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Iraq: U.S. Military Operations

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Summary

Iraq's chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons programs, together with Iraqi long-range missile development and support for terrorism, are the primary justifications put forward for military action. On March 17, 2003 President Bush issued an ultimatum demanding that Saddam Hussein and his sons depart from Iraq within 48 hours. On March 19, offensive operations began with air strikes against Iraqi leadership positions.

By April 15, after 27 days of operations, coalition forces were in relative control of all major Iraqi cities. Iraqi political and military leadership had disintegrated. The major challenge to coalition forces is now the restoration of civil order and the provision of basic services to the urban population. As the U.S. ground offensive approached Baghdad, DOD civilian leadership came under criticism for not permitting the deployment of sufficient U.S. ground forces to maintain the offensive, protect lines of supply, and secure rear areas where sporadic Iraqi resistance continues. With the fall of Baghdad, Mosul, and Kirkuk, this criticism muted. There was no use of chemical or biological (CB) weapons, and no CB weapons stockpiles have been found, though two mobile labs believed to be biological agent production facilities have been discovered.

Though press reports differ somewhat, and DOD has not released official figures, it appears that over 300,000 U.S. military personnel are in the Persian Gulf region (ashore and afloat). Ground forces include the 3rd Infantry Division, the 101st Airborne Division, the 7th Cavalry Regiment, and the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force. The U.S. Navy is sending two aircraft carrier battle groups back to their home station, leaving three in the region. The Air Force is recalling some of the 15 air wings in the region, and strategic bombers are operating from the British airbase at Diego Garcia, and airbases in the Middle East, Europe, and the United States. (See CRS Report RL31763, *Iraq: A Summary of U.S. Forces.*) The United Kingdom deployed an task force of approximately 47,000 troops. Australia deployed 2,000 troops, and 200 Polish special operations forces are also engaged. Key arrangements for the use of regional military facilities are in place with Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, and Oman. Saudi Arabia is permitting limited overflight rights and use of air command centers, and Turkey has granted limited overflight rights and permission for humanitarian aid transit. (See CRS Report RL31843, *Iraq Foreign Stances Toward US. Policy.*)

The Administration submitted a \$62.6 billion FY2003 DOD supplemental appropriation request for military operations. The House and Senate have approved the conference report (H.Rept. 108-76) to H.R. 1559 granting \$62.37 billion of the request.

This report will be updated as events warrant.

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Iraq: U.S. Military Operations

Background

Iraq's chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons programs, together with Iraqi long-range missile development, and support for terrorism are the primary justifications put forward by the Bush Administration for military action. Since Iraq originally ended cooperation with U.N. inspectors in 1998, there has been little information on the state of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction (WMD) arsenal; however, Administration officials are convinced that Iraq has reconstituted significant capabilities. Initially, leading Administration officials, most notably Vice-President Cheney, Defense Secretary Rumsfeld, and his Deputy Paul Wolfowitz, stressed that "regime change" or the removal of Saddam Hussein from power. Later in 2002, WMD disarmament was emphasized as the primary objective. Expanding on this theme, President Bush, in his speech before the United Nations on September 12, 2002 specified the following conditions for Iraq to meet to forestall military action against it:

- Immediately and unconditionally forswear, disclose, and remove or destroy all weapons of mass destruction, long-range missiles, and all related material.
- End all support for terrorism and act to suppress it.
- Cease persecution of its civilian population.
- Release or account for all Gulf War missing personnel.
- End all illicit trade outside the oil-for-food program and allow United Nations administration of its funds.¹

On March 17, 2003 President Bush issued an ultimatum demanding that Saddam Hussein and his sons depart from Iraq within 48 hours. On March 19, offensive operations commenced with air strikes against Iraqi leadership positions.

Military Planning and Operations

The Department of Defense officially released limited official information concerning war planning or preparations against Iraq prior to the onset of offensive operations. There were, however, frequent and significant news leaks which provided a range of details. News reports indicated that the military options that were under discussion varied significantly in their assumptions regarding Iraq military capabilities, the usefulness of Iraqi opposition groups, the attitude of regional governments, and the U.S. military resources that would be required.

¹ President Bush's Address to the U.N. General Assembly, September 12, 2002.

Options Considered

In the wake of the successful operations in Afghanistan against the Taliban, some Administration officials advocated a similar operation, entailing use of special operations forces in cooperation with indigenous Iraqi opposition forces, coupled with an extensive air offensive to destroy Hussein's most reliable Republican Guard units, command & control centers, and WMD capabilities. This approach assumed that the regular Iraqi army would prove unreliable, and could even join opposition forces once it is clear that defeat is imminent. To encourage this, significant emphasis would be placed on an intensive psychological warfare or "psyops" campaign to undermine the morale of Iraqi soldiers and unit commanders, persuading them of the hopelessness of resistance.²

While having the advantage of not requiring large staging areas (though some regional air basing would be required) or months to prepare, this was generally considered the riskiest approach. The weakness of Iraqi opposition military forces and their competing political agendas place their effectiveness in question, and predicting the behavior of regular Iraqi Army units under attack is problematic. This option also did not address the possibility of stiff resistance by Republican Guard units in the environs of Baghdad, nor the troop requirements of a post-conflict occupation.

This "lite" option stood in contrast to the operations plan originally offered by U.S. Central Command. This option, often called the "Franks Plan", after Army Gen. Tommy Franks, the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) commander who first briefed it to the President, calls for a large-scale ground force invasion. News reports initially indicated, however, that this "heavy" approach did not receive the support of the DOD civilian leadership or White House advisors. Questions over the reliability of the regional support that would be necessary for staging areas and the length of time required for deployment were the major concerns.³ However, the White House rejection of the "Franks Plan" came prior to the decision to take the Iraq issue to the United Nations Security Council. When it became clear that Security Council deliberations and the re-introduction of U.N. inspectors to Iraq could delay the possibility of military action for several months, it was apparently decided that this interlude would allow time both to negotiate regional cooperation and to deploy more substantial forces to the Persian Gulf region, and military operations today appear to adhere closer to CENTCOM's original recommendations. As the ground force offensive has slowed, however, there is now increasing criticism of DOD's civilian leadership for not permitting the deployment of even more ground forces prior to onset of operations.⁴

² "Timing, Tactics on Iraq War Disputed; Top Bush Officials Criticize Generals' Conventional Views", *Washington Post*, August 1, 2002. p. 1

³ "The Iraq Build-up, II", *National Journal*, October 5, 2002. p. 2866.

⁴ "Rumsfeld's Role as War Strategist Under Scrutiny", *Reuters*, March 30, 2003.

Combat Operations

Offensive operations combined an air offensive and simultaneous ground offensive, in contrast to the 1991 campaign which saw weeks of air attacks to soften Iraqi resistance. U.S. Central Command's operational plan employed a smaller ground force than the 1991 Desert Storm operation, reflecting an assessment that Iraqi armed forces were neither as numerous nor as capable as they were ten years ago, and that U.S. forces are significantly more capable. This option depended upon the continued cooperation of regional nations for substantial staging areas/airbases and required months to deploy the necessary forces.

Though press reports differ somewhat, it appears that over 340,000 U.S. military personnel are in the Persian Gulf region (ashore and afloat) and more en route. The 3rd Mechanized Infantry Division, the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), the 7th Cavalry Regiment, and the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force formed the bulk of the U.S. ground offensive. The 4th Mechanized Infantry Division arrived late in theater. Ships bearing its equipment remained off Turkey for weeks awaiting the outcome of negotiations to permit establishing a northern front attacking from Turkey, and then were diverted to the Persian Gulf when these negotiations fell through. The 1st Cavalry Division, 1st Armored Division, and 1st Mechanized Infantry Division were all alerted for deployment, but reportedly most elements of these divisions remained at home bases in Europe and the United States. Some aviation and armor elements of the 1st Air Cavalry and 1st Armored Division were, however, deployed. The U.S. Navy deployed five of its twelve naval aircraft carrier battle groups, and has now ordered two of these to return to home stations. The Air Force had approximately 15 air wings operating in the region, but many of these aircraft have returned to home bases. Strategic bombers operated from the British airbase at Diego Garcia, and airbases in the Middle East, Europe, and the United States. The United Kingdom deployed over 47,000 personnel, including a naval task force, an armored task force, a Royal Marine brigade, a parachute brigade, a Special Air Service regiment, and a Special Boat Squadron. The majority of these British forces are engaged in southeastern Iraq, securing the Umm Qasr and Basra region. Australia deployed approximately 2,000 personnel, primarily special operations personnel, and one F/A-18 attack aircraft squadron, most of whom have now returned to Australia. Poland has 200 special operations troops around Basra. (For more detailed information, see CRS Report RL31763, *Iraq: A Summary of U.S. Forces* and CRS Report RL31843, *Iraq Foreign Stances Toward US. Policy*)

The invasion of Iraq was expected to begin with a 72-96 hour air offensive to paralyze the Iraqi command structure, and demoralize Iraqi resistance across the military-civilian spectrum. Intelligence reports indicating the possibility of striking Saddam Hussein and his immediate circle led to an acceleration of the operations plan, and an almost simultaneously onset of air and ground offensive operations. CENTCOM air commanders have stressed that significant efforts would be made to minimize civilian casualties and damage to Iraqi physical infrastructure.

With twenty-five days of offensive operations, coalition forces had relative control of all major Iraqi cities, including Baghdad, Basra, Mosul, Kirkuk, and Tikrit. The Iraqi political and military leadership had disintegrated, although the

whereabouts of many senior leaders, including Saddam Hussein, remain unknown.

CENTCOM pursued a strategy of rapid advance, by-passing urban centers when possible, pausing only when encountering Iraqi resistance. CENTCOM spokesmen characterized Iraqi resistance as sporadic and uncohesive. Oilfields and port facilities throughout Iraq have been secured, as have all major air bases in Iraq. Though a few oil wells were set afire, all were quelled, and there has been no widespread environmental sabotage. Allied forces did not encounter the mass surrenders characteristic of the 1991 campaign, however DOD reported that over 6,000 Iraqis were taken prisoner, and believes that many more have simply deserted their positions. Iraqi paramilitary forces, particularly the Saddam Fedayeen, engaged in guerrilla-style attacks from urban centers in the rear areas, but did not inflict significant damage. Nevertheless, greater attention than anticipated had to be paid to protecting extended supply lines, and securing these urban centers, particularly around an-Nasiriyah and Najaf, and in the British sector around Umm Qasr and Basra. The anticipated support for the invasion from the Shiia population in southern Iraq was slow in developing, but greater cooperation is forthcoming, despite some outbreaks of factional fighting.

Though CENTCOM commanders expressed confidence in the adequacy of their force structure in theater, the Iraqi attacks in rear areas and the length of the supply lines to forward units led some to suggest that insufficient ground forces were in place to continue the offensive while securing rear areas and ensuring uninterrupted logistical support. These critics faulted DOD civilian leadership for overestimating the effectiveness of a precision air offensive and curtailing the deployment of more ground troops, suggesting that an ideological commitment to smaller ground forces and greater reliance on high-tech weaponry had dominated military planning.⁵ With collapse of the Iraqi regime, however, this criticism has muted, and the CENTCOM operations plan appears vindicated.

Without permission to use Turkish territory, CENTCOM was unable to carry out an early ground offensive in Northern Iraq. However, Special operations forces, the 173rd Airborne Brigade, and air-lifted U.S. armor, operating with Kurdish irregulars seized Mosul, Kirkuk, and Tikrit. Cooperation with Kurdish militias in the north has been excellent. Even a mistaken airstrike against an allied Kurdish vehicle convoy, killing or wounding senior Kurdish leaders, has not adversely affected this cooperation. Potentially complicating the situation in the north, was a Turkish desire to possibly augment the 8,000+ troops it has had stationed in Kurdish-held territory in order to block possible Kurdish refugees and influence the accommodations made to the Kurds in a post-conflict Iraq. Turkish military spokesmen have indicated that no additional Turkish forces will move into Iraq at this time. The U.S. has assured Turkey that the Kurdish forces involved in seizing Mosul and Kirkuk will be withdrawn and replaced with U.S. troops.

⁵ "Questions Raised About Invasion Force", *Washington Post*, March 25, 2003. p. 17

CENTCOM headquarters reported that intelligence sources indicated authority for the use of chemical and biological weapons was issued to Iraqi regional subordinate commanders.⁶ CENTCOM headquarters consequently believed that the possibility of CB weapons use would increase as coalition forces moved closer to Baghdad, but it never materialized. Indeed, the failure to find any confirmed CB weapons caches has led to questions about the existence of the suspected Iraqi CB arsenal.

Issues for Consideration

Roles and Attitudes of Other Nations⁷

The State Department has identified those nations whom it characterizes as having “agreed to be part of the coalition for the immediate disarmament of Iraq”. The list includes those contributing combat units (noted above), those offering basing or overflight rights, and those who simply “want to be publically associated with efforts to disarm Iraq” – Afghanistan, Albania, Angola, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Colombia, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Georgia, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Japan (post conflict), Korea, Kuwait, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Mongolia, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Palau, Panama, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Rwanda, Singapore, Slovakia, Solomon Islands, South Korea, Spain, Tonga, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom, and Uzbekistan. In addition to the countries listed, the State Department stated that there are 15 countries who have requested their support of military operations not be made public.⁸

The fluctuating international political environment regarding cooperation with U.S. offensive operations against Iraq confronted military planners with complex challenges. It has been suggested that some nations’ public opposition to military action against Iraq does not reflect the nature of “private” diplomatic conversations which indicated a greater willingness to support U.S. policy. If true, this may have resulted in unacknowledged or covert assistance, or perhaps more overt cooperation after a U.S. victory became assured.

Saudi Arabia, a previous opponent of military action, is permitting use of the U.S. air command center located on its territory, and the use of other air force facilities for non-strike aircraft (e.g., aerial tankers, search and rescue). After malfunctioning cruise missiles from U.S. ships operating in the Mediterranean landed in Saudi Arabian, the Saudi government limited overflight rights.

Concerned that U.S. facilities in Saudi Arabia would not be available for full operations against Iraq, the United States established defense agreements, and expanded or upgraded airbase and logistics facilities in Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman,

⁶ “Lightening Strikes, Then March to Baghdad”, *Washington Times*, March 18, 2003.

⁷ See also, CRS Report RL31843, *Iraq Foreign Stances Toward US. Policy*

⁸ Department of State, “Excerpt: Boucher Announces Coalition for Immediate Disarmament of Iraq”, *Washington File*, March 18, 2003.

Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates – countries whose support of U.S. policy in the region is judged the most reliable.⁹ Each of these countries permitted use of airbases to support U.S. military operations in Afghanistan, while Saudi Arabia allowed only the use of the air operations command center on its territory. The Department of Defense has announced its intention to move its air operations center from Saudi Arabia to newly constructed facilities located in Qatar. Given the range of facilities and prepositioned U.S. equipment in these countries, their continued cooperation will be crucial to the military operations in Iraq. The extent of cooperation from these nations was thought to probably greatly depend upon the results of U.N. arms inspections and the further approval of the U.N. Security Council. However, since the onset of conflict, there has been no diminution of support for U.S. operations.

The United States and Bahrain have a defense cooperation agreement regarding repositioning war materiel. The U.S. Navy 5th Fleet headquarters is in Bahrain, and the Air Force currently has use of Bahrain's Shaikh airbase. Since the Gulf War, the United States has maintained a troop presence in Kuwait and it is serving as the main staging area for coalition ground forces. The U.S. Air Force has use of two Kuwaiti airfields – Ali al Salem and Ali al-Jabiru. In Oman, through a cooperative agreement, the Air Force has access to four airbases – al-Musnanah, Masirah, Seeb, and Thumrait – which it has been upgrading to handle a full range of air operations. Qatar has developed a very close cooperative defense relationship with the United States, permitting the repositioning of enough equipment for three U.S. Army brigades and the construction of an operations command center at al-Udaid airbase comparable to that located at Prince Sultan airbase in Saudi Arabia. This facility has been extensively used to support operations in Afghanistan, and Central Command Headquarters deployed there in mid-September, 2002. In the United Arab Emirates, the U.S. Navy has access to port facilities and the Air Force is using the al-Dhafra airbase.¹⁰

The attitude of the Turkish government towards U.S. military action against Iraq was a very important consideration for U.S. military planners. The Turkish parliament's rejection of a proposal allowing U.S. ground troops to operate from Turkey delivered a setback to CENTCOM planners, though CENTCOM spokesmen downplayed the impact of the Turkish decision upon their prospects for a successful operation.¹¹ Turkey granted only overflight rights, and would not permit basing or offensive operations from its soil. As noted, the 4th Mechanized Infantry Division, originally intended to attack from Turkey, was diverted to Kuwait as follow-on support for post-conflict operations. There have been press reports, however, that Turkey has did facilitate U.S. upgrading of airfields located inside northern Iraq. Aside from permitting air operations from Incirlik and other bases, Turkish cooperation would also have provided an easier approach for a northern front for U.S. ground operations. Northern operations, though proceeding more slowly than would

⁹ For further information, see CRS Report RL31533, *Persian Gulf: Issues for U.S. Policy, 2003*.

¹⁰ "Current U.S. Order of Battle", Global Security.Org [http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/iraq_orbat_030120.htm]

¹¹ "General Dismisses Rebuff by Turkey", *Washington Post*, March 4, 2003, p. 1

have been the case with Turkish cooperation, have gone well. The major cities and oilfields are under coalition control and, after extended bombardment of Iraqi defensive positions, were seized without significant resistance.

Improved U.S. Military Technology

Significant technological advancements, particularly in precision-guided munitions, led DOD spokesmen to emphasize that the air campaign against Iraq will be considerably more efficient and more militarily devastating than Operation Desert Storm. In 1991 only ten percent of the aerial munitions used were precision-guided. That ratio was almost reversed in this air campaign. This allowed a greater number of targets to be destroyed far more rapidly, using fewer aircraft and with less collateral damage. The greater availability of precision-guided munitions (PGMs) worked well for attacks against stationary targets, and moving targets in open terrain. There was some question raised about the level of PGM inventories after the Afghanistan campaign, but stockpiles remained adequate for operations against Iraq.¹² Major improvements have also been achieved in the ability of the intelligence community to communicate targeting information directly to combat platforms (e.g. attack aircraft, missile launchers) in almost real time. This greatly enhanced the value of PGMs, providing them with critical targeting data when the information is most useful. Military operations in an urban environment were anticipated to limit the effectiveness of air power and armor units, however the relatively open configuration of Iraqi cities permitted quite effective use of these systems. Rules of target engagement and avoidance of “friendly fire” casualties remained prime concerns throughout the campaign.

U.S. military planners paid particular attention to the problem of Iraqi missiles. In 1991, the allied coalition was unable to locate and destroy any SCUD mobile launchers, and U.S. intelligence believes that Iraq still possesses at least 24 missiles, some possibly armed with chemical or biological warheads. Using new equipment, such as the Tactical Airborne Warning System (TAWS) and the PAC-3 air defense missiles, DOD greatly reduced the time from missile launch detection to intercept, improving the chance of both destroying the launched missile and the missile launcher. Improvements in satellite reconnaissance, communications, and unmanned aerial vehicles now available to ground commanders are also seen as major advances over Desert Storm capabilities. The PAC-3 air defense system worked well in Kuwait in intercepting the few Iraqi missiles which threatened populated areas, though it has also downed a British fighter aircraft in a “friendly fire” incident. Though initial reports indicated some of the Iraqi missiles were the prohibited SCUDs, this identification was later retracted.

Chemical and Biological Weapons. The Bush Administration believed that Iraq retained chemical and biological stockpiles from before the Persian Gulf War, and continued covert CBW development and/or production since. Some CBW facilities that were destroyed during the Persian Gulf War were been re-built. Iraq is known to have produced blister agents (“mustard gas”) and both persistent and

¹² “The Tools Of War Expecting a rerun of Gulf War I? Think again, thanks to high tech and smart bombs”, *Time*, October 21, 2002.

non-persistent nerve agents (VX and Sarin). Biological agents produced include anthrax, aflatoxin, and the toxin agents botulinum and ricin. Though unconfirmed, it is possible that Iraq may also possess the smallpox virus cultured from natural outbreaks of the disease in Iraq prior to its world-wide eradication in the early 1970s. Iraq is known to have developed a variety of means to disseminate CBW, including bombs, artillery shells, missile warheads, mines, and aerial sprayers for both manned and unmanned aircraft.¹³ Though Iraq did not use CBW in the Persian Gulf War, many believed that Saddam Hussein's restraint in this regard would be not repeated. This view was based on the assumption that, given that the U.S. objective would now be the destruction of his regime rather than the more limited objectives in the Persian Gulf War, Hussein would have "nothing to lose" by their employment.

As events turned out, there was no use of CB weapons, and no CBW stockpiles have been discovered. Given that operational planning called for suspected CBW sites to be among the first objectives to be seized or neutralized, the apparent failure to find any of these weapons, though certainly heartening to combat commanders, has led to questions about the Administration's assertions of Iraq's CBW capabilities. CENTCOM spokesmen have indicated that more extensive searches for these weapons will take place over time.¹⁴

Though perhaps better prepared than any other military to deal with CB warfare, U.S. forces have not actually encountered the use of CB weapons since World War I. U.S. commanders had to ensure adequate supplies of protective and decontamination equipment for an invasion force, and may again be eventually confronted with the possibly problematic issue of vaccinations and prophylactic pharmaceuticals that has led to the "Gulf War illnesses" controversy. Indicative of this latter problem, even though production of anthrax vaccine has been restored, DOD has still not re-instated its service-wide vaccination policy. This concern may be compounded with the smallpox vaccine. To date, however, no controversy has developed, despite the vaccination of all troops deployed the Persian Gulf.

In October 2002, the General Accounting Office reiterated its concerns over "serious problems" in the adequacy of the armed forces CBW training, availability of specialist personnel, and defensive equipment inventories¹⁵ Given that chemical and biological weapons were not used in the conflict, the adequacy of training and specialist personnel were not tested. With regard to GAO's concerns over CBW suit defects, DOD spokesmen have noted that troops deployed to the Persian Gulf have all been issued the newly-designed Joint Service Lightweight Integrated Suit

¹³ *Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction: A Net Assessment*. Center for International and Strategic Studies. September 2002.

Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction Programs. Central Intelligence Agency. October 2002.

¹⁴ CENTCOM Press Briefing , March 25, 2002

¹⁵ General Accounting Office. *Chemical and Biological Defense: Observations on DOD's Risk Assessment of Defense Capabilities* GAO-03-137T, October 1, 2002

Technology (JSLIT), which does not have the manufacturing defects detected in some of the older Battle Dress Overgarment.¹⁶

Post-War Requirements

With the onset of widespread looting and the breakdown of public services (electricity, water) in the cities, coalition forces were confronted with the challenges of restoring public order and infrastructure even before combat operations have ceased. Though U.S. forces have come under some criticism for not having done more to prevent looting, the transition from combat to police roles is a difficult one, particularly when an important objective is winning popular support. Harsh reactions risk alienation of the population, yet inaction reduces confidence in the ability of coalition forces to maintain order. Indicative of the seriousness of the civil disorder, U.S. officials in Iraq have authorized U.S. troops to shoot looters if necessary.¹⁷ In addition to looting, coalition forces also have to ensure that factional violence and retribution against former government supporters do not derail stabilization efforts. CENTCOM headquarters intends to “greatly increase” the number of troops patrolling Iraqi cities.¹⁸ U.S. forces, however, are spread relatively thin throughout Iraq, it is clear that additional troops in theater could improve the pace and breadth of stabilization operations. The question of how many military personnel will be required for stabilization operations has been a subject of controversy since well before the onset of operations. This controversy reflects the great difficulty in predicting how the political and military situation in post-war Iraq will evolve, and how long a military presence would be required before an acceptable and stable Iraqi government could be established.

The attitude of the Iraq population is the key element, and will depend upon a variety of factors, such as the nature and extent of war damage, the demands of ethnic and religious minorities, and the speed with which a credible government can be established. Though a short-term post-war occupation may be a possibility, given that so far the Iraqi population has not demonstrated an unqualified acceptance of coalition forces, it is possible that a continued deployment of substantial military ground force will be necessary for several years. For comparison, in the relatively benign environment and considerably smaller areas of Bosnia and Kosovo, after eight years of peacekeeping operations, NATO still maintains a deployment of about 60,000 troops.

In testimony before the House Armed Services Committee on September 18, 2002 Defense Secretary Rumsfeld declined to speculate upon what might be the military requirements for the United States in post-war Iraq, assuming Saddam Hussein’s ouster. On February 25, 2003, testifying before the Senate Armed Services Committee, Army Chief of Staff. General Eric Shinseki expressed the

¹⁶ “U.S. Troops’ Chemical Suits Do Not Leak, Army Insists”, *Washington Post*, March 4, 2003. Department of Defense Press Briefing, March 3, 2003.

¹⁷ “U.S. Military Chief Vows More Troops to Quell Iraqi Looting”, *New York Times*, May 15. p. 21.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

opinion that up to “several hundred thousand” troops could be required to maintain an occupation of Iraq. This estimate was almost immediately dismissed by DOD’s civilian leadership.¹⁹ Currently, there are about 158,000 coalition ground troops in Iraq. Their commander, Lt. Gen. McKiernan, has acknowledged that is an insufficient number to secure the entire country.²⁰ Not only the number of troops, but also the type is of critical importance. The vast majority of coalition forces are combat troops, but there is general agreement that military police or constabulary-type forces (e.g. the Italian Carabinieri, or Spanish Guardia Civil) are better suited to stabilization operations. However, as the Army’s Deputy Chief of Staff testified before the House Armed Services Committee, there is now a DOD-wide shortage of military police personnel, given the heightened security environment since the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. Nevertheless, about 8,000 MP’s are being deployed to Iraq.²¹

The Bush Administration is seeking to recruit other nations to supply troops for stabilization operations in Iraq, but there has been a limited number of responses. On May 3, Secretary Rumsfeld announced that 10 nations will contribute forces to stabilization operations in Iraq. Poland, which may assume command of operations in northern Iraq, plans to deploy about 1,500 troops, contingent upon U.S. financing their support. Spain intends to send 1,500 troops, but will prohibit their participation in any combat operations. Honduras and Nicaragua will contribute to the Spanish deployment, if reimbursed for the costs. Italy will send about 1,500 army and *carabinieri* personnel, and Denmark is deploying approximately 380 troops. Ukraine has agreed to send a battalion to assist in the search for chemical and biological weapons. Both Bulgaria and Romania are contributing about 500 personnel apiece. Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia may also contribute small units to stabilization operations.

Costs²²

Predicting the cost of military operations is a task that DOD did not undertake prior to the peace-keeping deployments to the Balkans, and it remains a highly conjectural exercise. Methodologies tend to be relatively crude and based upon historical experience, i.e. “the last war”. Though initially Secretary Rumsfeld expressed his opinion that “it is unknowable what a war or conflict like that would cost”, in early 2003 he estimated a cost of under \$50 billion. Other DOD officials anticipated an \$80-85 billion cost, assuming a 6-month follow-on occupation.²³

¹⁹ Secretary Rumsfeld, Defense Press Briefing, February 28, 2003.

²⁰ “Baghdad Anarchy Spurs Call for Help”, *Washington Post*, May 13, 2003. p. 1

²¹ “Shortage of MPs Complicates Iraq Occupation”, *Newhouse.com* ., May 12, 2003.

²² For greater detail on cost estimates, see CRS Report RL31715, *Iraq War: Background Issues and Overview*. Updated periodically.

²³ “War Could Cost More Than \$40 billion”, *Knight-Ridder Wire Service*, September 18, 2002; “Iraq War Costs Could Soar, Pentagon Says”, *Los Angeles Times*, February 26, 2003.

On March 25, 2003 The Administration submitted a \$74.7 billion FY2003 supplemental appropriations request, of which \$62.6 billion was for Department of Defense expenses related to the war in Iraq through September 2003. Specifically, this request includes funds for preparatory costs incurred, costs associated with military operations, replenishing munitions, and funds to support other nations. The Administration stated that this supplemental request was “built on the key assumption that U.S. military action in Iraq will be swift and decisive.”²⁴ Both the House and Senate have approved the legislative conference report to H.R. 1559 (H.Rept. 108-76), which provides \$62.37 billion.

Michael O’Hanlon of the Brookings Institution, pegged a 250,000-strong invasion at between \$40-\$50 billion with a follow-up occupation costing \$10-\$20 billion a year. Former White House economic advisor Lawrence Lindsay estimated the high limit on the cost to be 1-2% of GNP, or about \$100-\$200 billion. Mitch Daniels, Director of the Office of Management and Budget subsequently discounted this estimate as “very, very high”, and stated that the costs would be between \$50-\$60 billion, though no specific supporting figures were provided for the estimate.²⁵ In its most recent cost estimate, the Congressional Budget Office put deployment costs at about \$14 billion, with combat operations costing \$10 billion for the first month and \$8 billion a month thereafter. CBO cited the cost of returning combat forces to home bases at \$9 billion, and the costs of continued occupation of Iraq to run between \$1-4 billion.²⁶

The American Academy of Arts and Sciences has published a much more wide-ranging report which covers the possibility of an extended occupation, in addition to potential long-term economic consequences and concludes that potential costs could range from \$99 billion to \$1.2 trillion.²⁷ For comparison, the cost to the United States of the Persian Gulf War in 1990-91 was approximately \$60 billion, and almost all of this cost was offset by international financial contributions.

²⁴ Office of Management and Budget, Press Release No. 2003-6, March 25, 2002.

²⁵ Bumiller, Elisabeth. “Budget Director Lowers Estimate of Cost of War”, *New York Times*, December 31, 2002. p. 1

²⁶ Congressional Budget Office. *An Analysis of the President’s Budgetary Proposals for Fiscal Year 2004: An Interim Report*. March 2003

²⁷ *War with Iraq: Costs, Consequences, and Alternatives*. American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Dec. 2002. [http://www.amacad.org/publications/monographs/Iraq_Press.pdf]