on the horizon and the right they have in

their hand, and seek to achieve what is on the horizon while protecting what they have in their

hand," he continued.[140]

As further support, scholars cite FBI interrogation reports of Saddam and Chemical Ali.

According to FBI Special Agent George Piro, Saddam told him that his June 2000 speech

> …was meant to respond to Iraq's regional threat. Hussein believed that Iraq could not
> appear weak to its enemies, especially Iran. Iraq was being threatened by others in the
> region and must appear able to defend itself."

On the other hand, Piro continued, Saddam told him that the speech was also intended to

demonstrate Iraq's compliance with UN disarmament demands.[141]

Several Iraqi principals provide similar accounts. Aziz, for instance, confirmed Piro's

basic account. A journalist from *The Guardian*, who interviewed Aziz in 2010, reported the

following:

> When asked why Saddam kept the US guessing about his weapons programme, he
> confirmed the dictator's account to his captors that he had been playing to Iran, not to the
> west. "Partially, it was about Iran [the deterrent factor]," Aziz said. "They had waged
> war on us for eight years so we Iraqis had a right to deter them. Saddam was a proud
> man. He had to defend the dignity of Iraq. He had to show that he was not wrong, or
> weak. "Iran was our biggest enemy. We had to defy them whatever the cost. Now Iran
> is building a weapons programme. Everybody knows it and nobody is doing anything.
> Why?"[142]

According to Chemical Ali, he and other senior advisors "'pressed' Hussein to tell UNSCOM

and the world that Iraq has no WMD," but Saddam refused, claiming that Israel would strike if it

---

[140] For the text of the speech, see "Saddam Says Iraq Ready to Destroy Weapons if Others Reciprocate," *Republic of Iraq TV/BBC*, 14 June 2000, accessed 12 August 2013 at www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/168/34629.html.

[141] George Piro, Casual Conversation with Saddam, 11 June 2004, p. 1.

[142] Martin Chulov, "Tariq Aziz: 'Britain and the US killed Iraq. I wish I was martyred'", *The Guardian*, 5 August 2010.

knew Iraq was disarmed.[143]

There are important reasons to be skeptical of the "strategic ambiguity" interpretation. First, the thrust of Saddam's June 2000 speech follows closely the pattern of Iraq's acceptance of UNSC Resolution 833, which required Iraq to recognize its border with Kuwait, and Iraq's acceptance of a UN demand for an air survey over Iraqi territory. In all three, Iraq declared its compliance while decrying the demands as unjust. When Iraq begrudgingly accepted Resolution 833, it announced: "Iraq does not agree; Iraq complies."[144] Saddam instructed his advisors that when they announced Iraq's acceptance of UN overhead flights, they should say, "despite our conviction of our position, and the correctness of our position, etc., we will not hamstring aviation of this type if it is forced upon us."[145] In the June 2000 speech, Saddam criticized the double standard but confirmed Iraqi adherence by acknowledging that "Iraq does not have anything [WMD]…" Iraq understood that it was currently unable to acquire WMD, yet reserved the right "on the horizon" (i.e. in the future) to pursue the same weapons its neighbors possessed. Saddam was not sending an ambiguous signal about Iraqi capabilities; rather, he was affirming Iraq's acquiescence to what he considered illegitimate and potentially unsustainable UN demands.

Second, it appears from the FBI interrogation report that Saddam didn't consider the June 2000 speech unique or important. When Piro first asked about the speech, and told Saddam "his own words could be taken as an admission that Iraq possessed WMD," Saddam replied that "his intention was for the region to be fully disarmed." Piro rejected this response, however, telling the captive that "his speech did not project that message." Saddam, apparently unsure what

---

[143] Federal Bureau of Investigation, interrogation report of Ali Hassan al-Majid, 31 January 2004, p. 3, accessed 12 August 2013 at http://vault.fbi.gov.
[144] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-000-791, "Meeting between Saddam Hussein and the Council of Ministers regarding Russia, France, and Arab countries' positions towards the sanctions on Iraq," circa July 1995.
[145] Woods, Palkki, and Stout, *The Saddam Tapes*, p. 260.

exactly he had said, asked to review a copy of his speech before explaining its meaning.

When they returned to the subject a month later, giving Saddam ample time to come up with an acceptable response, Saddam blamed America and Iraq's common enemy: the Iranians. While Piro took from the meeting that Saddam wanted to lead Iran to believe he retained WMD capabilities, his report indicates that the "major factor" behind Saddam's refusal to allow UN inspectors to return might have been concern that they would provide Iran with information on vulnerable Iraqi targets. The report reads,

> Hussein stated he was more concerned about Iran discovering Iraq's weaknesses and vulnerabilities than the repercussions of the United States for his refusal to allow UN inspectors back into Iraq. In his opinion, the UN inspectors would have directly identified to the Iranians where to inflict maximum damage to Iraq. Hussein demonstrated this by pointing at his arm and stated striking someone on the forearm would not have the same effect as striking someone at the elbow or wrist, which would significantly disable the ability to use the arm.

Saddam knew that UN inspectors shared intelligence on Iraq with Baghdad's enemies, leaving it extremely unlikely that he would think he could lead UN inspectors or UN Security Council members to believe that he had disarmed but Israel or Iran that he had not.[146] Moreover, much of what Chemical Ali and Saddam told their interrogators was inaccurate and self-serving.[147] Aziz was provided with Saddam's account and asked if he agreed, which leaves one wondering what he might have said had he not already known how Saddam had responded.

If Saddam sought to mislead Iran about Iraq's capabilities, implementation of this policy was, at best, inconsistent. When senior Iraqi officials met with Ali Fallahian, Iran's Minister of Intelligence, on 3 April 1996, the first item on the agenda was to brief the Iranian Minister on Iraq's "full cooperation regarding the complete disclosure of former armament programs…" As

---

[146] Scott Ritter, *Iraq Confidential: The Untold Story of America's Intelligence Community* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2005), pp. 276-77; CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-298, "Meeting between Saddam Hussein and Iraqi Ministers regarding Iraq under sanctions," undated (circa 1998).

[147] Woods, Palkki, and Stout, *The Saddam Tapes*, p. 329-331; *Duelfer Report*, vol. 1, "Regime Strategic Intent," p. 2.

part of this brief, the Iraqis presented Iran with the "final data" from Iraq's Full, Final and Complete Declaration (FFCD). The FFCD reportedly contained many errors, yet if Iraq truly sought to send different signals to UNSCOM and Iran, it is odd that it provided Iranian intelligence and UNSCOM with the identical information on its WMD programs.[148]

The evidence is weaker yet that Iraq attempted to mislead Israel about its capabilities. Amir Rashid, the head of Iraq's National Monitoring Directorate, which oversaw Iraq's contacts with the UN inspectors, expressed appreciation to Scott Ritter, a senior UNSCOM inspector, for making clear to Israel that Iraq was disarmed. According to Ritter, Iraq's Deputy Minister of Defense also indicated appreciation. The Iraqis were under no illusions that they could send one signal to UN inspectors, and another to the Israelis, since they knew full well, thanks in part to an admission by Ritter, that Israel and UNSCOM shared intelligence on the inspections in Iraq.[149]

Ambiguity Due to Incredible U.S. Assurances of Regime Survival

Some scholars have argued that a lack of credible U.S. assurances was central to Iraq's failure to comply with international disarmament demands.[150] U.S. announcements that it would pursue regime change and refuse to lift the sanctions regardless of Iraqi behavior, suggests Litwak, "priced the administration out of the reassurance market."[151] Some analysts have even

---

[148] CRRC, SH-MISC-D-000-203, "Report to the Deputy Prime Minister regarding an Iraqi Delegation visit to Russia and France to discuss the situation in Iraq," 6 April 1993, p. 10. The Iraqi report identifies Fallahian as the Minister of Security.

[149] Ritter, *Iraq Confidential*, pp. 276-77.

[150] UN Security Council Resolution 687 called on Iraq to verifiably give up its WMD and WMD related programs, as well as rockets with ranges in excess of 150km. Iraq was allowed to maintain its conventional weapons.

[151] Robert S. Litwak, "Non-proliferation and the Dilemmas of Regime Change," *Survival* Vol. 45, No. 4 (2003/2004), p. 28; Litwak, *Regime Change*, pp. 136–37; David M. Malone, *The International Struggle over Iraq* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 157; Nimah Mazaheri, "Iraq and the Domestic Political Effects of Economic Sanctions," *Middle East Journal* Vol. 64, No. 2 (2010), pp. 255-56; Bruce W. Jentleson and Christopher A. Whytock, "Who 'Won' Libya?," *International Security* Vol. 30, No. 3 (2005/2006).

concluded that Iraq's ambiguous disarmament stemmed from a desire to satisfy disarmament demands while maintaining enough ambiguity to deter a U.S. attack.[152]

There is something to be said for this line of argument. Saddam and his advisors were perfectly aware of American leaders' statements indicating that the sanctions would remain as long as Saddam was in power, and suspected that no amount of Iraqi compliance would satisfy the United States.[153] Albright made clear that the United States would not take "yes" on Iraq's disarmament for an answer. In a 17 October 1994 meeting of the UN Security Council, she stated:

> The threshold question this Council faces is not how long Iraq must cooperate with United Nations requirements on weapons of mass destruction before the oil embargo is suspended; the real question is whether Iraq will continue to cooperate with United Nations inspectors after the embargo is suspended.[154]

Albright also expressed wholehearted U.S. agreement with the UK representative's statement that "the continued presence of President of Saddam Hussein as President of Iraq" made it more difficult to conclude that Iraq would refrain from pursuing WMD with which to threaten its neighbors after the sanctions had ended.[155] Over a decade before Douglas Feith, who served as Under Secretary of Defense for Policy under George W. Bush, suggested that the existence of Iraqi stockpiles and active programs at a specific point in time were less important than what would happen after the sanctions ended, Albright had laid out the logic before the Security

---

[152] Kenneth Katzman, *Iraq: Weapons Threat, Compliance, Sanctions, and U.S. Policy*, Issue Brief for Congress (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2009), p. 5; Litwak, *Regime Change*, p. 325; "Saddam's Table Talk: Interview with Williamson Murray," *Yale Journal of International Affairs* (Winter/Spring 2006), pp. 39-40; accessed 29 June 2013 at http://yalejournal.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/062104murray.pdf. Murray places less certainty in this conclusion than Katzman or Litwak.

[153] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-000-850.

[154] United Nations, Security Council, "Provisional Verbatim Record of the 3439th Meeting," 17 October 1994, p. 8, 14, and 19, accessed 17 May 2013 at http://www.undemocracy.com/S-PV-3439.

[155] United Nations, Security Council, "Provisional Verbatim Record of the 3439th Meeting," 17 October 1994, p. 8, 14, and 19, accessed 17 May 2013 at http://www.undemocracy.com/S-PV-3439.

Council.[156] Iraq could "have sanctions with inspectors or sanctions without inspectors," Saddam

told his advisors.[157] Logically, the lack of credible U.S. assurances would seem to undermine

the efficacy of the disarmament effort.[158]

Saddam had long suspected that the United States wished to remove him from power, but

does not seem to have considered U.S. rhetoric about replacing his regime credible. Even at the

height of U.S. support for Iraq in the Iran-Iraq War and the postwar years of U.S. engagement,

Saddam suspected that the United States sought to overthrow his Ba'athist regime.[159] From

Saddam's suspicious perspective, the Americans had always been "conspiring bastards."[160]

When U.S. calls for military action and a regime change in Iraq increased in 1998, however,

Saddam expressed belief that these were hollow threats. He explained,

> When we were kids, I saw a situation in Tikrit and I was surprised of it because I just
> came from the countryside. Two were fighting, and one of them tells the other, "Hold
> me, hold me," and he doesn't hit him, harassing him and screaming. We have the same
> here. They are cursing and saying, "Hold me back, hold me back."[161]

From Saddam's perspective, U.S. officials were grateful that the United Nations provided a face-

saving means to threaten without attacking. The United Nations was not irrelevant, yet, Saddam

realized, neither could it constrain a determined superpower.

Rather than automatically taking U.S. politicians' threats at face value, Saddam tended to

assess the sincerity of Americans' threats and demands based on how he thought actions toward

Iraq would affect U.S. domestic political payoffs. As he explained to his advisors, Republicans

---

[156] Douglas J. Feith, *War and Decision: Inside the Pentagon at the Dawn of the War on Terrorism* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008). For a critique of Feith's claim, see Robert Jervis, "War, Intelligence, and Honesty: A Review Essay," *Political Science Quarterly* Vol. 4, No. 3 (2008-2009), pp. 645-75.

[157] *Duelfer Report*, vol. 1, "Regime Strategic Intent," p. 61.

[158] On the importance of credible assurances, see Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 1977) pp. 74-75.

[159] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-000-554, "Meeting between Saddam Hussein and Iraqi Officials regarding the Political Relationship between Iraq, Iran, and the USA," 17 September 1998; Brands and Palkki, "Saddam, Israel, and the Bomb."

[160] CRRC, SH-SHTP-D-000-567, "Meeting between Saddam Hussein and Ba'ath Party Members regarding attempted assassination of Yasser Arafat in 1985 and U.S. voting in the United Nations," 5 October 1985.

[161] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-199, "Saddam Hussein Meeting Discussing United Nations Reports," 21 July 1998.

in the U.S. Senate pushed publicly for regime change in Iraq in the late 1990s "to make it difficult for Clinton…so that they can tell him he failed in achieving the goal, if the regime is not ousted." However, he continued, the White House understood that it was "unable to oust the regime." He believed that leading Republicans also knew "that the regime cannot be ousted, and because they are aware of this fact they raise the slogan of ousting the regime since they know that Clinton is not going to oust the regime." Republican leaders would not push so hard as to remove Clinton from power, he explained, since then Gore would enjoy incumbent advantages in the presidential election scheduled for two years hence.[162] Saddam clearly assessed the credibility of these American calls for regime change through an audience cost framework. Republicans in the Senate, he also believed, made similar assessments and behaved accordingly.

Ambiguity Due to Russian and French Assurances

American calls for regime change regardless of Iraqi behavior might have undermined Iraqi incentives to comply with U.S. disarmament demands, yet the Iraqis clearly saw incentives in accommodating Russian and French desires. Iraq's partial compliance was intended more to satisfy Russia and France and thereby divide the Security Council than it was to signal some audiences that Iraq had disarmed but others that perhaps it had not. As Saddam explained to his inner circle in Fall 1991,

> We should not harass them [apparently Americans] with our refusal, nor harass them with our acceptance, but we should always place lines for them to cross, lines between refusal and acceptance. I mean, we should involve others, involve them in a manner that different opinions will emerge.[163]

---

[162] Saddam also noted that the United States would not allow the emergence of a new state in Iraq's south or north, at least not at the moment, since the state would fall under Iranian influence. He also considered European opposition to a weak Iraq an important factor. See CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-000-756.

[163] Woods, Palkki, and Stout, *The Saddam Tapes*, pp. 260-61.

The Iraqis understood that the Russians and French were far more willing to accept uncertainty about Iraqi WMD than were their American or British counterparts. As Aziz explained in a 2 May 1995 meeting of Saddam's inner circle, France's ambassador had told the UN Security Council, "The search for perfection is not a reality, you cannot achieve a point of 100 percent in every field." "From the Russian and French position," Aziz continued, it was possible to embarrass UNSCOM and the United States for pursuing unambiguous disarmament.[164] Iraq's incomplete compliance stemmed, at least in part, from the understanding that Russia and France would use this partial compliance to undermine calls for further Iraqi measures.

Senior Russian officials went further than merely tolerating incomplete Iraqi compliance with international disarmament demands; at least from the perspective of some of Saddam's key lieutenants, they insisted upon it. When Iraqi officials were caught trying to import Russian gyroscopes for prohibited delivery systems, and cooperated with UN investigators, senior Russian diplomats reportedly complained to their Iraqi interlocutors that the information had portrayed Russia in an unfavorable light. A "Mr. Karlif," whom the Iraqis identify as the Director of Russia's Department of International Organizations and Conventions, told senior Iraqi officials in a 27 March 1996 meeting that Iraqi forthrightness with UNSCOM following the defection of Hussein Kamil had hurt Iraq's cause. He explained, "If Iraq provided the [UN Special] Commission with new documents, this would increase the suspicion against it. The Americans always say that Iraq should not be trusted; they have proofs from the past." By this, a parenthetical reference in the Iraqi record indicates, "He means not to elaborate in giving details

---

[164] Woods, Palkki, and Stout, *The Saddam Tapes*, p. 277.

regarding receiving supplies from Russia."[165]

In a 28 March 1996 meeting, Victor Possulvalyuk, Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister, informed his Iraqi interlocutors that "Iraq's cooperation, receptivity and sincerity with the Special Commission (UNSCOM)…has damaged Russia's position."[166] The Iraqi Intelligence Service reported to Saddam, following the defection of Hussein Kamil, "The Russian Foreign Ministry was annoyed by the remarks made by the traitor Hussein Kamil where he revealed secrets about the relations with Iraq."[167] Such Russian messages were not lost on Saddam, who in late 1998 told his inner circle that Iraq should not provide UN inspectors with names of Iraq's earlier suppliers of WMD-related materials.[168] Saddam's subordinates appear to have faithfully implemented this guidance.[169]

Conclusions

This chapter provides evidence that even leaders of a personalist state such as Saddam's Iraq believed that they could signal resolve by generating domestic audience costs. Saddam expressed belief that public demonstrations provided a method by which authoritarian regimes in the Middle East could signal resolve, even though he realized that Westerners publicly discounted the demonstrations as non-spontaneous, regime-instigated events. Though Western officials do not seem to have considered the demonstrations credible signals of the Iraqi people's resolve, this did not mean that they completely discounted the importance of audience cost considerations in Iraq. Western leaders expressed belief that official, public Iraqi signals would

---

[165] CRRC, SH-MISC-D-000-203, p. 5.
[166] CRRC, SH-MISC-D-000-203, p. 6.
[167] CRRC, SH-IISX-D-001-000, "Intelligence reports from Iraqi Intelligence Services regarding escapee Hussein Kamil," undated (circa 17 September 1995 - 9 October 1995), p. 11.
[168] Woods, Palkki, and Stout, *The Saddam Tapes*, pp. 292-93.
[169] *Duelfer Report*, vol.1, "Regime Strategic Intent," p. 64; Woods et al, *Iraqi Perspectives Project*, p. 95.

be credible in ways that less official, and less public, signals would not. For instance, the U.S., UK, and French representatives on the UN Security Council all described Iraq's public, official recognition of Kuwait's sovereignty and borders as a credible signal of Iraqi intentions. Albright publicly suggested that Iraq's renunciation of its earlier public commitment to incorporating Kuwait would make it difficult for Saddam to maintain his grasp on power.

Saddam generally assessed the credibility of U.S. threats and assurances within the context of American domestic politics, at times by referencing domestic audience costs. He suffered from various misperceptions and in some regards, perhaps, an idiosyncratic worldview, yet he had no problems grasping the basic logic of ACT. Saddam discounted American leaders' calls for U.S. policy to pursue regime change in Iraq as intended for American domestic audiences. Republican leaders knew they could not remove him from power, he explained, and were merely trying to weaken Clinton politically by forcing him to publicly commit to removing Saddam from power, at which the president would surely fail.

U.S. and Iraqi assessments and behavior in this chapter were guided by a variety of considerations, of which domestic audience costs were but one. Iraqi beliefs about the nature of the international political system, and great power rivalries between the United States and Russia, in particular, frequently had greater effects on Iraqi decision-making than Iraqi views about the role of audience costs. It is hard, however, to explain certain events covered in this chapter without reference to audience costs. Audience cost considerations may not have always been decisive, but neither were they insignificant.

Conclusions

This study presents new evidence that the audience cost mechanism influenced Iraqi and American leaders' thinking and behavior in key interactions between the two states. I find that audience cost considerations were not nearly as important as many leading ACT enthusiasts have supposed, but neither were they quite as inconsequential or irrelevant as recent historical analyses of ACT have suggested. The audience cost mechanism is certainly not a mere "toy," with no explanatory value, nor is the logic at the heart of ACT too complex to guide leaders' thinking.

Saddam, at times, assessed the credibility of American signals within an audience cost framework. For instance, he assessed public threats by Bush administration officials to replace his regime in 1990/1991 as credible, and expressed belief that Bush was removed from office, in part, for failing to make good on these public commitments. He also clearly assessed congressional calls in 1998 to replace his regime within an audience cost framework.

Iraqi and U.S. leaders also believed that the audience cost mechanism affected the credibility of Iraqi commitments. Audience cost theorists describe Saddam's Iraq as the archetypal authoritarian regime that cannot credibly commit itself by use of the audience cost mechanism, yet this was not the view of either American or Iraqi leaders. Saddam believed he was able to signal Iraqis' resolve to U.S. leaders by initiating massive civil defense procedures in 1990 and orchestrating demonstrations against the UN inspectors. Madeleine Albright and other U.S. officials recognized the domestic audience costs that Saddam would pay for unambiguously and publicly backing down, under pressure, from Iraq's public and unambiguous 1990 incorporation of Kuwait as Iraq's 19th province. Saddam would no longer be able to hold power

if he publicly and unambiguously failed to honor his earlier commitment to Kuwaiti territory, she predicted.

This study contains valuable corrections to incorrect historical understandings, in addition to the value it provides for theory. Chapter 2 devastates the conventional wisdom that Iraq invaded Kuwait because the U.S. ambassador to Iraq, in a *private* meeting, assured Saddam that the United States would not respond vigorously to an Iraqi invasion. The evidence in Chapter 3 is problematic for the widespread belief that Saddam decided against using chemical or biological weapons because of Baker's *ambiguous* (non-existent, more likely) threat of U.S. nuclear retaliation. It also strongly indicates that Baker's threats to replace the Iraqi regime were irrelevant to Iraq's decision not to use WMD. Chapter 4 challenges the widespread belief that credible U.S. threats deterred an Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1994, and takes on the prevailing interpretation for why Iraq did not more fully comply with international disarmament demands.

For too long, audience cost theorists paid far too little attention to historical evidence. Recent historical research on ACT by Trachtenberg, Snyder and Borghard, and others is hopefully a harbinger of more empirically grounded scholarship to come. Whereas theorists need to pay greater attention to history, historians stand in equal need of learning from theory. It is stunning how many scholars have written that a private assurance led Iraq to invade Kuwait and that an extraordinarily ambiguous threat convinced Saddam not to use WMD against U.S.-led forces in 1991. Once one asks what would make such private or ambiguous signals credible, and then reviews the evidence with these questions in mind, historical myths quickly crumble.

Future Research

This study provides important insights relevant to ACT, yet much work remains—even within the context of U.S.-Iraq strategic interactions. This study contains some obvious omissions. For instance, it presents no detailed account of the perceptions and signaling from Fall 1990 and Fall/Winter 1990-1991 focusing on U.S. attempts to compel Iraq to withdraw its forces from Kuwait, and on Iraqi resistance to these efforts. This topic certainly merits much more detailed analysis than I have provided. How did Saddam and his advisers assess Bush's famous declaration, shortly after the invasion, that Iraq's aggression would not stand? Did Saddam revise his assessments in response to massive deployments of U.S. forces to the region? How did Saddam and his inner circle view the role of congressional elections in late 1990, and divided government in the United States, on the likelihood that Bush would make good on his public threat to force an Iraqi troop withdrawal? Did Soviet and Jordanian officials try to convince Iraqi leaders of the credibility of American threats by making reference to domestic audience costs? These, and many other such questions, call out for further analysis. The CRRC and Bush Presidential Library have made many extraordinarily insightful records available from this period, from both sides, so sufficient information is available to begin drawing preliminary conclusions.

This study's chapter on Iraq's coerced disarmament is, of course, anything but a comprehensive account. The inspection period covered a multitude of crises, of which this study provided an overview of only two. A revised edition of this study might include a more detailed version of the mini case study on Operation Vigilant Warrior as a stand-alone chapter, rather than a piece of the chapter on Iraq's coerced disarmament. This would give this important crisis

the attention it deserves and facilitate a clearer contrast between an event—the invasion in 1990 (Chapter 1), and a non-event—the lack of an invasion in 1994. It would also clear up space in what is currently Chapter 4 for one or more additional mini case studies on crises over the inspections.

A mini case study on Operation Desert Fox would make a particularly nice contribution to what is currently Chapter 4. The CRRC has recently added a handful of new recordings of meetings between Saddam and his inner circle regarding this crisis. The Clinton Presidential Library has also made available a number of excellent records from this crisis, in stark contrast to the paucity of records it has otherwise released dealing with Iraq. How did each side assess the other's threats and assurances? Did the United States attempt to offer credible assurances, and, if so, how did it seek to make them credible? Did Saddam truly believe that the sanctions would never be lifted regardless of Iraqi compliance? This crisis was key, since it led to the withdrawal of UNSCOM inspectors, and, in some ways, paved the path for war in 2003. Analyzing this crisis would also provide a nice bookend to the chapter. Whereas the crisis over inspecting Iraq's ministry of agriculture was the first instance in which Iraq had flatly refused an UNSCOM inspection, and Iraq allowed the inspection out of fear of U.S. airstrikes, the U.S. airstrikes in 1998 effectively ended UNSCOM.

The 2003 war also demands attention. I excluded analysis of this case for several reasons. First and foremost, there are few captured audio recordings from late 2002 and early 2003 in which Saddam was a participant, thus leaving scholars with fewer reliable sources. Relatively few captured documents from this period have been translated and added to the CRRC. Senior officials from the George W. Bush administration have written memoirs, but relatively few high quality records have been declassified and released compared with what is

available to scholars from the administration of Bush Senior. A revised version of this study would require a discussion of audience costs and credibility assessments in the prelude to the 2003 war, though the length of the discussion would be driven, to some degree, by the volume of available documentation.

If this case study were on the shorter end—a mini-case study—it might logically be folded into the chapter on Iraq's coerced disarmament. Senior Bush administration officials publicly demanded that Iraq re-admit UN weapon inspectors or face military consequences. Did U.S. leaders believe that their threats were credible? How did U.S. officials change the content or delivery of their threats and assurances to persuade the Iraqis, and perhaps other audiences, that their commitments were credible? Iraq re-admitted UN inspectors and largely, though not entirely, complied with the inspectors' demands. Did Saddam decide to re-admit the inspectors because he considered U.S. military threats credible? This would seem to be the obvious explanation, though further exploration might reveal alternative hypotheses. If Saddam decided to comply with U.S. demands because he considered U.S. military threats credible, why did he consider the threats credible? Did his perceptions of American domestic audience costs play a role in these assessments?

Saddam's re-admission of the UN inspectors is puzzling. On the one hand, at least at first glance, it appears that Saddam re-admitted the inspectors due to concerns about U.S. military strikes. On the other hand, declassified Department of Defense and Central Intelligence Agency studies on the 2003 war find that neither Saddam nor his advisers took U.S. threats to invade Iraq entirely seriously.[i]

Several of the case studies presented here would benefit greatly from interviews with former policymakers. This is particularly the case with interviews with senior officials during

the Clinton and George W. Bush years, since fewer records are available from these periods. I have been able to interview a small number of former Iraqi officials, primarily generals and senior nuclear scientists. Unfortunately, most of Saddam's leading advisers are in prison, dead, or unwilling to talk about their experiences—particularly with Americans. Declassification of additional interrogation reports of Saddam's key advisers will enable additional insights into the perceptions and decision-making of Saddam's inner circle.

A need also exists for future scholarship contrasting Saddam's public and private statements. The Iraqis, we know, frequently excised content from transcripts of Saddam's meetings before releasing the transcripts as "complete" meeting records through the Iraqi, or foreign, press. What we do not know is exactly what type of patterns existed in terms of what the Iraqis did and did not make public from Saddam's meetings. In Chapter 2, on Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, I identified a handful or so of instances in which Iraqi officials redacted portions of meeting transcripts involving Saddam. It would be interesting and important to expand this analysis to a larger number of meetings to assess what information Iraqi leaders did, and did not, want in the public sphere. Did Iraqi leaders systematically remove private threats because they did not want to generate audience costs?

Future researchers might also analyze Saddam's strategic thinking more broadly— beyond how Saddam assessed and signaled commitment, and beyond the interplay between domestic and foreign policy behavior. In what ways were Saddam's conceptualizations of strategic affairs consistent and inconsistent with prescriptions by leading strategists? On the one hand, Saddam frequently described complex strategic affairs within the context of simple analogies from his Tikriti upbringing, from nature, and from the world around him.[ii]

On the other hand, a superficial review of Iraqi behavior indicates that Saddam was familiar with many of the key concepts expounded by prominent strategists. For instance, Saddam understood the great value of resolve, and believed on numerous occasions that Iraqi resolve would more than offset U.S. military superiority. According to Schelling, war is more a contest of "endurance, nerve, obstinacy, and pain" than one of strength.[iii] According to Colin Gray, "To deter, an ounce of will is worth a pound of muscle."[iv] Saddam similarly placed enormous emphasis on will and morale.[v]

Saddam and Schelling describe, in almost identical terms, the superior value of threatening violent acts without actually carrying them out. Schelling writes that "Violence is most purposive and most successful when it is threatened and not used."[vi] At the heart of the Iran-Iraq War, Saddam told a group of Iraqi Air Force officers that unfulfilled threats to use chemical weapons could exceed the effects of actual use. Under such circumstances, he emphasized, Iraqi chemical weapon use was undesirable.[vii]

Saddam and Schelling both recognized that one can gain strategic advantage by appearing hot-headed or less than fully rational. Schelling writes that "It does not always help to be, or to be believed to be, fully rational, cool-headed, and in control of oneself or of one's country."[viii] As Saddam and other Iraqi officials informed American interlocutors in 1990, the United States should not publicly threaten Iraq, since this would cause Saddam to throw ration into the wind and to act purely on honor.[ix]

When it comes to Iraq's civil defense procedures, Saddam reached the same conclusions as Herman Kahn and Bernard Brodie. From Kahn's perspective, damage-limitation measures are every bit as important as the ability to inflict pain. He writes, "The side most afraid of a strike will tend to get the worst of the bargain."[x] According to Brodie, shelters "tend to favor

courageous rather than craven decision" and "an adequate civil defense program may prove an indispensable factor in keeping wars limited."[xi] Saddam clearly saw similar benefits in civil defense programs.[xii]

Saddam may have had more than his share of "delusions," yet it would be foolish to consider his thinking or behavior entirely unique, or clearly irrational.[xiii] Saddam's strategic thinking, to quote a British diplomat's description of Stalin, exhibited a "curious mix of shrewdness and nonsense."[xiv] The captured records, along with other emerging sources, are allowing new insights into this interesting exhibition of competence and incompetence.

Policy Recommendations

The analysis in this study has a number of important implications for today's policymakers and defense and intelligence analysts. Consider, for instance, the insights for deterring chemical and biological weapon use, and policy ramifications for the U.S. nuclear posture, found in chapter three. When the Obama administration announced in its 2010 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) that the United States would not use nuclear weapons in retaliation for chemical or biological weapon attacks, so long as the attacker were a Non-Proliferation Treaty member in good standing, critics and defenders alike focused attention on the Baker-Aziz meeting.[1] "I question the wisdom of [the administration's] position," Baker told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, as from his perspective Iraq had refrained from chemical and

---

[1] For the text of the NPR, see "Nuclear Posture Review Report," (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, April 2010), accessed 1 March 2011 at www.defense.gov/npr/.

biological weapon attacks because he had left open the door to U.S. nuclear strikes.[2] Iraq's non-use stemmed from Baker's threats of regime change, not nuclear retaliation, supporters of the policy have responded.[3] Inasmuch as nuclear weapons were useless or of only marginal coercive utility in this and other cases, some analysts have argued, the United States needs them at most only to deter nuclear attack and should radically reduce the size of its arsenal.[4] A key lesson from the war, noted former Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, was that nuclear weapons were "incredible as a deterrent and therefore irrelevant."[5]

McNamara and Baker are both wrong. Fear of U.S. nuclear retaliation deterred Iraq from using chemical or biological weapons, yet Baker's ambiguous threats had no effect on Iraqi calculations. Saddam needed no convincing that the United States might use nuclear weapons on Iraqi targets. America's possession of nuclear weapons was important in deterring Iraqi chemical and biological weapon use, yet the influence of U.S. declaratory policy in shaping Saddam's perceptions remains unclear.

Clearly, this study provides insights of more than solely historical or theoretical importance. Rather than providing here a series of policy insights derived from the material in this study, what follows is a general explanation of why policymakers must better draw lessons from the rich material in the captured records. Today's senior U.S. administration officials must recognize the value of the captured records. They do not.

---

[2] *The History and Lessons of START, Hearing Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee*, 112th Cong. 5 (19 May 2010) (statement of James A. Baker, III, former Secretary of State and Secretary of the Treasury of the United States).

[3] Scott Sagan, "The Case for No First Use," *Survival*, Vol. 51, No. 3 (June 2009), pp. 163-82; Sagan, "The Commitment Trap," pp. 85-115; Michael S. Gerson, "No First Use: The Next Step for U.S. Nuclear Policy," *International Security*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (Fall 2010), pp. 7-47.

[4] Ward Wilson, "The Myth of Nuclear Deterrence," *Nonproliferation Review*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (November 2008), especially pp. 434-36; Ken Berry, et al, "Delegitimizing Nuclear Weapons: Examining the Validity of Nuclear Deterrence," Monterey Institute of International Studies, May 2010, especially p. 15 and 59.

[5] Carl Kaysen, Robert McNamara, and George Rathjens, "Nuclear Weapons after the Cold War," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 70, No. 4 (Fall 1991), p. 102.

The U.S. National Security community spends hundreds of billions of dollars collecting intelligence on current threats, including through Open Source Intelligence (OSINT), but has failed to adequately appreciate the insights that former adversaries' records can provide. The captured Iraqi records present a once in a generation opportunity to dissect the internal workings of a former adversary, using the former regime's internal records. These records provide insights about far more, however, than just Saddam's Iraq. They promise insights on weapon inspection regimes, economic sanctions, WMD proliferation, Iran, Syria, state support for terrorism, deterrence, coercive diplomacy, state-mosque relations in Iraq, and a slew of other topics. The captured records can provide insights for many of policymakers' most important questions.

The decision by the Office of the Secretary of Defense for Policy (OSD(P)) to cease funding the CRRC is horribly unwise, even in the current period of fiscal austerity. The U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) and Intelligence Community will lose many insights by ceasing to support the release of captured records to the academic community. It is horribly ironic that while Barack Obama has pushed for the executive branch to be more transparent and to do a better job of declassifying and releasing unclassified documents to the public, his senior officials are about to shut down the CRRC—the U.S. Government's primary mechanism for making captured records available to scholars.[xv] Whereas OSD(P) established the CRRC and the Minerva Initiative to bridge the gap between the DOD and the academy, when budgets tightened the DOD made clear that scholarly insights from the captured records were not worth a few hundred thousand dollars a year.

If policymakers and intelligence analysts wish to better understand factors that might be affecting the thinking of Bashar al-Assad, they should turn to the captured records for insights. For instance, there is no better case study of the factors that affect whether a state will use

chemical weapons against its own people than Iraq's use of chemical weapons against Iraqi Kurds during the Iran-Iraq War. U.S. forces captured invaluable records on this topic, but no case study has been written based on these newly available sources. Such a case study would not be particularly difficult.

If policymakers wish to better understand Iran, they would do well to review captured records. Today's Iranian leaders learned formative lessons about international politics, military affairs, and the United States during Iran's brutal eight-year war with Iraq. If policymakers wish to better understand how Iran would fight another war, and to use history as a guide, they must turn to the Iran-Iraq War—the only war that Iran has fought in centuries. Scholarship on this conflict, however, is shockingly poor. Much of the literature on the Iran-Iraq War is based on a small number of defectors' reports and journalists' accounts. Scholars have largely discounted defector reports from later years, but have only just begun to revisit the role of defector reports on understandings of this crucial conflict. Much work remains.

Hopefully the U.S. Government will decide to reconstitute the CRRC. The Senate Armed Services Committee and House Armed Services Committee have proven strong supporters of the CRRC, and may insist that the DOD re-establish the Center.[xvi] If a sufficiently senior official in the U.S. National Security community decided to fund the CRRC, the Center would not be particularly difficult to reconstitute. It is a sad indictment of the DOD and IC that they place too little value on civilian scholars' insights on al-Qaeda and the Middle East to continue providing records through the CRRC. It is a sad indictment of the academy that most social scientists and historians fail to produce research of value to policymakers.

---

[i] Woods et al., *Iraqi Perspectives Project*, pp. 15-16; *Duelfer Report*, vol. 1, "Regime Strategic Intent," pp. 31-33.

[ii] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-256, "Meeting between Saddam Hussein and top political advisors to discuss a visit by Prime Minister Tariq Aziz to the United Nations delegates," undated (circa 1994); CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-188, "Saddam Hussein meeting with some advisors concerning the defector Hussayn Kamil and other issues," 5 April 1995; and CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-542, "Saddam Hussein Meeting with the Iraqi Cabinet to Strategize," undated.

[iii] Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, p. 7.

[iv] Colin S. Gray, "Deterrence Resurrected: Revisiting Some Fundamentals," *Parameters* (Summer 1991), p. 3.

[v] On the importance to Saddam of morale see Woods et al, *Iraqi Perspectives Project*, pp. 15, 29, 98-99; Woods, *Mother of all Battles*, pp. 137, 175, 229, 237, 240, etc.

[vi] Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, p. 10.

[vii] CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-035.

[viii] Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, p. 37.

[ix] See Chapter 2 of this study.

[x] As quoted in Keith Payne, *The Great American Gamble*, p. 384.

[xi] Bernard Brodie, "The Anatomy of Deterrence," *World Politics* Vol. 11, No. 2 (January 1959), p. 188.

[xii] See Chapter 3 of this study.

[xiii] On Saddam's "delusions," see Kevin Woods, James Lacey, and Williamson Murray, "Saddam's Delusions: The View from the Inside," *Foreign Affairs* (May/June 2006).

[xiv] Quoted in Woods, Palkki, and Stout, *The Saddam Tapes*, p. 324.

[xv] On Obama's push for declassification and transparency, see Executive Order No. 13,526, 3 C.F.R. 707 (2009); Steven Aftergood, "New Executive Order Expected to Curb Secrecy," *Secrecy News*, 4 January 2010.

[xvi] Senate Armed Services Committee on Department of Defense Appropriations Bill of 2014, S. Rep. No. 113-85, at 179 (2013); House Armed Services Committee on National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014, H.R. Rep. No. 113-102, at 241 (2013).

Works Cited

"25 Aug Solarz Interview with Saddam Husayn." Digital National Security Archive IG00075, Baghdad INA (in Arabic), 25 August 1982.

"ABC's Diane Sawyer Interviews Saddam Husayn." FBIS-NES-90-127, 2 July 1990, Baghdad INA (in Arabic), 30 June 1990.

Abdul Majid, Saman. *Les Annees Saddam: Révélations Exclusives*. Paris: Fayard, 2003.

Achen, Christopher H., and Duncan Snidal. "Rational Deterrence Theory and Comparative Case Studies." *World Politics* 41, no. 2 (January 1989).

Aftergood, Steven. "New Executive Order Expected to Curb Secrecy." *Secrecy News*, 4 January 2010.

Al-Ayyubi, Hazim Abd al-Razzaq. "Forty-Three Missiles on the Zionist Entity." *Al-Arab al-Yawm*, 27 October 1998.

Al-Hamdani, Raad Majid. "History." (unpublished memoir, n.d.).

Al-Marashi, Ibrahim. "The Nineteenth Province: The Invasion of Kuwait and the 1991 Gulf War from the Iraqi Perspective." (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oxford, July 2004).

Alfonsi, Christian. *Circle in the Sand: Why We Went Back to Iraq*. New York: Doubleday, 2006.

Ali, Javed. "Chemical Weapons and the Iran-Iraq War: A Case Study in Noncompliance." *Nonproliferation Review*, Spring (2001): 43-58.

Alter, Jonathan. "Hand-to-Hand Video Combat." *Newsweek*, 10 September 1990.

Amanpour, Christine, et al. "Saddam Hussein Defiant in Court." *Cable News Network*, 19 October 2005.

"Amman 09648, "TFKI02: Oral Message for the President: King Hussein Advises U.S. Caution on Iraq-Kuwait Dispute." 2 August 1990.

"An Interview with Tariq Aziz," narrated by Will Lyman, *Frontline*, PBS, 25 January 2000.

Arkin, William M. "Calculated Ambiguity: Nuclear Weapons and the Gulf War." *Washington Quarterly* 19, no. 4 (Autumn 1996): 2-18.

Ashton, Nigel. *King Hussein of Jordan: A Political Life*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008.

Atkinson, Rick. *Crusade: The Untold Story of the Persian Gulf War*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1993.

Author's Email Correspondence with Raad Majid al-Hamdani. 11 January 2011.

Author's Interview with John W. Limbert. Alexandria, VA. 25 April 2008.

Author's Interview with Joseph Wilson. Santa Fe, NM. 27 July 2007.

Author's Interview with Patrick Theros. Washington, D.C., 27 March 2008.

Author's Phone Interview with Barbara Bodine. 19 March 2008.

Author's Interview with Joseph McGhee. Washington, D.C. 6 June 2007.

Author's Interview with Nancy Johnson. Washington, D.C. 6 March 2008.

Author's Interview with Waleed Al-Rawi. Washington, D.C. 8 November 2012.

Author's Meeting with George Piro at the Institute for Defense Analyses. Alexandria, VA. 26 February 2008.

Author's Phone Interview with David Newton. 25 March 2008.

Author's Phone Interview with Larry Pope. 13 February 2008.

Author's Phone Interview with Wayne White. 7 June 2010.

"Aziz Refuses Bush Message." FBIS-NES-91-007, 10 January 1991, Baghdad Domestic Service (in Arabic), 9 January 1991.

"Baghdad Radio Airs Saddam Interview with CNN." Daily Report, Near East & South Asia, FBIS-NES-91-021, 31 January 1991.

Baker, James A. III, with Thomas M. DeFrank. *The Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War & Peace*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1995.

Baram, Amatzia. "An Analysis of Iraqi WMD Strategy." *The Nonproliferation Review* 8, no. 2 (Summer 2001), pp. 23-57.

———. "The Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait: Decision-Making in Baghdad." In *Iraq's Road to War*, edited by Amatzia Baram and Barry Rubin. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993.

———. "The Missing Link: 'Badu' and 'Tribal' Honor as Component in the Iraqi Decision to Invade Kuwait." In *Changing Patterns of Nomads in Changing Societies*, edited by Joseph Ginat and Anatoli Khazanov. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 1998, pp. 155-70.

Baram, Amatzia, and Barry Rubin. "Calculation and Miscalculation in Baghdad." In *International Perspectives on the Gulf Conflict, 1990-91*, edited by Dan Keohane and Alex Danchev. New York: Palgrave McMillan, 1994, pp. 23-57.

Baram, Amatzia and Barry Rubin, ed. *Iraq's Road to War*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993.

Barton, Rod. *Weapons Detective: The Inside Story of Australia's Top Weapons Inspector*. Melbourne, Australia: Black Inc. Agenda, 2006.

Beamish, Rita. "Bush Will Tape Address for Iraqi Television." *Associated Press*, 6 September 1990.

Bengio, Ofra. *Saddam's Word: Political Discourse in Iraq*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Berry, Ken, Patricia Lewis, Benoît Pélopidas, Nikolai Sokov and Ward Wilson, "Delegitimizing Nuclear Weapons: Examining the Validity of Nuclear Deterrence." (May 2010). http://cns.miis.edu/opapers/pdfs/delegitimizing_nuclear_weapons_may_2010.pdf.

Betts, Richard K. *Nuclear Blackmail and Nuclear Balance*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1987.

———. "Suicide from Fear of Death?" *Foreign Affairs* 82, no. 1 (2003), pp. 34-43.

Black, Ian, and Julie Flint. "Monitors in Place as UN Denies Rift." *The Guardian*, 4 October 1994.

Blair, Bruce. *Logic of Accidental Nuclear War*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1993.

Blix, Hans. *Disarming Iraq*. New York: Pantheon Books, 2004.

Brands, Hal, and David Palkki. "'Conspiring Bastards': Saddam Hussein's Strategic View of the United States." *Diplomatic History* 36, no. 3 (2012): 625-59.

———. "Saddam, Israel, and the Bomb: Nuclear Alarmism Justified?" *International Security* 36, no. 1 (Summer 2011): 133-66.

Brodie, Bernard. "The Anatomy of Deterrence." *World Politics* 11, no. 2 (January 1959), pp. 173-91.

"Brzezinski Memorandum for the Secretary of State, 'Subject: Schmidt Memcon'." Jimmy Carter Presidential Library: Donated Historical Material, Zbigniew Brzezinski Collection, Box 20, Subject File Alpha Channel (Miscellaneous) 1/80-3/80, 27 February 1980.

Bush, George H. W. "Remarks and an Exchange with Reporters on Arrival from Camp David, Maryland." Bush Presidential Library, 26 July 1992. Accessed at http://bushlibrary.tamu.edu/research/public_papers.php?id=4610&year=1992&month=7.

Bush, George, and Brent Scowcroft. *A World Transformed*. New York: Knopf; Distributed by Random House, 1998.

Butler, Richard. *The Greatest Threat: Iraq, Weapons of Mass Destruction, and the Crisis of Global Security*. New York: PublicAffairs, 2000.

Carter, Jimmy. "President Carter's Rebuttal." *Foreign Policy* (March/April 2010), pp. 10-11.

Cassidy, John. "Bush Calls in Guru to Fight Saddam Propaganda Blitz." *Sunday Times*, 26 August 1990.

"CB Defense Department Regular Briefing, Briefer: Pete Williams." *Federal News Service*, 24 July 1990.

Central Intelligence Agency. "Comments on Iraq's Non-Use of Chemical or Biological Weapons During the Gulf War." August 1995.

Central Intelligence Agency. "Memorandum Subject: Iraq: Why Weapons of Mass Destruction Were Withheld." March 1991.

Charles Stuart Kennedy Interview with Ambassador Joseph C. Wilson. The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project, 8 January 2001.

Charles Stuart Kennedy Interview of Arthur L. Lowrie. The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project, 23 December 1989.

Charles Stuart Kennedy Interview with Chas W. Freeman. Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, 14 April 1995.

Charles Stuart Kennedy Interview of Hayword Rankin. The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project, 24 July 1998.

Charles Stuart Kennedy Interview of Joseph McGhee. The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project, 21 August 1998.

Charles Stuart Kennedy Interview with Morris Draper. The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project, 27 February 1991.

Chulov, Martin. "Tariq Aziz: 'Britain and the Us Killed Iraq. I Wish I Was Martyred'." *The Guardian*, 5 August 2010.

Cigar, Norman. "Chemical Weapons and the Gulf War: The Dog That Did Not Bark." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 15, no. 2 (1992), pp. 145-55.

———. "Contributions to War Studies Number 3: Iraq's Vision of the Nuclear Battlefield." (March 2003). http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/iraq/2003/iraq-nuclear-battlefield-study.pdf.

———. *Saddam Hussein's Nuclear Vision: An Atomic Shield and Sword for Conquest*. Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University Press, April 2011. http://minerva.marinecorpsuniversity.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/NuclearVision_Web1.pdf.

Cockburn, Andrew, and Patrick Cockburn. *Out of the Ashes: The Resurrection of Saddam Hussein*. New York: HarperCollins, 1999.

———. *Saddam Hussein: An American Obsession*. London: Verso, 2002.

Cockburn, Patrick. "Saddam Seizes the Moment." *Independent*, 11 April 1999.

"CODEL Dole: Meeting with Saddam Hussein." Bush Presidential Library, National Security

Council, Richard N. Haass Working Files, Iraq Pre 8/2/90 [2], 12 April 1990.

Combating Terrorism Center at West Point. "Harmony Program." http://www.ctc.usma.edu/programs-resources/harmony-program.

"Comments on 'Bombproof' Shelter." FBIS-NES-91-009, 14 January 1991, Caracas Venezolana de Television Canal 8 (in Spanish), 10 January 1991.

Conflict Records Research Center. "FAQs." http://crrc.dodlive.mil/about/faqs/#8.

"Conflict Records Research Center." http://crrc.dodlive.mil/.

"Confrontation in the Gulf: Text of Letter from Bush to Hussein." *New York Times*, 13 January 1991.

Cordon, Gavin. "Heath Urges Saddam Talks." *The Press Association*, 9 October 1994.

CRRC, SH-GMID-D-001-047. "Collection of Intelligence Reports." 1 March 1991.

CRRC, SH-GMID-D-000263. "General Military Intelligence Directorate Correspondence Regarding First Gulf War." October 1989-August 1990.

CRRC, SH-IDGS-D-001-431. "Correspondence between the Presidential Diwan and Several Other Iraqi Authorities, Discussing an Emergency Evacuation Plan of Different Iraqi Cities in Case of a Nuclear Attack." 29 December 1990.

CRRC, SH-IISX-D-001-000. "Intelligence Reports from Iraqi Intelligence Services Regarding Escapee Hussein Kamil." 17 September 1995 to approximately 9 October 1995.

CRRC, SH-IISX-D-001-536. "Emergency Plan Concerning Prisoners and Documents in Case of an Attack against Iraq." 18 December 2002.

CRRC, SH-IZAR-D-001-414. "The Art of War - Manual on the Principles of the Use of Force." 13 December 1987.

CRRC, SH-IZAR-D-001-490. "Military Manual on the Tactical Use of WMD, Vol 2 Part 2." July 1988.

CRRC, SH-MISC-D-000-203. "Report to the Deputy Prime Minister Regarding an Iraqi Delegation Visit to Russia and France to Discuss the Situation in Iraq." 6 April 1996.

CRRC, SH-MISC-D-000-298. "Statements About the Iraq War in 1991." Undated (1992 or later).

CRRC, SH-MISC-D-000-652. "Meetings between Saddam Hussein and the Yemeni President, and between Saddam and Dr. George Habash, Secretary General of the Popular Front of the Palestinian Liberation." August-September 1990.

CRRC, SH-MISC-D-000-736. "Report on Israeli Nuclear, Chemical, and Biological Capabilities and Scenarios." May 1985-May 1992.

CRRC, SH-MISC-D-000-772. "Meeting Minutes from Meeting between Tariq Aziz and Rolf Ekeus Regarding Iraqi Chemical and Nuclear Programs." 30 September 1995.

CRRC, SH-MISC-D-000-783. "Drafts for Various Speeches by Saddam Hussein in 1990." 12 August 1990.

CRRC, SH-MISC-D-001-271. "Collection of Saddam's Personal and Family Pictures Including Uday's Wedding." Undated (circa late 1980s or 1990).

CRRC, SH-PDWN-D-000-012. "Letter Regarding Contingency Instructions for Iraqi Government Personnel in the Event of Regime Defeat." 23 January 2003.

CRRC, SH-PDWN-D-000-341. "Speech by Saddam Hussein at Al-Bakr University." 3 June 1978.

CRRC, SH-PDWN-D-000-533. "Meeting between Saddam Hussein and the Soviet Delegation."

10 February 1990.

CRRC, SH-RPGD-D-001-454. "Training Documentation Pertaining to Nuclear, Chemical and Biological Threats to the Iraqi Republican Guard." 16 October 2002.

CRRC, SH-RPGD-D-001-474. "Republican Guard Intelligence Logbook Containing Information on UN Weapon Inspections and Iraq's WMD Program." 1 January 2003.

CRRC, SH-RVCC-V-001-402. "Saddam Hussein's Speech with the Revolutionary Command Members and National Command." Undated (circa 1992).

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-000-553. "Revolutionary Command Council Meeting." 27 March 1979.

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-000-554. "Meeting between Saddam Hussein and Iraqi Officials Regarding the Political Relationship between Iraq, Iran, and the USA." 17 September 1988.

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-000-568. "Saddam Hussein and High Ranking Officers Discussing the Liberation of Al-Fao." Undated (circa Summer 1988).

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-000-630. "State Command and Council Meeting Regarding the Russian Peace Proposal and Communications between Saddam Hussein and Mikhail Gorbachev." 24 February 1991.

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-000-635. "President Saddam Hussein Meeting with Ministers." Undated (circa 1982).

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-000-670. "Audio Recording of a Revolutionary Command Council Meeting." 2 November 1990.

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-000-711. "Saddam Hussein and Iraqi Officials Discussing the King Fahad Initiative, Relations with the USSR, and Perceptions of Other Middle Eastern Countries." Undated (circa November 1981).

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-000-732. "Meeting between Saddam Hussein and Iraqi Officials Regarding the Arab Summit." Undated (circa 1989 to 1990).

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-000-735. "Saddam and Officials Discussing Military Operations and Secret Projects during the Iran-Iraq War." 18 October 1984.

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-000-753. "Saddam Hussein Meeting with Senior Advisor Regarding Bill Clinton's Administration and Its Attitudes toward Iraq." Undated.

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-000-756. "Saddam and Senior Advisors Discussing a Potential Military Conflict with the United States." 9 February 1998.

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-000-786. "Meeting between Saddam Hussein and the Revolutionary Command Council Regarding UN and Security Council Resolutions." Undated.

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-000-791. "Meeting between Saddam Hussein and the Council of Ministers Regarding Russia, France, and Arab Countries' Positions toward the Sanctions on Iraq." Undated (circa July 1995).

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-000-830. "Saddam Hussein and Other Officials Discussing Ba'ath Party Support to Its Lebanese Branch, Its Ideology, and Other Party Affairs." 1992.

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-000-834. "Saddam Hussein and Political Officials Discussing How to Deal with the Republican Guard and Other Issues Following the First Gulf War." Undated.

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-000-838. "Meeting between Saddam Hussein and Ba'ath Party Members Concerning the Election of Bill Clinton and the Effects of That Change on Iraq." Undated (circa 4 November 1992).

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-000-848. "Saddam Hussein and His Advisors Discussing Potential War with the United States." 1990.

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-000-850. "Revolutionary Command Council and Regional Command Meeting about UN Inspections and Security Council Resolutions." 29 February 1992.

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-000-858. "Meeting between Saddam Hussein and Iraqi Officials." Undated (circa 1981).

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-000-988. "Saddam Hussein Meets with Members of Revolutionary Command Council in 1998." 1998.

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-000-989. "Saddam Hussein Meeting with Council of Ministers." 15 April 1995.

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-000-990. "Meeting between Saddam Hussein and the Security Council Regarding Iraqi Biological and Nuclear Weapons Programs." 5 February 1995.

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-022. "Meeting between Saddam Hussein and High Ranking Officers Regarding Military Operations during the Iran-Iraq War." February 1984.

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-023. "Saddam Hussein and Ba'ath Party Members Discussing the Iran Iraq War." 6 March 1987.

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-035. "Saddam Hussein and Air Force Officers Discussing the Movements and Performance of the Iraqi Air Force during the Iran-Iraq War." 7 July 1984.

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-039. "Saddam and His Senior Advisors Discussing Israel's Attack on the Tamuz (Osirak) Reactor and Iraqi Civil Defenses." Undated (circa late 1981).

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-040. "Meeting between Saddam Hussein and Members of the Ba'ath Party Regarding Sadat's Peace Initiative with Israel." Undated (circa 1979).

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-042. "Saddam Hussein and the Revolutionary Command Council Discussing the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait and the Expected US Attack." 29 December 1990.

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-043. "A Revolutionary Command Council Meeting about Coalition Operations against Iraq." 18 January 1991.

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-045. "Saddam Hussein and High Ranking Officers Discussing Plans to Attack Kurdish 'Saboteurs' in Northern Iraq and the Possibility of Using Special Ammunition (Weapons)." Undated.

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-048. "A TV Interview with Saddam Hussein Regarding Various Issues with the U.S." 13 February 1993.

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-186. "Saddam Hussein Meeting with Ba'ath Party Members to Discuss UN Weapons Inspection." 23 July 1992.

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-187. "Saddam Hussein Meeting with High-Ranking Officers About UN Security Council Resolutions." 2 May 1995.

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-188. "Saddam Hussein Meeting with Some Advisors Concerning the Defector Hussayn Kamil and Other Issues." 5 April 1995.

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-196. "Meeting between Saddam and Unidentified Iraqi Leaders." Undated.

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-198. "Meeting between Saddam Hussein and the Revolutionary Command Council Regarding the Rules of the United Nations Security Council." Undated (circa April 1993 to December 1993).

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-199. "Saddam Hussein Meeting Discussing United Nations Reports." 21 July 1998.

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-201. "Iraqi Leaders Discuss Oil Sales, Ekeus, a Possible Biological Project, and the Iraqi Media." Undated.

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-202. "Saddam Hussein Meeting with the General Command of the Armed Forces." Undated.

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-233. "Saddam Hussein and Iraqi Officials Discussing Turkish, Russian and Chinese Perceptions of Iraq's Occupation of Kuwait." 7 August 1990.

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-238. "Saddam Hussein and His Political Advisors Discuss International Interest in Iraqi Oil, Iraqi Army Dissenters, and an Initiative to Settle Disputes with Saudi Arabia." 3 September 1994.

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-252. "A Meeting between Saddam Hussein and the Council of Ministers Concerning UN Sanctions, Resolutions, and the Potential for an American Invasion." Undated.

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-253. "Meeting between Saddam Hussein and Top Political Advisors Regarding Relations with Saudi Arabia and Other Neighbors." Undated.

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-256. "Meeting between Saddam Hussein and Top Political Advisors to Discuss a Visit by Prime Minister Tariq Aziz to the United Nations Delegates." Undated (circa 1994).

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-262. "Meeting between Saddam Hussein and Top Political Advisors Concerning the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait and International Positions on Iraq." Undated.

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-269. "Saddam and His Advisors Discuss Iraq's Compliance with UN Inspectors, UN Sanctions on Iraq, Iraqi Tribes, and Other Issues." 29 February 1992.

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-294. "Saddam Hussein Meeting with the Revolutionary Command Council Regarding Sanctions and Kuwait." 9 March 1994.

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-298. "Meeting between Saddam Hussein and Iraqi Ministers Regarding Iraq under Sanctions." Undated (circa 1998).

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-481. "Meeting between Saddam Hussein and High Ranking Technical Officers Regarding Iraqi Army Weapons Development." Undated (circa 1995).

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-487. "Saddam and His Senior Advisors Discuss Kuwait, the Importance of Mobilizing Public Opinion, and American Opposition to Iraq." Undaetd (circa 11 October 1990 to January 1991).

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-494. "Saddam Hussein Meeting with Cabinet Ministers to Discuss Recent United Nations Resolutions and the Relationship between Iraq and Kuwait." 13 October 1994.

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-540. "A Meeting between Saddam Hussein and Several Unidentified Individuals." Undated.

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-541. "A Meeting between Saddam Hussein, Taha Yasin Ramadan, and Several Unidentified Ministers." Undated.

CRRC, SH-SHTP-A-001-542. "Saddam Hussein Meeting with the Iraqi Cabinet to Strategize." Undated.

CRRC, SH-SHTP-D-000-559. "President Saddam Hussein Meets with Iraqi Officials to Discuss Political Issues." November 1979.

CRRC, SH-SHTP-D-000-567. "Meeting between Saddam Hussein and Ba'ath Party Members Regarding Attempted Assassination of Yasser Arafat in 1985 and U.S. Voting in the United Nations." 5 October 1985.

CRRC, SH-SHTP-D-000-712. "Saddam Hussein Meeting with the Revolutionary Command and the State Command." 1994.

CRRC, SH-SHTP-D-000-759. "Saddam Hussein Meeting with Members of Al-'Ubur Conference, National Command, Iraqi Regional Command and Revolutionary Command Council." Undated.

CRRC, SH-SHTP-D-000-760. "Saddam Hussein and Political Advisors Discussing the Production of Biological Materials in Iraq, the Iran-Iraq War, UN Inspections, and the Arab-Israeli Conflict." Undated.

CRRC, SH-SHTP-V-001-194. "Iraqi Minister of Defense and Republican Guard Commanders Discussing the Republican Guards' Role in the 1990-1991 Gulf War." 16 May 1993.

CRRC, SH-SPPC-D-000-334. "Meeting between Saddam Hussein and Russian Delegate for Special Mission." 18 July 2001.

Danilovic, Vesna. "The Sources of Threat Credibility in Extended Deterrence." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 45, no. 3 (June 2001): 341-69.

Davis, James W. Jr. *Threats and Promises: The Pursuit of International Influence*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000.

"Debate between Scott Sagan and Keith Payne." *Project on Nuclear Issues (PONI) Debates the Issues: U.S. Nuclear Declaratory Policy*. Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 25 May 2010. www.csis.org (10 August 2013)

DC20/5121, 17 March 1981, p. 7, Foundation Archives of Parties and Mass Organizations of the GDR, Potsdam, Germany: Federal Archives (SAPMO).

"Defector Reveals Saddam's 'Hidden Arsenal." FBIS-NES-95-034, 21 February 1995, *The Sunday Times*, 19 February 1995.

"Demarche on Arab League Resolution." Bush Presidential Library, National Security Council, Richard N. Haass Working Files, Iraq Pre 8/2/90 [3], 24 July 1990.

Diamond, Jared. "Perry Sees Iraqi 'Long-Term Threat'." *The Associated Press*, 13 October 1994.

"Document: Saddam Hussein and Senator Dole." *Mednews - Middle East Defense News*, 25 June 1990.

"Draft 2 RE Letter to Saddam Hussein from the President," 4 January 1991, Richard N. Haass Working Files, File: Iraq – January 1991 [7], National Security Council, George Bush Presidential Library.

Drozdiak, William. "Paris Restricts Iraqi Citizens: Baghdad Still Holds Foreigners, French Foreign Ministry Notes." *Washington Post*, 30 August 1990.

Duelfer, Charles. "Annex C: Iraq's Security Services." Central Intelligence Agency, 2004.

———. Central Intelligence Agency, *Comprehensive Report of the Special Advisor to the DCI on Iraq's WMD,* vols. 1-3, 30 September 2004.

———. *Hide and Seek: The Search for Truth in Iraq*. New York: PublicAffairs, 2009.

Duelfer, Charles, and Stephen Benedict Dyson. "Chronic Misperception and International Conflict: The U.S.-Iraq Experience." *International Security* 36, no. 1 (Summer 2011), pp. 73-100.

Dumoulin, André. "The Non-Use of Chemical-Warfare Agents During Operation Desert Storm." In *The 2nd Gulf War and the CBW Threat*, edited by Jean P. Zanders. Brussels: Centrum voor Polemologie, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, 1995, pp. 45-52.

"Egypt President Mubarak Comments on Gulf Crisis." *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 10

August 1990.

ElBaradei, Mohammed. *The Age of Deception: Nuclear Diplomacy in Treacherous Times*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2011.

Emery, Michael. "King Hussein: The Man in the Middle Is Now the Man in Deep Water." *Los Angeles Times*, 3 March 1991.

Emigh, Rebecca Jean. "The Power of Negative Thinking: The Use of Negative Case Methodology in the Development of Sociological Theory." *Theory and Society* 26, no. 5 (October 1997), pp. 649-84.

"Envoy to Austria Sees No Policy Change in Geneva." FBIS-NES-90-004, 7 January 1991, *Vienna Kurier* (in German), 6 January 1991.

Evera, Stephen Van. *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997.

"Excerpts from Iraqi Document on Meeting with U.S. Envoy." *New York Times*, 23 September 1990.

Executive Order No. 13,526, 3 C.F.R. 707 (2009).

Farrell, Joseph, and Robert Gibbins. "Cheap Talk Can Matter in Bargaining." *Journal of Economic Theory* 48 (1989): 221-37.

Farrell, Stephen. "Trial Opens for Former Hussein Aide." *New York Times*, 30 April 2008.

Fearon, James D. "Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes." *American Political Science Review* 88, no. 3 (September 1994), pp. 577-92.

———. "Signaling Foreign Policy Interests." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 41, no. 68 (1997), pp. 68-90.

Federal Bureau of Investigation. "Interrogation Report of Ali Hassan Al-Majid." 9 April 2004.

Federal Bureau of Investigation. "Interrogation Report of Sabir Abd Al Aziz Husayn Al Duri." Baghdad, Iraq, 23 June 2004.

Federal Bureau of Investigation. "Prosecutive Report of Investigation Concerning Saddam Hussein." 10 March 2005.

Feith, Douglas J. *War and Decision: Inside the Pentagon at the Dawn of the War on Terrorism*. New York: HarperCollins, 2008.

Fischer, Dean. "Inside Saddam's Brutal Regime." *Time*, 18 September 1995.

Francona, Rick. *Ally to Adversary: An Eyewitness Account of Iraq's Fall from Grace*. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1999.

Freedman, Lawrence. *Deterrence*. United Kingdom: Polity Press, 2004.

———, ed. *Strategic Coercion: Concepts and Cases*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

———. *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*. 3rd ed. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

Freedman, Lawrence, and Efraim Karsh. *The Gulf Conflict, 1990-1991: Diplomacy and War in the New World Order*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995.

Friedman, Thomas L. "Envoy to Iraq, Faulted in Crisis, Says She Warned Hussein Sternly." *New York Times*, 21 March 1991.

"Future Moves on the Gulf Crisis," 21 December 1990, Richard N. Haass Files, Iraq – December 1990 [3], National Security Council, Bush Presidential Library.

Galbraith, Peter W. *The End of Iraq: How American Incompetence Created a War without End*. New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc., 2006.

Gartzke, Erik, and Yonatan Lupu. "Still Looking for Audience Costs." *Security Studies* 21, no. 3

(2012), pp. 391-97.

Gause, Gregory F. III. "Iraq and the Gulf War: Decision-Making in Baghdad." October 2001. http://www.ciaonet.org.

Gause III, F. Gregory. *The International Relations of the Persian Gulf*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Gelb, Leslie H. "Mr. Bush's Fateful Blunder." *New York Times*, 17 July 1991.

"General Husayn Kamil Hasan on Iraq's Nuclear Weapons Programme, Opposition Plans." *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 10 November 1995.

"General Hussein Kamal UNSCOM/IAEA Briefing." Amman, Jordan, 22 August 1995. www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/iraq/un/unscom-iaea_kamal-brief.htm (17 May 2013).

George, Alexander L. *Bridging the Gap: Theory & Practice in Foreign Po*licy. Washington D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1993.

George, Alexander L., and Andrew Bennett. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2005.

George, Alexander L., and Richard Smoke. *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1974.

Gerring, John. *Social Science Methodology: A Critical Framework*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

———. "What Is a Case Study and What Is It Good For?" *American Political Science Review* 98, no. 2 (May 2004), pp. 341-54.

Gerson, Michael S. "No First Use: The Next Step for U.S. Nuclear Policy." *International Security* 33, no. 2 (Fall 2010): 7-47.

Gerstenzang, James. "Bush Airs Thoughts on End of Gulf War; Leadership: Former President Tells Interviewer That U.S.-Headed Coalition Might Have Done More to Weaken Saddam Hussein." *Los Angeles Times*, 15 January 1996.

Goldstein, Lyle J. *Preventive Attack and Weapons of Mass Destruction: A Comparative Historical Analysis*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006.

Gordon, Michael R., and Bernard E. Trainor. *Cobra II: The Inside Story of the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq*. New York: Pantheon, 2006.

———. *The Generals' War: The Inside Story of the Conflict in the Gulf*. New York: Little Brown & Co., 1995.

Gray, Colin S. "Deterrence Resurrected: Revisiting Some Fundamentals." *Parameters* (Summer 1991).

Greenberg, David. "The Cuban Missile Tape Crisis: Just How Helpful Are the White House Recordings?" *Slate*, 22 July 2003.

Guisinger, Alexandra, and Alastair Smith. "Honest Threats: The Interaction of Reputation and Political Institutions on International Crises." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 46, no. 175 (2002), pp. 175-200.

Gulf War Air Power Survey, Vol. 1: Planning and Command and Control. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1993. http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a279741.pdf.

"Gulf War: George Bush Phone Call to Gorbachev (Soviets & Iraq) [Declassified 2003]." 22 February 1991. www.margaretthatcher.org (10 September 2003).

"Gulf War: George Bush Phone Call with Gorbachev (Soviet Negotiations with Saddam) [Declassified 2003]." 23 February 1991. www.margaretthatcher.org (10 September 2003).

Gup, Ted. "History: A Man You Could Do Business With." *Time*, 11 March 1991.

Haass, Richard N. *War of Necessity, War of Choice: A Memoir of Two Iraq Wars*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010.

Halaby, Jamal. "Defector Says Iraq Was Set to Invade: The Reported Targets: Kuwait, Saudi Arabia." *Chicago Sun-Times*, 21 August 1995.

Halloran, Richard. "Washington Talk: How Leaders Think the Unthinkable." *New York Times*, 2 September 1986.

Hannay, David. "Three Iraqi Intelligence Failures Reconsidered." *Survival* 51, no. 6 (December 2009-January 2010), pp. 13-20.

Haselkorn, Avigdor. *The Continuing Storm: Iraq, Poisonous Weapons and Deterrence*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999.

Herr, W. Eric. "Operation Vigilant Warrior: Conventional Deterrence Theory, Doctrine, and Practice." (master's thesis, Air University, June 1996.)

Herring, Eric. *Danger and Opportunity: Explaining International Crisis Outcomes*. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1995.

Hersh, Seymour M. "A Case Not Closed." *The New Yorker*, 1 November 1993.

Hoffman, David. "No Martyrdom for Saddam." *Washington Post*, 27 February 1991.

Human Rights Watch. "Basra." 2 June 2003.

———. "Iraq: State of the Evidence." 3 November 2004.

Hume, Brit. "Interview with Dennis Ross." *Fox News Network*, 17 March 2003.

"Hussein Must Not Be Allowed to Provoke Future Crises: Christopher." *Agence France Presse*, 12 October 1994.

Huth, Paul K. "Deterrence and International Conflict: Empirical Findings and Theoretical Debates." *Annual Review of Political Science* 2 (1999), pp. 25-48.

Huth, Paul, and Bruce Russett. "Testing Deterrence Theory: Rigor Makes a Difference." *World Politics* 42, no. 4 (July 1990).

"INA Reports Minutes of 'Aziz-Baker Meeting: Part I." Daily Report, Near East & South Asia, FBIS-NES-92-009, 14 January 1992.

Institute for Defense Analyses, Force and Strategy Assessments. "Non-Traditional Security Challenges." http://www.ida.org/researchareas/forceandstrategyassessments/irregular%20warfare%20planning%20and%20experimentation.php.

"Interrogator Shares Saddam's Confessions: Tells 60 Minutes Former Iraqi Dictator Didn't Expect US Invasion." *CBS News*, 27 January 2008.

"Iraq and Terrorism." Digital National Security Archive (DNSA), 27 June 1990.

"Iraq Ascribes a Key Defeat in '86 to Misinformation from the U.S.".*New York Times*, 19 January 1987.

"Iraq Kuwait Tensions –What's Really at Stake." Bush Presidential Library, National Security Council, Richard N. Haass Working Files, Iraq Pre 08/02/1990 [Folder 1], 26 July 1990.

"Iraq Will Free 'Guests' Foreign Women, Children Expected to Leave Today." *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 30 August 1990.

Iraqi Decision Making under Saddam Hussein. 20, C-SPAN video recording, 1:33:12, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 20 September 2010.

"Iraqi Leader Apologizes to Kuwaiti People, Criticizes Kuwaiti Officials." *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 7 December 2002.

"Iraqi President Addresses ACC Summit Issue of Soviet Jews and US Presence in Gulf." *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 26 February 1990.

"Iraqi Query RE US/UAE 'Manoeuvers'." 24 July 1990.

"Iraq's Tariq Aziz News Conference on Anniversary of Gulf War." *Al-Jazirah*, 16 January 2001.

"ISGP-2003-00300189." In Woods, Kevin M., with James Lacey. *Iraqi Perspectives Project: Saddam and Terrorism: Emerging Insights from Captured Iraqi Documents*. Alexandria, VA: Institute for Defense Analysis, 2007.

"ISGQ-2003-M0006248." In Woods, Kevin M., with James Lacey. *Iraqi Perspectives Project: Saddam and Terrorism: Emerging Insights from Captured Iraqi Documents*. Alexandria, VA: Institute for Defense Analysis, 2007.

"Israeli/American 'Coordination' in the Gulf." Bush Presidential Library, National Security Council, Richard N. Haass Working Files, Iraq Pre 8/2/90 [3], 24 July 1990.

Jentleson, Bruce W., and Christopher A. Whytock. "Who 'Won' Libya?" *International Security* 30, no. 3 (2005/2006).

Jervis, Robert. "Perceiving and Coping with Threat." In *Psychology and Deterrence*, edited by Richard Ned Lebow Robert Jervis, and Janice Gross Stein. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985.

———. *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976.

———. "Signaling and Perception: Drawing Inferences and Projecting Images." In *Political Psychology*, edited by Kristen Monroe. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2002.

———. *The Logic of Images in International Relations*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970.

———. "War, Intelligence, and Honesty: A Review Essay." *Political Science Quarterly* 4, no. 3 (2008-2009): 645-75.

Kaplan, Robert D. *The Arabists: The Romance of an American Elite*. 3rd ed. New York: Free Press, 1995.

Karsh, Efraim. "Reflections on the 1990-91 Gulf Conflict." *Journal of Strategic Studies* 19, no. 3 (1996).

Karsh, Efraim, and Inari Rautsi. *Saddam Hussein: A Political Biography*. New York: Grove Press, 2002.

Katz, Lee Michael. "Iraq Had No Illusions." *USA Today*, 27 November 1992.

Katzman, Kenneth. "Iraq: Weapons Threat, Compliance, Sanctions, and U.S. Policy." United States Congress. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 2009.

Kaufmann, Chaim. "Threat Inflation and the Failure of the Marketplace of Ideas: The Selling of the Iraq War." *International Security* 29, no. 1 (2004).

Kaysen, Carl, Robert McNamara, and George Rathjens. "Nuclear Weapons after the Cold War." *Foreign Affairs* 70, no. 4 (Fall 1991).

King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994.

Knopf, Jeffrey W. "The Fourth Wave in Deterrence Research: An Appraisal." Paper presented at the American Political Science Association. Boston, MA, 2008.

Kramer, Martin. "Book Review of Robert D. Kaplan, *The Arabists*." *Commentary* 97, no. 2 (1994).

Kurizaki, Shuhei. "Diplomacy, Pre-crisis Communication, and War." 19 March 2012. http://people.tamu.edu/~kurizaki/dpw.i.pdf.

———. "Efficient Secrecy: Public Versus Private Threats in Crisis Diplomacy." *American Political Science Review* 101, no. 3 (August 2007): 543-58.

"Kuwait and Iraq Move up Troops in a Dispute." *New York Times*, 21 April 1967.

"Leadership Collection, Legislative, Assistant Leader Files, Folder – Foreign Policy – Iraq Visit." Dole Archive: Dole Institute of Politics, 1990.

Lebovic, James H. *Deterring International Terrorism and Rogue States: U.S. National Security Policy after 9/11*. New York: Routledge, 2007.

Lebow, Richard Ned, and Janice Gross Stein. "Rational Deterrence Theory: I Think, Therefore I Deter." *World Politics* 41, no. 2 (January 1989).

Lekic, Slobodan. "Saddam's Translator Emerges from Obscurity." *Associated Press*, 10 September 2005.

"Letter to Saddam Hussein." *U.S. Department of State Dispatch*, 14 January 1991.

Leventhal, Todd. *Iraqi Propaganda and Disinformation During the Gulf War: Lessons for the Future*. Emirates Occasional Paper Number 36. Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, 1999.

Levy, Jack S. "Coercive Threats, Audience Costs, and Case Studies." *Security Studies* 21, no. 3 (August 2012).

Lewis, Adrian R. *The American Culture of War: The History of U.S. Military Force from World War II to Operation Iraqi Freedom*. New York: Routledge, 1997.

Litwak, Robert S. *Rogue States and U.S. Foreign Policy: Containment after the Cold War*. Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2000.

———."Non-Proliferation and the Dilemmas of Regime Change." *Survival* 45, no. 4 (2003/2004).

———. *Regime Change: U.S. Strategy through the Prism of 9/11*. Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2007.

Mack, David. "Notes on Gulf War for BBC Interview." (unpublished manuscript, November 1994.)

"Main Points of Charge's Meeting with President Saddam Hussein." Bush Presidential Library, National Security Council, Richard N. Haass Working Files, Iraq 2/8/90 (4 of 6).

Malone, David M. *The International Struggle over Iraq: Politics in the UN Security Council, 1980-2005*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Mayer, Jane. "The Manipulator." *The New Yorker*, 7 June 2004.

Mazaheri, Nimah. "Iraq and the Domestic Political Effects of Economic Sanctions." *Middle East Journal* 64, no. 2 (2010).

McCarthy, Timothy V., and Jonathan B. Tucker. "Saddam's Toxic Arsenal: Chemical and Biological Weapons in the Gulf Wars." In *Planning the Unthinkable: How New Powers Will Use Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Weapons*, edited by Scott D. Sagan, Peter R. Lavoy, and James J. Wirtz. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000.

McDermott, Rose. *Political Psychology in International Relations*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004.

Mearsheimer, John J., and Stephen M. Walt. "An Unnecessary War." *Foreign Policy*, 1 January 2003.

"Meeting of the NSC," 3 August 1990, Richard N. Haass Working Files, Iraq 2/18/90 – 12/90, National Security Council, George Bush Presidential Library.

"Meets with Saddam Hussein." Baghdad INA (in Arabic), 24 July 1990.

"Memorandum for the Record, 'the Gulf War: An Iraqi General Officer's Perspective.'" Joint Debriefing Center Report, 11 March 1991.

Mercer, Jonathan. "Audience Costs Are Toys." *Security Studies* 21, no. 3 (2012).

———. "Rationality and Psychology in International Politics." *International Organization* 59, no. 1 (Winter 2005): 77-106.

Miller, Judith, Stephen Engelberg, and William Broad. *Germs: Biological Weapons and America's Secret War*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001.

Mohamedou, Mohammad-Mahmoud. *Iraq and the Second Gulf War: State Building and Regime Security*. San Francisco: Austin & Winfield, 2001.

"More on Meeting." FBIS-NES-91-009, 14 January 1991, Tokyo KYODO.

Morgan, Patrick M. *Deterrence Now*. Cambridge Studies in International Relations. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Murphy, Caryle. "Iraqi Leader Gets New Title as Kuwaiti Anxiety Grows." *Washington Post*, 20 July 1990.

"National Security Council Meeting, 'Subject: Soviet Military Threat to Iran.'" Jimmy Carter Presidential Library: Donated Historical Material, Zbigniew Brzezinski Collection, Geographic File, Southwest Asia/Persian Gulf 6/80-12/80, Box 16, Folder 9/80, 12 September 1980.

National Security Directive 26. "U.S. Policy toward the Persian Gulf." 2 October 1989.

National Security Strategy of the United States. The White House, 27 March 1990.

National Security Strategy of the United States. The White House, 18 January 1988.

"NEA DAS Mack's Meeting with Arab League Representative Maksoud." Bush Presidential Records, National Security Council, Richard N. Haass Working Files, Iraq Pre 8/2/90 [3], 21 July 1990.

Nelan, B.W., and W. Dowell. "Who Lost Kuwait." *Time Magazine*, 1 October 1990.

"Nightline in the Eye of the Storm." *ABC News Transcripts*, 4 December 2002.

Nincic, Miroslav. *Renegade Regimes: Confronting Deviant Behavior in World Politics*. New York: Colombia University Press, 2007.

"NSC Meeting on the Persian Gulf." Bush Presidential Library, National Security Council, Richard N. Haass Working Files, Iraq 2/8/90-12/90, 3 August 1990.

Nye, Joseph S. "Old Wars and Future Wars: Causation and Prevention." *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 18, no. 4 (Spring 1988).

———. *Power in the Global Information Age: From Realism to Globalization*. New York: Routledge, 2004.

O'Hanlon, Michael. "How to Be a 'Cheap Hawk'." *Brookings Review* 13, no. 3 (1995).

O'Neill, Barry. *Honor, Symbols, and War*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001.

Obeidi, Mahdi, and Kurt Pitzer. *The Bomb in My Garden: The Secrets of Saddam's Nuclear*
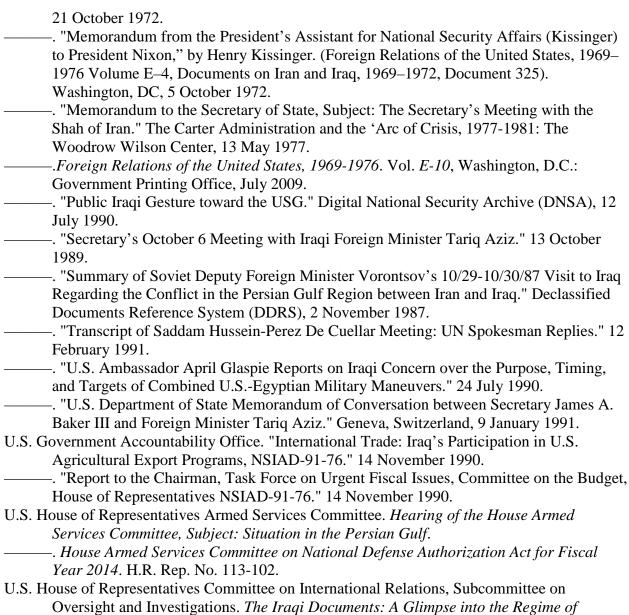
Mastermind. Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2004.

Oberdorfer, Donald. "Missed Signals in the Middle East." *Washington Post*, 17 March 1991.

Packer, George. "The Next Iraqi War: What Kirkuk's Struggle to Reverse Saddam's Ethnic Cleansing Signals for the Future of Iraq." *New Yorker*, 4 October 2004.

Payne, Keith B. *The Great American Gamble: Deterrence Theory and Practice from the Cold War to the Twenty-First Century*. Fairfax, VA: National Institute Press, 2008.

Perry, William J. "Desert Storm and Deterrence in the Future." In *After the Storm: Lessons from the Gulf War*, edited by Joseph S. Nye and Roger K. Smith. Colorado Springs, CO: Aspen Institute, 2000.

Pillar, Paul. "Deterring Rogue States. Their Intentions; What We Know, What We Can Learn." (panelist, George Washington University, 5 April 2007).

Pincus, Walter. "U.S. Plans Appeal to Iraqi Officers." *Washington Post*, 30 September 2002.

Pollack, Kenneth M. *The Persian Puzzle: The Conflict between Iran and America*. New York: Random House, 2005.

Posen, Barry B. "U.S. Security Policy in a Nuclear-Armed World, Or: What If Iraq Had Had Nuclear Weapons." *Security Studies* 6, no. 3 (Spring 1997): 1-31.

Post, Jerrold M. "Explaining Saddam Hussein: A Psychological Profile." Presented to the House Armed Services Committee, December 1990.

———. *Leaders and Their Followers in a Dangerous World: The Psychology of Political Behavior*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004.

———. "Saddam Hussein of Iraq: A Political Psychology Profile." Published electronically June 2006. http://law.cwru.edu/saddamtrial/documents/saddam_hussein_political_psychology_profile.pdf.

Potter, Philip B.K., and Matthew A. Baum. "Democratic Peace and Domestic Audience Costs." *Political Communication* 27, no. 4 (2010).

"POTUS to Saddam Hussein RE [Invasion of Kuwait]." Bush Presidential Library, National Security Council, Richard Haass Working Files, File: Iraq – January 1991 [7], January 1991.

Powell, Colin L., and Joseph E. Persico. *My American Journey*. New York: Random House, 1996.

"President Bush's Response to Saddam's Message – Next Steps." Bush Presidential Library, National Security Council, Richard N. Haass Working Files, Iraq Pre-2/8/90-12/90 (3 of 6).

"President Bush's Response to Saddam's Message – Next Steps." Bush Presidential Library, National Security Council, Richard N. Haass Working Files, Iraq Pre-2/8/90-12/90 (3 of 6), 29 July 1990.

"President's CIA Briefing File." Jimmy Carter Presidential Library: NLC-2-28-7-1-3., Box 28, 6/21/80-6/25/80.

Press, Daryl. *Calculating Credibility: How Leaders Assess Military Threats*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005.

Primakov, Yevgeny. *Russian Crossroads: Toward the New Millennium*. Translated by Felix Rosenthal. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004.

"Producer Says Iraqi TV Censored Warning from Jackson Interview." *Associated Press*, 10

September 1990.

Pyle, Richard. "Top Commander Says US Gained Credibility in Gulf." *Associated Press*, 18 October 1988.

Ray, James Lee. "Democracy and International Conflict." In *Bridges and Boundaries: Historians, Political Scientists, and the Study of International Relations*, edited by Colin Elman and Miriam Fendius Elman. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2001.

"Reaction to King Husayn's Speech: Husayn Kamil Says Atmosphere in Saddam Husayn's Family Is 'Troubled'." *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 28 August 1995.

"Reaffirmation of Persian Gulf Policy." Bush Presidential Library, National Security Council, Richard N. Haass Files, Iraq Pre 8/2/90 [1], 11 February 1990.

Reagan, Ronald. "Address to the Nation on the Iran Arms and Contra Aid Controversy." 13 November 1986.

"Reportage Continues on Baker-'Aziz Talks: Meeting Delegates Noted." FBIS-NES-91-007, 10 January 1991, Baghdad INA (in Arabic), 9 January 1991.

"Returning Iraq to the Terrorism List." Digital National Security Archive (DNSA), 1 September 1990.

Ritter, Scott. *Iraq Confidential: The Untold Story of the Intelligence Conspiracy to Undermine the UN and Overthrow Saddam Hussein*. New York: Nation Books, 2006.

———. *Spying on Saddam*. PBS *Frontline* Interview, April 1999.

Rohde, Achim. "State-Society Relations in Ba'thist Iraq: Facing Dictatorship." New York: Routledge, 2010.

Rubin, Barry. "US Policy: End of a Peace Process, Start of a Gulf Crisis." *Middle East Review of International Affairs* (1990).

"Russian Foreign Minister Sums up Talks with Hussein." *Tass*, 28 October 1994.

"Saad Al-Bazzaz: An Insider's View of Iraq." *Middle East Quarterly* 2, no. 4 (December 1995).

"Saddam Delivers Gulf War Anniversary Speech." FBIS-NES-94-012, 19 January 1994, Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio (in Arabic).

"Saddam Husayn Interview for CNN on Peace Prospects Broadcast by Iraqi Radio." *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 2 November 1990.

"Saddam Husayn Reviews Course of War in CNN Interview." *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 2 February 1991.

"Saddam Husayn Tells French Journalists There Is a Fifty-Fifty Chance of War." *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 4 December 1990.

"Saddam Husayn's Interview for Spanish Television." *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 29 December 1990.

"Saddam Makes Statement to Iraqi Journalists." FBIS-NES-91-009, 14 January 1991, Baghdad INA (in Arabic), 13 January 1991.

"Saddam Says Iraq Ready to Destroy Weapons If Others Reciprocate." Republic of Iraq TV, *BBC Summary of World Broadcast*, 14 June 2000.

"Saddam Speaks." ABC NEWS: *Primetime Live*, 28 June 1990.

"Saddam's Table Talk, Interview with Williamson Murray." *Yale Journal of International Affairs* (Winter/Spring 2006).

"Saddam's Interview in Hurriyet." FBIS-DR, 13 February 1992.

"Saddam's Message of Friendship to President Bush." Bush Presidential Library, National

Security Council, Richard N. Haass Working Files, Iraq Pre-2/8/90-12/90 (2 of 6), 25 July 1990.

Safire, William. "Glaspie Matter: Machinations Work Overtime at Foggy Bottom." *The Oregonian*, 27 March 1991.

Sagan, Scott D. "The Case for No First Use." *Survival* 51, no. 3 (June 2009): 163-82.

———. "The Commitment Trap: Why the United States Should Not Use Nuclear Threats to Deter Biological and Chemical Weapons Attacks." *International Security* 24, no. 4 (Spring 2000): 85-115.

Sagan, Scott D., and Kenneth N. Waltz. *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate Renewed*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2003.

Sandler, Norman D. "Bush Tapes Message for Saddam." *United Press International*, 12 September 1990.

Sassoon, Joseph. *Saddam Hussein's Ba'th Party: Inside an Authoritarian Regime*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Scales, Robert H. *Certain Victory: United States Army in the Gulf War*. Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Staff, United States Army, 1993.

Schelling, Thomas C. *Arms and Influence*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966.

———. *Strategies of Commitment and Other Essays*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006.

———. *The Strategy of Conflict*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960.

Schemmer, Benjamin F. "Was the U.S. Ready to Resort to Nuclear Weapons for the Persian Gulf in 1980?" *Armed Forces Journal International* 123, no. 9 (September 1986): 92-105.

Schofield, Richard. "Finalising the Arabian Territorial Framework." *Geopolitics* 2, no. 3 (1997): 90-105.

Schultz, Kenneth A. "Looking for Audience Costs." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 45, no. 32 (February 2001): 32-60.

———. *Democracy and Coercive Diplomacy*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

———. "Why We Needed Audience Costs and What We Need Now." *Security Studies* 21, no. 3 (August 2012).

Schwarzkopf, H. Norman, with Peter Petre. *It Doesn't Take a Hero: The Autobiography of General H. Norman Schwarzkopf*. New York: Bantam Books, 1992.

Sciolino, Elaine. "World of Terrorism Didn't Halt Overtures." *New York Times*, 27 February 1987.

"Secretary Baker, January 9, 1991 News Conference Following Bilateral Meeting with Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz, Geneva, Switzerland." *U.S. Department of State Dispatch*, 14 January 1991.

Seliktar, Ofira, and Lee E. Dutter. "Assessing the Rationality of Autocrats: The Case of Saddam Hussein." *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence* 22, no. 2 (Summer 2009).

Sharbutt, Jay. "Iraqi TV Censors Saddam Hussein Warning to Foreigners in Kuwait." *Associated Press*, 4 September 1990.

Sick, Gary. "The United States in the Persian Gulf: From Twin Pillars to Dual Containment." In *The Middle East and the United States: A Historical and Political Reassessment*, edited by David W. Lesch. Boulder: Westview Press, 2007.

Sieff, Martin. "Saddam Expected Trouble: US Opposition Clear, Aziz Says." *Washington Times*, 28 November 1992.

Simpson, Alan. "Simpson on Thin Skins, and Saddam Hussein." *Roll Call* (1 October 1990).

Simpson, William. *The Prince: The Secret Story of the World's Most Intriguing Royal, Prince Bandar Bin Sultan*. New York: HarperCollins, 2008.

Slantchev, Branislav L. "Audience Costs Theory and Its Audiences." http://slantchev.ucsd.edu/published/pdf/TrachtenbergResponse-W061.pdf.

———. "Feigning Weakness." *International Organization* 64, no. 3 (Summer 2010): 357-88.

———. "Military Coercion in Interstate Crises." *American Political Science Review* 99, no. 4 (November 2005).

Smith, Alastair. "International Crises and Domestic Politics." *American Political Science Review* 92, no. 3 (September 1998).

Smith, Craig S. "A Nation at War: Weapons Minister; Hussein's Top Science Adviser Surrenders to U.S. Marines." *New York Times*, 13 April 2013.

Snyder, Jack, and Erica D. Borghard. "The Cost of Empty Threats: A Penny, Not a Pound." *American Political Science Review* 105, no. 3 (August 2011): 437-56.

Solingen, Etel. *Nuclear Logics: Contrasting Paths in East Asia and the Middle East*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007.

"Soviet Defense Industry Minister Holds Talks." FBIS-NES-90-143, 25 July 1990, Baghdad INA (in Arabic), 23 July 1990.

Starr, Barbara. "Gulf Tactics Are Assessed with Iraqi Weapon Data." *Jane's Defense Weekly*, 10 January 1996.

"Statement of Arab League Council Session on the Palestinian Question." *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 18 July 1990.

Staudenmaier, William O. "Military Policy and Strategy in the Gulf War." *Parameters* XII, no. 2 (June 1982).

Stewart, Cameron. "Butler Smeared in Iraqi Talks Video." *The Weekend Australian*, 15 August 1998.

"Subj: Iraq's Performance in the Persian Gulf War." www.gulflink.osd.mil/declassdocs/dia/19961031/961031_950825_002mc_91.html

Takieddine, Randa. "US Ambassador to Baghdad Tells Al-Hayat the Story of Her Famous Meeting with Late Iraqi President." *Dar al Hayat*, 15 March 2008.

Tannenwald, Nina. *The Nuclear Taboo: The United States and the Non-Use of Nuclear Weapons since 1945*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

"Tariq Aziz Interview." PBS *Frontline*, 25 January 2000.

"Tariq Aziz Says West Misjudged Saddam Hussein." *The Guardian*, 5 August 2010.

Teicher, Howard. "Testimony before the United States District Court, Southern District of Florida." 31 January 1995.

"Telephone Conversation with King Hussein of Jordan." Bush Presidential Library, National Security Council, Richard N. Haass Working Files, Iraq Pre-2/8/90 (4), 31 July 1990.

"Telephone Conversation with PM John Major of Great Britain." Bush Presidential Library, 21 December 1990.

Telhami, Shibley. "Between Theory and Fact: Explaining American Behavior in the Gulf War." *Security Studies* 2, no. 1 (August 1992).

Tenet, George, with Bill Harlow. *At the Center of the Storm: My Years at the CIA*. New York: HarperCollins, 2007.

"Tensions in U.S.-Iraqi Relations Demarche." Digital National Security Archive (DNSA), 12 April 1990.

Terrill, Andrew W. "Saddam's Failed Counterstrike: Terrorism and the Gulf War." *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 16, no. 3 (July-September 1993): 151-71.

"'Thank You for Everything. But Do Not Stay.' an Exchange with the Late Nizar Hamdoon." *Middle East Quarterly* (Fall 2003).

"The Long Road to War." PBS, 17 March 2003.

"The Terrorist Threat from Iraq." Digital National Security Archive (DNSA), 7 August 1990.

"The US-Iraqi Propaganda War." Nightline/ABC News, 17 September 1990.

The World Factbook 2008. Washington, D.C.: Central Intelligence Agency, 2008.

"Threats in the Gulf; Schwarzkopf on Hussein: Calculating 'Carter Factor.'" *New York Times*, 13 October 1994.

Trachtenberg, Marc. "A Comment on the Comments." *Security Studies* 21, no. 3 (2012).

———. *The Craft of International History: A Guide to Method*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006.

Trager, Robert F. "Diplomatic Calculus in Anarchy: How Communication Matters." *American Political Science Review* 104, no. 2 (May 2010).

Trevan, Timothy. *Saddam's Secrets: The Hunt for Iraq's Hidden Weapons*. London: HarperCollins UK, 1999.

Trevor-Roper, H.R. *Hitler's Table Talk 1941-1944: Secret Conversations*. New York: Enigma Books, 2007.

Tucker, Jonathan B. "Evidence Iraq Used Chemical Weapons During the 1991 Persian Gulf War." *Nonproliferation Review* 4, no. 3 (Spring-Summer, 1997).

———. *War of Nerves: Chemical Warfare from World War I to Al-Qaeda*. New York: Pantheon Books, 2006.

Turner, Stansfield. *Caging the Genies: A Workable Solution for Nuclear, Chemical, and Biological Weapons*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999.

Tyler, Patrick E. "Standoff in the Gulf: Wave of Gloom over War Peril Covers Baghdad." *New York Times*, 20 December 1990.

———. "US Finds Persian Gulf Threat Ebbs; A 'Strategic Shift' over Iran's Oil." *Washington Post*, 7 February 1990.

"US Attack Was Expected on Aug. 2 Iraqi Says." *Toronto Star*, 31 May 1991.

"U.S. Conflict or War with Iraq." ABC News: *Nightline*. 8 August 1990.

U.S. Department of Defense, Defense Intelligence Agency. "Combined Media Processing Center-Qatar Standard Operating Procedures." 4 February 2005.

U.S. Department of Defense. "Nuclear Posture Review Report." Washington, D.C., April 2010.

U.S. Department of State. "Assistant Secretary Kelly's Conversation with Saddam Husayn." Digital National Security Archive (DNSA), 13 February 1990.

———. "Cable from Secretary of State James Baker III Regarding U.S. Concern over Iraq's Threats against Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates." 24 July 1990.

———. "Kuwait: Iraq Keeps up the Pressure." 22 July 1990.

———. "Memorandum from the U.S. Interests Section in Baghdad to the Department of State."

21 October 1972.

———. "Memorandum from the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon," by Henry Kissinger. (Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976 Volume E–4, Documents on Iran and Iraq, 1969–1972, Document 325). Washington, DC, 5 October 1972.

———. "Memorandum to the Secretary of State, Subject: The Secretary's Meeting with the Shah of Iran." The Carter Administration and the 'Arc of Crisis, 1977-1981: The Woodrow Wilson Center, 13 May 1977.

———.*Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976*. Vol. *E-10*, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, July 2009.

———. "Public Iraqi Gesture toward the USG." Digital National Security Archive (DNSA), 12 July 1990.

———. "Secretary's October 6 Meeting with Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz." 13 October 1989.

———. "Summary of Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Vorontsov's 10/29-10/30/87 Visit to Iraq Regarding the Conflict in the Persian Gulf Region between Iran and Iraq." Declassified Documents Reference System (DDRS), 2 November 1987.

———. "Transcript of Saddam Hussein-Perez De Cuellar Meeting: UN Spokesman Replies." 12 February 1991.

———. "U.S. Ambassador April Glaspie Reports on Iraqi Concern over the Purpose, Timing, and Targets of Combined U.S.-Egyptian Military Maneuvers." 24 July 1990.

———. "U.S. Department of State Memorandum of Conversation between Secretary James A. Baker III and Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz." Geneva, Switzerland, 9 January 1991.

U.S. Government Accountability Office. "International Trade: Iraq's Participation in U.S. Agricultural Export Programs, NSIAD-91-76." 14 November 1990.

———. "Report to the Chairman, Task Force on Urgent Fiscal Issues, Committee on the Budget, House of Representatives NSIAD-91-76." 14 November 1990.

U.S. House of Representatives Armed Services Committee. *Hearing of the House Armed Services Committee, Subject: Situation in the Persian Gulf*.

———. *House Armed Services Committee on National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014*. H.R. Rep. No. 113-102.

U.S. House of Representatives Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations. *The Iraqi Documents: A Glimpse into the Regime of Saddam Hussein*, 2nd, 6 April 2006.

U.S. House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee. *CB Hearing of the Europe and Middle East Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Subject: Developments in the Middle East, Chaired By: Representative Lee Hamilton (D-IN)*, 31 July 1990.

———. *Hearing of the Europe and the Middle East Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Subject: Views of U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, Chaired By: Representative Lee Hamilton (D-IN)*, 21 March 1991.

U.S. House of Representatives. *Iraq Liberation Act of 1998*. 105th, H.R. 4655.

United Kingdom House of Commons Committee on Standards and Privileges. *Combined Media Processing Centre-Qatar/UK CI Report: Authenticity of Harmony File ISGP-2003-*

00014623, 17 July 2007.

———. *Report by Mr. Oliver Thorne on the Daily Telegraph Documents*, 19 January 2007.

"US Manipulated Public Opinion before Iraq War." *RT English Channel*, 22 March 2013.

United Nations Monitoring, Verification, and Inspection Commission. "Compendium Chapter II, the Organizational Structure of Iraq's Proscribed Weapons Programs." 27 June 2009.

United Nations Security Council. "Joint Communiqué on the Outcome of the Meeting in Baghdad." 15 October 1994.

———. "Letter from Richard Butler to the President of the Security Council." 25 January 1999.

———. "Note by the Secretary-General: Report of the Secretary-General on the Status of the Implementation of the Special Commission's Plan for the Ongoing Monitoring and Verification of Iraq's Compliance with Relevant Parts of Section of Security Council Resolution 687 (1991)." 11 October 1995.

———. "Provisional Verbatim Record of the 3438th Meeting." 15 October 1994.

———. "Provisional Verbatim Record of the 3439th Meeting." 17 October 1994.

———. "Resolution 949." 15 October 1994.

———. "Sixth Report of the Secretary-General on the Status of the Implementation of the Plan for the Ongoing Monitoring and Verification of Iraq's Compliance with Relevant Parts of Section C of Security Council Resolution 687 (1991), S/1994/1138." 7 October 1994.

"US Outlines Commitment to Gulf." *MidEast Markets* (30 October 1989).

"US Reaction to Iraqi Threats in the Gulf." Bush Presidential Library, National Security Council, Richard N. Haass Working Files, Iraq Pre 8/2/90 [3], 24 July 1990.

U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee. *Senate Armed Services Committee on Department of Defense Appropriations Bill of 2014*. S. Rep. No. 113-85.

———. *US Defense Strategy*, 8 February 1990.

U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee. *Testimony of April Glaspie, US Ambassador to Iraq*, 20 March 1991.

———. *Senate Foreign Relations Committee Informal Public Discussion, Subject: Issues Related to the Gulf War*, 20 March 1991.

———. *The History and Lessons of START, Hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee*, 112th Congress, Session 5, 19 May 2010.

U.S. Strategic Command Subcommittee of the Strategic Advisory Group. "Essentials of Post-Cold War Deterrence." 1995.

Utgoff, Victor A. "Nuclear Weapons and the Deterrence of Biological and Chemical Warfare." Occasional Paper. Washington, D.C.: Henry L. Stimson Center, October 1997.

Venter, Al J. *The Iraqi War Debrief: Why Saddam Hussein Was Toppled*. Hermanus, South Africa: Earthbound Publications, 2004.

"Video Containing a Recorded Meeting That Took Place on 19 Apr 90 among President Saddam Hussein, the Iraqi Cabinet, President Yasser Arafat and the Palestinian Delegation." In *Saddam and Terrorism: Emerging Insights from Captured Iraqi Documents*, edited by Kevin M. Woods with James Lacey. Alexandria, VA: Institute for Defense Analyses, 2008.

"Wafiq Al-Samarrai Interview." PBS *Frontline*, 2 May 2002.

Wagner, R. Harrison. *War and the State: The Theory of International Politics*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007.

Walker, Christopher. "Saddam Launches Propaganda Blitz." *The Times*, 28 August 1990.

"Wall Street Journal Interviews Saddam." FBIS-NES-90-128, 1 July 1990, Baghdad INA (in Arabic).

Waltz, Kenneth N. *Alone in the World*. University of California, Los Angeles, 2003. www.sscnet.ucla.edu/06W/polisci120b-1/waltz.php.ram.

———. "The Origins of War in Neorealist Theory." In *The Origin and Prevention of Major Wars*, edited by Robert I. Rotberg and Theodore K. Rabb. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

———. "The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: More May Be Better." In *Adelphi Papers*. London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1981.

"War in the Gulf: Statement by Iraqi Revolutionary Council." *New York Times*, 23 February 1991.

Weeks, Jessica L. "Accountability, and Foreign Policy in Non-Democracies." Stanford University, May 2009.

———. "Autocratic Audience Costs: Regime Type and Signaling Resolve." *International Organization* 62, no. 1 (Winter 2008): 35-64.

Weiss, Jessica Chen. "Autocratic Signaling, Mass Audiences and Nationalist Protest in China." *International Organization* 61, no. 1 (24 January 2012). Published electronically http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1975163.

White House. "Containing Saddam Hussein's Iraq." http://clinton5.nara.gov/WH/EOP/NSC/html/nsc-11.html.

Wilson, Joseph. *The Politics of Truth: A Diplomat's Memoir: Inside the Lies That Led to War and Betrayed My Wife's CIA Identity*. New York: Carrol & Graf, 2004.

Wilson, Ward. "The Myth of Nuclear Deterrence." *Nonproliferation Review* 15, no. 3 (November 2008).

Woods, Kevin M., James Lacey, and Williamson Murray. "Saddam's Delusions: The View from the Inside." *Foreign Affairs* (May/June 2006).

Woods, Kevin M. *The Mother of All Battles: Saddam Hussein's Strategic Plan for the Persian Gulf War*. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2008.

Woods, Kevin M., et al. *Iraqi Perspectives Project: A View of Operation Iraqi Freedom from Saddam's Senior Leadership*. Washington, D.C,: Joint Center for Operational Analyses.

———. *Saddam's War: An Iraqi Military Perspective of the Iran-Iraq War*. McNair Paper 70. Washington, D.C,: National Defense University Press, 2009.

———. "The Iraqi Perspectives Project: Saddam's Senior Leadership on Operation Iraqi Freedom from the Official U.S. Joint Forces Command Report." Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2006.

Woods, Kevin M., with James Lacey. *Iraqi Perspectives Project: Saddam and Terrorism: Emerging Insights from Captured Iraqi Documents*. Alexandria, VA: Institute for Defense Analysis, 2007. http://www.jfcom.mil/newslink/storyarchive/2008/pa032008.html.

Woods, Kevin M., Williamson Murray, Elizabeth A. Nathan, Laila Sabara, and Ana M. Venegas. *Saddam's Generals: Perspectives of the Iran-Iraq War*. Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 2011. http://purl.fdlp.gov/GPO/gpo16068.

Woods, Kevin M., David D. Palkki, and Mark E. Stout. *The Saddam Tapes: The Inner Workings*

of a Tyrant's Regime, 1978-2001. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

Woods, Kevin M., and Mark E. Stout. "Saddam's Perceptions and Misperceptions: The Case of 'Desert Storm'." *Journal of Strategic Studies* 33, no. 1 (February 2010).

Woodward, Bob. *The Commanders*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991.

"Your Meeting with Israeli Defense Minister Ariel Sharon, 4:00 – 5:00 P.M., Tuesday, May 25." Digital National Security Archive (DNSA), 21 May 1982.

Yusuf al-Ghunaim, Abdullah, et al. *Kuwait-Iraq Boundary Demarcation: Historical Rights and International Will*. Al-Mansoria: Center for Research and Studies on Kuwait, 1994.

Zagare, Frank C., and D. Marc Kilgour. *Perfect Deterrence*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000.