

# U.S. Policy in the Gulf: Five Years of Dual Containment

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## In-Depth Reports

It is a great pleasure to be here this evening to speak to this audience on the subject of U.S. policy in the Gulf. I would especially like to thank Rob Satloff for inviting me. Five years ago, of course, my predecessor, Martin Indyk, addressed the Institute on our policy in the Gulf at the start of the first Clinton Administration. Tonight I would like to give you an update on where we are in the Gulf and where we are going.

The Gulf region has been recognized by every American President since Franklin Delano Roosevelt as an area of absolute vital strategic importance for the United States. Not only is it the energy storehouse of the world -- home to two thirds of the proven oil reserves of the globe -- but it is also the nexus where three continents come together. No where else in the world have U.S. military forces been more actively engaged in the last quarter century than here. From Earnest Will to Desert Shield and Desert Storm to Southern Watch, Northern Watch and Desert Strike, this is where the vital interests of the United States have been defended most vigorously in the last two decades.

When President Clinton was elected in 1992 his first administration recognized immediately the strategic importance of the region and recognized that there were two central threats posed to the stability and security of the area -- Iraq and Iran. We also recognized from the beginning that these threats could not be dealt with in isolation. Rather the United States needed to understand that dealing with the threat posed by one could not be done at the cost of neglecting the other. Consequently, we needed a policy designed to handle the unique threat each posed but which did so in a coordinated manner.

This was and remains the underlying premise of the policy known as Dual Containment. That policy understands the unique threats posed by these two states and seeks to deal with them both, not identically but in a coherent manner. Early on we rejected the option of trying to play one off against the other. That policy had been tried earlier and had resulted in the dangerous imbalance of power in the region that helped to precipitate the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990.

We are now five years later and much has changed in the world. But much remains unchanged. Let's start with Iraq. We continue to face a very serious challenge to the stability of the Gulf from Saddam's Iraq. We have just concluded a prolonged confrontation with Iraq over the question of whether the UNSCOM inspectors would have full and unrestricted access to all sites in Iraq. That crisis has been resolved for now with a clear result -- Iraq backed down and allowed UNSCOM to have the access it needs to do its job. UNSCOM inspectors, including Americans have inspected facilities previously off limits -- like the Iraqi equivalent of the Pentagon -- in the last few weeks. This is a significant accomplishment for American diplomacy backed by the threat of force.

During this crisis we also successfully expanded the UN's oil for-food program substantially -- thus securing more help for the Iraqi people. Saddam's ability to use the humanitarian card to undermine sanctions has been reduced. This too is a victory for the international community.

This crisis began last year when the Iraqi government chose again to challenge the regime of UNSCOM inspections

that were set up in 1991 to eliminate Iraq's arsenal of weapons of mass destruction and the means of delivery and to prevent Iraq from reconstituting them. Any review of the crisis must begin by focusing on UNSCOM.

Why did the international community create this inspection regime in the first place? The answer is because Iraq is today the only repeat offender in the world in the use of weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles.

That is to say that while many nations have WMD arsenals of various sizes and ballistic missiles, Iraq is the only one with a recent track record of using them not once but often. Saddam's Iraq has started two wars in our time in an effort to dominate the Gulf. In both those wars it has employed its ballistic missile force -- against Tehran, Isfahan, Tel Aviv, Riyadh and Manama. In the first Gulf war it repeatedly used chemical weapons. In the Anfal campaign it used them again against its own people ten years ago last month in Halabja. Almost certainly it would have used CBW in the second Gulf war had we not effectively deterred Iraq from crossing that threshold. The UNSCOM inspector's reports indicate clearly that the Iraqis had plans to do so.

That is why the international community created UNSCOM in 1991 -- to disarm and keep disarmed this uniquely dangerous regime. Those inspectors have done a terrific job since then despite intense Iraqi efforts to intimidate them, conceal the truth about its programs and prevent them from achieving their objectives. As the President has often noted, UNSCOM has successfully destroyed more Iraqi WMD and missiles than did Desert Storm. In 1996, at the al-Hakim biological weapons factory alone it destroyed a facility capable of producing enough BW to kill everyone in the region.

Iraq's decision last year to try to block UNSCOM's access to sites in Iraq and to try to limit American participation in UNSCOM was, therefore, a direct challenge to an instrument crucial to maintaining peace and security in a critical part of the world. Not only was the future peace of the region very much at stake, so too was the credibility of the United Nations in dealing with the threat of WMD proliferation -- a problem the world is certain to face even more starkly in the next century.

President Clinton understood clearly how much was at stake in the Iraqi challenge from the beginning. He authorized a response that matched vigorous diplomacy with a robust demonstration of force. The two worked together effectively to compel Iraq to change its position. After months of saying that Americans could not inspect facilities in Iraq or that some sites were off limits to any inspectors, UN weapons inspectors including Americans are back on the job in Iraq inspecting sensitive and important sites including for the first time some sites repeatedly declared off limits before, like the Iraqi equivalent of the Pentagon. That is a victory for American diplomacy and a success for the world community.

But we all know it is not over. Saddam Hussein's track record is all too clear. He will continue to challenge the international community because his goals remain regional domination and revenge for past defeats. That is why he started two wars and tried to assassinate President Bush and the Amir of Kuwait. Thus it is imperative that vigilance and strength remain the hallmarks of our efforts to contain this regime until the time comes when Iraq fully complies with its obligations and is at peace with its neighbors.

We are all tired of Saddam's hide and seek games with UNSCOM. The burden of proof is on Iraq to fully disclose all information about its WMD programs, not on UNSCOM. In 1991 UNSCR 687 gave Iraq 15 days to provide full, final and complete disclosure on these programs. Some 2000 plus days later we see progress only in the nuclear area. Access has been achieved thanks to U.S. firmness. Now is the time for Iraq to come forward and tell the truth. Full disclosure is what the UN has called for.

Staying firm on Iraq can not be only an American mission. We should not have to confront this challenge only with American forces. Fortunately that is not the case. Much was made in the last crisis about differences in the international community about how to respond to Saddam's challenge. There were indeed differences of view but

there was a more important consensus on one essential point --- Iraq must comply with the 40-plus UN Security Council Resolutions adopted since 1990 to curb its regional ambitions. Every foreign leader President Clinton spoke to during the months of crisis agreed on this bottom line.

And many countries agreed with the need to support diplomacy with the credible threat of military force. Over three dozen offered to assist our military effort either by providing use of their facilities like Germany and Spain or by sending their own forces to be with us in confronting Iraq like the United Kingdom, Denmark, Argentina, Holland, New Zealand, Poland, Canada and Australia.

Our friends in the Arab world also played a key role in helping to reverse Saddam's challenge. Many sent repeated high level demarches to Baghdad demanding compliance. Others quietly provided key logistical and transit support for our buildup including Egypt, the Gulf States and Saudi Arabia. None of our friends in the Arab world had any sympathy for Saddam, even as many shared our sympathy for the Iraqi people.

So the challenge ahead will be to keep this very dangerous regime contained and to prevent it from building an arsenal of dangerous weapons. How do we intend to do so?

First, by limiting the regime's ability to threaten its neighbors. The two no fly zones and the maritime interdiction force are part of this approach. We have now flown more sorties in Operations Southern Watch and Northern Watch than in all of Desert Storm. I have just visited our airmen in Saudi Arabia with the Vice President and I share his view that they are the true "heroes" of this crisis. We will also continue support for UNSCOM and sanctions. We are proud to fly UNSCOM's U-2 missions, and sanctions have already lost Saddam \$110B -- imagine what kind of threat Iraq would be today if it had \$110B. We will work with our partners in the region and around the world to strengthen these instruments. We will insist on full Iraqi compliance with Security Council Resolutions including a full accounting for a11 of Kuwait's missing-in-action.

Second, by trying to help the Iraqi people through the oil for food arrangement expanded by the UN earlier this year. This allows substantial amounts of food and medicine to get to the Iraqi people under UN supervision. Already more than 3.5 million metric tons of food have been delivered. This denies Saddam the ability to starve his own people to curry support for ending sanctions -- the policy he deliberately pursued for five years. We should not let him exploit what we care about, the people of Iraq, to protect what he cares about, WMD. We should not be fooled by Saddam's propaganda -- an Iraq that has grown by over 3 million people since 1991 is not starving to death.

Third, we will continue to be in contact with various elements of the Iraqi opposition to help them work more effectively. Those Iraqis who oppose Saddam do so at great personal risk --- they deserve our support. We should have no illusions here that an end to the Saddam dictatorship is close at hand or easy to accomplish. But we should also do what we can to help efforts like the INDICT program to highlight and dramatize Saddam's crimes.

Fourth, we will remain ready to work with a new government in Baghdad when it comes to power. Saddam will not last forever, and we should be ready to work with the Iraqis who succeed him. We do not seek a permanent sanctions regime or a Versailles like peace for Iraq. Nor do we want to see Iraq fragmented and turned into another Afghanistan or Somalia. We do want to see a strong and healthy Iraq return to the community of nations and see it play its appropriate role in international and regional affairs. America and Iraq have been close partners in the past and they can be partners and friends again in the future.

All of this will require patience. We will' need to bear in mind that a containment policy is by definition a long term approach to a problem, but it is one that achieves our vital interests.

And we must bear in mind that containing Iraq is not enough, we must also move forward on other tracks in the Gulf.

So let me turn to the second threat in the Gulf region that President Clinton inherited in 1993 -- Iran. How has containment fared vis-a-vis Iran?

Our most important accomplishment here has been to put an international focus on Iran's actions and behaviors. Iran's support for terrorism, its efforts to acquire WMD and its sponsorship of violent opposition to the Middle East Peace Process have become an increasingly important part of the international debate since 1993.

And we have had some success. Four years ago Japan suspended its aid program for Iran, citing its support for terrorism, costing the Iranian regime over a billion dollars. Europe last spring announced an arms embargo. Russia has agreed to cap its arms dealings and take steps to control technology transfers with Iran. The Ukraine, Poland and other states have listened positively to our concerns about dangerous arms and technology transfers. China has moved away from cooperation with Iran's nuclear program and the sale of destabilizing conventional weapons.

Second, our effort to highlight Iran's dangerous policies and increase the economic cost of such actions has forced Tehran to make difficult decisions about where to put its resources. In a country with more than half the population under 21, economic decisions about arms purchases can be influenced by outsiders. We have sought to make Iran think twice about how to spend its money. Hard pressed for foreign hard currency Iran has had to steadily cut back on its purchases of foreign weapons in this decade. Foreign exchange expenditures on arms have dropped from a high of \$2.5 billion in 1991 to less than one billion dollars last year. That means the Iranian military threat to regional security and stability has been slowed and weakened. A threat still remains but it is not what Iran hoped for when it sought to rebuild its forces at the end of the Iran-Iraq war.

Now we have begun to see some signs of change within Iran's political process. The election of President Khatami last spring obviously marked a milestone in the history of the Islamic Republic. The Iranian people voted in impressive numbers for a change in Iran's course. We appreciate the significance of this development. President Clinton welcomed the election of Khatami and said only a few days after the votes were counted that he hoped it would begin a process of change that could end the estrangement of the two countries that began almost twenty years ago.

Since President Khatami's inauguration we have followed his words and actions. We watched closely his unprecedented CNN interview and noted its many positive statements. We followed his handling of the Islamic Summit in Tehran last December and its generally moderate tone. And we have noted with interest his efforts to strengthen the rule of law inside Iran. We hope this will lead to protection for all Iranians, including religious minorities like the Bahai. We hope it will also lead to an end to efforts to encourage Salman Rushdie's murder.

Most of all we welcome President Khatami's decision to increase the level of interaction at the people-to-people level between our two countries. President Clinton met with the American wrestling team which had been so well received in Tehran and heralded their reception. We welcomed Iranian wrestlers in Oklahoma. And we support the efforts of think tanks on both sides to increase greater contacts between experts across a wide spectrum of disciplines. As the President said in his Id al-Fitr message to Muslims around the world, "Iran is an important country with a rich and ancient cultural heritage of which Iranians are justifiably proud. We have real differences with some Iranian policies, but these are not insurmountable. I hope that we have more exchanges between our peoples and that the day will soon come when we can enjoy once again good relations with Iran."

We are prepared to move further toward greater engagement. People to people dialogue is useful but the issues that divided Iran and America must ultimately be addressed by their governments. The United States has been open to a government-to-government dialogue with Iran since the Bush Administration. We remain interested in sitting down face to face with the Iranian leadership to discuss all issues of concern to both states. We have no preconditions. We only insist that the dialogue be authoritative--that is government to government.

And unfortunately, there are serious issues about Iran's actions that still need to be addressed and need to be changed. Let me spend a few moments reviewing these.

First are Iran's efforts to develop weapons of mass destruction and long range ballistic missiles. Despite its signature on the NPT and CWC, our information is crystal clear: Iran is seeking to develop an arsenal of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and the missiles to deliver them. As DCI Tenet has reported to the Congress, this effort is an aggressive one in which Iran has put considerable resources.

As I noted earlier, we have an equally aggressive effort around the world to try to discourage potential sources of technology and equipment for these programs from selling it with Iran. Our track record in doing so has been reasonably but not entirely successful. More needs to be done and we will continue to do our utmost. The President frequently raises these issues himself at the highest levels to discourage such transfers.

Second, there remains Iran's dangerous connections with terrorist organizations around the world and particularly in the Muslim world. Despite promises that Iran opposes terrorism, we continue to see significant connections between Iran and numerous organizations that engage in terror including Islamic Jihad, Hizballah and Hamas. Iran still provides such groups with arms, money, training and safe haven. In Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon and many other states, Iran gives aid and assistance to groups engaged in acts of brutal violence against civilians. That is why so many of Iran's neighbors remain so leery of Iranian intentions despite the changes brought by President Khatami.

Third, we remain particularly concerned by Iran's support for violent opposition to the Middle East peace process. We have noted Iran's more moderate declaratory policy toward the Palestinian Authority and the more flexible approach it took in the Islamic Summit. But we remain deeply concerned about its continued connections and support for the most violent enemies of peace. Its words must now be matched by deeds.

So in any future dialogue with Iran we will want to discuss these issues. And we will continue to discourage other countries from engaging with Iran as a normal partner until we all see changes in Iran's policies in these areas. In this regard we will enforce the laws passed by Congress intended to encourage other states to control technology transfers to Iran and to exercise great care and discipline in what they trade with Iran.

In principle the United States and Iran potentially have many areas where shared interests and common concerns could emerge: seeing the Gulf open to unrestricted flow of its energy resources; seeing the Saddam regime in Iraq contained and disarmed by the UN inspectors; seeing an Afghanistan at peace with itself and its neighbors. I visited Kabul last month with Ambassador Richardson and can attest with my own eyes the urgent need to end the Afghan war. It is even possible to envision the development of a common interest in seeing stability in the region so that its peoples can focus their attention on human development, not weapons development.

The United States stands ready to engage with Iran on all of these issues and others whenever Tehran is ready. Iran should feel free to raise its agenda. We are patient and prepared to wait. In the interim we will continue to do all we can to constrain Iran's actions in those areas that threaten our interests and the interests of our allies and friends.

Let me briefly address two other points. First, another key to our policy toward the Gulf is our effort to advance the Middle East peace process. No government has devoted more attention and effort to this process than the United States. We are acutely aware of the dangers that a stalemated peace process poses to the entire Middle East. The President and his peace process team remain determined to do what we can to move this forward. At the end of the day, the hard decisions need to be made by the parties in the region--not by Americans--but we will do all we can to assist them.

Second and finally we need to do more to develop our bilateral relationships with our allies in the region. For fifty years the United States has enjoyed and benefited from a unique and special partnership with Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Oman and the other states of the Gulf Cooperation Council. That partnership is the bedrock around which our

policy in the Gulf has always been based. We confronted Soviet imperialism together and persevered. We confronted Khomeini's extremism together and persevered. We fought Saddam's invasion of Kuwait together and today Kuwait is free. We have worked to bring peace to the Levant together and we need to continue to do so.

The ties that bind us to our friends in the Gulf are deep and strong. Vice President Gore reaffirmed them in Jeddah last weekend with King Fahd and Crown Prince Abdullah. Those ties have overcome the work of terrorists again and again. They have transitioned from one leader to another, and I am confident they will continue to do so. The key is to remain dedicated to our common goals.

President Clinton in his message to the Iraqi people earlier this year said it best about our objectives toward Iraq in particular and the Gulf in general. Our goal, he said, is to "see a future of security, prosperity and peace for all the people of the Middle East. We want to see the Iraqi people free of the constant warfare and repression that have been the hallmark of Saddam's regime. We want to see them living in a nation that uses its wealth not to strengthen its arsenal but to care for its citizens and give its children a brighter future." ❖

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