What Next after Saddam?

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In-Depth Reports

Patrick Clawson, The Washington Institute: I want to say a few words about the standards of success by which we should judge progress in Iraq after Saddam Husayn's regime is deposed. Two issues are of particular importance: weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and democracy.

Because any war against Iraq will be motivated, in large part, by U.S. concerns about WMD, Washington will be very interested in making sure that a post-Saddam Iraq has no more such weapons. At the same time, though, there will be some people in post-Saddam Iraq, particularly in the Iraqi military, who still think that it is a good idea to pursue these weapons. How should the United States deal with this problem?

It would be a mistake to assume that, once we are in Iraq, we will be able to do inspections the "right" way. Inspections are a fallback mechanism that should only be used when one lacks a better alternative. Our real goal should be persuading the Iraqi government that it does not need WMD. Hence, the best counterproliferation approach is to create a security environment that fosters such an attitude. As others have said, the best counterproliferation mechanism ever developed was the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, which persuaded European countries that they did not need their own nuclear weapons. Initially, convincing the new Iraqi regime to abandon WMD will require a U.S. security umbrella over Iraq against external aggression (primarily aggression from Iran). This umbrella will be necessary because the Iraqi military will be in no shape to fight off external enemies after a U.S.-led war. The world will expect that responsibility to devolve upon us. We should recognize that fact and, indeed, proclaim it.

Then, over the longer term, it would behoove us to foster a good relationship with Iraq. It will be in our best interests to help rebuild the Iraqi military into a force that it is capable of defending the country against external aggression. Helping Iraq develop a robust conventional military capability would be, by far, the best way to convince the Iraqis that they do not need WMD. That will only be possible if there is a close relationship between the United States and Iraq such that we do not have to worry about Iraq threatening its neighbors, Israel, or other U.S. interests in the region. But that is indeed a possibility over time.

With regard to democracy, I am concerned that much of the discussion about democratization in post-Saddam Iraq seems to ignore the lessons of the democratization efforts of the 1990s. There is a rich literature regarding how to bring democracy to countries that do not have a democratic culture. Yet, much of the advice that is currently being given about what should be done in post-Saddam Iraq flies in the face of the lessons we have learned and the wisdom in that literature.

The literature argues that holding elections shortly after the fall of a totalitarian government is a bad idea. In the immediate aftermath of Saddam's fall, the institutions necessary to holding a free election simply will not exist: no robust, independent press with respected commentators and journalists who can accurately report the positions of the various candidates; no political parties through which tested leaders can emerge who are used to the ideas of compromise and cooperation; and none of the other things necessary to make democracy operate.

We will need to help the Iraqis rebuild the institutions of civil society gradually, starting with local elections, other semirepresentative institutions, and a free press. Then Iraqis will begin to gain the experience they need to make democracy work. We will also need to help create a consultative council similar to the Loya Jirga held in Afghanistan. There, people who are not used to compromise -- not used to the idea that they can differ with someone on an issue without declaring a blood feud that lasts until the end of days -- can begin getting accustomed to cooperation. That kind of intermediate situation might last for several years.

This would be the lesson of other countries that are going through democratization: the best way to produce a stable, working democracy is to build representative institutions gradually. If the standard being held out is the creation of democracy, people will complain, "But we haven't had elections yet." That's precisely as it should be, though; elections should be held well down the road in the process of democratization, not immediately after liberation from tyranny.

More likely than not, an American-run military government will be established the day after a U.S. overthrow of Saddam. Soon thereafter, U.S. forces should hand over most power to Iraqi technocrats, who would then run much of Iraqi society. For example, the school and hospital systems, along with almost all of the security functions (e.g., local policing, the judiciary) could be put in the hands of competent Iraqis relatively quickly.

Yet, there will be a transition period of some duration. During that period, we must allow the Iraqis to make as many decisions as possible. One particularly important decision will be the fate of the Iraqi oil industry and what role international investment and oil companies should play. Few issues have been as sensitive in modern Iraqi history. For seventy-five years, Iraqi nationalism has defined itself around opposition to a role for international oil companies. Therefore, it would be inappropriate for us to insist on an active role for such companies or to force Iraqis to make any decisions quickly. Although I am firmly convinced that it is in Iraq's best interest to allow international firms to play as large a role as possible in the development of its oil industry, there may be many proud Iraqi oil engineers who differ. Therefore, this decision should be made by the Iraqis themselves.

The United States can deem itself successful if, five years from now, there is a government in Iraq that looks rather like the government in Jordan, which is to say, a regime that is reasonably representative and reasonably respectful of human rights, with a reasonably free press. I would even settle for an Iraqi government that resembles Egypt's, which offers fewer such freedoms but is nevertheless not so bad. If we achieve anything more than another Jordan, that would be wonderful. Yet, it is overly optimistic to think that we can take a country that has emerged from under a totalitarian regime with its institutions of civil society in total disarray and create a beacon of democracy within five years. We could run into serious trouble if we operate under that notion.

Amatzia Baram: Around the year 710, al-Hajjaj bin Yusuf, who was appointed governor of Kufa by the Umayyad regime in Damascus, came to a gathering in the Friday Mosque there and said, "Ho, people of Iraq, people of division, hypocrisy, and bad qualities." This criticism shows us two things. First, it highlights a fact that people sometimes gloss over, namely, that there is a historical Iraq. Iraq was not a national entity in the Umayyad, Abbasid, or later periods, but there was a regional entity of sorts called Iraq in those days, and it has persisted. Witness how many medieval scholars have "al-Iraqi" (which means "coming from Iraq") appended to their names. So, to say that Iraq is a wholly artificial invention of the British, a creation of the minds of Gertrude Bell, Lawrence of Arabia, and Percy Cox, is not accurate. Yet, one would not be unjustified in saying that Iraq is, to a large extent, an artificial creation dating from 1918.

Second, Iraq has been characterized by a great deal of divisiveness -- revolutionary zeal, religious schisms, protests, violence, and various tribal, regional, and class divisions -- since the Umayyad times. As a result, after the Abbasid era, no Iraqi-based regime was truly representative of its population. This is the first lesson of Iraqi history. Although the Sunni Arabs and Sunni Kurds in Iraq accepted the Ottoman sultan as a legitimate ruler by the end of

the nineteenth century, the Shi'is -- who already constituted a clear majority in the area now called Iraq -- did not. This lack of representative government persisted with the establishment of modern Iraq. Since 1921, when King Faysal I came to the throne, Iraqis have lived under minority rule by Sunni Arabs, who compose 15 to 20 percent of the population. This is one of the reasons why the Iraqi monarchy had such difficulty establishing its legitimacy among the Iraqi people.

Rather than become more representative, Iraqi governments -- including the benign, partly democratic monarchy, which lasted until 1958 -- have instead chosen to destabilize the regional order. Adventurism became a means of winning domestic legitimacy. Some Iraqi Jewish friends of mine who grew up in Amarah told me how their geography teacher would say to them, "Iraq will conquer the Gulf and flatten the Fertile Crescent," whereupon all students were allowed to stand and dance on their desks. They were speaking of the early 1940s, under the monarchy. Iraq has never conquered the Gulf or flattened the Fertile Crescent, but Iraqis were taught to work toward a change in the regional status quo. More recently, the Palestinian issue has become a mechanism for the unpopular and illegitimate Iraqi regime to appeal to the passions of its people.

Some have spoken about the possibility of appointing another Sunni Arab military man -- a good-looking army general riding a white horse -- to rule Iraq after Saddam. This man would handle all of Iraq's postwar problems, and the Americans could quickly fulfill their admirable promise of leaving Iraq. Yet, this is not a good solution for the simple reason that such a regime would be unpopular and would lack legitimacy. As soon as it freed itself from American tutelage, this regime would resort to the proven strategy of destabilizing the region in order to divert domestic dissent. As George Orwell suggested in 1984, hate works; Kanan Makiya titled his book on Ba'ath Iraq Republic of Fear, but he could just as easily have called it Republic of Hate.

The first problem that the U.S. military will face in a war against Iraq will be the Tikritis. When I say Tikritis, I mean people who come from Tikrit, Dur, Beiji, Uja, and the whole governorate called Salah al-Din. Not by coincidence, Saddam believes that he is the latter-day incarnation of Salah al-Din. He has not yet managed to do what Salah al-Din did, but he hopes he might be able to do so, particularly after he obtains a nuclear arsenal.

Geographically, Samarra is in the same governorate, but you can be much less suspicious of Samarris. Tikritis and Samarris, for historical reasons, have not been on good terms for the last 300 years. Samarris are bitter because they feel that the Tikritis discriminate against them.

So, what to do with the Tikritis? First of all, there are many Tikriti bureaucrats in the administration, and they can be left in their positions as long as they are not senior Ba'ath Party members, and as long as they do not deal with any of four essential areas: money; the military; education; and communication systems and the media. Anything else is fine. If you find that a Tikriti who happens to be a long-time party member is in charge of the rail system, leave him there. Similarly, a Tikriti banker cannot embezzle without risking himself, so there is no reason to remove him provided he is under some sort of surveillance. But if you leave senior Ba'ath Tikritis in control of the four areas I just mentioned, you will lose the battle to transform Iraq immediately. When the British allowed Sati al-Husri and his frivolous friends to manage the Iraqi educational system during their mandate, they paid heavily for it in the form of Rashid Ali al-Gailani's pro-Nazi nationalist coup in 1941.

Not every member of the intelligence apparatus is a Tikriti; there are not enough of them. But you cannot leave Tikritis or Ba'athists in important internal security positions. You must completely dismantle what Iraqis call the Presidential Protection Force, probably 95 percent of which consists of Tikritis. You will have to keep these forces in isolation, placing Tikriti and Ba'ath fighters in large prisoner-of-war compounds for a few months.

Similarly, the entire Special Republican Guard corps is either Tikriti or loyally Ba'ath. You cannot trust members of this unit even for a moment; they, too, must be isolated for a short time.

The Republican Guard must be dismantled completely. Because it has long been the private army of Saddam Husayn, you cannot simply place its more apolitical officers in the general army; they will have to go through a vetting committee. You must also remove all politicized officers from the general army, with some severance pay.

Eventually, you will have to start releasing Tikriti and Ba'ath prisoners. The first to be released should be those who surrendered; in fact, you should advertise this fact during psychological warfare operations as an incentive to surrender. Eventually, however, you will have to release the rest of the prisoners. Rest assured that they will have weapons and money stashed away. Saddam's three options are to try to wage Armageddon, to seek political asylum, or to establish an underground. He is already prepared for the last option, and you may have great difficulty finding him. You have to be ready for the possibility that Saddam will slip away to lead an underground resistance. That is why you cannot release Tikriti or Ba'ath prisoners of war until you have each one in check.

What about the Iraqi political elite? Some of them will need to be jailed immediately and put on trial, but many will not. In addition to protecting them in welldefended Baghdad compounds, Saddam has long monitored them, and you will need to do the same. Although many are not necessarily criminals, they are Ba'ath elites, and there is a very good chance that some Iraqis will attempt revenge killings against Saddam's supporters. Such bloodshed must be prevented at all costs.

Alina Romanowski: I have been asked to talk about the specific challenges that the U.S. military will face in a post-Saddam situation. I want to raise our awareness of the range of such challenges and examine how we can mitigate some of the worst-case scenarios that might emerge.

History is filled with models for military cooperation that might be useful in guiding the military mission as it shifts from removing Saddam's regime to laying the foundations for an alternative Iraqi political system. The most demanding U.S. military occupations were in Germany and Japan after World War II. Allied forces destroyed both countries and then occupied them for many years. To a large extent, the U.S. military and others created new constitutions and political institutions for both of them. This model greatly facilitated each country's redevelopment and reintegration into the community of nations. Yet, it is unclear whether post-Saddam Iraq will be as economically or socially devastated, or as open to international management, as Germany and Japan were.

The peacekeeping missions in the Balkans in the 1990s provide another model for military occupation, particularly in their use of a wide array of international military partners to separate warring ethnic factions. Such cooperation established a loose balance of power on the ground. Although the United States may well end up convincing the United Kingdom, Turkey, and a few other regional players to support an invasion, it is unclear whether there would be an outpouring of international help to share in the military tasks required to rebuild Iraq. There will certainly be sharp elbows in the international community when opportunities emerge to share in the economic rebuilding of Iraq. But the tough job of maintaining a secure Iraq may fall largely to the Americans. After all, many will still perceive an invasion as an American campaign, notwithstanding any United Nations (UN) resolution the United States may achieve authorizing the use of force.

The Afghan model of military cooperation is another useful case. It is still a work in progress, but its central feature is a multinational operation in the country's capital, composed of countries that willingly came together to provide security for the newly emerging Afghan government while the Afghan military and security forces are rebuilt.

Yet, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and the international community have yet to decide whether ISAF's role will extend beyond Kabul, either in advance of the rebuilt Afghan security forces or along with them, in an effort to consolidate and centralize control by the government. It is too early to tell whether such an expansion in ISAF's mandate would trigger a backlash against the central government or serve as the sole means of taming the warlords. One can only hope that the international community would be ready to coalesce quickly in order to ensure

the territorial integrity of Iraq.

We can draw from many other relevant models, such as Somalia, Haiti, and South Korea. One thing is common to each case: the U.S. military played a key role in establishing the parameters of the military occupation and in developing the multinational involvement over the longer term. We should be prepared to do exactly the same in Iraq.

Clearly, the military occupation of Iraq will be a unique amalgam of such experiences, but the central issue for the Bush administration and U.S. military commanders will be determining where on that spectrum of military involvement the United States should be. Currently, I am not sure that we have a clear idea where we want to be the morning after an invasion.

In his speech at the UN General Assembly on September 12, 2002, President George W. Bush spelled out clearly what he expects of a new Iraqi regime. His requirements highlight the key areas that the U.S. military should be prepared to focus on, at least initially. According to the president, any new Iraqi regime must:

• eliminate all WMD, long-range missiles, and related materials; • end support for terrorism and act to suppress it; • ensure the safety of all civilians, including Sunnis, Shi'is, Kurds, and Turkmens, as required by Security Council resolutions; • account for or release all prisoners of war from Operation Desert Storm and return all stolen property; • end all illicit trade outside the oil-for-food program; and • build a government that represents all Iraqis and respects human rights, economic liberty, and internationally supervised elections.

If the United States invades Iraq, it will have two key objectives: toppling the regime and eliminating WMD. The U.S. military will then have the responsibility of setting up a new regime, and Machiavelli's first rule will come into play: he who has power must rule. The burden will fall, first and foremost, on General Tommy Franks and his troops. They will have to administer Iraq and facilitate the transition to whatever authority will follow them. U.S. forces will be responsible for establishing and maintaining law and order and for giving a new regime legitimacy, even if it is only an interim government. They will also need to ensure the personal security of the new leadership.

The U.S. military will be stepping into a morass. Iraq presents as unpromising a breeding ground for democracy as any in the world. It has never really known democracy or even legitimate, centralized rule for any great duration. The country is riven between mutually hostile ethnic groups that are themselves divided into a multiplicity of contending tribes. Iraq's politics have, historically, been brutally violent. Whichever American or Iraqi leader sits in the presidential palace in Baghdad after Saddam's demise will face immediate and enormous problems. Iraq has long been rich in vendettas, and never more so than now; hence, a small U.S. force sufficient to bring about Saddam's demise might not be sufficient to stop the subsequent bloodletting. Even if one believes those pundits who assert with utmost confidence that the Iraqis will welcome us with open arms, our troops cannot go into Iraq without at least planning for a string of revenge killings.

Moreover, how will U.S. troops deal with the aspirations of those ethnic groups who want to assert their control over areas that Saddam has long deprived of political influence? For example, the Kurds in the north may attempt to move south and capture Kirkuk. Even if we do cut a deal with the Kurds before an invasion, can we be so confident that it will hold? Will the U.S. or Turkish military have to worry about this problem sometime in the future, whether three days, three months, or three years after an invasion?

And what are we prepared to say to the Shi'is in the south? What role might Iran, Syria, and Turkey play in establishing political equilibrium in Baghdad? All of these countries have a vested interest in what goes on in Iraq. Nevertheless, we must be careful not to go too far in giving a country such as Iran a sense that it will have influence.

We must face the possibility that whatever government we foster or impose may be considered illegitimate from the start and may survive only as long as we are prepared to exercise the force necessary to suppress opposition.

Alternatively, we may be far better off if the burden of administering Iraq is a multinational effort, under some regime with international legitimacy. So, how do we get there? Thus far, few in the international community are clamoring to join the United States in identifying an alternative regime or even a political process. Ultimately, the only stable and legitimate government will be the one Iraqis impose on themselves.

Is the U.S. military prepared to take on the longer-term job of providing the security and control across Iraq that will allow the Iraqi people, with or without international monitoring, to hold elections? What about the task of helping Iraqi security leaders develop a new strategy and design and equip a new Iraqi defense force? This task calls for new strategic concepts, new doctrine, new training, and new organization. Will we take on that burden?

Let me turn to the second-most difficult task the president set forth for the military, the elimination of WMD. Some of Saddam's WMD capabilities will have to be dealt with during the invasion, but the bulk of his arsenal is hidden and will require careful search and destruction. This process will have several phases. The invading force must secure suspected sites rapidly. This task will become more difficult if there is contamination that requires an immediate response. In many cases, we will probably have to find the facilities ourselves; we will not be able to trust anybody else to do so, and we should not expect the Iraqis to show us all of their sites.

The key question is whether this task will fall exclusively to the U.S. military. Will the international community be willing and able to assist in this area? Many of these challenges can and should be thought through before an invasion, including the long-term destruction of WMD capabilities under a regime that has declared its desire to comply with UN resolutions.

Although regime change and WMD are the two most important issues, a few others are worth mentioning. These include managing the UN oil-for-food program; cutting off illicit trade; administering refugee camps, even if they are temporary; providing water and food to the population; and returning Gulf War prisoners of war. We can try to delegate some of these tasks to nongovernmental organizations and aid agencies in order to minimize the role of the military.

Yet, if the invasion involves a protracted hunt for Saddam, then the task of distributing food and water, preventing illicit trade, and managing refugees will become a much higher priority for the invading force. If the security situation in Iraq is chaotic and unstable (which many have tried to argue will not be the case), then the U.S. military's responsibility for maintaining law and order throughout the country will be much greater. We will need more of our troops to work further from their supply lines. Similarly, if Iraq's vast oil reserves are to be used to rebuild the country, then the United States will be responsible for securing the infrastructure so that it can be repaired and expanded. In other words, the entire rebuilding of Iraq will likely fall on the U.S. military unless we begin to create an international coalition that is more likely to help us.

Participant: Earlier in these proceedings, Zalmay Khalilzad offered vague responses to questions of governance and commitments, not wanting to talk yet about putting the burden of governing postwar Iraq on the U.S. military or some coalition. To what extent do you believe commitments for the post-Saddam leadership of Iraq have already been made, and how does that affect your description of what will happen afterward Saddam?

Romanowski: If you undertake an invasion and put soldiers into Baghdad to unseat Saddam, you need to have an alternative waiting in the wings. Otherwise, who will manage the situation in the first hours and days after Saddam has been deposed? That task will rest with the U.S. military (or, perhaps, with some other external actor). This is an even more acute problem if, as was suggested previously, we have to get rid of Tikritis, Ba'athists, the security forces, and the Republican Guard.

So, in the immediate aftermath of Saddam's overthrow, administering Iraq will most likely fall to the U.S. military. Now, that may not be bad. But we have to go in expecting to assume a huge role in the initial phase. I am not saying

that we should not intervene in Iraq, just that we should think through the consequences.

Clawson: Alina, I was struck by how much you emphasized handing administrative tasks over to an international force rather than to Iraqis themselves. A fair number of the tasks you talked about, such as the provision of food and water, are things that Iraqis themselves have done quite well through difficult circumstances over the past twelve years. There are some competent technocrats running those efforts for the regime. Hence, in thinking about the alternatives to a U.S. military administration, we must consider to what extent we will want to involve international forces or friendly Arab regimes and to what extent we will seek to hand these tasks over to Iraqis.

Romanowski: I agree -- we need to keep the administration in the hands of the people who are doing it well now. Yet, suppose an invasion creates a much more chaotic situation? Then you will have a serious problem, and somebody will have to deal with it.

Clawson: Yes, but we may also have a serious problem in figuring out which Iraqis to work with, how to do it, and if what we are doing --

Romanowski: Well, if we do not know who they are by now, we had better start figuring it out.

Clawson: True. But there is a tendency on the part of war planners to assume that the worst-case scenario is one in which the military has to run Iraq. In fact, the worst case may involve dealing with local allies about whom we know little. That can be every bit as challenging as having to administer postwar Iraq ourselves.

Romanowski: But you have to remember, in this particular case, that unless we have an international consensus to intervene in Iraq, we will look like a unilateral force that is trying to reshape an entire country on its own. In that case, we had better have the answers up front. We cannot wait for the situation to deteriorate and then say, "Gosh, we didn't think about that."

Participant: Professor Baram, in Afghanistan we were able to use some of the local institutions, along with the Loya Jirga, to try to organize politics, even though one could argue that we have not done a great job so far. Is there any comparable institution in Iraqi history that would provide some sort of legitimacy to regime change? Would you recommend trying to get one Kurd, one Shi'i, and one Sunni into some sort of troika to run the country provisionally? How would you recommend that Iraq's administration be organized in the immediate aftermath of U.S. action?

Baram: At the top echelon, you can have people who will serve either as head administrators or as an entire government unto themselves, supervised by the U.S. force or other international forces. Initially, these administrators would be appointed, not elected. The trick here is appointing the right people. I myself know of certain individuals -- some currently living inside Iraq, some outside -- whom the Iraqi people would definitely regard as representative, even if they were not elected.

You must create a connection between the grassroots and the leadership. If you do that, things will begin moving in a way that Iraqis can accept. At the very least, they will be reasonably unhappy rather than unreasonably unhappy.

The Iraqi army will still be necessary, though you can reduce its size. Most Iraqis regard it as a legitimate institution, even one that they can be proud of, despite the various atrocities it has committed. I have met Shi'is who fought against the army in what they used to call intifadat Sha'ban, the March 1991 Shi'i uprising against the regime. The army decimated these opposition forces. But when I asked them a few questions about relations between officers and soldiers in the army during the Iran- Iraq War, they looked at me and said, quite genuinely, "But Professor Baram, these are national secrets. The army is the property of the people." Then there is the Iraqi police force. Although all institutions in Iraq are completely penetrated by Saddam loyalists and by the Ba'ath Party, the police are less troublesome than most. They focus on actual crime rather than political matters.

Perhaps the General Security Service (al-Amn al-'Amm) can be retained -- it is a state institution, not a party

institution. It will need reform, however; unlike the regular police, it does deal with political crimes, and that mandate must be taken away. Nevertheless, those of its personnel who have not engaged in torture and other abuses can retain their posts, and the organization itself can be modeled on the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

As for the Iraqi military, the first line of defense against a U.S. invasion will not be the Republican Guard, but rather the so-called "Jerusalem army." Saddam established it a year and a half ago and is still building it. It has twenty-one divisions, with perhaps as many as 200,000 personnel. Very few Shi'is actually want to fight. Those who carry rifles for the regime do so only because they would be shot or imprisoned, or their families would suffer, if they refused. Hence, in the event of an invasion, they will surrender in droves. Many may try to run home, but the Republican Guard will be behind the regular army lines and might shoot deserters. Because surrender will be a safer avenue, the invasion force will likely have to absorb many Iraqi prisoners almost immediately. In fact, Saddam may be planning on just such a contingency, in an effort to keep invading forces preoccupied. In any event, such prisoners must be held in a secure area for a week or two until they can be sent home.

The U.S. military must also be prepared for the possibility that Saddam will attempt to destroy Iraqi oil fields. There are already signs that the regime is preparing bridges for demolition in the event of an invasion, and the United States should investigate whether similar preparations are being made to the country's oil infrastructure.

Representative Howard Berman: I would like the panelists to elaborate on what they have said in the context of two things. First is the Republican Party's rhetorical position over the last ten years (and particularly since George W. Bush campaigned for president in 2000) against the United States assuming the role of nation builder. Second is Bernard Lewis's comment earlier in these proceedings about Israel's experience in Lebanon, where Israelis came as liberators and stayed to become occupiers. All of our key interests in Iraq -- eliminating WMD, safeguarding the country's territorial integrity, and so forth -- seem to require us to remain there for a while in the wake of an invasion.

Clawson: One of the arguments I was trying to make in saying that we should set our standards of success in Iraq relatively low is that I am a fan of the idea that we should liberate Iraq and then get out of there as quickly as possible. We should confine our presence primarily to upholding our security guarantee against external aggression. We should allow the Iraqis to make their own mistakes, and we should have a light role after the initial period.

Alina was talking about U.S. responsibilities over several months. I think we may end up having to play the principal role in Iraq for the first year; after that, we should hand control over to the Iraqis and get out of there. Even if the result is less than optimal, it would be a whole lot better than facing the situation that the Israelis did in Lebanon.

Iraqis were one of the very few people who rebelled -- in the form of a major revolt in 1920 -- when the British showed up to run a mandate. The Iraqis have a long history of strongly nationalistic, almost xenophobic reactions that makes me extraordinarily nervous about our sticking around there. If we are unsure about how we will be greeted when we first arrive, I strongly suspect that we will face serious problems if we overstay our welcome. So, I would argue that we should set relatively low standards for what we expect to accomplish there; then, if things go better than we had hoped, then all to the better.

In his book The Threatening Storm: The Case for Invading Iraq, Kenneth Pollack argues that if we do anything other than achieve a perfect democracy in Iraq, we will have failed. He also contends that such a failure could only be attributed to a lack of will. He does not once suggest that if we stick around, we will face the threat of engendering a nationalistic revolt against us, and that such an event might make the question of U.S. political will moot. That is a profound misreading of Iraqi society and history. If we try to transform Iraq into a democracy, we will need more and more troops over time because we will have to quell nationalistic revolts.

Romanowski: We need to decide what the mission is. What are we really after: regime change or WMD? If the latter,

there are many other ways we can accomplish this mission without an invasion. For example, we can engage in much more aggressive use of the no-fly zones, or we can make full use of our political clout and will in the UN and with some of our partners. We must look at those alternatives before we send in an invading force.

If eliminating WMD is the mission and we try to accomplish it through regime change, we will have no way of determining when that mission is accomplished unless we install a regime that is willing to grant us full access and turn over every WMD site. We would need an Iraqi regime that is prepared to work with us, and I am not entirely sure that any Iraqi government would willingly renounce WMD anytime soon, given the issues surrounding such weapons in the Middle East and in India and Pakistan. Barring such a renunciation, we would need to establish a good inspection system following regime change.

If we do not want to get tied into nation building to the extent that we may have to in Afghanistan, or to the extent that we had to in Germany and Japan, then we should think very carefully about which comes first: regime change or WMD.

Baram: Establishing a democracy in Iraq would be a longer and more difficult process than that seen in postwar Germany (I do not know enough about Japan to offer a comparison to it). Before the war, Germany went through the same social and political developments that, say, Britain and France did, only in a much shorter period. These included the development of capitalism, industry, a middle class, and even a limited African empire. So, Germany had some notion of liberalism and a middle class that could carry a democracy. Iraq does not yet have those assets, so building democracy there will take longer.

I agree with Patrick that you can settle for less than a perfect democracy. In fact, you can settle for a regime that is simply benevolent and representative of the main groups in Iraqi society. Anything less than that, however, would not hold water. The United States will have to remain in Iraq at least long enough to achieve those conditions.

One way of reaching this goal without garrisoning a huge number of forces in Iraq would be to control the money. Corruption has always been a big problem in Iraq, and whoever takes over the country after Saddam will attempt to pocket its oil revenues. If the United States (or, alternatively, the UN) pays Iraqi officers, teachers, intelligence and internal security personnel, and so forth, it will be able to build a pyramid of dependence and keep its own hand on the big tap.

As for ameliorating Iraqi resentment and nationalism during a military occupation, the United States must live up to its promises and show Iraqis that conditions are improving rapidly. In the event of a total disruption of Iraqi society (e.g., if, after an invasion, Iraqis stop showing up for work), the U.S. military will have to take over the country entirely. That would not be a good thing, but you must prepare for it.

A better and more likely approach would be to employ Iraqis in every possible vacancy. Iraqis are hardworking, and they really would like to do what needs to be done. Yet, you must be prepared to call on them to report for duty and to pay them good salaries, as opposed to the symbolic salaries they currently receive. You must also begin to improve their lives relatively quickly, not necessarily in dramatic fashion, but in readily discernible ways. If the people see such improvements within six months, they will feel a sense of stability.

Fighting crime will be a particular challenge. Although the crime rate in Iraq is fairly low at the moment, it was very high only a year and a half ago. Once the various militia groups and special forces are forced to return to their homes, they will still have ready access to weapons. Weapons are not in short supply in Iraq, and the Tikritis and others might use them to form some kind of mafia. It would be a dangerous mafia indeed; the Tikritis are well-trained in both tactics and the use of weapons, and they are capable of penetrating Baghdad and destroying post-Saddam society. Yet, if you prove, even in a limited fashion, that stability and respect for property are possible with little crime or bloodshed, then the general Iraqi hatred of foreign control will be ameliorated, and you can stay there for a

while.

What reception can U.S. soldiers expect in Iraq in general, and in Baghdad in particular? The Kurds will certainly welcome an invasion, but they will not fight for you outside of Kurdistan. At the same time, they are unlikely to pose a problem unless you need to keep them out of Kirkuk. Nine out of ten Shi'is will accept you, not with great joy, but with a sigh of relief. Yet, in the Sunni area of Tikrit, Beiji-Dur, they will fight you.

In Baghdad, most citizens -- the majority of whom are Shi-i -- will not fight you. Yet, they will not be at all happy to see you, because you will bring devastation and hardship with you. You will need to win Baghdadis over quickly. They do not like any foreigners except those who come as tourists and spend a lot of money. They will accept an invading force only reluctantly, and only for a while. But you can win them over, especially by helping them, setting attainable goals, and telling them that you will leave as quickly as you can once those goals are achieved.

Clawson: On a historical note, the U.S. occupation of Germany essentially ended in eighteen months. It was completely over within thirty-six months. The fiction of an occupation for the next forty years is only maintained because we kept some forces there to help defend Germany against Soviet aggression. The U.S. military played no real role in the administration of Germany after the first eighteen months. The occupation of Japan did not last much longer than that. So, the idea that the rootto- branch reconstruction of Japanese and German societies took decades is not supported by any of the historical research. Most of the historians of postwar Germany assert that by the spring of 1946, the occupation was largely over. We maintained a presence in each country for decades, but as a protective force, not as occupiers.

Baram: Returning to the subject of WMD, we just do not know much about how the Iraqi armed forces view such weapons. Many of them believe that WMD helped them end the Iran-Iraq War. Some Iraqi officers even believe that the United States did not attempt to take Baghdad in 1991 out of fear of Iraq's WMD.

But the whole picture is not clear. Saddam assassinated his maternal cousin, the minister of defense, in 1989, in part because the man objected to nuclear weapons. In other words, nuclear weapons are very dear to Saddam's heart, and he would never give up his pursuit of them. Yet, other Iraqi officers may feel the same as the former defense minister.

That said, you cannot rely on the Iraqi army to voluntarily surrender all of its WMD capabilities. You will have to confirm full disarmament with your own means.

Romanowski: If we are committed to staying in postwar Iraq for only eighteen to thirty-six months, we must take care of the WMD issue rather quickly. That is, we must start the process of eliminating such weapons as soon as we reach Baghdad. Otherwise, we might face pockets of resistance from units in the regular army or the Republican Guard who have access to unsecured WMD. Although that would be a worst-case scenario, we need to consider it as we plan an invasion.

Ze'ev Schiff, Ha'aretz: Listening to the long list of responsibilities that the panel is giving to the U.S. government and its military, I am a bit amazed, particularly when I hear you say, "Don't stay too long, but stay as long as is necessary to bring prosperity to the Iraqis."

Let us assume that, just after an invasion, President Bush calls the three of you and tells you that Saddam has disappeared and that some Republican Guard units are fighting a terrorist campaign. What is the maximum amount of time that each of you thinks the U.S. military must stay in Iraq in order to fulfill the goals you have proposed?

Second, Mr. Clawson, you said that the United States must create a security environment in order to persuade Iraqi elites to get rid of WMD by themselves. Yet, what will you tell them if you find out that the Iranians are close to obtaining nuclear weapons? What kind of umbrella would the United States give Iraq in such a case?

Clawson: The U.S. Army will have to stay one year, the U.S. Air Force probably five to ten years. This long list of responsibilities you mention could be completed fairly quickly, and U.S. forces could then help the Iraqi military become strong enough to take over. Afterward, the U.S. Air Force could effectively guarantee Iraq's external security, even while based in a remote area out of the way of the Iraqi people, similar to Prince Sultan Air Force Base in Saudi Arabia. We could still work with the Iraqi military in the meantime, selling them arms and working to build up their conventional forces.

I have long felt that the best response to an Iranian nuclear breakout -- indeed, the only response that can stop the Saudis, Turks, and Iranians from proliferating -- is to extend some kind of security umbrella over the region if the Iranians use or threaten to use nuclear weapons. This problem is not unique to Iraq. If the Iranians acquire nuclear weapons, we will have a lot of problems among our friends.

On a related note, Pakistani generals have explained to me in some detail how, if Pakistan were to transfer nuclear warheads to Saudi soil but keep them under Pakistani control, they would not be violating the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Romanowski: I would give it a bit longer than one year. The U.S. Army will have to stay about eighteen months. I would not keep the U.S. Air Force in Iraq in the same capacity that Patrick described, but I would maintain a U.S. presence throughout the region as a security umbrella. The U.S. presence in Iraq would be accepted as a means of helping the region provide for its own security; it is already viewed as such in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Jordan, and elsewhere.

If you decide that you will occupy Iraq for eighteen months and then leave, you will either have to leave the entire region or build a different framework for staying there. Currently, regional states are pretty bad at providing for their own defense, so the United States would do well to help them become more selfreliant. As for Iraq, U.S. forces will need to work with a post-Saddam military before determining whether it can be modernized to the point of providing for Iraq's security on its own.

Baram: For some reason, I am not all that worried about an Iranian WMD attack. The Iraqis will fear it, however, so the United States will need to reassure them.

Iraq has an army. If you dismantle the Republican Guard and send its equipment and its less politicized officers and troops to the regular army, Iraq would have a reasonably capable military that could be modernized within a few years.

Of far greater concern is the possibility of domestic bloodletting, particularly the emergence of a mafia or other underground organization. Even a relatively small underground (e.g., a few hundred people) could rob banks, arm itself, interfere with politics, and kill U.S. soldiers. You have to remember that Saddam and his lieutenants have repeatedly mentioned Mogadishu and Beirut. They remember U.S. experiences in both cities and have drawn all sorts of conclusions from them.

Without a legitimate post-Saddam government and reasonable progress toward stability, nationalist resentment would build up among Iraqis and make the U.S. position there difficult. Hence, I am a little more pessimistic than my fellow panelists; U.S. forces will need to remain in Iraq for up to two years, and they will not have an easy time there.

Occupying Iraq without unnecessarily arousing Iraqi sensitivities is not a simple matter. U.S. forces must be careful; if they behave in Iraq as they sometimes have in Afghanistan, they will run into trouble. For example, some U.S. special forces operatives in Afghanistan walked around half-naked with their guns, looking like Rambo. In an Islamic country, such behavior is received quite badly. People do not like it; it is not respectable. So, U.S. soldiers will have to behave themselves in Iraq, as they did in Germany and Japan.

If the United States maintains a minimal and respectful presence, then Iraqi irritation will be less problematic. If I am wrong, however, and conditions are more adverse, then U.S. forces could be in Iraq for as long as five years. If I were advising the president, then, I would be honest with him. Still, under normal circumstances, the military presence will last a year or two at most.

Clawson: Amatzia, your five-year option makes me very nervous. If things go badly, the United States should withdraw immediately.

Baram: That is another option, yes. You can say "forget it" and go home, but you would leave behind chaos -- a vacuum that Iran may be happy to fill.

Participant: If the Kurds do indeed attempt to move into Kirkuk, what would the consequences be, in both the immediate aftermath of regime change and in the longer term? For example, say elections are scheduled to take place in a federal Iraq within three years. A census is taken, and Kirkuk is still predominantly Kurdish. If the Kurdish leaders cut a deal with the Arabs and Kirkuk is ceded to a Kurdistan regional unit within a federal Iraq, how would the United States manage Turkey?

Romanowski: It is important to cut a deal up front with the Turks and the Kurds so that this sort of scenario does not happen. Even if the deal with the Kurds falls apart, we would still need to secure a deal with the Turks so that they do not intervene directly.

This issue also depends on what type of political system is established in post- Saddam Iraq. We cannot simply force the Kurds to abandon all of their aspirations. This would spark an internal conflict within a country still reeling from a U.S.-led invasion. Frankly, the United States should be prepared to accept an unsatisfactory end to this particular problem.

But getting back to your premises, if the first elections are held three years after an invasion, they will be too late. If the United States is to leave Iraq in eighteen months, it will have to hold elections beforehand to establish a legitimate Iraqi government.

Participant: To play the devil's advocate on Patrick's behalf, how do we prepare Iraqis for an election in less than three years? What kind of election would it be?

Romanowski: That is why you must start planning for the post-Saddam leadership now.

Participant: Patrick, you said you were happy that Mr. Khalilzad rejected the notion of a government-in-exile. This seems to contradict everything else you are saying. Why not begin to establish a transitional government beforehand -- not a full-fledged government-in-exile, but an entity with open seats for individuals who have remained in Saddam's Iraq, and with no figurehead? Such a step would start the process of creating institutional benchmarks that could lead to a constitution and elections within a shorter period.

Clawson: My vision is military government for a year, Iraqi-led transitional government for two to three years, then elections toward democracy. It is unrealistic to imagine that we will be able to figure out who should be in that transitional government until we have been there for a while and observed Iraqi reactions. So, the U.S. military will be stuck running things for a little while.

This is the kind of lesson you will hear from people who have helped establish democracy in many other countries: if you try to force-feed it to the population more quickly, you end up with something that is not democratic, with another dictator down the road. The force-feeding approach has failed in every country where it has been attempted.

Baram: Establishing a government-in-exile right now would be a bad idea because there are people inside Iraq whom you should include right away. You do not want to make them feel left out or create antagonism before an invasion. So, it does not make much sense to name a new government right now. Within the first ninety days after an

invasion, you can establish a governing authority, though it would not be a government in the true sense. Rather, it would be a kind of council that could run the country on the technical level. Such a council must be composed of individuals who are seen as representative.

One such individual is Abdul Majid Kho'i. I mention his name only because he lives in London and I doubt Saddam would try to assassinate him just because I name him. He is the right person to place in some kind of important position because he is admired, or at least liked, by many Iraqis, and because they know that he will represent their interests. Moreover, his positions on most issues are very secular. There are others like him inside Iraq as well.

Yet, it is not enough to create this kind of managerial council. The process of democratization must be started as well, beginning with the creation of a constituent assembly. If the members of such an assembly are nominated, then you will have no problems. If, however, they are elected, then you will have one huge problem. Out of Iraq's eighteen governorates, ten are approximately 95 percent Shi'i. Therefore, Shi'is would be guaranteed to win more than half of the assembly seats, making Iraq a sort of Shi'i dictatorship. It would be a dictatorship by the majority, but a dictatorship all the same, and severe Kurdish and Sunni Arab backlash would be a given.

So, you need to find an intelligent way of administering the country. For example, when you build the constitution, each community could be given a veto.

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