

A Heritage Foundation Forum

The Future of Iraq

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Mr. Kosminsky: It's become apparent to me in the past two weeks since the war ended that there is a new mantra being chanted in Washington. We heard echoes of it in George Bush's speech the other night, and it goes something like this:

Now that the war is over, we must address the imbalances of wealth between the Middle East rich and poor; and now that the war is over we must bring the Middle East arms race under control; and now that the war is over we must solve the Palestinian question.

Interesting — and all of them probably more or less worthy goals. But none of them had anything to do with why we went to war against Iraq, with why Iraq invaded Kuwait, or with how to prevent another Gulf war in the future. They're all secondary issues.

In fact, Saddam Hussein did not go to war to help the Palestinians. He did not invade Kuwait to help the Arab poor against the Arab rich; in fact, Iraq is an oil exporter and not particularly a poor country by Arab standards itself. And certainly Iraq wasn't in an arms race with anyone, at least after it defeated the Iranians — and least of all with Israel, which presents no threat to Iraqi territory.

In fact, Saddam went to war against Kuwait because he thought he could get away with it. He had the power, and he thought that nobody was going to get in his way. Saddam went to war against Kuwait because there was a breakdown in the regional balance of power and a failure of deterrence. And that is what we have to restore if we're going to restore peace and security to the Gulf.

Sure, there were things that Saddam wanted. He wanted Kuwaiti oil and he wanted to eliminate a \$10 billion debt to Kuwait. But in essence, Saddam went in because he felt he could get away with it, just like he thought he could get away with invading Iran in 1980, when he tried to take advantage of instability there; just as he thought that he could get away with — and in fact did get away with — gassing thousands of his own Kurdish population in 1988.

Saddam's Two Reasons. Now there are two reasons that Saddam thought he could get away with invading Kuwait; one is material and the other psychological. The material reason is that he had the weapons to do it; the psychological reason is that he thought nobody was going to stop him.

The story of how Saddam came to be so well armed is fairly well known.

The Russians, for one, have armed the Iraqis at least since 1972, when they signed a treaty of friendship and cooperation. Iraq had over 5,000 Soviet tanks in its arsenal and Russian-built Scud missiles — but it wasn't just the Russians. The French sold advanced *Mirage* aircraft and *Exocet* missiles to Iraq; the Germans gave Iraq the capability to extend the range of their Scud missiles and to build chemical weapons.

Was the United States implicated in all of this? Well, not so much as an arms supplier to Iraq, not so much in a material sense, but in terms of the psychological balance of power in the region, America had a great deal to do with why Saddam thought that he could get away with it.

In fact, throughout the 1980s as Iraq became more and more powerful — even after it became apparent that Saddam was going to fight the Iranians at least to a stalemate in that war — America kept in various ways tilting toward Iraq, encouraging Iraq, and encouraging Saddam.

In 1982, the U.S. took Iraq off a list of nations supporting terrorism, when in fact Iraq had not stopped supporting terrorism. In 1984, the U.S. began sharing intelligence information with Iraq and offering billions of dollars in credit guarantees. In 1988, the Reagan Administration lobbied intensely against congressionally imposed sanctions against Iraq for using chemical weapons against the Kurds. And finally, this whole process culminated in the now infamous meeting between the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, April Glaspie, and Saddam on the eve of the invasion in which she told Saddam that the U.S. had no opinion in inter-Arab disputes, more or less giving Saddam what he interpreted as a green light to go into Kuwait.

So, over the years America sent a wrong message to Saddam, sent the message that he could get away with things that in fact we had no intention of letting him get away with.

Restoring the Balance. In winning the war, George Bush has gone a long way already toward restoring the material and psychological balance in the Gulf. He's destroyed Iraqi capability more or less to produce weapons of mass destruction, and he has demolished the Iraqi army. If anything now, the imbalance is in favor of some of Iraq's neighbors — the Syrians and the Iranians — and that could turn out to be a problem in the longer run.

More important, in winning the war so decisively, Bush restored America's credibility as a major player in the region.

Now what Bush has to do is re-establish the longer term stability and balance of power in the region on which America's critical interests in the Persian Gulf ultimately rest.

How can he go about doing this?

First, the United States is going to have to maintain a much more visible military presence in the Persian Gulf. You know, when Saddam first went into Kuwait, what did the United States do? We sent two KC-135 air refueling tankers to the United Arab Emirates; it didn't have much of a deterrent impact, obviously.

We've got to have a more visible presence on the ground in the Middle East militarily. Does this mean U.S. foot soldiers permanently stationed in the Middle East? No. That probably would be self defeating in the long run by undermining the regimes of the countries where they're stationed.

But there are other things we can do.

We will have to pre-position equipment for heavy divisions in Saudi Arabia, and we'll have to have an aircraft carrier in the Gulf full time. We'll probably want to undertake brigade-level training exercises with the Saudis in Saudi Arabia. Right now, we do most of our desert training out at the National Training Center at Ft. Irwin, California. We could probably shift a lot of that to the area where we'd actually be doing the fighting — which would be the Saudi Arabian Peninsula.

And we could also have Air Force squadrons rotating in and out of our facilities in Saudi Arabia, and some of the other Gulf states. So a more visible presence is one thing that's going to be important.

Second, and very closely related to that, we have to build on regional alliances in the area. This doesn't mean that we have to build a new CENTO, which was the U.S. security arrangement in the 1950s in the Gulf; in fact, it was known as the Baghdad Pact, and Iraq was to be the anchor of American regional alliance in the area. We don't need a formal alliance in the area, but certainly there are new opportunities for working with the moderate Gulf states,

with the Gulf Cooperation Council, with the Saudis, and with the Egyptians. I don't have much optimism about our ability to work with the Syrians.

But we had a coalition that stayed together effectively in wartime in order to uphold common interests. To the extent that we continue to work with this coalition in peacetime — working with them, training with them — that's going to be an important element of U.S. security efforts in the region.

And we probably also ultimately will be able to use that coalition as the nucleus of our efforts toward Arab-Israeli peace.

Third, it's going to be critical for us to be serious about preventing the spread of biological, nuclear, and chemical weapons capability, and ballistic missile capability to the Middle East.

I spoke the other week to one of the Air Force planners who helped plan the bombing campaign against Iraq, and he said one of the things he was shocked about was the discovery that Saddam had built his facilities to withstand the electromagnetic pulse of a nuclear explosion. Their belief is that Saddam was planning to fight a nuclear war against Israel.

It isn't just Israel that would have been threatened. If he had been able to develop nuclear capabilities over, say, the next five to ten years, within roughly that same time frame, he could also have been able to build ballistic missiles capable of reaching the United States. Last year, Saddam launched a the first stage of a space launch vehicle and the Iraqis were working on developing intercontinental ballistic missiles.

Would the U.S. have been so quick to rush in to counter Iraqi aggression if in fact Saddam had developed nuclear weapons and the capability to launch them against the United States? I don't think we would have been.

Now how do we go about limiting the spread of weapons of mass destruction in the region?

Regional arms control is a non-starter. The Arab states of the region all would insist that if they're going to give up the chemical and nuclear weapons option, that Israel give up its own nuclear weapons. And Israel certainly cannot be expected to give up what is its last resort, and perhaps its best deterrent against attack by its neighbors.

So really that's a non-starter, completely. What we're going to have to do is get serious about supplier agreements with the other Western powers, and with the Soviet Union if possible, to prevent the spread of this technology to aggressive states in the region. We're going to also have to take another look at our own policy toward unilateral preemptive action, such as the Israelis undertook in the Osirik nuclear reactor in 1981.

The fourth thing we're going to have to do is to continue to arm our regional allies. Arms races are not the source of problems and instability in the Middle East. Rather, the danger comes from arms imbalances that favor revisionist powers like Iraq.

And if the United States is going to insure security in the region, it's going to have to continue to insure that its own allies in the region — the more moderate Arab states including the Egyptians, the Gulf states, and certainly the Israelis — maintain superiority over the revisionist states of the region — the Iraqs, the Syrias, the Libyas.

Now there's always danger in supplying weapons to any of these states which are all, except for Israel which is a democracy, unstable tyrannies. Today's friend can be tomorrow's enemy, so we have to be judicious in the way we supply weapons to these states.

Fifth, we're going to have to reevaluate cuts in American military spending. General Vuono this week told the Defense Appropriations Committee that the cuts now envisioned over the next five years in the U.S. military budget would make it very difficult for us to carry out a Desert Storm-type operation five years from now.

And if you look at the numbers, it's pretty clear why. The U.S. is planning on dropping from 18 active army divisions to 12 active army divisions. Now we had the better part of 8 army divisions in the Kuwaiti theater to stop the Iraqis. If we only had 12 divisions in the army, and we had to send 8 of them to stop Iraq, that would spread us pretty thin in the rest of the world.

So I think that we're going to have to take another look at our five-year defense plan and our plans to cut down to 12 army divisions. Certainly there are cuts that can be made because of the easing of tensions in Europe, but do we want to go all the way down to 12 divisions?

Return on Investment. U.S. defense spending five years from now is going to be down to 3.6 percent of GNP. That will be the lowest level since at any time before World War II. If there's one thing that we learned from this conflict, it's that we in fact get something for our defense investment. Not only did we manage to win the war with miraculously low American casualties given the scale of the operation, but we came out of this as a nation clearly in control of its own destiny, in a way that very few nations, if any other nation in the world, can claim to be.

That's a lot to get for what is ultimately a fairly moderate investment in our own national defense. Maybe 3.6 percent of GNP for defense is a little bit too low to go.

Finally, the last point.

The U.S. has to fit its security strategy in the Gulf into an overall global security policy geared toward the defense of America's interests. Now George Bush has talked a lot recently about a new world order, and who really can quarrel with his idea of a world governed by the rule of law conducive to the spread of peace, democracy, and free markets? I certainly don't want to squabble with it. Moreover, he's taken a tremendous step in that direction by stopping Iraqi aggression.

Just a few cautions.

American Leadership. We've got to keep in mind that the new world order is founded on American military power and American leadership. Without these, there wouldn't be a new world order. Given this, the United States certainly cannot allow in its efforts to garner international support, the United Nations or other states, such as the Soviet Union, to gain a veto over America's security policy; America has to be free to pursue its own interests in the world.

As long as we understand that, the new world order holds promise. Let's see what Bush can do with it. In sum, one thing we've learned in the Gulf is that the world still needs policemen. Policing the world is not a job that the United States by any means should do alone. Our allies should be in there. But we simply have to understand that it's a job that is not going to be done without us. If America is not active globally, and if America doesn't have the capability to pursue its interests, the job just isn't going to get done. Right now, America is top cop, and all in all it's not a bad position to be in.



Dr. Mylroie: Will Saddam survive? I don't think we can know. I tend to think not, but he is ruthless and he is skilled at controlling his population.

Although I don't know whether Saddam will survive, I'll focus on his vulnerability. The uprising that began last weekend — which is to say that it's gone on for a week now among the Shiites in the south and among the Kurds in the north — is the greatest challenge to Saddam's rule ever. Now just recently it spread to the Shiite sectors in Baghdad.

This revolt is more than just a challenge to Saddam's rule. It's the biggest popular uprising in Iraq since 1920 when the League of Nations mandate for British rule over the country was announced; then there was a tremendous widespread uprising because of the notion that Christians should not be ruling a Muslim country.

Saddam recognizes the seriousness of the problem, and that's shown by the speed with which he is meeting American demands for a cease fire. Anything more the United States wants from Iraq now, they should ask for it.

To deal with those revolts, Saddam is taking his troops from the north to the south to put down the Shiite revolt. And he'll have to bring his troops back up north to put down the Kurdish revolt; it remains to be seen what will happen in Baghdad.

It's not clear that at the end of all this, he will have enough loyal troops to suppress all the trouble in his tumultuous realm.

There's also the possibility that he will use chemical weapons against his internal unrest. Some American intelligence people are saying that there are signs that that's what he is preparing to do. If there are indications that Saddam plans to use chemical weapons, what is the Administration saying? Why is there silence about that possibility?

Now if we look at U.S. policy, I guess the idea is to use the many economic levers that exist — a question of sanctions, reparations, debt rescheduling (Iraq owes the world \$80 billion and it's broke) — to convince the Iraqi population that there will be no normalcy in Iraq economically as long as Saddam Hussein is there.

Saudi and Turkish Backing. The United States is fully backed in that by the main Middle Eastern partners in the coalition, Saudi Arabia and Turkey, who have said either privately or publicly that they will not allow Iraq to start exporting oil through its main pipelines which pass through Saudi Arabia and Turkey as long as Saddam Hussein is in power.

The idea is that some Iraqi army officer will shoot Saddam Hussein. Is that a policy or is that a wish? Suppose some army officer does shoot Saddam Hussein — then what? It's hard to imagine such a government being stable. After the Iraqi monarchy was overthrown in 1958, there were four coups in the next decade before the Ba'ath took power and stayed there for good.

Presumably the same thing would happen again — a series of coups. Now that might be tolerable to outsiders — who cares if the Iraqi army murders itself off? But there's a difference between the present day and 1958. In 1958 when the monarchy was overthrown, there was no Kurdish revolt, and there had been significant steps taken to integrate the Shiites into Iraqi politics at the highest level. There had been four Shiite prime ministers in the decade before.

But in the period since then, the integration of the Shiites has been undone by 30 decades of military rule; now you have the Kurds and the Shiites in revolt. Unless those people are

murdered off, there is every reason to think that they will remain discontent if there is another military dictatorship in Iraq by the Sunni Arab minority, which has traditionally ruled the country.

So there are reasons to question whether a military dictatorship is going to be stable or whether it's not going to be a recipe for instability which will allow others, particularly Iran, to play on the discontent of a restless south.

There is another problem with the wish that an army officer is going to shoot Saddam. Since he's so good at maintaining control, suppose the population succeeds in throwing off Baghdad's authority before some army officer manages to shoot Saddam?

Suppose in fact there is a *de facto* division of the country between the south, the center and the north, simply because the population has risen up and killed off all the Ba'ath figures there? Then what are we going to do?

And so far as I can see, there has been little thinking beyond the army officer scenario. The Administration has sort of dogmatically refused to meet with people who might have contacts with the south and the north.

Transitional Government. My own suggestion, which was in the *New York Times* yesterday, is that the United States might establish two principles which would provide for a wide variety of contingencies. Those two principles might be a statement that any government that overthrows Saddam be considered a transitional government. If the country breaks up in three, the administrations which arise in each part of the country will be transitional regimes.

And, that the purpose of the transition is to establish at the end of a fixed period of time a Constitutional government, either in the whole country or in part of the country. If the country divides into three, then the three Constitutional regimes would federate at the end of the period.

That I think might provide for a more flexible situation, and ultimately provide for more stability by incorporating restless elements within Iraq that I don't think can easily be controlled by a military dictatorship.

And in this case, the U.N. could play an important role. The Security Council authorized the war against Iraq, and arguably, it has some responsibility for the peace.

The international community in the form of the United Nations could use its influence, prestige, economic resources to support the transitions that I've talked about.

Such a thing is not unprecedented. The U.N. oversaw democratic elections in Namibia. They could do something like that in Iraq. This approach I think allows for dealing with developments that might occur, not seeking to dictate, but to influence the course of events where possible. It's possibly a more pragmatic approach to the problem of stability in Iraq, and ultimately and importantly, it's more consistent with American values.



Mr. Phillips: The Middle East's geopolitical kaleidoscope has been given a very violent twist by the war with Iraq. I'd like to look at some of the new patterns emerging and look at it in terms of the new light shed in terms of regional security.

Threat to Neighbors. From the U.S. point of view, it's clear that Saddam must go; as long as he remains in power, he remains a threat to the surrounding region. Although his military forces have been reduced, he still retains a considerable capability to launch terrorist and subversive threats against his neighbors.

That said, I think the administration was right to fight a limited war and retain its U.N.-sanctioned goals of victory in the Kuwaiti theatre, rather than continue the war until Saddam was overthrown.

Overthrowing Saddam would have been very costly in terms of military and political costs to the U.S. It would have precipitated the dissolution of the 28-member anti-Iraq coalition and eroded the U.S. political and diplomatic position in the Arab and Muslim world. Occupying Baghdad would have been an Pyrrhic victory. Just getting to Baghdad would not have assured that Saddam himself could have been taken; he probably would have fled to Tikrit, his home town, and the only region that really remains loyal to him. Even if we captured Saddam, there was a danger that this could make him a martyr in the Arab world and could set off a protracted guerrilla war. We probably would have lost many more men in garrison duty than in the initial blitzkrieg.

As Iranians found out when they crossed the Iraqi border in 1982, the Iraqis fought a lot harder on their own territory when motivated by considerations of defending their own land rather than defending a conquest that Saddam undertook to further his own ambition. I suspect the Republican Guards would have fought a lot better as guerrillas against a U.S. occupation than as armored units in the Kuwaiti theater. And it's not hard to imagine Iraq being turned into a super-Lebanon. Occupying forces would have been vulnerable to truck bombs and other forms of terrorism.

Parallel with Lebanon. The Shiites that are now rising against Saddam eventually would have risen against the U.S. I think there is a certain parallel to what's going on in Iraq and what happened in Lebanon in 1982. When the Israelis intervened in Lebanon in June 1982 to smash the PLO-state-within-a-state in southern Lebanon, the Shiites originally welcomed them. They greeted the Israeli tanks by showering them with rice because the Israelis were striking out against a mutual enemy, the PLO. However, after the Israelis overstayed their welcome, the Shiites turned against them and launched terrorist attacks that eventually drove them back to southern Lebanon.

I think that the U.S. was correct not to go all the way to Baghdad. Rather, we should try to remove Saddam by using the Iraqis as fulcrum. That is, to let the Iraqi people take care of Saddam. The twin bases of Saddam's power have been undermined: his terrorist apparatus, or his Republican Guards, and secondly his economic development programs which essentially amounted to a patronage program. Saddam's aura of invincibility has been shattered by this war. This is important because that was the basis of his appeal in the Arab world as well as a strong deterrent to opposition within Iraq.

Saddam has now been revealed as a two-time loser. He led the Iraqis into a disastrous war against Iran in 1980, and he led them again into a disastrous war in Kuwait in 1990. He will not be able to recover from this. He now presides over the smoking rubble of not only the bulk of his military (particularly the sophisticated offensive elements of his air force, his missile forces, his chemical, nuclear, and biological warfare programs) but also his economic infrastructure. Iraq had sunk about one-third of its GNP in the ten years before the war into its military, which was its pride.

No Nasser. Saddam will be unable to salvage political victory from the ashes of military defeat because of this. Unlike Nasser in 1956, who lost a war to the Israelis, the British and the French, but nevertheless triumphed when they were forced to withdraw, Saddam has been dealt a humiliating blow similar to Nasser's in 1967 in the Six-Day War. There is no way he will be able to put a new face on this. Nasser was an inspirational leader who had a lot of charisma. When Nasser offered to resign following his debacle in the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, his people turned him down. Saddam does not have that kind of leadership. His power is based more on fear than on popularity. Saddam rules through the force of arms, not through the force of his personality. He will only be overthrown by force. We've already seen that not only the Shiites, but the Kurds are renewing their struggle against him. However, I doubt this spontaneous Shiite rebellion in the south is going to succeed in the short run. The Shiites don't have the organization, the heavy weapons, or the international support to resist Saddam's heavily-armed Republican Guards for more than a few weeks. Saddam by one count, is estimated to have 26 divisions that survived the war intact, although some of them are considered to be undependable because of their questionable loyalty.

The Kurds in the north ultimately may be a more dangerous military challenge than the Shiites in the South. The Kurds have had long experience in resisting the Iraqi central government, they live in the mountains which are more conducive to guerrilla warfare, and they currently are better organized. However, in the long run, the Shiites, particularly if they're backed by Iran, will be more of a political threat to Saddam's rule than the Kurds, since the Shiites make up 55 percent of Iraq's population, compared to only about 20 percent for the Kurds.

The Iraqi opposition is weak and divided. Because most opposition leaders have been forced into exile, I don't think they will be much of a factor at this point. The real challenge to Saddam's power within Iraq, is the Iraqi military. And as Dr. Mylroie has pointed out in her excellent book, there were four reported coup attempts in the seven months before the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and there was tremendous tension between the Iraqi military and Saddam. Iraqi army officers chafed under Saddam's constant purging of their ranks, his shuffling of officers to prevent them from gaining the loyalty of their troops, which would have enabled them to stage a successful coup.

Driving a Wedge. The Iraqi army has seen first hand the results of Saddam's disastrous leadership, not only in the war with Iran, but now in Kuwait. I think the U.S. should continue to drive a wedge between the Iraqi army and Saddam by making it clear that the U.N. economic sanctions will not be lifted as long as Saddam is in power. This not only would give them an incentive, but would give an incentive to the "Tikriti mafia" to consider ousting Saddam before he irreparably damages the regime and sinks them all.

To restore the stability in the Persian Gulf, we must restore the regional balance of power. Americans dislike thinking in terms of balance of power because we tend to go to war as if we were launching a crusade. Since George Washington's farewell address, which warned against entangling alliances between the U.S. and Europe, Americans have shunned wars that were fought merely to restore a balance of power. As a result, we demonize Saddam. But it is important to note that Saddam's ouster will not bring peace or stability to this region. We must rebuild the regional balance of power. In the short run, as Mr. Kosminsky mentioned, this does mean keeping American forces there.

However, I would argue that we should try to pull out American forces, particularly ground forces, as soon as possible because of local political sensitivities. For instance, the Saudi

regime's basic legitimacy rests on its guardianship of the Holy places, which will ultimately be undermined by an extensive Western presence. Although the Koran proscribes the presence of non-Muslims in the Holy Cities of Mecca and Medina, Muslim fundamentalists argue that this ban should be applied to the whole Arabian peninsula. There already have been leaflets distributed within Saudi Arabia denouncing the Western presence and calling for the expulsion of infidels even before the war with Iraq. Given this allergy to a massive U.S. military presence, I think we should restrict our presence there to our strong suit, naval and air power, while limiting the deployment of ground forces. The U.S. should retain air bases in isolated areas of Saudi Arabia where there will be little contact with the local population, and perhaps leave token ground forces with pre-positioned heavy equipment. But overall, the U.S. should minimize its long-term military presence in Saudi Arabia because that only will undermine Saudi security.

I think also it's important to strengthen the emerging Saudi-Egyptian axis in the Gulf. As U.S. forces are withdrawn, they should be replaced by Egyptian forces if possible, or Gulf Cooperation Council forces, to offset Iraq's power on land.

Including Iran. Also, I think we should include Iran in restoring this balance. There can be no stable balance of power in the Gulf without Iran. Iran is a strategic counterweight to Iraq. It no longer poses the same threat to the Gulf states that it once did in the early days of the Islamic revolution. Iran has been weakened by its long war with Iraq, its economy is devastated, and its radical revolutionary ideology has not been successfully exported anywhere but Lebanon. President Rafsanjani knows that his political future depends increasingly on his ability to solve Iran's economic problems, and for that he needs Western aid.

By easing Iran's isolation and encouraging improved relations with the Arab Gulf states, the U.S. can also reduce Iran's dependence on Moscow. Iran increasingly is turning to the Soviets for military hardware. Now there are rumors that Moscow will sell Iran MIG-29s. Iranians already are training in the Soviet Union to use Soviet weapons, including a recent contingent of Iranian naval officers that are training in the Baltic republics.

We should not rush towards a rapprochement with Iran. I would prefer quiet talks. I think it's a mistake to prematurely establish an embassy in Iran, as we discovered in November 1979, when Iranian radicals seized the U.S. embassy in Tehran. There's no reason to have that kind of a lightning rod. That would only set off the Iranian radicals, and weaken Rafsanjani's hand.

We should not expect any immediate progress on the remaining American hostages in Lebanon. These hostages are kept by Lebanese Shiites loyal to Iranian radicals, not so much for what they can gain from the hostages, but from what the hostages can prevent — a rapprochement between the U.S. and the Iranian revolution. So, even if we do improve relations with Iran, that doesn't necessarily mean that the hostages are going to be released. In fact, I would argue that it may mean the exact opposite — that they will be kept longer or even killed.

I think we should encourage the establishment of a detente between Iran and the Arab Gulf states and between Iran and Western Europe. This would help ease Iran's isolation and give it an alternative to a strategic embrace with Moscow.

The peace and stability can be built from inside the region and we should not try to impose it from outside as part of some ambiguous "new world order." As far as I've been able to determine, this new world order is based on a collective security regime focused on the U.N. and predicated on Soviet-American cooperation.

Soviet Gains. The Soviets have been helpful as far as voting for U.N. resolutions is concerned, but it is important to note how much they are gaining from these votes. For instance, on November 28th, the day before U.N. Resolution 678 was passed, setting the Iraqi withdrawal deadline for January 15th, the Saudis granted the Soviets \$4 billion in loans. On January 22nd, shortly after the war began, the Kuwaitis gave the Soviets \$1 billion in credits. Moscow ultimately will extract up to \$6 billion in financial aid from Arab Gulf states from its policy in the Gulf, so the Soviets are being amply rewarded financially.

Moreover, the Soviets have not been as helpful as they could be. They have played a double game. They continue to send military aid to Iraq, not only on ships, one of which was intercepted in the Red Sea en route to the Jordanian port of Aqaba, but there are reports from U.S. officials knowledgeable about intelligence matters that Soviet trucks continue to cross Iran into Iraq, presumably carrying military supplies. There also have been reports of Soviet arms to Iraq coming from Libya by air.

So the Soviets are playing a double game. They're seeking to advance their own interests at U.S. expense. A case in point is the Gorbachev plan put forward shortly before the ground war began. That plan was essentially an oxymoron in which Gorbachev said the Iraqis are willing to withdraw unconditionally, and here are the conditions. Gorbachev essentially was helping Saddam to plea bargain his way out of his crimes in Kuwait.

Gorbachev's plan required Iraq to comply with U.N. Resolution 660 calling for unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait, but also gave Saddam assurances that he would remain in power, that he would be free from punishment, that the U.N.-mandated economic sanctions would be lifted, and that there would be no war crime trials or reparations.

Now this is a better deal than Saddam could have gotten from the U.N. coalition before he forced it to go to war on January 15th. It makes no sense at all that he should get such a good deal — after forcing us into a war and being on the verge of losing that war.

Gorbachev's Personal Agenda. Gorbachev launched that plan to deprive the U.S. of a victory in the Gulf. He wanted to retain Saddam as a loyal client and retain Iraq as a strategic ally. He wanted to gain a stronger say in the post-war settlement in the Persian Gulf and show that the Soviet Union was not a bystander in the Middle East, but had a strong role to play. And finally, I think he had his own personal agenda in addition to scoring points in the Arab world. I think he wanted to refurbish his credentials as a peacemaker, which had been tarnished pretty badly in the Baltics.

I think it's notable that Soviet policy in Iraq became significantly less cooperative after Foreign Minister Shevardnadze resigned in December. Shevardnadze's replacement, former ambassador to the U.S., Aleksandr Bessmertnykh is an East/West specialist and he left a vacuum of power on Soviet/Middle East policy there which was filled by an Arabist, Evgeny Primakov, who became Gorbachev's personal envoy to Iraq. Primakov is pushing Soviet policy towards scoring points in the Arab world at U.S. expense.

The Soviet Foreign Ministry also lost ground to the Soviet military which was anxious to preserve a former ally and to preserve a market for Soviet arms. Given this fractured Soviet policy, given the Soviet double game in the Gulf, given the fact that we may have seen the high water mark of U.S. Soviet cooperation, the U.S. should not give the Soviets a veto over U.S. policy in the Persian Gulf, or give the Soviets an entry into the Persian Gulf, through some nebulous scheme of "new world order." The U.S. should seek to reconstitute the Gulf region, not on the basis of an idealistic utopian vision of a new world order imposed from

above, but rather rebuild Persian Gulf stability through the tried and true way of doing it — by restoring the regional balance of power.

Back to Biblical Principle. The Middle East is the worst possible region in the world to experiment with such a concept as this new world order. I think that we should go back to the balance of power approach, which has prevailed there since Biblical times. The Iraqis understand the concept of “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.” It is unclear whether they, or anyone else, really understand the “new world order.”

