

February 22, 1991

**ENDING THE WAR AND WINNING THE PEACE
IN THE PERSIAN GULF
PART I
THREE SCENARIOS FOR VICTORY**

INTRODUCTION

Mikhail Gorbachev's February 21 "peace plan" apparently has been designed to provide Iraq's Saddam Hussein with one last chance to extricate his armies from Kuwait while still claiming to have avoided defeat at the hands of American and coalition forces. George Bush's forceful rejection of the plan gives Saddam only hours to withdraw his forces or face a ground war. It is one option he still may try to exercise; and it thus is one way that America's war against Iraq might end, and one of the war-ending scenarios for which Bush must be prepared.

It is, of course, not the only scenario. A second is that the United States and Iraq will fight a limited war over Kuwait, pushing the battle only until Kuwait is liberated and using only conventional weapons. A third scenario is that the war will escalate, perhaps to include the use of chemical, biological, or even nuclear weapons, spread to other countries, and end with a U.S. drive to Baghdad.

Forthcoming: Ending the War and Winning the Peace in the Persian Gulf, Part II. Once the war is won, Bush will face a host of issues including the peacetime role of the coalition against Iraq, the long-term military role of the U.S. in the Persian Gulf, and the need to prevent the transfer of unconventional weapons technology to Iraq and other outlaw states in the international system. Part II in the series, to be published next month, will address these issues.

Controlling the Outcome. With deft diplomacy and choice of military goals, Bush can control the outcome of any of the scenarios — a diplomatic surprise, limited victory, or escalation of the conflict — and end the war on the terms America now envisions: Kuwait liberated, Iraqi forces largely destroyed, and Saddam thoroughly discredited.

The liberation of Kuwait will fulfill Bush's pledge to restore Kuwaiti sovereignty. The destruction of Iraqi military capability will help attain Bush's broader objective of restoring security and stability to the Persian Gulf by denying Iraq any offensive military capability against its neighbors. A sound defeat will discredit Saddam, weakening his political base within Iraq and removing him as a political factor in the post-war Middle East. It also will discredit other radicals in the area, such as Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) chief Yassir Arafat, who endorse Saddam's aggressive policies.

Already the war has destroyed Iraq's chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons research centers, and is destroying much of its armed force. Saddam probably shortly will be out of Kuwait, via a humiliating withdrawal without conditions, or after a brief, violent war. But it is not only Bush who will have a say in this war's outcome. Saddam undoubtedly will try to thwart Bush's goal of a limited war with an unambiguous ending. Iran and the Soviet Union, can be expected to try to change the outcome as well. So can some of America's European and Arab "coalition partners." So far Bush has been flawless in his handling of the Persian Gulf war. Now he must be ready for three broad scenarios for ending the war, each holding the prospect for American success or failure.

Scenario #1: "Saddam's surprise" — an Iraqi tactical retreat, in which Saddam shocks the world by pulling his forces out of Kuwait and declaring "victory" while his army remains relatively intact. The danger for the U.S. in this is that Saddam simply will redeploy his armies on Kuwait's northern border and remain a permanent threat, perhaps dragging the U.S. into a Korea-style long-term deployment.

How to end a "Saddam surprise" on American terms:

- ◆ Insist that Iraqi forces withdraw from Kuwait without their weapons, in effect surrendering. This will prevent Saddam from claiming victory in defeat.
- ◆ Refuse to negotiate. Saddam's withdrawal from Kuwait must be unconditional.
- ◆ Do not permit Gorbachev to broker an agreement. By apparently undermining allied and United Nations calls for Saddam's unconditional withdrawal in his February 21 "peace plan," Gorbachev has disqualified himself as a negotiator.

Scenario #2: Limited victory, in which the U.S. wins a limited war, routs Iraqi forces from Kuwait, but finds that Saddam sporadically fights on, hoping to drag the U.S. into an extended “war of attrition.”

How to end a limited war on American terms:

- ◆ Prevent Saddam from saving his army. The American-led offensive must prevent the orderly retreat of the Iraqi army back into Iraq where it could be rebuilt and reconstituted.
- ◆ Continue to occupy southern Iraq until the Iraqi government agrees to cease hostilities, abandon claims to Kuwait, return all POWs, and meet any other conditions Bush and the allies set.
- ◆ Maintain the military initiative with continued offensive action against targets in Baghdad and against remaining Iraqi forces on the ground until allied conditions are met.
- ◆ Continue the blockade against Iraq until allied conditions for the cessation of hostilities are met.

Scenario #3: Escalation and intensification, in which Saddam or another country raises the stakes for America. Saddam, for example, could use chemical and biological (or atomic, if he has them) weapons against U.S. forces or Israeli and Saudi civilians; Iraqi agents could carry out deadly terrorist attacks in the U.S., perhaps targeting American leaders; Iran could enter the war on the side of Iraq; Jordan could be drawn into the war deliberately or against the will of King Hussein; the Soviet Union could reverse course and decides to resupply Iraq.

How to control escalation and end the war on American terms:

While the precise U.S. response to an Iraqi escalation of the war will depend on the nature of the escalation, Bush should:

- ◆ Warn Saddam that using weapons of mass destruction against allied civilians or American forces would lead to Saddam’s trial and punishment for war crimes, and if necessary to the occupation of Baghdad.
- ◆ Authorize U.S. commanders to use chemical weapons if Saddam uses them first. This will compel Iraqi forces to fight in the same hot, bulky protective gear as allied forces.
- ◆ Consider retaliating with nuclear weapons — but only as a last resort. The political risks of using nuclear weapons, including loss of allied support and enduring enmity in the Arab world are outweighed only if Iraqi chemical or biological attacks cause mass American casualties, if American forces unexpectedly are in danger of losing a conventional war and are suffering mass casualties, or to pre-empt or retaliate against Iraqi use of atomic weapons.

- ◆ Warn other regional powers, including Iran and Jordan, that intervention or overt aid to Saddam puts their territory at risk; warn Moscow that attempts to resupply Iraq will be treated as a violation of the United Nations embargo and that ships, planes, or trucks attempting to resupply Iraq will be subject to attack.

AMERICA'S OBJECTIVES IN THE WAR AGAINST IRAQ

George Bush spelled out the objectives of the American-led blockade and embargo of Iraq in a September 12 address to Congress:

- ◆ Iraq must withdraw from Kuwait completely, immediately, and without condition;
- ◆ Kuwait's legitimate government must be restored;
- ◆ The security and stability of the Persian Gulf must be assured;
- ◆ American citizens abroad must be protected.

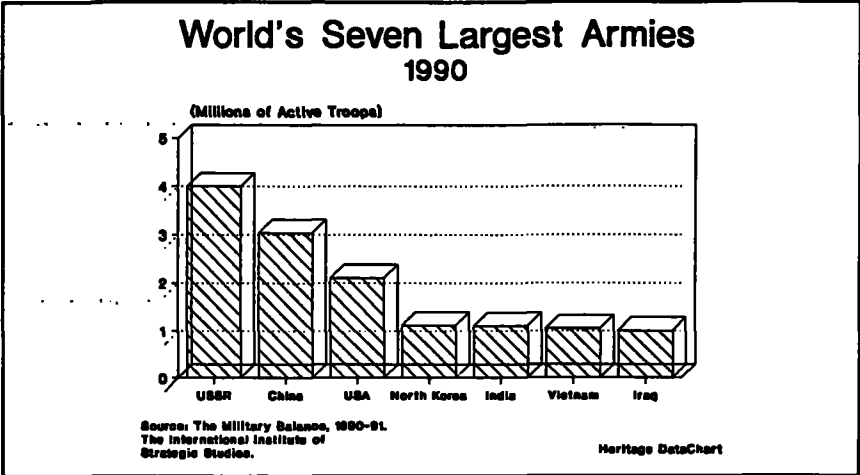
These four peacetime goals officially became America's wartime objectives on January 15 when Bush repeated them in a letter to House Speaker Thomas Foley and Senate President Pro Tem Robert Byrd upon the opening of hostilities, as required by Section 2(b) of Congress's January 12 Joint Congressional Resolution Authorizing the Use of Military Force Against Iraq. In the letter, Bush also called for compliance with the twelve U.N. Security Council resolutions concerning Iraq's complete and unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait.

Bush's war aims protect America's most basic interests. Saddam was building in Iraq a military machine — including biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons — with which he apparently intended to upset the Persian Gulf military balance, gain a stranglehold over the region's vast oil reserves, and threaten other states. In addition to Kuwait, these states include such other moderate, pro-Western Arab regimes as Saudi Arabia, the other Arab emirates of the Saudi peninsula, and Jordan. Saddam's buildup also gave him the capability to challenge Israel, an American ally and the region's only democracy.

If Saddam's aggression against Kuwait had been permitted to stand, he directly would have controlled access to 20 percent of the world's oil reserves, double the 10 percent he controlled before the invasion. In addition, he would have been positioned militarily to coerce the states of the Saudi peninsula, exerting *de facto* control over about 56 percent of the world's oil.¹

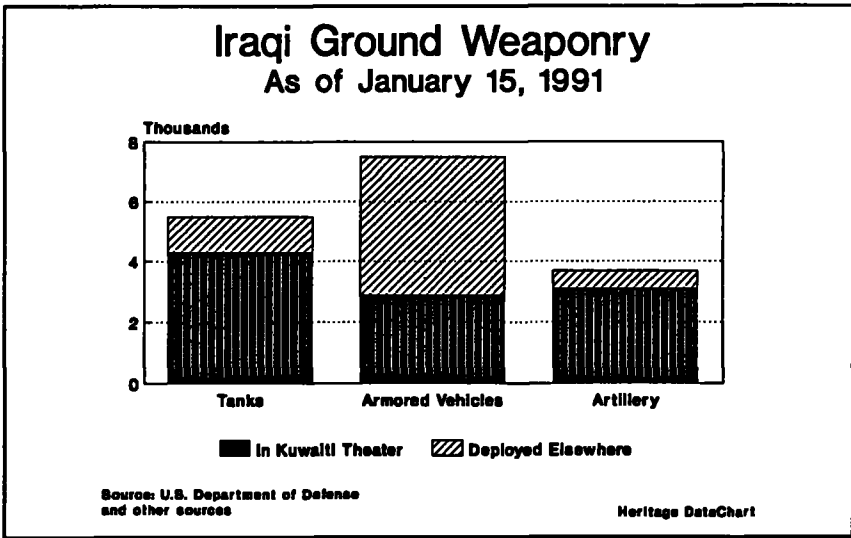
1 U.S. Department of Energy, Energy Information Administration *International Energy Annual* (1990).

U.S. Burden. Since Britain's decision to withdraw its military forces from "east of Suez" in 1971, the U.S. has shouldered the main burden of supporting the West's common interests in the Persian Gulf. It has fulfilled this responsibility not through empire and domination, as had the European powers for a century, but by maintaining a stable regional balance of power that has ensured



the independence and sovereignty of each Persian Gulf state. In so doing, America has prevented any hostile state from gaining a position that would dominate its neighbors and control the region's valuable resources.

Two states periodically have threatened the stability and security essential to U.S. interests in the Gulf: Iran, after the fall of the Shah in 1979, and Iraq. Though the Iranian threat



has faded since the death of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in 1989, the Iraqi threat to Gulf stability has continued to grow. Iraq's army mushroomed from 200,000 to 1,000,000 between 1980 and 1990, expanding from 13 divisions to 62 divisions.² By last year, just before the August 2 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, Iraq's growing military power — with weapons and advice provided mainly by

² Stephen C. Pelletiere et al., *Iraqi Power and U.S. Security in the Middle East*, U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, 1990, p. 16.

Moscow, but also by French, Germans, and other West Europeans — prompted a study by the U.S. Army War College. It warned that if the U.S. were to fight Iraq, it would have to wage “high intensity conflict [by] heavy ground forces with air superiority.”³

U.S. Air Force commanders have been surprised by just how well Iraq has girded for war, with an extensive network of command posts and underground tunnel complexes hardened with reinforced concrete to withstand attack, backup communication systems including expensive fiber optic cable, and about 2,100 hardened shelters for aircraft and other military equipment, many of which survived initial U.S. attempts to destroy them.⁴ Many of these facilities are designed to withstand such nuclear weapon effects as the tremendous energy burst — known as electromagnetic pulse — released in a nuclear explosion. What this means, U.S. Air Force planners told The Heritage Foundation: Saddam was preparing to fight a nuclear war against Israel.⁵

Overriding Objective. Restoring the balance of power in the Persian Gulf is the overriding objective from which stem America’s more apparent goals, such as liberating Kuwait. Restoring the balance hence is the objective that should guide America’s war aims and its post-war diplomacy. This requires, first, that America’s military efforts should be aimed at defanging Iraq’s military capability; and second, that the outcome leaves no doubt as to America’s will and ability to protect its interests in the region. This means no compromising on America’s war aims and no face-saving for Saddam.

America’s air campaign has done much to achieve this already, destroying research centers and factories producing, or potentially capable of producing, chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons. Iraq’s munitions plants, command centers, air forces, and air defense system also, for the most part, were destroyed in the early stages of the air campaign. Once Saddam’s field army is largely destroyed or disarmed, Iraq’s ability to wage war against Kuwait or any other country will have been severely undermined, and a key American objective met.

Undeniable Defeat. Even after Iraq’s offensive military capability is destroyed, there may remain the question of what to do about Saddam Hussein and whether he can be allowed to remain in power. If, at the war’s end, Saddam in any credible way can declare “victory” for having stood up to America and lived to tell about it, he will remain a threat. His militant path will have been vindicated in the eyes of other Arabs, particularly radical Palestinians who advocate Saddam-style military solutions to the Arab-Israeli

3 *Ibid.*, p. 40.

4 Toughest were Yugoslavian-built shelters which survived direct hits by 1,000 pound bombs. According to Air Force planners, these later were destroyed by precision warheads capable of penetrating reinforced concrete before detonating.

5 *Ibid.*

conflict. The result would be years more of Middle East instability. To prevent this America must end the war against Iraq in a way that thoroughly discredits Saddam and his aggressive policies by making his defeat undeniable, even if he manages to survive. He can be granted no rewards for his attack on Kuwait — no concessions, no linkage with other regional issues, no guarantees.

THREE SCENARIOS FOR ENDING THE WAR AGAINST IRAQ

If the U.S. is to restore security and stability to the Persian Gulf, it will have to: liberate Kuwait; destroy Iraq's ability to wage offensive war against its neighbors; and discredit Saddam and the militant path he represents. With skillful diplomacy and choice of military goals, the U.S. can achieve these ends no matter what path Saddam chooses. At the same time, missteps could allow stability and security to slip from America's grasp, even after battlefield success. To avoid missteps, Bush and his advisors should consider three scenarios, how each may lead to failure, and how each may lead to victory.

Scenario #1: Saddam's surprise, an Iraqi tactical retreat.

After standing up to a six-month worldwide embargo and weeks of U.S. and allied air attacks, Saddam decides to bring home his forces from Kuwait before they are defeated and declare "victory."

In a February 15 speech to the Iraqi people, Saddam for the first time mentioned "withdrawal" from Kuwait — albeit followed by a long list of conditions — and told the Iraqi people that they already had won a great victory. Two days later came Mikhail Gorbachev's peace initiative. Continuing diplomatic maneuvering by Saddam can be expected right up to and perhaps after the start of a ground war.

An orderly retreat from Kuwait with his forces still partly intact might be Saddam's best option. While his country has suffered severe damage from U.S. air attacks, Iraqi forces have not been defeated on the ground and Saddam's forces have not broken ranks and surrendered in large numbers. Were he to withdraw immediately, Saddam credibly could claim a political "victory" for having withstood and survived America's assaults, particularly if he were to gain some — almost any — concession from the coalition in return. He might withdraw his forces to just north of Iraq's border with Kuwait, from where he would pose a permanent threat to Kuwaiti sovereignty and to regional stability. He would be well positioned to build on his improving relations with Moscow and Tehran to take a leading role in the post-war Middle East. His stature within Iraq could rise, not only for having stood up to America and its allies, but also for getting out before a costly land war.

His stature throughout the Arab world too could rise, particularly among Palestinians, and particularly if he manages to gain even the semblance of linkage to the Palestinian question in return for his withdrawal from Kuwait.

This would vastly extend Saddam's power in neighboring Jordan, with its majority Palestinian population, putting Jordan's King Hussein under Saddam's virtual control. With Saddam still in power and his army intact, any Arab government that had backed the Western military effort would be in danger of being undermined by pro-Saddam Arab nationalist forces.

How America can win after "Saddam's surprise."

Bush can thwart Saddam's plans by continuing to reject any Iraqi proposal for an end to hostilities that falls short of unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait. America's tremendous military success and strong support on the home front have taken the political pressure off Bush. He need make no concessions, and correctly has shown no inclination to do so. Specifically, Bush should:

◆ ◆ **Not be drawn into negotiations.** America has nothing to gain from negotiating. Saddam's options so far are to accept the humiliation of unconditional withdrawal, or to face military defeat. Either option serves America's war aims. By contrast, negotiations would give Saddam new options.

◆ ◆ **Not trust Gorbachev to broker an agreement.** Since it signed a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with Iraq in 1972, Moscow patiently has armed and trained the Iraqi military. By defeating Iraq, America is defeating a Moscow ally. It is to be expected that Gorbachev will try to salvage something of Soviet influence in Iraq and the Middle East. But his February 21 "peace proposal" would do so at the expense of U.S. and allied objectives. First, even indirect linkage to the Palestinian issue, reportedly included in the Soviet proposal, undermines allied efforts to oust Saddam from Kuwait without conditions. Second, and more ominous, is Gorbachev's rumbling about guarantees of Iraq's territorial integrity and Saddam's rule. This implies a military role for the Soviet Union after the war as Iraq's protector — precisely the cover Saddam would need to start rebuilding his military machine. As long as Saddam survives, he is too dangerous to be offered guarantees that he will be protected. On the contrary, keeping him in line will require the constant threat of military action against him. Bush must make it clear that even unilateral Soviet "guarantees" to Iraq constitute unacceptable "conditions" for an Iraqi withdrawal. America, more than any nation, is paying the price to eliminate the threat posed by Saddam. The terms for ending the war and shaping the peace to follow should be set in Washington, not Moscow.

◆ ◆ **Require Iraqi forces to surrender their weapons before leaving Kuwait.** Even if Saddam offers to withdraw his forces from Kuwait unconditionally, Bush should require that the Iraqi army leave behind its weapons. Over half the Iraqi tanks, artillery, and armored vehicles in the Kuwait military theater, which includes Southern Iraq and Kuwait, are on Kuwaiti territory. By insisting that Iraqi forces leave their weapons behind when leaving Kuwait, Bush accomplishes two objectives: First, he demonstrates undeniably that Saddam's forces have retreated and surrendered. Second, he cuts Iraq's

army to a size that no longer poses a regional threat. While this condition is not set out in U.N. resolutions, neither are others that Bush insists upon, including return of POWs and disclosure of hidden mines. America is at war with Iraq. America has spent billions of dollars and lost lives to oust Saddam from Kuwait. America has the right to impose conditions essential to the successful fulfillment of its war aims.

Bush may face opposition from some U.S. allies, the Soviet Union, and the United Nations in demanding these conditions. At every point Bush could be under pressure to negotiate with Saddam or grant Saddam such "face saving" concessions as indirect linkage of Iraqi withdrawal to the Palestinian issue. The American objective, however, is precisely to prevent Saddam from saving face, and hence from claiming victory in defeat.

Scenario #2: Limited victory.

American-led forces defeat the Iraqi army, either from the air or in a ground war, and liberate Kuwait.

America could win a limited war against Iraq in a number of ways. The Iraqi army in Kuwait could begin breaking up under incessant air attack, and then retreat under attack or surrender in the field to American commanders. More likely as a limited war scenario is a successful U.S.-led ground attack against Iraqi forces in Kuwait and perhaps in southern Iraq.

Even a U.S. military success in a limited war could leave Saddam with options. He could pull back into Iraq and fight on, hoping to draw the U.S. into a protracted war of attrition. This is what Egypt did against the Israelis from 1969 to 1970. Egyptian forces launched artillery barrages and occasional air attacks against Israel to repair Egypt's shattered military and political credibility after the humiliating defeat of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. Similarly, Saddam could engage U.S. forces in artillery duels, occasional air strikes, probing attacks from inside Iraq across the Kuwaiti border similar to the January 29-30 attack on the Saudi border town of Kafji, and even launch occasional *Scud* missile attacks at Israel and Saudi Arabia. His objective would be to inflict casualties on American forces and to tie them down for an extended period in Kuwait. He might hope that this would undermine support for the war in the U.S. He also might reckon that this would increase support for him in the Arab world and lead to pressures on Washington for a negotiated settlement that would leave him with some tangible achievement for his efforts, such as the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Kuwait.

How America can win in a limited war scenario.

America's objective in a limited war must be to destroy or disarm Saddam's army and to bring the war to a clear-cut conclusion on America's own terms after liberating Kuwait. Terms would include, at a minimum, an end to all hostilities by Iraq, compliance with U.N. resolutions, and return of all POWs. With his army defeated, Saddam would lack the military means to remain a

regional danger, and would be so discredited at home that he would be in grave danger of being deposed by his own military. America and its allies could well consider themselves victors even if Saddam survives the war. To ensure victory in the event of a limited war to liberate Kuwait, Bush should:

◆◆ **Prevent Saddam from saving his army.** The American-led offensive must prevent the orderly retreat of the Iraqi army back into Iraq where it could be rebuilt and again pose a threat. To do this, the U.S. ground offensive, when it comes, must sweep far enough into Iraq — perhaps as much as 50 to 100 miles — to surround the bulk of Iraqi forces.⁶ Cut off from supplies of food, water, and ammunition, Saddam's army in Kuwait would have to surrender or be destroyed. Surrendering forces would be disarmed and sent home. Saddam would have lost about 4,000 of his 5,000 tanks, about 3,000 of his 7,500 armored vehicles, and nearly all his artillery.

◆◆ **Maintain the military initiative even after liberating Kuwait.** If Saddam salvages enough of a force to wage a low-level war of attrition against allied forces in Kuwait, America will have to keep the military pressure on Saddam to bring the fighting to a close on favorable terms. Air attacks on Iraq should continue, particularly against military and political targets in Baghdad. Offensive action also could include ground attacks into Iraq to destroy what remains of Saddam's army. Saddam cannot be permitted to draw the U.S. into a simmering conflict with mounting American casualties. Without the military initiative, America could lack the leverage to bring the fighting to a close on its own terms.

◆◆ **Occupy southern Iraqi territory as bargaining leverage.** Pressure too could be kept on Iraq after the liberation of Kuwait by occupying Iraqi territory until Iraq agrees to end hostilities on allied terms. Iraq has key oil fields along the Kuwaiti border, including Iraqi's share of the vast Rumailah oil field, that would be a powerful bargaining leverage. So might the Fao Peninsula and the city of Basra, which bitterly were contested during the Iran/Iraq war. Iraq lost tens thousands of lives during that war to hold these territories, and their loss would deal a severe political blow to Saddam inside Iraq.

◆◆ **Maintain the blockade.** Once Kuwait is retaken, international pressure undoubtedly will build to end the international embargo against Iraq. Moscow and even some American allies will argue that the liberation of Kuwait fulfills the United Nations mandate and that sanctions should end. If necessary, Bush unilaterally should maintain the air and naval blockade against Iraq until all hostilities have ceased on terms acceptable to the U.S.

⁶ This scenario has been described in some detail by Colonel Trevor N. Dupuy, *How to Defeat Saddam Hussein* (New York: Warner Books, 1991).

Scenario #3: Escalation and intensification of the war.

A surprise event, such as mass Iraqi chemical or biological weapon attacks or Iranian intervention, thwart U.S. plans for a short, limited war with minimum U.S. casualties.

While the U.S. hopes to keep the war limited, Washington must be prepared for the possibility of escalation. There are several potential surprises that could escalate the Gulf conflict:

- ◆ Iraq could use chemical or biological weapons against American troops;
- ◆ Iraq could use chemical or biological weapons against Israeli and Saudi civilians;
- ◆ Iraq may possess and Saddam may decide to use a crude atomic weapon against American forces, Israel, or Saudi Arabia;
- ◆ American forces could suffer unanticipated reverses and mass casualties in a ground war;
- ◆ Iraqi agents could launch terrorist attacks in the U.S., perhaps targeting American leaders;
- ◆ Iran could enter the war on Iraq's side;
- ◆ Jordan could be drawn into the war deliberately or against the will of King Hussein; or,
- ◆ The Soviet Union could reverse course and resupply Iraq.

Escalation of the war of course would be risky for Saddam. As long as the war is fought with conventional weapons for the purpose of liberating Kuwait, he stands some chance of coming out of the war alive and still in power. If he escalates to weapons of mass destruction against U.S. troops or civilians in Israel or Saudi Arabia, or by attacking targets in the U.S., he runs the risk that America will respond by raising its own war aims in ways that pose a greater threat to his rule and his life.

Accepting Mass Casualties. Still, Saddam may calculate that if he raises the war's cost to the U.S., Bush will back down under public pressure. Saddam has pointed with pride to his own country's ability to withstand tens of thousands of deaths in its war against Iran, and has spoken with contempt of what he perceives as America's lack of fortitude, telling U.S. Ambassador to Iraq April Glaspie on July 25 that "yours is a society that cannot accept 10,000 dead in one battle."

To inflict mass casualties on U.S. forces with conventional weapons, Saddam's armies must perform far better than expected. They would have to halt the American offensive and then engage the U.S. in protracted war of attrition similar to the Korean stalemate or even to World War I-style trench warfare. This is unlikely.

Saddam's only other option would be unconventional weapons: chemicals that kill on contact; biological weapons that spread anthrax, botulism, and other deadly germs; or, perhaps, crude atomic weapons. Chemical or biological attacks are not likely to succeed in killing great numbers of Americans because U.S. forces are trained and equipped to fight on a contaminated battlefield. Saddam, of course, may gamble that shock and panic would set in, making his attacks more effective than anticipated.

Desperate Choice. As for nuclear weapons, while he is thought to have the material needed for one or two bombs, he is not believed to have the expertise to build a workable weapon. If he has atomic weapons, he knows that to use them would be suicidal. He could hope to gain only martyrdom; yet under desperate circumstances, this would not be unthinkable.

Saddam is not the only player in the region who could up the stakes in the war. While unlikely, there are circumstances under which Iran could enter the war against the coalition. Example: the war becomes protracted, Iranian public opinion turns sharply against the coalition, and Iranian leaders call for "volunteers" to liberate holy Islamic territory from the infidel invaders. Iran has a strongly-motivated 600,000-man army. A massive Iranian intervention could be analogous to China's entry into the Korean war on November 1, 1950. It was the hordes of often poorly-equipped Chinese soldiers that halted the American advance in Korea and ended the hopes for a quick victory.

While Iran's intervention would not be so devastating as was China's, the U.S. would suffer sharply higher casualties. Adding further to America's problems would be a Soviet decision to resupply Iraq, either directly or through Iran. Washington then would have to decide whether to target Soviet personnel.

Jordan too could widen the war. If Saddam were to demand that Iraqi forces be based on Jordanian territory, Jordan's King Hussein might not be able to withstand pressure from his Palestinian population to grant Saddam's request. With Iraqi forces operating from Jordanian territory, Israel would be tempted to become involved.

How America can control escalation and win if the war escalates.

While Bush clearly would prefer a limited war to liberate Kuwait, he must understand that the scope and nature of the war is not his alone to decide. Still, if the war escalates, Bush can:

◆ ◆ **Warn Saddam that use of weapons of mass destruction against allied civilians or American forces would mean his trial, and punishment, for war crimes, and if necessary the occupation of Baghdad.** Saddam apparently is not deterred by threats that his troops or even his civilian population will suffer mass casualties. He shows, however, no inclination so far to become a martyr. His escalation of the war thus may be deterred by convincing him that he personally would suffer if he uses chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons. He should be put on notice that he will be tried for war crimes and

punished accordingly. If his unconventional weapons attacks take heavy American casualties, Saddam should be warned that U.S. forces would drive on Baghdad to capture him. If the unconventional attacks are sporadic and U.S. self-protection measures work, a drive on Baghdad may not be needed. Still, Saddam's crime should not go unpunished. Justice and deterrence of would-be-Saddams would require that an example be made of him. Bush would be justified in bombing targets in Baghdad until the Iraqi military turned over Saddam to the U.S. Or, alternatively, Saddam could be tried *in absentia*, a judgment rendered, and a warrant issued that makes him liable to capture or attack by American forces or agents anytime or anywhere.

◆ ◆ **Authorize American commanders to use chemical weapons if Saddam uses them first.** While U.S. commanders rarely would find the use of chemical weapons militarily necessary, Iraqi forces must know that if they use chemical weapons they could be subject to immediate retaliation in kind. At the very least, this will force the Iraqis to fight in the same bulky, heavy, and hot protective suits that U.S. forces will be forced to fight in if Iraq uses chemicals.

◆ ◆ **Consider using nuclear weapons – but only as a last resort.** The U.S. should consider using nuclear weapons against Iraq only: 1) if no other means would pre-empt Iraq's use of atomic weapons or in response to an Iraqi atomic attack; 2) if American forces are suffering mass casualties as a result of chemical or biological attack; or 3) if American forces unexpectedly suffer mass casualties in a ground war and are in danger of defeat. None of these situations seems likely, but none can be ruled out.

U.S. battlefield nuclear weapons – launched by artillery, delivered by short-range *Lance* missiles, or dropped from airplanes – would be used to punch holes in Iraq's defensive line to clear a path for attacking allied forces. If detonated at about 1,000 feet above the battlefield, the blast of an atomic weapon of under one kiloton would destroy all forces on the ground within a radius of perhaps a half mile, and would result in virtually no radioactive "fall-out," which is created only when a weapon is detonated on or near the ground. Nuclear weapons would not and should not be used against Iraqi cities.

In terms of raw power, the U.S. nuclear arsenal ultimately gives the U.S. the ability to raise the stakes of any conflict higher than Iraq can afford to pay. But playing the nuclear card would be politically explosive for America, risking enduring enmity in the Arab world, condemnation by allies, and Soviet intervention. While in principle nuclear options should not be ruled out, the U.S. first would have to exhaust all other reasonable possibilities for bringing the war to a successful conclusion.

◆ ◆ **Warn off third parties, particularly Iran and the Soviet Union.** Iraq's neighbors of Iran and Jordan should be warned that their territory will be subject to immediate attack if either enters the war on Iraq's side. Potential Soviet intervention poses a more difficult problem for Bush. Gorbachev's

February 17 "peace proposal" contained some foreboding language concerning Soviet guarantees for Iraqi territorial integrity and Saddam's regime. A Soviet decision to resupply Iraq thus is a possibility for which Bush must be prepared. His response should be that the U.S. will continue to enforce the embargo on any military or non-military goods entering Iraq; Soviet ships would be intercepted on the high seas, Soviet cargo planes would be targets once they had touched down on Iraqi territory, and any trucks crossing the border would be considered targets.

America will not escalate this war by choice. But if escalation is forced upon the U.S., already engaged in a major war, any sign of backing down would be the surest way to encourage Iraq and other potential enemies to turn to even more heinous acts against the U.S. and its allies. America is at war. With sound military planning and execution, it should be a quick and limited war. But war by nature is risky and uncertain. Now that U.S. forces have been committed to battle, the U.S. must be prepared to fight, and win, whatever type of war is forced upon it.

CONCLUSION

Saddam Hussein's ambitions to control a new Arab empire do not set him apart from other petty dictators that populate the Middle East, including Libya's Muammar Qadhafi and Syria's Hafez Assad. What makes Saddam so dangerous is that he has acquired the military muscle to try to make good on his aims, right in the heart of the strategically critical Persian Gulf region. Now Saddam is loose, and military action is underway to reign him in again.

To fulfill George Bush's objective of restoring stability and security to the Persian Gulf, the U.S. will have to fight this war in a way that brings it to a close on America's terms: Kuwait liberated; Iraq's ability to wage offensive war against its neighbors destroyed; and Saddam humiliated and the militant path he represents discredited. To do so, Bush must consider three scenarios, how each might lead to failure, and how each might lead to victory and success for America's policy in the Persian Gulf.

The first scenario is a "Saddam surprise" proposal to withdraw from Kuwait before his army is destroyed. Bush can counter this move by continuing to insist on a total withdrawal without conditions or negotiations, and by insisting that Iraqi forces withdrawing from Kuwait leave their weapons and equipment behind, in effect surrendering.

The second scenario is a limited war/limited victory scenario in which U.S. forces push Saddam out of Kuwait, but Saddam tries to drag the U.S. into a long-term war of attrition. The U.S. can counter this by fighting the battle for Kuwait in southern Iraq, cutting off and trapping Saddam's forces — amounting to about four-fifths of his military power — and demanding their surrender. As bargaining leverage, the U.S. should occupy parts of Iraq, maintain the military initiative, and enforce the blockade of Iraq.

The final scenario is an escalation of the war, through Iraqi use, for example, of chemical or biological weapons, Iranian intervention, or a Soviet decision to resupply Iraq. Under these circumstances, the U.S. will have to escalate its own war aims, perhaps changing the target of America's action from Kuwait to Baghdad and to warn Iran or other states that might intervene of the military consequences should they become involved in hostilities. Battlefield nuclear weapons should be considered by the U.S. only as weapons of last resort, for example if U.S. forces suffer heavy casualties under chemical or biological weapons attack.

Reaping Battlefield Gains. Bush has set forth his policy aims in the Persian Gulf clearly and concisely. If he chooses his war aims and end-game diplomacy as carefully and wisely, he can end this war on terms favorable to America's strategic interests in the Persian Gulf. If he wavers, if he allows Saddam to slip away with his army intact, if he is drawn into a war of attrition, or if he fails to up America's war aims if Saddam raises the stakes by using weapons of mass destruction, Bush might not reap the gains that America's battlefield victories promise to deliver.

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