

# The Iraqi Opposition and U.S. Policy: An Update

Jul 7, 2000



## Brief Analysis

**T**he INC has so far proven its capability in undermining the viability of the existing regime, namely by seizing fourteen provinces from Saddam Husayn's grasp, infiltrating the intelligence apparatus, making and maintaining contact with the highest members of the ruling cadre and military branch, and opening offices in the region. We are now awaiting a clear indication from the United States that it is intent on developing a strategy or program to overthrow Saddam. The INC delegation in Washington hopes to advance this process and bring about the implementation of the Iraqi Liberation Act. Gradually, we are getting the administration to follow through on its promises.

Hoshyar Zibari

At the present time, international pressure is mounting to end the no-fly zones and reconsider the use of sanctions. It is imperative that both programs remain firmly in place as the only shield protecting the Iraqi people from unmitigated aggression by the regime. These mechanisms are also critically important as the only means currently in place to weaken Saddam and make him vulnerable to removal. But overall progress requires a more active U.S. role, including the termination of all policy alternatives to toppling the regime.

Ahmad Chalabi

If the \$98 million designated for use by the INC within the purview of the Iraqi Liberation Act is officially allocated, it will be used for the purpose of overthrowing Saddam Husayn's regime-the ultimate goal envisaged by its drafters and signatories. The money will more specifically be used to create a media infrastructure, a civil reconstruction program, and a military force to challenge Saddam and promote desertion from within his ranks. Vice President Al Gore has agreed to accelerate the pace of military training and marshal the support of regional states. We are awaiting further developments from the Department of Defense.

## STATE OF SADDAM'S REGIME

Sharif Ali

Externally, Saddam appears to making progress, crudely yet efficiently manipulating or outmaneuvering the sanctions. Internally, the circumstances have deteriorated and the regime is worried about its security and the loyalty of the intelligence services. Furthermore, the tripartite siege-comprised of daily Anglo-American bombing, the sanctions regime, and nearly complete diplomatic isolation-has significantly eroded his popular base of support. But this atmosphere of instability is fleeting and will certainly shift in Saddam's favor during the months to come.

Ahmad Chalabi

Saddam is weaker now but not for long. He shows signs of rehabilitation, having reestablished ties with Bahrain and Qatar just recently. Saddam's intelligence network is also resurgent, having reportedly renewed operations in Dubai, Syria, and Jordan. He is slowly but steadily acquiring the resources to rebuild 1) the state terror structure, 2) his

foreign access, and, soon thereafter, 3) weapons of mass destruction-the three pillars of his regime's survival strategy. Sanctions are insufficient without the prospect of removing Saddam Husayn.

#### LOOKING AHEAD: CHALLENGES AND EXPECTATIONS

Sharif Ali

The INC is in agreement that beyond the more immediate goal of toppling Saddam, our objective is to establish a pluralistic, democratic, and federalist state. As for the configuration of this or any future regime, that will be left up to the people to decide through direct referendum. In the meantime, our preliminary efforts to mount a force capable of challenging Saddam has been frustrated by many factors, among them mixed messages from the U.S. administration. To be sure, administration officials who have publicly expressed skepticism about our efforts have done great damage. A moratorium on this sort of behavior is nothing short of imperative, to promote our common objective of regime change.

Sheikh Mohammed

The prospect of political paralysis, or worse yet chaos-caused by internal divisiveness in the wake of Saddam-has been grossly overestimated. The multiplicity of sects and ethnicities in Iraq does not preclude consensus in post-Saddam Iraq. Pitting groups against one another was and continues to be a strategy of the current regime. We do not fear the ascendancy of a group as long as it has the support of the public. Iraqis do not divide themselves that way.

Latif Rashid

The support of neighboring countries is essential. Syria has and continues to accommodate the Iraqi opposition. Iran for its part has faithfully kept its borders open to Iraqi refugees. The critical hurdle to overcome now pertains to official support and greater involvement from Turkey, which has so far provided much-needed airfields for the continuation of sorties over Iraq, but has proven reluctant to make more specific pledges.

Ahmad Chalabi

In pursuit of regime change, the INC plans to station humanitarian organizations in areas of Iraq adjacent to Kurdish territory. Concomitantly, it will erect depots for goods and services in the south, areas that Saddam has traditionally neglected and cannot currently afford to control. Second, we intend to enlist the support of international organizations to furnish additional humanitarian aid in conjunction with a media campaign to raise levels of awareness about the opposition, all this while the sanctions continue. In addition, we will forge relationships with our neighbors-beginning with the interpersonal relationships still maintained on the local level between our people and theirs-in order to prevent Saddam from sustaining relationships with adjacent foreign states. At this stage, we cannot proceed without a stronger mandate from the United States.

This Special Policy Forum Report was prepared by Michael Moskowitz.



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