In the Fall of 2002, the ANP had shown a better way to deal with Iraq

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Abstract

In 2003, the United States launched a pre-emptive strike against Iraq which was largely defended by the Bush Administration as an act to protect national security. In the months leading up to the attack, however, the US was still in the decision-making process — should we work with the UN on enforcing sanctions? go in only with Allied support? launch a pre-emptive strike with mainly US forces? During this time, the Analytic Network Process [T.L. Saaty, The Analytic Network Process, Fundamentals of Decision Making and Priority Theory, second ed., RWS Publications, Pittsburgh, 2001] was used to determine the best course of action. Working with the UN to ensure weapons inspections was found to be the best choice; the model showed that other alternatives, such as a pre-emptive attack on Iraq or attacking Iraq with Allied help would increase the possibility of such risks as increased oil prices, increased terrorism, decreased domestic support for the war, and high economic costs of sustaining the war itself.

Keywords: ANP; Iraqi war; Operation Iraqi freedom; Analytic network process

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the problem

This analysis is not a Monday morning quarter backing exercise, because it was done several months prior to the Bush administration’s decision to invade Iraq. The detailed finding was that, with substantially greater priority, the US should work with the United Nations to deal with the problem (namely that of the possibility of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) in Iraq). At the time this Analytic Network Process (ANP) model [1] was developed, the assumption was that Iraq could, in fact, be harboring WMD. Nonetheless, possible costs and risks, such as the high monetary cost to the US, as well as the possibility of increased terrorism, US military casualties, world opinion turning against the US for a pre-emptive strike, and ‘winning the battle but losing the war’ in terms of the descent of Iraq into civil conflict and decreasing support of the war by the American public, all led to the model predicting working with the UN to enforce sanctions as the best proposed alternative.

On March 13, 2003, the second Gulf War, termed ‘Operation Iraqi Freedom’ by the US Administration began; the complex relationship between the United States and Iraq, however, had begun years before. In 1972, Saddam Hussein
forcibly rose to power in Iraq; 16 years later, Hussein took the opportunity afforded by a cease-fire in the Iran–Iraq war to rebuild his military, aided by funds and technology from Western Europe and the United States. In January 1991, a US–led international coalition began using both air and ground force against Iraqi forces after a UN demand to withdraw from Kuwait was ignored. In April 1991, a cease-fire was agreed to and UN sanctions were imposed; the sanctions were to remain in place until certain conditions, including Iraq ending its WMD program, were met. In 1995, the UN began the “oil-for-food” program when fears arose that the sanctions were reducing Iraqi civilian quality of life to a point where access to food and medicine were compromised. Under the program, Iraq was permitted to buy food and medicine using proceeds from oil exports, even though the exporting of oil was banned under the embargo. In November 1998, UN weapons inspectors were withdrawn after it was claimed that Hussein made it impossible for them to verify whether Iraq had chemical, biological or nuclear weapons, as prohibited by the 1991 agreement. The following month, “Operation Desert Fox”, executed by US and British forces, began four days of airstrikes against Iraqi weaponry targets.

September 11, 2001, however, was the catalyst for a resurgence of national and international attention on Iraq. The following day, President George W. Bush made a speech to the UN General Assembly stating that Hussein was violating commitments made at the conclusion of the first Gulf War, including promises to end WMD programs and improve human rights. The following month, the Authorization for Use of Military Force against Iraq Resolution of 2002 was passed in the US Congress. In November, the passing of UN Security Council Resolution 1441 demanded that Iraq comply with its disarmament obligations as well as previous resolutions on human rights, terrorism and prisoners of war. Although Iraq agreed to the resolution and UNMOVIC began inspections that same month, the veracity of Iraq’s cooperation was disputed. In February 2003, US Secretary of State Colin Powell spoke to the UN Security Council regarding the threat that Hussein’s regime posed; the Bush Administration also claimed, at this time, that Iraq had ties to al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations and was still developing WMD. The following month, a US-led coalition invaded Iraq.

Having completed this analysis before the US made the decision to launch a pre-emptive attack on Iraq, it is interesting to look back at the results in light of events that have transpired since that time. WMDs were never found, and domestic support for the war has diminished as our war debt increases and Iraq itself spirals into what some claim is a civil war. What follows is the decision-making model, understanding of the issue, analysis and recommendations as they emerged from the study in the fall of 2002.

1.2. Development of the decision-making model

In 2002, the United States was experiencing a noticeable shift in its foreign policy decision-making. In September, the National Security Council (NSC) released the new “National Security Strategy” for the United States. According to the NSC website (www.nsc.gov) the Strategy was based on an American internationalism reflecting “the union of our values and our national interests”, the aim of which is to “help make the world not just safer but better”. The report itself said that if the US saw that a country or organization was developing WMD (defined as nuclear, chemical or biological weapons, either produced in large quantities or in quantities capable of causing large amounts of damage in terms human life, geographical, etc.) and, also, that the country might use those weapons against the US, then the United States would be willing to take pre-emptive action in order to neutralize that threat. Although this action would not necessarily mean war or acting unilaterally, neither option would be out of the question.

This new strategy was an important factor in the dilemma facing the United States in the months leading up to the second Gulf War. Specifically, the question was whether the US should engage in preemptive action against Iraq. The argument itself was quite delineated; there were those who had run out of patience and, therefore, believed Iraq had run out of chances, unwilling to predicate national security and public safety on the assumption that Iraq was an honest and rational actor. Conversely, there were those who felt that the diplomatic options had not been exhausted, and that engaging Iraq (especially in a pre-emptive manner) would lead to a slippery slope, giving the US carte blanche to engage any country or organization it considered a “threat”, however broad that definition may be.

In order to begin the decision-making process, the model was based on separate benefits, opportunities, costs and risks (BOCR), all of which assume calculated weights (see Table 1 for local and global priorities for each BOCR criterion). Each of these was evaluated using the strategic criteria of economic, social, political and military (ESPM) considerations. The question asked (i.e. goal) was the following: what should the current United States policy be towards Iraq?
### Table 1
Local and global priorities for each BOCR criterion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Merits</th>
<th>Local priorities (normal)</th>
<th>Global priorities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Benefits</strong></td>
<td>0.244667</td>
<td>0.22483</td>
<td>0.055008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased chance of Iraq making/using WMD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased oil prices</td>
<td>0.20208</td>
<td>0.049813</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased terrorism</td>
<td>0.17059</td>
<td>0.041738</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased peace of mind for US</td>
<td>0.27748</td>
<td>0.06789</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased standard of living for Iraqi people</td>
<td>0.02796</td>
<td>0.006841</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possibility of better relations with Arab World</td>
<td>0.11272</td>
<td>0.027579</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legitimacy/Future viability of UN</td>
<td>0.03456</td>
<td>0.008456</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possibility of regime/regime policy change</td>
<td>0.13178</td>
<td>0.032242</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opportunities</strong></td>
<td>0.118916</td>
<td>0.05403</td>
<td>0.006425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bush’s familial revenge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve quality of life for Iraqi people</td>
<td>0.05584</td>
<td>0.00664</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspect for/ Decrease likelihood of WMD</td>
<td>0.37772</td>
<td>0.044917</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote democracy in Iraq</td>
<td>0.19045</td>
<td>0.022648</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protect Israel</td>
<td>0.07921</td>
<td>0.009419</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protect oil supply/prices</td>
<td>0.08269</td>
<td>0.009833</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rid world of dangerous leader</td>
<td>0.12229</td>
<td>0.014542</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthen US influence in Middle East</td>
<td>0.12229</td>
<td>0.014542</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Costs</strong></td>
<td>0.318209</td>
<td>0.05916</td>
<td>0.018825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESPM Costs of protecting Israel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further deterioration of relations with Middle East</td>
<td>0.21266</td>
<td>0.06767</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High monetary cost of war</td>
<td>0.06836</td>
<td>0.021753</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraqi civilian casualties</td>
<td>0.34698</td>
<td>0.110412</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative world opinion turned against the US</td>
<td>0.21074</td>
<td>0.067059</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US casualties</td>
<td>0.66617</td>
<td>0.211981</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Risks</strong></td>
<td>0.318209</td>
<td>0.08178</td>
<td>0.026023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased hostility from the Middle East</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased oil prices</td>
<td>0.02027</td>
<td>0.00645</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased terrorism</td>
<td>0.26322</td>
<td>0.083759</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreasing domestic support</td>
<td>0.1955</td>
<td>0.06221</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible flight of Hussein to sympathetic country</td>
<td>0.03289</td>
<td>0.010466</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threat of use of WMD</td>
<td>0.3255</td>
<td>0.103577</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legitimacy/Future viability of UN</td>
<td>0.05383</td>
<td>0.017129</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Winning the Battle but Losing the War”</td>
<td>0.02701</td>
<td>0.008595</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the given goal, the four most salient, viable options were the following:

1. The US should make a unilateral, pre-emptive attack against Iraq.
2. The US should attack Iraq only with Allied support and/or help.
3. The US should exhaust diplomatic options by working with UN weapons inspectors to ensure inspections.
4. Sanctions against Iraq should be removed.

### 2. The issue

For over ten years, Iraq had been under economic sanctions as a condition of UN resolutions mandating UN weapons inspectors access to determine if the country was creating and/or storing WMD. During that time, Saddam Hussein had not only refused to comply with UN Security Council resolutions (which would have resulted in the lifting of the sanctions), but had also worsened the Iraqi people’s situation by failing to create or implement policies that would improve employment opportunities, economic growth, education, or health care. While Hussein claimed the sanctions led to the death of 1.7 million Iraqis between 1991 and 2002 [2], he himself was partly, if not largely, responsible for the disparate conditions in the country.

Many agree that Hussein had maintained an alarming level of economic inequity in the country, while telling the Iraqi people that the United States and her allies were responsible for their poor quality of life. Meanwhile, as many Iraqi and world citizens continued to suffer under what the Western world viewed as misdirected blame, Saddam Hussein had perpetuated a record of aggression and recklessness that included routinely firing on the Northern Watch Combined Task Force and locating air-defense weapons near non-military targets [3]. The feeling, however, was
mutual — allied planes had bombed radar and missile sites in no-fly zones nearly fifty times in 2002 alone; the US and U.K. coalition’s mission (established after the Gulf War) was to patrol both a northern and southern zone in an attempt to protect Iraqi minorities [4]. Trumping all these contentions, however, was the growing opinion (personified in the Bush administration) that Hussein was developing, or already had developed, WMD.

During the 1990s, Hussein had perpetuated a cat-and-mouse game of inviting UN weapons inspectors into the country, only to place conditions or threats upon them once they arrived (a full chronology of UN weapons inspections in Iraq can be found at: http://cns.miis.edu/research/iraq/uns_chro.htm). Because of this decade-long ploy, by 2002 there was an ever-growing opinion that Saddam Hussein had no intention of complying with UN Resolution 1284. On the other hand, there were those who felt that diplomacy had not been exhausted, and that the most prudent course of action would be to continue to work with UN weapons inspectors to give compliance every chance. Although Iraq stated in 2002 that it welcomed UN weapons inspectors and would give them unfettered access, the question remained as to whether Hussein had deceived the UN once too often to allow for any more chances. Conversely, it could be asked at the time whether the United States simply adopted a position where they wouldn’t take “Yes” for an answer.

Iraqi ambassador to the United Nation Mohammed Aldouri stated Iraq’s case in this way:

“After so many years of fear from war, the threat of war and suffering, the people of Iraq and their government in Baghdad are eager for peace. We have no intention of attacking anyone, now or in the future, with weapons of any kind. If we are attacked, we will surely defend ourselves with all means possible. But bear in mind that we have no nuclear or biological or chemical weapons, and we have no intention of acquiring them. We are not asking the people of the United States or of any member state of the United Nations to trust in our word, but to send the weapons inspectors to our country to look wherever they wish unconditionally. This means unconditional access anywhere, including presidential sites in accordance with a 1998 signed agreement between Iraq and the United Nations — an agreement that ensures respect for Iraq’s sovereignty and allows for transparency in the work of the inspectors. We could never make this claim with such openness if we did not ourselves know there is nothing to be found” [5].

Statements such as this, however, could do little to silence the nagging doubts about any Iraqi offer to allow open inspections, in light of their record of deceit. The question that remained, regardless of the findings of UN weapons inspectors, was whether it could ever be completely determined if Iraq was concealing WMD or programs to create WMD.

If this was the case, however, would sanctions be sufficient to keep Iraq “in-check”? To a large extent, sanctions had only served to strengthen Hussein’s hold on his people, as their impoverishment was maintained while their hatred for the United States and her allies was fed. All this had created an atmosphere where the children of the Gulf War had grown up with little education, poor health care, few opportunities, and little to lose. Simultaneously, Hussein had given these now-young men and women someone to blame: the United States. If the current situation in Iraq were to continue, there was little doubt that the psychological and demographic profile of Iraq’s people would move further away from the possibility of democracy. Any future policy of the United States, therefore, needed to include a program of information dissemination that would serve to counter Hussein’s propaganda campaign. In 2002, positive relations with the Arab world were needed five years later, that need remains unchanged.

However, there was also the issue of whether the US would want to “provoke” Iraq. On July 31, 2002, the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations consulted with an expert panel regarding US response to the situation in Iraq. Panel member Robert Gallucci, Dean of the Georgetown School of Foreign Service, suggested that a military strike would only serve as provocation for the Iraqi government’s continued work on WMD [6]. Nonetheless, the United States faced the obvious reality that, given Saddam Hussein’s past and present actions of aggression, it was probable that the Iraqi government would continue to pursue and create WMD with or without a military strike against them.

Without question, however, a military strike against Iraq necessarily involved a consideration of the whole region. To begin, within Iraq itself, the United States needed to make use of Iraqi opposition forces, united in the Iraqi National Congress. The United States Congress, in the Iraq Liberation Act of 1998, had already authorized millions of dollars to help train and equip the INC in their shared goal of ousting Saddam Hussein [7]. The INC had already developed a plan (championed by many military leaders and Congressmen/women alike) that called for the United States to train a limited number of Iraqis, integrate that operation with US airpower, and confront Hussein on the ground with opposition forces that would draw the Iraqi army out and defeat them [3].
Charles Deulfer, former Deputy Executive Chairman of the UN Special Commission on Iraq (UNSCOM), stated to the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations that, “Limited actions by the international community will have limited effects. The threat will continue to grow and in the meantime the opportunities for a positive Iraq continue to slide into the future. This is clearly an issue where the United States must lead, one way or the other” [6]. Indeed, the US, if she chose to pursue action against Iraq, may not only end up taking the lead, but may be going it alone as well. Although dependent on the eventual reaction of US allies as well as the reaction of the UN, the US campaign against Iraq would likely be a solo venture.

While it could be assumed that the economic costs of a military campaign against Iraq would be high, the alternative reality of a hostile nation harboring WMD could only be imagined. By 2002, a policy of containment had failed, yielding only a still-aggressive dictator, an impoverished nation, the finger of blame for the Iraqi people’s suffering pointed at the US (and UN) by much of the Arab world, and a rogue state dancing dangerously close to WMD. As The Economist had noted in regards to “the case for war”, “... Wishful thinking in the face of mortal danger is bad policy” [8]. In 2002, faced with the question of whether or not to attack Iraq, continued wishful thinking on the part of the United States and its allies might not only be a bad policy, but a dangerous one as well.

3. Creating the model

The model for determining US policy regarding Iraq was designed with security in mind, using the benefits, opportunities, costs, and risk of the security resulting from the different alternatives considered. (For convenience, the present tense is used in what follows, reflecting its development in 2002.) The benefits model indicates which alternative would be most beneficial, while the opportunities model shows which alternative would provide the greatest opportunities. Similarly, the risk model designates which alternative has the highest associated risk, and the costs model shows which alternative would be most costly.

It is important to recognize, however, that the model is being created and evaluated in regards to a US policy option. Therefore, Benefits does not necessarily indicate which Alternative would be most beneficial to other countries, including Iraq. Foreign policy decisions, while giving consideration to those extraneous influences that have an impact, such as today’s global environment and intricate network of allied relationships, NGOs, IGOs, public opinion (both domestic and world), etc. are, nonetheless, inherently self-centered with regard to the state. Consequently, while no responsible foreign policy decisions are made in a vacuum without regard to repercussions or reaction beyond one’s borders, they are nonetheless more self-serving than globally benevolent.

Thus, Benefits indicates the security benefits of a given US policy option. The model assumes that the United States desired to and would be changing its policy regarding Iraq in the months ahead of the time when the study was done, and that anti-Hussein rhetoric combined with ignored UN resolutions and ineffective sanctions would no longer suffice. The Bush administration had sent this message from its inception.

The Costs include both the monetary and human costs of a given alternative, as well as more intangible costs such as public opinion and foreign reaction. Further, the model also includes security Opportunities and Risks. Both are included not only because of the unknown variables inherent in the problem, but also because each Alternative provides significant and unique opportunities as well as risks, all variable and speculative.

3.1. Discussion of alternatives

Therefore, given the following Alternatives:

(1) The US should make a unilateral, pre-emptive attack against Iraq.
(2) The US should attack Iraq only with Allied support and/or help.
(3) The US should exhaust diplomatic options by working with UN weapons inspectors to ensure inspections.
(4) Sanctions against Iraq should be removed.

A simplified, brief benefit/cost (or pro/con) analysis of the options reveals the following:

Option 1

- Pro: A unilateral, pre-emptive attack may do the most to “disarm” Iraq of potential WMD, by seeking and destroying any weapons-making programs or facilities by air or ground force. Additionally, it would well serve the US goal of regime change.
• **Con:** A unilateral, pre-emptive attack might alienate the United States from her allies (and future allied support), might threaten the legitimacy and/or future viability of the UN, may provoke Iraq into using any current WMD as retaliation and, further, might cause a potential increase both in terrorism and/or negative Arab sentiment towards the United States. Additionally, a unilateral strike would place all cost concerns and future Iraqi nation-building upon the US.

**Option 2**

• **Pro:** Attacking only with Allied help and/or support would be a slightly more cautious approach that would still target potential Iraqi WMD threats without alienating American allies or threatening the viability of International Governmental Organizations (IGOs, such as the UN). Moreover, it would share the burdens of monetary cost and future peacekeeping/nation-building.

• **Con:** Attacking Iraq, even with allied help, would still result in Iraqi retaliation that might result in use of biological or chemical WMD. Additionally, this action might serve to further polarize the Arab and Western worlds.

**Option 3**

• **Pro:** Exhausting diplomatic options by working with UN weapons inspectors would not only uphold the future viability of the UN (and respect for the UN Security Council), but might also serve the intended purpose of determining if/where Iraq has WMD or means to proliferate WMD. This option serves to respect sovereignty, limit cost, and champion diplomacy.

• **Con:** Having a decade-long history of non-cooperation with UN weapons inspectors, allowing Iraq to continue to draw out the situation might simply give them more time to create WMD, while also mocking the usefulness and viability of the United Nations.

**Option 4**

• **Pro:** Removing sanctions might result in an improved quality of life for the Iraqi people, since the general consensus was that the UN sanctions have had little to no effect on Hussein and, instead, merely served to hurt the Iraqi people and give credence to Hussein’s villianization of the United States.

• **Con:** Removing sanctions might serve to dramatically decrease UN credibility, to threaten future sanction enforcement attempts, and to reduce the viability of future UN operations. Further, removing sanctions might relinquish any leverage that the UN has on Hussein’s power and capacity to proliferate and use WMD, giving him a dictatorial carte blanche.

3.2. **Strategic criteria**

The BOCR model is evaluated using the strategic criteria of Economic, Social, Political and Military (ESPM) considerations (see Table 2 for strategic criteria priorities normalized by cluster). Further, each strategic criterion is divided into its own subcriteria as follows:

**Economic subcriteria**

• **Monetary cost of war** — The fiscal costs of war. As told to the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations in August 2002, Dr. Morton Halperin, a senior fellow on the Council for Foreign Relations said, “There can be no question the military cost of [war] will be enormous”. This subcriterion is largely related to the monetary cost to the United States for war, both because Option 1 would not provide for Allied monetary support, and 2 might not result in UN support or an international alliance willing to help defray the cost as was the case in the Gulf War. This is an important consideration, and one that has not been adequately discussed by the Bush administration;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic criteria priorities normalized by cluster</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>0.131481</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military</td>
<td>0.620508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>0.197965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>0.050045</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
specifically, what the budget costs of another war with Iraq would be, and whether the war would be funded by new taxes, a decrease in domestic spending, or would simply result in an even larger budget deficit. Recently, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimated that a unilateral war with Iraq would cost an estimated $9–$13 billion in military deployment, $6–$9 billion per month to carry out to completion and an additional $5–$7 billion to transport the forces back home. With the addition of the inevitable peacekeeping mission at $1–$4 billion per month, the CBO has estimated that the total for three months of combat and five years of subsequent occupation would be over 270 billion dollars (portions of the cost estimate were based on previous US Army experiences in Kosovo and Bosnia. It should be noted that the size, composition and duration of the force deployed could not be determined at the time) [9].

- **Change in oil prices** — It is likely that oil prices will change regardless of which Alternative is chosen. In the short run, oil prices might increase if we and/or our allies go to war against Iraq. In the long run, however, a war might serve as a pathway to regime change in Iraq, thus freeing up oil reserves and lowering the price of oil. Conversely, increased negative Arab sentiment might lead to either an oil embargo or OPEC cutting back on production in order to increase oil prices. Also, the immediate effect of lifting sanctions might lead to a decrease in oil prices, but may also serve to reinforce and strengthen the Hussein regime, thus creating the possibility of a future increase in prices, dependent on Hussein’s actions.

- **Focus shift away from US economy** — Dissenting voices in the United States are concerned that engaging Iraq in war might be a disservice to the United States and its citizen by focusing attention away from domestic problems, the most important of which is the downturn of the US economy.

  An October 2002 NYT/CBS poll revealed that 69% of those surveyed felt that President Bush should be paying more attention to the economy (when broken down by political party, a majority of Republicans, Independents and Democrats felt more attention should be paid). Further, when asked how a war with Iraq would affect the US economy (i.e., make it better, worse, or keep it about the same), 37% of those polled felt a war would worsen the economy, while only 23% felt it would improve it [10].

**Social subcriteria**

- **Public opinion** — Public opinion is a very salient factor when a nation is considering engaging in a war or military action. To begin, public sentiment affects not only the decisions and actions of government officials and policy makers, but also those responsible for the “dirty work”, such as US troops. Remembering the importance of public sentiment during such military actions as the Vietnam War, the importance of public opinion cannot be dismissed.

  To be sure, this was a war that would likely be fought as much on the nightly news as on Iraqi streets. In an October 2002 interview, the University of Pittsburgh’s Posvar Chair in International Security Studies Dr. William Keller stated as much. Unlike the situation during the Gulf War, Dr. Keller felt that “this time, Saddam is much more likely to withdraw his forces into Baghdad and force the US into a nightmarish scenario where we would be fighting house to house and street to street, and he would pack the most significant targets with women and children”. This scenario, US casualties included, could be summed up as a horrific combination of street combat, casualties and CNN coverage. Given the ambivalence toward engagement now, one can only wonder what effect the graphic realities of war would have on American public opinion (the complete listing of October Polling on Iraq can be found in the October 23, 2002 Program on International Policy Attitudes Bulletin: October Polling on Iraq, Available at: [http://www.americans-world.org/articles/Bulletin Octnograph.pdf](http://www.americans-world.org/articles/Bulletin Octnograph.pdf)).

- **Iraqi civilians** — It would be negligent not to consider the effect of the given Alternatives on Iraqi civilians. Obviously, engaging Iraq in war (Options 1 and 2) would result in an undeterminable number of Iraqi civilian casualties, not to mention the effect on both the country and civilians in the aftermath of war. Conversely, while working to remove sanctions (Options 3 and 4, in essence) might increase the standard of living for Iraqi civilians in the short term, the long-term effects of Iraq remaining under the Hussein regime cannot be determined.

**Political subcriteria**

- **Regime change** — A main priority for the Bush administration is to oust Saddam Hussein from power; this is only possible, however, if the US aligns itself with either Option 1 or 2. A deeper consideration of this subcriterion, however, reveals the following questions: What if the US is unable to topple the Hussein regime, even if they are successful in destroying what they believe to be stores of WMD? What if Hussein flees the country and either rules in absentia or remains as a future threat to Iraq upon his return? How does the US plan to accomplish an actual
regime change, given the problems we have seen in similar situations, such as Afghanistan? Who will fund the new ruling regime of Iraq–US taxpayers?

Further, the question must be asked: how concerned is the Administration for the state of a post-Saddam Iraq? When asked by TIME magazine about the condition of an Iraq after Hussein, given the current shambles of the Iraqi opposition, a senior Administration official replied simply, “Personally, I don’t care” [11]. This reaction seems alarming at best from an Administration who has stated more than once that a benefit of pre-emption would be to institute democracy in Iraq. With no history of democracy, however, nor any supporting infrastructure, how does the Bush administration see this vision coming to fruition? The expenditure of the immense amount of resources (including time, money and personnel) needed to even attempt to bring democracy to Iraq aside, it is actually most likely that a post-Saddam Iraq would fall prey to various warring factions, including the Kurds in the north and the Shiites in the south (a majority of 64%, who might become an attractive ally to Iran).

Although, Bush himself has made it clear that, while the stated policy towards Iraq is regime change, if Saddam were to meet all the UN conditions then “…that, in itself will signal the regime has changed”, said President Bush [12]. One can only wonder how much sincerity lies behind that statement, and if a policy change of the Saddam regime would indeed serve to satiate American hegemonists.

- **Allies reaction** — Even though the Bush administration has given the impression that the United States is the sole power in a unipolar world, it is negligent to pursue a US foreign policy that dismisses the reaction of US allies. The prudent alternative, if the US remains steadfast in her path to war, is to choose Option 2. However, what are the consequences of choosing Option 1? The sentiment that the world needs the US more than the US needs the world is definitely a prominent opinion …but is it a wise one?

   Moreover, there is a grave concern that Israel would join a strike against Iraq, thereby polarizing the situation even further. Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has already stated that Israel, if provoked, would retaliate against Iraq. This would, in effect, only serve to further isolate the US in her attempt. It must be considered, in fact, how much our foreign policy decision in this case is influenced by our allied ties with Israel. Senator John McCain stated on the October 7, 2002 episode of Larry King Live that the “worst case scenario” is that Saddam Hussein launches biological or chemical weapons at Israel. If this is, in fact, the **worse case scenario**, then is our most prudent option pre-emptive, unilateral force??

- **Arab world reaction** — It seems ironic that, at a time when the United States should give serious consideration to courting favorable communication, etc. with the Arab world, we are instead considering war with Iraq. There are options here, though. For instance, the United States could work to gain Arab support for action against Iraq, demonstrating the possible benefits to the region. As Dr. Halperin from the Council for Foreign Relations said, “Rather than pressing states that border Iraq to provide base rights for unilateral military action against Iraq, we would be pressing them to end the smuggling and trade in violation of the UN embargo, assist them in monitoring their borders and the flow of material into and out of Iraq” [6]. Further, if the US feels obliged to engage in war, surely Option 2 would help disperse some negative among non-US countries. In a time when a top priority for the United States is to protect herself from terrorist acts, the sentiment of the Arab world should be given every consideration.

   There is also the concern that war with Iraq would only serve to further unite the Arab nations against the United States, possibly fueled both by the American arrogance of unilateral, pre-emptive action as well as the long-held Arab resentment of US support of Israel.

**Military subcriteria**

- **WMD** — Weapons of Mass Destruction are, without question, the most important consideration with respect to the Goal of determining the most judicious US foreign policy towards Iraq. The fact is, however, that the US does not have formal proof either confirming or denying the presence of WMD or WMD programs in Iraq. Therefore, if we go on the assumption that they exist, then the best alternatives are Options 1 and 2; otherwise, Option 3 or 4 would be more prudent. However, the US must also consider another important question: will engaging Iraq in war simply provoke them into either using WMD or continuing work on WMD programs? In other words, would war only serve as a catalyst in creating the situation that the US is the most fearful of?

- **Military casualties** — While the United States has been a historically willing player in military defense action, the country has never been willing to accept that an inherent side-effect of such campaigns are US military casualties. The anticipated number of military casualties is an important consideration, mainly due to the important role of public opinion in supporting and sustaining military action and defense policy.
• **Removal of dictator** — Going by the Bush administration rhetoric, this criterion may be somewhat difficult to decipher. Would they like to see Saddam removed? Yes. Even if he does allow weapons inspections, I believe that, in the long run, the US will not be satisfied with Saddam in power. The question of removing Saddam, however, is not a clear cut “yes” or “no”; rather, it is a question of when and how. There is no question that Hussein is a dangerous dictator, void of conscience, loyalty, ethics and the like. It is believed that it would be dangerous in the long run for the world to allow him to remain in power … but touchy issues such as sovereignty leave much to ponder. It can be assumed, however, that it would not be in US interests to take on this task alone.

4. **BOCR models**

While the benefits, opportunities, costs and risks entered in the decision-making model are somewhat abstract in nature, in the case of the alternatives facing the US in 2002 with regard to the question of Iraq, the BOCR involved can be specified in a more concrete term by aligning them with the overwhelming interest of US national security. For example, under Benefits, considerations such as the decreased chance of Iraq making/using WMD, decreased terrorism, and the possibility of better relations with the Arab world are all related to security considerations. Likewise, the promotion of Democracy in Iraq, the protection of Israel, and ridding the world of Hussein under the Opportunities consideration, further deterioration of Middle East relations under the Costs consideration, and increased terrorism and future viability of the UN under the Risks consideration are all clearly related to security issues.

4.1. **Benefits model**

In the model, Benefits represent the optimal list of benefits that can be received, or the benefits that the United States would like their policy towards Iraq to yield. These are:

- Decreased Chance of Iraq Making/Using WMD
- Decreased Oil Prices
- Decreased Terrorism
- Increased Peace of Mind for the US
- Increased Standard of Living for the Iraqi people
- Possibility of Better Relations with the Middle East
- Legitimacy/Future Viability of UN
- Possibility of Regime Change or Regime Policy Change

**Inner Dependencies within Model:**

1. Decreasing the Chance of Iraq Making/Using WMD would also Increase the Peace of Mind for the US, as well as possibly resulting in Decreased Terrorism.
2. Decreasing Terrorism would also Increase the Peace of Mind of the US as well as increase the Possibility of Better Relations with the Middle East.
3. Increased Peace of Mind for the US would be affected by a Decreased Chance of Iraq Making/Using WMD
4. Better Relations with the Middle East might be facilitated by a Decrease in Terrorism.
5. The Possibility of Regime Change would both Increase the Peace of Mind for the US and, possibly, increase the standard of Iraqi living.

4.2. **Opportunities model**

The Opportunities Model reflects the optimal list of opportunities that could be facilitated:

- Inspect for/Decrease Likelihood of WMD.
- Protect Oil Supply/Prices.
- Bush’s Familial Revenge (*George W. Bush has commented that Hussein is the man that tried to kill his father, former President George H.W. Bush. Attacking Iraq would provide a forum in which President Bush could seek revenge against Hussein*).
- Rid World of Dangerous Leader.
- Promote Democracy in Iraq.
- Improve Quality of Life for Iraqi People.
- Protect Israel.
- Strengthen US Influences in the Middle East.
Inner Dependencies within Model:

1. Bush’s Familial Revenge might provide the opportunity for Protecting Israel, Ridding the World of a Dangerous Leader, or Strengthening US Interests in the region.
2. The opportunity for Improving the Quality of Life of the Iraqi People might be affected by Ridding the World of a Dangerous Leader (Hussein).
3. Ridding the World of Hussein would affect all other given Opportunities.
4. Strengthened US Influence in the Region might also affect Oil Prices, Democracy Promotion, and the ability of the US to Protect Israel.

4.3. Costs model

The anticipated costs that must be factored in are:

- Further Deterioration of Relations with Middle East.
- High Monetary Cost of War.
- ESPM Costs of Protecting Israel (the idea has been promoted by Senator John McCain and others, that the country in most immediate danger from Iraqi WMD is Israel, a US ally. Therefore, it must be considered that there is a cost associated with protecting the interests of Israel, and that US foreign policy in the Middle East might otherwise differ).
- Iraqi Civilian Casualties.
- Negative World Opinion Turned Against the US.
- US Casualties.

Inner Dependencies within Model:

1. The ESPM Costs of Protecting Israel might be manifested in any or all of the other given Costs in the Model.
2. Further Deterioration of Relations with Middle East might be caused by either Iraqi Civilian Casualties or by Negative World Opinion Turned Against the US.
3. Iraqi Civilian Casualties might result in either Negative World Opinion or Further Deterioration of US–Middle East Relations.

4.4. Risks model

The anticipated Risks that must be considered are:

- Threat of Use of WMD.
- Increased Hostility from the Middle East.
- Increased Oil Prices.
- Increased Terrorism.
- Decreased Domestic Support (either for war or for the current Bush Administration, although decreased support for one would likely result in decreased support for the other).
- Possible Flight of Saddam Hussein to Sympathetic Country
- Legitimacy/Future Viability of UN.
- “Winning the Battle but Losing the War”. (This phrase denotes the risk that, while we would be successful in a military campaign against Iraq, we would subsequently pay the high price of pre-emptive, unilateral action in the form of negative world opinion, Allied disdain, Arab backlash and resentment, etc.; alternatively, it could mean that while we might “win” against Iraq, our lack of commitment to nation-building would stymie Iraq’s democratic transition, leaving her at the hands of warring factions.)

Inner Dependencies within Model:

1. Increased Hostility from the Middle East might affect the risk of an Increase in Oil Prices, Terrorism and/or Threat or use of WMD.
2. Increased Oil Prices might affect the risk of Decreasing Domestic Support.
3. Increased Terrorism would affect the risk of Decreasing Domestic Support and the Threat of Use of WMD.
4. The Threat of WMD would affect the risk of Increased Middle East Hostility, Increased Terrorism and Decreased Domestic Support.
**Table 3**

Ratings table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alternatives</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Normal</th>
<th>Ideal</th>
<th>Ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benefits</td>
<td>0.7579</td>
<td>0.7883</td>
<td>0.2226</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities</td>
<td>0.7529</td>
<td>0.7831</td>
<td>0.2212</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costs</td>
<td>0.9320</td>
<td>0.9694</td>
<td>0.2738</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risks</td>
<td>0.9614</td>
<td>1.0000</td>
<td>0.2824</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4**

Super decision rating results of benefits, opportunities, costs and risks weighed against the 11 subcriteria based on the economic, military, political and social strategic criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alliances</th>
<th>Reaction</th>
<th>Focus shift away from US economy</th>
<th>Iraqi civilian casualties</th>
<th>WMD</th>
<th>Arab world reaction</th>
<th>US military casualties</th>
<th>Monetary cost of war</th>
<th>Change in oil prices</th>
<th>Public opinion</th>
<th>Regime change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weight</td>
<td>0.0295</td>
<td>0.0394</td>
<td>0.0212</td>
<td>0.4544</td>
<td>0.0674</td>
<td>0.0639</td>
<td>0.1138</td>
<td>0.0137</td>
<td>0.0424</td>
<td>0.1544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits</td>
<td>Hi</td>
<td>Lo</td>
<td>Med</td>
<td>Hi</td>
<td>Med</td>
<td>Lo</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>Med</td>
<td>Hi</td>
<td>Hi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities</td>
<td>Hi</td>
<td>Med</td>
<td>Med</td>
<td>Hi</td>
<td>Med</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>Lo</td>
<td>Hi</td>
<td>Hi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costs</td>
<td>Hi</td>
<td>Hi</td>
<td>Hi</td>
<td>Hi</td>
<td>Med</td>
<td>Hi</td>
<td>Hi</td>
<td>Hi</td>
<td>Med</td>
<td>Hi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risks</td>
<td>Hi</td>
<td>Hi</td>
<td>Hi</td>
<td>Hi</td>
<td>Med</td>
<td>Hi</td>
<td>Hi</td>
<td>Hi</td>
<td>Hi</td>
<td>Hi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 5**

Ratings information — BOCR priorities and totals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Totals</th>
<th>Priorities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benefits</td>
<td>0.430074</td>
<td>0.156573</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities</td>
<td>0.425070</td>
<td>0.154653</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costs</td>
<td>0.931970</td>
<td>0.339077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risks</td>
<td>0.961432</td>
<td>0.349797</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Lastly, actions resulting in increased hostility from the Middle east, increased terrorism, the possible flight of Saddam, the threat of use of WMD, and a threat to the legitimacy/future viability of the UN would all serve to strengthen a situation in which we would “Win the Battle, but Lose the War”.

4.5. Judgements and ratings

Pairwise comparisons are made between each BOCR subnet criterion and each Alternative (outer dependencies), as well as the inner dependencies as listed above. Similarly, each Strategic Criterion is compared with its corresponding cluster (and its individual criterion), while the Goal is pairwise compared with each Strategic Criterion.

Next, each strategic subcriterion is rated against Benefits, Costs, Opportunities and Risk using the four-level High–Medium–Low–No Value category rating. The Rating results can be seen in Table 3, and the results weighed against the strategic subcriteria can be seen in Table 4. BOCR priorities and total ratings information can be seen in Table 5, while results of how the alternatives fed up through the system to yield synthesized values can be seen in Table 6; the synthesized priorities can be seen in Table 7.

The top-level network has subnetworks, so results from the subnetworks are combined using a formula in the top level network. The priorities of the Benefits, Opportunities, Costs and Risks nodes are established in the rating system and used in the formula applied in the top level network.

The overall synthesized results revealed Option 3 (work with UN weapons inspectors to exhaust diplomatic options) to be the best alternative. Taken as a whole, it ranked as having the lowest risk and costs, was ranked the second-best choice in terms of opportunities, and the best choice in terms of benefits. Although Option 2 and Option 1 are ranked second and last respectively, these two options combined surpass the ranking of Option 3 (meaning that, combined, the Option of engaging Iraq surpasses that of exhausting diplomatic options). After Option 3, the other options are fairly equal, with Option 2 only slightly edging out Option 4.
Table 6
How the alternatives fed forward

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alternatives</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Normal</th>
<th>Ideal</th>
<th>Ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Report for benefits</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-emptive attack</td>
<td>0.0351</td>
<td>0.2010</td>
<td>0.6181</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attack with allied help</td>
<td>0.0483</td>
<td>0.2761</td>
<td>0.8493</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with UN</td>
<td>0.0568</td>
<td>0.3251</td>
<td>1.0000</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remove sanctions</td>
<td>0.0346</td>
<td>0.1978</td>
<td>0.6083</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Report for opportunities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-emptive attack</td>
<td>0.0992</td>
<td>0.3668</td>
<td>1.0000</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attack with allied help</td>
<td>0.0477</td>
<td>0.1763</td>
<td>0.4806</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with UN</td>
<td>0.0843</td>
<td>0.3116</td>
<td>0.8493</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remove sanctions</td>
<td>0.0393</td>
<td>0.1453</td>
<td>0.3961</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Report for costs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-emptive attack</td>
<td>0.1571</td>
<td>0.6662</td>
<td>1.0000</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attack with allied help</td>
<td>0.0512</td>
<td>0.2172</td>
<td>0.3261</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with UN</td>
<td>0.0114</td>
<td>0.0484</td>
<td>0.0727</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remove sanctions</td>
<td>0.0161</td>
<td>0.0682</td>
<td>0.1024</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Report for risks</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-emptive attack</td>
<td>0.0877</td>
<td>0.3452</td>
<td>0.7320</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attack with allied help</td>
<td>0.0344</td>
<td>0.1354</td>
<td>0.2872</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with UN</td>
<td>0.0121</td>
<td>0.0478</td>
<td>0.1013</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remove sanctions</td>
<td>0.1199</td>
<td>0.4716</td>
<td>1.0000</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7
Overall synthesized priorities for the alternatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Ideals</th>
<th>Normals</th>
<th>Raw</th>
<th>Ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-emptive attack</td>
<td>0.332131</td>
<td>0.151603</td>
<td>0.324391</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attack w/Allied support</td>
<td>0.415798</td>
<td>0.189793</td>
<td>0.406108</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with UN</td>
<td>1.000000</td>
<td>0.456454</td>
<td>0.976695</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remove sanctions</td>
<td>0.442871</td>
<td>0.202150</td>
<td>0.432550</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Conclusion

Without question, foreign policy decisions necessitate the consideration of all possible options. In the case of the United States and Iraq, however, the decision was one of prime importance, given the future repercussions of both countries’ actions in 2002. At the time, we felt that the decision of the United States would be based on an educated guess as to whether Iraq possessed either nuclear WMD or the means to make them. We now know that faulty intelligence was used to convince the public that Iraq was harboring WMD. Regardless, the ANP was successfully used in 2002 to examine the short-term, and possible long-term, effects of engaging Iraq in war, unilaterally or not.

In 2002, the following conclusion was reached by the author of this paper: President Bush’s insistence on viewing the United States in the context of a unipolar world, rather than conceding that a larger picture exists, may in fact stifle any progressive foreign policy decisions. In general, he and his administration have shown little concern for the rest of the world’s response to his protectionist policies. Further, his consistent movement toward unilateral action should be alarming at least, and should incite a dialogue that is currently absent. Repeated public opinion polls demonstrate that the American public is uncertain at best when faced with whether or not to engage Iraq — is this the shaky foundation on which a military campaign should be launched? At the very least, these are questions that must be asked, despite the current American climate of patriotism and, perhaps, superiority. Unilateral action against Iraq, coupled with other recent protectionist policies, may serve only to portray US interests as superior and valid, and our needs and wants as the exception to every rule, inviting only disdain and opposition from the rest of the world.
In short, using pre-emptive, unilateral force has a high potential of both alienating allies and negatively affecting America’s long-term interests. In addition, pre-emptive action might incite the use of WMD in retaliation, as well as create further instability in the Middle East and within Iraq, as the country is left in the hands of warring factions with Iraqi citizens at their mercy. It cannot be denied that Iraq poses a threat to both the United States and the world, and that Hussein is a leader that must be contended with. Unchecked, he represents the quintessential example of both absolute power and absolute corruption, unfettered by the restraints of conscience, ethics, morality or religious beliefs. However, the question, as stated at the beginning of this paper, is not whether to engage Iraq, but rather, how and when.

Weapons inspectors have not been in the country since 1998; surely, the US could take the time necessary to carry out the appropriate dialogue in both the public and political/diplomatic arenas in order to gain both allied and public support, fully consider both the depth and scope of the operation (including anticipated costs), as well as to formulate a plausible plan for what will become of an Iraq absent of the Hussein regime. The logistics of this operation are being glossed over by the Bush administration. The importance of allied and public support is being dangerously underplayed. The Administration is spouting the rhetoric of “force as a last resort”, even as it dismisses UN authority through House resolutions. There is no good faith here, on the part of either country.

In the end, there is only one plan that is truly in the best interests of both the United States and the world. The UN must move to expediently pass a resolution calling for a new, tougher inspection regime. Absent Iraqi cooperation, there must be a multilateral move to forcefully search out and destroy Iraqi WMD and related programs. Simultaneously, the Arab world must be actively engaged and consulted, as the West should be mindful that Western-led authority will neither have legitimacy nor longevity, and that Iraq, left entirely to her own devices, would likely dissolve into the hands of warring factions. There are goals here: protecting oil reserves, improving life for Iraqi civilians, building bridges with the Arab world, maintaining focus on the domestic economy, and strengthening our ties both with our allies and IGOs. Simply put, there is not enough support, at home or worldwide, for pre-emptive unilateral action, and the US cannot afford the risks involved. The wisest choice remains to first exhaust diplomatic measures . . . hoping for the best, but preparing for the possible necessity of allied intervention.

There is a larger picture here, however, that must be considered. Yes, Iraq must comply with inspections. Yes, Iraq must be rid of WMD and related programs. Yes, the days of Saddam Hussein’s regime ought to be numbered. However, the shaping of foreign policy never hinges on one single decision at one moment in time. There is a definite shift to unilateralism and a push for American hegemony. There is a noticeable absence of dialogue and debate regarding the past, current and future actions of a “wartime” president. There are too many decisions being made and accepted in the name of fear — breeding protectionist, isolationist policies cloaked in patriotism and politics. There is, very nearly, a policy of paralysis regarding common sense, active debate, prudent fiscal decisions and long-term repercussions. Not attacking pre-emptively is a message that will give the US a better response on many fronts, and in the long-term. If Iraq must be engaged militarily, then let it be by a multilateral allied force, sharing in both the costs and the risks.

The results and conclusion, as stated above and composed in 2002, have proven to be quite prophetic in nature. In the years since Operation Iraqi Freedom began, American public support has indeed diminished and the costs of the war have risen to over 300 billion dollars, with the total cost project to surpass one trillion dollars [13]. The risks of US and Iraqi casualties have materialized; since the war began in March 2003, almost 2700 Americans have died, over 20,000 have been wounded, and over 40,000 Iraqi civilians have died [14]. The cost of the war is also seen in high oil prices and increased terrorism, as well as further destabilization of the Middle East. While the US-led pre-emptive strike was justified largely with the rationale of overcoming security risks to the US, in our current situation, one could ask whether we are indeed more secure today than four years ago. It would have been far better to work with the UN than to be the leader of a few allies. Iraq would have thought that they were fighting the whole world instead of just the United States. At this point, the United States remains in an unyielding Catch-22: withdraw troops, leaving Iraq to be ruled by whichever faction emerges victorious from the current state of civil war, or maintain troops, even as support for the war diminishes and the monetary and casualty toll grows higher. Given the current state of affairs, ‘winning’ no longer seems to be an option.

Acknowledgements

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References