The Military Option: The Conduct and Consequences of War in the Persian Gulf

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I. Introduction

Hearings and Purpose of Report. On December 4, 1990, the House Armed Services Committee began a series of hearings on the Persian Gulf crisis. The purpose was to provide a systematic, thorough examination or the three main avenues for resolution or the conflict: sanctions, war, and diplomacy. The committee examined the costs and risks of each, what chance each option had of succeeding and what success might mean in each case.

The committee dealt with sanctions during the first week of hearings, the military option during the second week, and the diplomatic avenue during the third. I issued a White Paper with my views and analysis on sanctions on December 21, 1990 and a second White Paper on the diplomatic option on December 28, 1990.

From December 12—17 the committee held five hearings on the military option. See Appendix 1 for hearing topics and witnesses.

This White Paper summarizes what I have drawn from these hearings and other sources on the military option. It is my report and not that of the House Committee on Armed Services. I offer it in hope of contributing to the substantive debate on the Persian Gulf crisis.

My analysis of the military option will address several key areas: the readiness of US forces in the Persian Gulf; options for use of military force in the Gulf the costs and risks associated with each option; the advantages and risks of relying upon force to resolve the Gulf crisis; and the implications for US interests of a crisis solution arrived at through war. It is intended to help provide the information Congress needs to understand fully the costs and consequences of US options and make an informed judgment as it carries out its constitutional responsibilities with regard to US actions in the Persian Gulf.

US Interests and Objectives in the Persian Gulf. The invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990 confronted the US government with three concerns. In three words, they were: oil, aggression and nukes.

The crisis in the Persian Gulf threatens fundamental and longstanding interests of the United States and regional stability in the Middle Fast. Iraq invaded and occupied Kuwait just as the Cold War was ending. The rules that will govern the world in the post-Cold War era are being fashioned in the crucible of this crisis. Saddam Hussein should not be allowed to enjoy the fruits of his aggression if we are to create a new, peaceful international order.

Every President since Franklin D. Roosevelt has committed the United States to the pursuit of security and stability in the Persian Gulf. In part, this reflects our economic interest. The need of the United States and the world for reliable access to oil requires, in the short run, that Iraq's seizure of Kuwait's oil and attempt to dominate Gulf oil politics be opposed. In the long run, it requires security and stability in the Gulf where over half of the world's known oil reserves are located. Our pursuit of stability in the Gulf also stems from our concern about the security of long-term allies and our general interest in stability as a prerequisite for economic growth and democracy.

Under the leadership of Saddam Hussein, Iraq's aggressiveness against a smaller, weaker neighbor has destabilized the region. Iraq's million-man army, biological and chemical weapons, and coming nuclear capability pose a long-term threat to the region. Iraq's military leverage in the region must be neutralized if security and stability are to be achieved in the Persian Gulf.

As a matter of national policy, the United States is committed to the defense of Saudi Arabia and to the UN-approved goals of ousting Iraq from Kuwait, restoring the Kuwaiti government, and freeing foreign nationals. This set of objectives, even though it does not address all of the US interests at stake, has evolved into the bottom line for President Bush and most Members of Congress, and is often used as the litmus test for evaluating policy alternatives. A principal criterion for evaluating an option in the Gulf must be whether it accomplishes the UN objectives—that is, Iraq's unconditional and complete withdrawal from Kuwait and the restoration of the Kuwaiti government, now that the hostages have been released.

II. Strategic objectives and military missions

US Objectives in the Event of War. On November 29, 1990 the UN Security Council authorized the use of "all necessary means" to implement UN resolutions if Iraq does not comply with them by January 15. In the event that Saddam Hussein does not withdraw from Kuwait, the US and its allies, whose military forces I will refer to as the "anti-Iraq coalition forces," will have UN authorization to use military force to make Iraq comply with the UN-approved goals. Deciding whether to use force, however, requires a clear understanding of what our strategic objectives in a war with Iraq would be and what military missions are required to achieve them.

At a minimum the anti-Iraq coalition forces will seek the following:

—The immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of all Iraqi forces from Kuwait;

—The restoration of Kuwait's legitimate government;

A third principal objective—the release of foreign nationals in Iraq and Kuwait—was achieved on December 2, when Saddam Hussein announced that he would release all foreigners who wished to leave.

President Bush has stated repeatedly that the US seeks security and stability in the Gulf, an objective that is shared by our allies. This latter goal has been interpreted variously to require:

—Reducing the war-making power of Iraq so that it is no longer a threat in the area;

—Eliminating Iraq's nuclear, biological and chemical capabilities

—Creating conditions that could lead to the fall of the Saddam Hussein regime;

—Establishment of post-crisis regional security arrangements; and

—Establishment of controls on arms sales and transfers of technology to Iraq.

The military option, of course, cannot by itself achieve all of these objectives. As would be the case with diplomacy or sanctions, supplementary measures will be needed. However, if the US and its allies decide to use force to obtain Iraq's complete withdrawal from Kuwait—the key test of an acceptable outcome to the crisis—they are likely to seek to accomplish two additional objectives:

—Reducing the size and effectiveness of Iraq's armed forces.

—Destroying as much of Iraq's nuclear, biological and chemical capability as possible.

Other objectives—such as driving Saddam from power—might be desirable, but are not likely to be adopted as wartime objectives by the anti-Iraq coalition.

Resulting Military Missions. These objectives translate into two broad missions for the anti-Iraq coalition forces:

—When ordered, undertake operations aimed at the liberation of Kuwait and the destruction of opposing Iraqi armed forces which occupy or threaten Kuwaiti territory.

—When ordered, conduct operations throughout Iraq and the Kuwaiti theater of operations to gain immediate air superiority and freedom of air action and destroy Iraqi nuclear, biological, chemical and tactical ballistic missile capabilities.

These are well-defined and limited objectives. The anti-Iraq coalition does not appear to be seeking the conquest of Iraq or to punish the Iraqi people. In the event of war, strategic and military targets in Iraq are likely to be attacked, primarily by airpower.

Coalition air and ground forces would be used against Iraqi ground forces in Kuwait and the immediate area. There is little indication that non-military targets in Iraq will be targeted or ground forces used to seize Iraqi territory.

III. Coalition forces

Strength and Dispositions in the Middle East as of January 1991. When planned and promised deployments are completed in January 1991, coalition forces in Saudi Arabia will total approximately 25 division equivalents, including almost 430,000 US and 245,000 allied troops, equipped with 3,500 tanks and supported by over 1,300 naval and air force combat aircraft.

US ground forces in the region include eight Army division equivalents and supporting units and two Marine Expeditionary Forces deployed ashore in Saudi Arabia, and a Marine Expeditionary Brigade and a Marine Expeditionary unit afloat in the Persian Gulf region. These forces are equipped with approximately 2,000 M1 and M1A1 tanks and are supported by over 1,000 combat and 250 transport aircraft.

Over 100,000 allied ground forces are deployed in the region. When the Saudi Arabian National Guard is included, the total increases to approximately 160,000. Two additional divisions promised by Egypt (4th Mechanized) and Syria (9th Mechanized) would increase the total by another 30,000 to 35,000. With increased force levels announced by the United Kingdom and by France, over 245,000 allied troops in addition to US forces will be available.

Naval units afloat in the region in support of the force will include six carrier battle groups and two surface battle groups (Battleships Missouri and Wisconsin), a total of approximately 90 surface combatants.

Readiness to Go to War. Events following the November 29th UN resolution have created the impression that the Bush Administration was attempting to bring the Persian Gulf situation to a head by January 15. The readiness of US forces to participate in offensive operations became an issue in late December. Would US forces be capable of initiating combat operations soon after January 15th if Saddam Hussein did not withdraw from Iraq? If not, when would they be ready?

Getting the Force There and Insuring That It Is Ready. On August 8, 1990 in response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the President ordered US forces to the Persian Gulf with the mission to defend Saudi Arabia and deter further Iraqi aggression. The force totaled approximately 230,000 soldiers, sailors, marines and airmen, and included more than 660 US combat aircraft and over 1,000 tanks. Deployed and proposed allied ground forces for the Middle East included up to 150,000 additional troops. The equivalent of 20 coalition force divisions—almost 400,000 troops equipped with 2500 tanks and supported by over 900 naval and air force combat aircraft—were scheduled to be in the region by November 1. Completion of the deployment slipped to early December because of transportation delays.

In late October, press reports suggested that additional force requirements were being considered by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Colin Powell, and the commander of US forces in the Persian Gulf, General Norman Schwarzkopf. In addition, Pentagon planners reportedly wanted to replace the 82nd Airborne Division with heavier forces and were designating additional units that might be sent to the Gulf as rotational units or reinforcements. General Powell reported to the committee on December 14 that in late October he had consulted with General Schwarzkopf and the Joint Chiefs of Staff on the force levels required to provide our forces in the Gulf with an offensive capability.

On November 8, President Bush announced that the US forces in the Persian Gulf would be almost doubled in size so that a credible "offensive military option" would be available against Iraq. The additional deployment included an Army corps of 3 1/2 division equivalents, an additional Marine Expeditionary Force, three carrier and one surface battle groups, and 14 additional fighter, two bomber, and 11 support aircraft squadrons—a total of approximately 150,000 troops, 650 additional Air Force, Navy, and Marine combat aircraft, and 1,100 additional M1A1 and M1 tanks. Subsequently, the United Kingdom announced that it would send a second armored brigade to Saudi Arabia and France increased its deployments as well.

On November 29, 1990, the UN Security Council authorized the use of force if Iraq did not leave Kuwait by January 15, 1991.

On December 14, General Powell told the House Armed Services Committee that the additional deployment announced by the President "would take two or three months" from November 9 to complete the "Phase II" buildup of US and anti-Iraq coalition forces offensive capability. In other words, General Powell seems to believe the buildup would be completed by early February, if not sooner.

During the week of December 18, Lt. General Waller, Deputy Commander to General Schwarzkopf, told the press in Saudi Arabia that "every unit will not be filly combat ready until after the first of February sometime." Press reports also indicated that the flow of equipment within and from Europe had been delayed by bad weather.

On December 26, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that according to Pentagon officials, Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney had advised the White House of General Schwarzkopf's assessment that ground forces would not be fully prepared for an all-out assault until February. General Schwarzkopf apparently believed that extra time was important to build up supplies of munitions and high technology missiles, improve coordination, and ensure proper training of recently arrived troops.

Units arriving in the Gulf earlier this year required several weeks to marry up with their equipment after arriving in Saudi Arabia, to become used to the weather and prepare for desert operations. It apparently takes two to three weeks following arrival in the theater for troops to become prepared for combat, as indicated by comments from those in the theater and by military analysts in this country. Lt. Colonel Glynn Pope, US Army, told *CBS News* on December 9 that "It takes two or three good weeks of hard, hard work out

there." Retired Marine General George Crist noted that "Even after all our forces are there, it's going to take up to a month to get fully combat-ready to fight in the desert and conduct an operation as complex as an offensive."

Will We Be Ready on January 15th?

Readiness is not an all or nothing proposition in individual units or in the overall picture of US forces in Saudi Arabia. It is not the case that units are not ready on Monday and then ready on Tuesday. It is always a matter of degree.

As our expert witnesses and others have indicated, units newly arrived in the Persian Gulf require some time to acclimate and bring themselves to peak readiness. Many of those forces already in country or on station have done so.

US Air Force and US Navy units will be fully available and ready on January 15. Those ground combat forces deployed after August 9 will likewise be ready. Those ground units deployed after November 8 will not have fully completed their preparation for combat operations. Our forces would certainly be capable of mounting some kind of offensive operation after January 15, but it appears that a couple more weeks could make a difference.

Coalition Force Strengths. US and allied forces in the Persian Gulf should enjoy four principal advantages over Iraqi forces: airpower, the ability to fight at night, superior strategic and tactical intelligence, and superior logistics.

First, the coalition's airpower provides the clearest and most one-sided advantage enjoyed by the anti-Iraq forces. Coalition forces will have an almost 3 to 1 edge in numbers of combat aircraft and an overwhelming edge qualitatively. Given the uneven quality of the Iraqi Air Force and their inexperience in offensive counter air and air defense operations, coalition forces should be able to establish air superiority relatively easily over Kuwait and over Iraq, as well. Military analysts' estimates for the time required to establish air superiority ranged from one to a few days. Control of the air in a part of the world where there is little to no concealment available for deployed forces will permit coalition air forces to range over both Iraq and the battlefield and attack strategic and tactical targets at will.

Second, the US Army enjoys a marked edge in night fighting capability. Its night vision devices are widely distributed among individual soldiers, armored fighting vehicles, and attack and scout helicopters and give the Army unparalleled night-fighting capabilities. Unfortunately, the Marine Corps and the majority of other coalition forces do not possess this capability to the same degree.

Third, the superior logistical support available to US and other allied forces provides the anti-Iraq coalition with a clear advantage over Iraq whose ability to sustain its forces is questionable under the combined effects of an embargo and an effective interdiction campaign. As General Meyer said to the committee on December 12, "...logistic support drives the tactics...." The US logistical system and the ability to maintain it free from any

interference by Iraqi air and tactical ballistic missile attack (assuming that our air operations are as successful as is expected) will provide a marked advantage. The Saudis apparently will provide separate logistical support for Syrian, French and Egyptian forces. It may not be as good as that provided to American and British troops, but is still likely to exceed that provided by Iraq to its forces.

Finally, the coalition forces will have a marked advantage in both strategic and tactical intelligence as a result of the US space-based capability and intelligence platforms that have been deployed into the region. When coupled with the strike capability present in US conventional strategic and tactical air, the combined target acquisition and attack capability of the anti-Iraq coalition forces should dictate the course of the war.

Key uncertainties. There are four principal questions with respect to the military capability of the coalition forces: In the event of war, who will join the fight against Iraq and where will they fight? Would an Iraqi attempt to involve Israel in the war lead to the breakup of the anti-Iraq coalition? Is the command and control of the coalition forces adequate? Can the coalition forces protect the Saudi oil fields?

First, the willingness of our key allies to fight is an enormously sensitive subject about which governments are reluctant to comment publicly. What is stated publicly, including perhaps, comments several months ago by Egyptian and Syrian field commanders that their forces were present only for defensive purposes, is often aimed at domestic audiences and does not reflect actual intentions. Secretary of Defense Cheney addressed this question very cautiously when he appeared before the committee on December 14:

Each nation that has deployed forces to the region has worked out an arrangement, if you will ... those who have troops in Saudi Arabia with the Saudis. I am sure there probably are varying levels of commitment. Their commitment now is to have forces there. Some of them are fully committed to defending Saudi Arabia should there be conflict and some of them, I would guess, would go further and join in an effort to liberate Kuwait. So it varies. Each one of those governments will have to make in a sense a political decision as to whether or not they would participate in the kind of action that would be required were we to use force to implement the UN resolutions.

The former Commander of the Allied Air Forces in Central Europe, General Charles Donnelly, US Air Force (retired) told the committee on December 13 that he believed that it was easier to determine who would participate in air operations than it was for ground operations. Based on his experience in the region he believed that Arab, British and French Air Forces would participate in any air campaign against Iraq as part of the effort to get them out of Kuwait.

The Economist addressed, on January 5, the issue of alliance participation in a Gulf war and reached an ambiguous conclusion. It reported that Egyptian officials close to President Mubarak indicated that Egyptian forces would fight Iraqi forces in Kuwait but not "penetrate Iraq itself." Western diplomats in Damascus reportedly believed that while Syria wouldn't block an attack on Iraq, it also wouldn't participate. *The Economist*

noted, however, that Egyptian and Syrian forces come under direct Saudi command and the Saudis appear confident that they will obey whatever orders are given.

The willingness of our principal allies to join, if necessary, an attack against Iraq is critical, both politically and militarily. In the event of a war, US airpower would be used against strategic and military targets in Iraq and Kuwait and US ground forces against the Iraqi Army deployed in or near Kuwait. Based on innumerable conversations I have had with US and allied officials, I am confident that our forces will be accompanied by most, if not all, of our principal allies in both missions. In particular, I believe that Arab forces are willing to engage Iraqi forces in Kuwait. Attacks on Iraqi forces in Iraq are more problematic. We should plan accordingly.

Second, the probability seems very high that, if attacked, Iraq will attack Israel in an effort to break up the opposing coalition by widening an anti-Iraq war into an Arab-Israeli one. Iraqi officials, including Saddam Hussein (most recently in late December on Spanish television), have stated repeatedly that Tel Aviv would be the first Iraqi target in the event of war. Iraq also test-fired several surface-to-surface missiles in late December, reportedly not in the direction of the coalition forces in Saudi Arabia but, in all likelihood, in the direction of Israel. Israel responded with its own test-firing of a medium-range surface-to-surface missile.

Israeli concern over this threat peaked in late November when several Israeli defense officials implied that they might consider preemptive action against Iraqi missiles aimed at Israel, in part because of frustration over what they believed was inadequate intelligence-sharing and military-coordination with the United States. A preemptive attack by the Israelis, of course, would be much more damaging to the cohesion of the anti-Iraq coalition than an Israeli response, particularly in kind, to an Iraqi first strike.

Israel clearly was reassured after Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's visit to Washington in mid-December when, according to the Israeli press, President Bush strongly reaffirmed US commitment to Israel's security if attacked and reached an agreement with Prime Minister Shamir on strategic cooperation if a war should break out. Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Arens subsequently said on Israeli radio that "we are not in the business of launching preemptive strikes" and told Parliament on December 25:

We do not rule out the possibility of the Iraqis striking at us first. Saddam Hussein's missiles have the range to reach Israel. But their capability is very restricted. If we are hit, we shall strike back. But there is no need for panic.

Former Ambassador to Israel Samuel Lewis and former Assistant Secretary of State for the Middle East Richard Murphy both believed that there was "no question" that Israel would respond if attacked, but thought that our principal Arab partners, while disturbed by the impression that they were allied with Israel in a fight against a brother Arab, would continue to fight. A disproportionate or lengthy Israeli retaliation, of course, would create more public pressure, particularly on Syria and Egypt, to pull out of the fight against Iraq.

The impact of Israel's potential involvement upon the willingness of our Arab allies to fight Iraq is an exceptionally sensitive subject about which little can be said publicly by official sources. I have no doubt that the issue has been discussed extensively by all the parties concerned. My reading of recent Israeli statements is that they have agreed to stay out of the war unless attacked and, if attacked, will respond quickly and in kind, much like the one-shot retaliatory raids they have launched in the past after Palestinian terrorist attacks. I also believe that our Arab allies expect this and will continue fighting. What they would find difficult is Israel's entering the war on a sustained basis, which I do not think is likely. In short, although Saddam Hussein probably will try to split the forces arrayed against him by attacking Israel, I believe the attempt will fail.

Third, several military commentators have questioned whether the multinational forces opposing Iraq have adequate command and control. Ideally, it would be desirable to fully integrate the national commands into a unified joint command. This happened in Korea, but this has proven to be the exception, not the rule. Historically, nations have coordinated their military operations, with each assuming separate spheres of responsibility, rather than forming a unified command structure. Political, not military, considerations have usually been the cause.

The anti-Iraq coalition has established parallel commands for US and Arab forces. US, British, and now (in the event of hostilities) French forces operate under US command, while Arab forces operate under Saudi Arabian command:

—General Schwarzkopf, the US Central Command commander, is the commander of all US forces participating in Operation Desert Shield, and also exercises control over attached British forces. His joint force is organized with Army, Air Force, Marine, Naval and special operations component commands.

—Saudi Arabian Defense Minister Prince Khalid commands all Arab and Islamic national forces, including those of Syria and Egypt.

—US and Saudi commanders have established a co-located command center from which to direct operations.

—Air forces operate under a combined air operations center coordinated through the US Air Force component command.

—The US Naval component command coordinates naval operations in the Persian Gulf and assists with the coordination of the multinational interception force in the Gulf of Oman and the Red Sea.

Secretary Baker and Saudi King Fahd reached agreement in early November that the US would have responsibility for planning all offensive operations outside of Saudi territory and operational control of all forces if offensive military action were taken.

In October, following a trip to the Middle East, General Powell reported that General Schwarzkopf had expressed his satisfaction with the command arrangements. In his

prepared statement before the committee on December 14, General Powell stated:

The multinational command and control is an evolving process but thus far has been very successful. Although a unified command structure is desired, coordination and cooperation (recognizing and accommodating national sensitivities) between the multinational forces have provided an effective force to deal with the changing situation. ... Close coordination exists. ... This arrangement is working well. ...

It is my belief that General Powell's assessment is correct. Political realities rule out the creation of a fully integrated command structure for the anti-Iraq forces. It is also apparent that the coalition forces are making efforts to improve their ability to coordinate their activities in the event of a war. I am satisfied that command and control arrangements, while not ideal, are satisfactory.

Third, Saddam Hussein's threat to turn the entire region into a "sea of fire" raises the issue of whether the anti-Iraq coalition forces can protect the Saudi oil fields. On January 2, delegates to an international science conference in London on the possible impact of a Gulf war said that pollution from blazing oil installations and from oil spillage could threaten the world's ecology and even cause disastrous climate changes. Concern has also been expressed that Iraqi attacks on Saudi oil fields would damage them so much that world access to Saudi oil would be effectively denied.

The Iraqi options for attacking are few in number and limited:

—Iraq lost the ability to attack the oil fields from the ground when US ground and air forces arrived in Saudi Arabia after August 9.

—Iraqi aircraft and tactical ballistic missiles undoubtedly would be targeted against the oil fields. They also would be high-priority targets in the initial stages of any coalition offensive action. Some aircraft and missiles will survive, but their ability to attack the Saudi oil fields with either conventional or unconventional weapons would be limited.

—Iraq was unable to interdict the Iranian oil flow during the Iran-Iraq War despite limited Iranian air defenses. It is not likely to be much more successful against the much more heavily defended Saudi facilities.

—Iraq's tactical ballistic missiles could cause some damage if key elements in a refinery or distribution center were successfully targeted. However, The Scud-B is a relatively inaccurate missile and more suitable for delivery of a nuclear weapon against a large area target than of a relatively small conventional warhead against an oil well or refinery. Iraq's longer range missiles are less accurate and have even smaller warheads.

—Although there have been a few incidents of sabotage or terrorist attacks against Saudi oil facilities, an effective campaign against Saudi field installations would require an indigenous terrorist support network. Random terrorist attacks are a possibility that should not be discounted, but are not likely to have a major impact on overall Saudi oil production.

In the event of a war, the Kuwaiti oil fields, which, according to press reports, may have been mined and rigged for demolition by the Iraqis, will undoubtedly suffer additional damage. However, the market has already adjusted for the absence of Kuwaiti and Iraqi oil. Iraq's capability against the Saudi oil fields is limited, and is not likely to have a significant effect on Saudi oil production.

To summarize, I have been concerned about all four of these uncertainties that could affect the capability of the coalition forces and have spent considerable time analyzing them. I am least worried about our ability to protect the Saudi oil fields and to have adequate command and control, but most concerned about the impact that an Iraqi attack on Israel might have, on the cohesion of the anti-Iraq coalition. Nevertheless, it is my judgment that these problems are under control, but I list them as "uncertainties" because I am not one hundred per cent sure.

IV. Iraqi forces

Strength and Disposition. On August 2, 1990, Iraq invaded Kuwait, defeated the Iraqi armed forces, and established control over the country within 36 hours. Since that time Iraq has reinforced its forces in southern Iraq and in Kuwait. Estimates of Iraqi forces deployed in the Kuwaiti theater of operations total over 500,000 soldiers, organized in some 30+ divisions with approximately 4,000 tanks, 2,500 armored personnel carriers and infantry fighting vehicles, and 2,700 artillery pieces, supported by up to 500 combat aircraft. Iraq continues to mobilize forces for possible employment against the coalition and has recently called up its class of 17 year-old males. Most military analysts, however, believe that Iraq is reaching the bottom of its manpower pool and will have great difficulty in significantly expanding its armed forces.

Iraq's first tactical echelon, composed primarily of infantry divisions, is established in prepared defensive positions in a series of man-made obstacles along the Kuwait-Saudi Arabian border. A tactical reserve force, predominantly armored and mechanized divisions, is deployed in central Kuwait. The Iraqi second operational echelon, including an estimated five elite Republican Guards divisions, is along and north of the Iraq-Kuwait border south of Basra. Two Republican Guards divisions are reportedly in the vicinity of Baghdad. Additional units are deployed along the Syrian, Turkish and Iranian borders.

Iraqi Strengths and Weaknesses. The Iraqi armed forces include an army which has been tested in battle in the desert as a result of the long war with Iran. They have mass and a significant chemical capability which they have used before. Iraq's air force is weak. They have a logistical system which, although good by Third World standards, is vulnerable to interdiction. The Iraqi army has never experienced the effects of a serious air campaign.

Iraq's greatest strength is its ground forces. The Iraqi Regular Army and the Republican Guards represent a professionally competent, well-equipped, well-led and well-trained force with considerable experience in combined arms warfare gained during the Iran-

Iraq war. Their force of 5,000 tanks and 3,500 guns is equipped with a wide variety of Soviet, Western and Third World equipment, and includes some of the most modern equipment, as well as equipment of 1950s vintage.

Based on the record of the Iran-Iraq war, the Iraqi army appears to excel in the ability to conduct a position defense from well-prepared positions backed up by substantial mobile reserves. In Kuwait, Iraqi ground forces appear to be relying heavily on past experience as they establish strongly fortified defensive positions along the coast of Kuwait, the southern border with Saudi Arabia, and the western border of Kuwait, with a network of north-south and east-west military roads behind them to support the rapid movement of both supplies and tank and mechanized reserve forces.

The Iraqi army depends upon attack helicopters for close air support. Their field artillery, which is organized and trained along the Soviet model, was very effective in the latter stages of the Iran-Iraq war. They possess a large number of air defense weapons, but their capability to mount an integrated air defense is generally regarded as weak.

Second, the Iraqi chemical capability is extensive, including blister, blood and nerve agents, and was repeatedly used in the Iran-Iraq war. The Iraqis apparently included chemical fires in their normal defensive fire plans and in some offensive fire plans as well. The favorite targets for Iraqi chemical weapons included artillery positions, assembly areas and Iranian command and control facilities.

Third, Iraq's greatest weakness may lie in its poor air force and inferior air defense forces. During the Iran-Iraq war, the Iraq air force was largely ineffective, confining itself to inaccurate high altitude attacks against Iranian cities after initially taking losses from limited Iranian air defense. The Iraqi air force can be expected to be even less effective against much more extensive and sophisticated US and Saudi air defenses. Iraqi pilots have also shown a marked reluctance to engage in air defense and counter-air operations.

Iraq possesses a large number of air defense weapons, but their capability to mount an integrated air defense is generally regarded as weak. Former Strategic Air Commander, General Russell Dougherty and General Donnelly both told the committee that it should be relatively easy with modern weapons to defeat the Iraqi air defense system. The Iraqi army would still retain, however, a relatively large number of air defense guns and hand-held missile systems that would pose a threat to low-flying aircraft.

Fourth, while the Iraqi logistics system is impressive for a Third World military, it is very vulnerable to air attacks. During the Iran-Iraq war, the Iraqis fought and were supplied along a 750-mile front by a stable and fixed supply line and logistics infrastructure. Material was shipped from one transshipment point to another as supplies were moved forward almost in "fire-bucket brigade" fashion. This worked well against Iran which had limited-to-no ability to interdict.

In Kuwait, major supply depots have been withdrawn and are established in southern Iraq. Although a network of military roads has been established to facilitate the

movement of supplies and reserves, these would be very vulnerable to air interdiction in an area which has little cover or concealment and excellent visibility.

Key Uncertainties. From the perspective of the anti-Iraq coalition, there are two principal questions concerning Iraqi military capabilities: How well will the Iraqi soldier stand up to a sustained air campaign? How effective will Iraq's chemical and biological weapons be?

First, many Egyptian and Saudi officials privately disparage the will to fight of the Iraqi soldier. Egyptian President Mubarak reportedly told a visiting committee delegation that he has a very low regard for the capabilities of the Iraqi military based on their performance in the 1973 Arab-Israeli War. Comments by several recently-returned Westerners from Kuwait suggested that Iraqi soldiers appeared more battle-weary than battle-tested. Others pointed to the lack of discipline displayed by many Iraqi soldiers during the invasion and looting of Kuwait.

On the other hand, Stephen Pelletiere and Douglas Johnson, authors of a recent Army War College study of Iraq's performance during the Iran-Iraq war, view the Iraqi army as a competent, reasonably well-equipped and well trained force with considerable experience in desert warfare and combined arms operations gained during the Iran-Iraq war.

Clearly, the elite Republic Guard units are highly motivated and capable forces, as are the armored and mechanized groups of the Regular Army. The militia-like Popular Army forces are probably the least motivated and capable forces. The Regular Army's infantry divisions, which provide the bulk of Iraq's first echelon forces fall somewhere in between. General Powell told the committee on December 14 that:

The Iraqi army has strengths... some very, very competent units, that are well led, commanders with operational experience. ... We take those units very, very seriously. ... [Then are] other units that are clearly less capable. We understand their weaknesses and vulnerabilities. ... I certainly hope President Mubarak ['s assessment of the quality of Iraqi forces] is right. But, ... we don't have to take a chance on underestimating the enemy.

The Iraqi army, however, has never come under sustained, heavy air attacks. General Dougherty told the committee that in the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, Egyptian soldiers performed well when they were protected from the threat of Israeli air, but their fighting qualities were severely degraded when under heavy air attack. The noted military analyst and historian, Colonel Trevor Dupuy, US Army (retired), added that in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, Israeli airpower had a devastating impact on Arab troops who certainly "were not cowards," but nevertheless were panicked when "attacked by unhampered, unhindered airpower." The former Commander of the US Army Training and Doctrine Command, General William DePuy, US Army (retired), maintained that:

It all depends on how effective the US forces are in attacking them. If the attack is inefficient and ineffective and unsuccessful, they [the Iraqis] will be there tomorrow

morning. If the attacks are in general effective, quick, devastating and lethal, the word will get around, and the second and third-class stoops will begin to fade away.

Second, while there is little doubt that Iraq will use chemical and, perhaps, biological weapons during the course of a war, there is considerable dispute over how effective those weapons would be. Iraq employed chemical weapons repeatedly in the Iran-Iraq war and Saddam also employed chemical weapons domestically against the Kurds. They have a substantial stockpile of chemical weapons deliverable by artillery, aircraft and missile and probably have some biological weapons as well.

In a hot desert environment, chemical agents dissipate fairly quickly and are relatively limited in their casualty effect. Nevertheless, the presence of a chemical threat is psychologically debilitating to opposing troops and the requirement to wear chemical protective equipment can sharply reduce the effectiveness of ground troops due to excessive heat.

Nevertheless, a noted specialist on chemical weapons, Brad Roberts of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, told the committee on December 6 that he did not view the Iraqi chemical and biological capabilities as very significant militarily. While acknowledging that Iraqi chemical-equipped missiles could constitute an effective "terror weapon" against urban targets, Iraq's short range capability is probably not large enough to sustain continuous or large scale chemical operations.

V. Principal scenarios and options for war in the Persian Gulf

During the course of the committee's hearings on the military option, plausible military scenarios for alternative offensive military operations in the Persian Gulf were presented by military analysts as a basis for discussion by panels of retired senior military officers. The purpose was not to attempt to second-guess active operational planning, but to permit members of the committee to gain an understanding of the ability of various alternatives to achieve US and UN objectives, and of the conduct, likely costs, and uncertainties of each alternative.

The public debate over how a war might be fought in the Persian Gulf, as well as testimony before the committee, indicates that there are two schools of thought on how a military offensive against Iraq should be conducted—one that calls for total reliance on airpower and another that insists that ground forces will be required.

Airpower advocates believe that airpower alone can achieve the UN objectives, either by forcing the Iraqi leadership to withdraw their forces from Kuwait or destroying Iraqi forces from the air. For example, the Director of Strategic Studies at the Johns Hopkins School for Advanced International Studies, Eliot Cohen, told the committee that an air campaign largely targeted against Iraq would result in the "visible destruction of much of the Iraqi armed forces and economy, the enfeeblement of the Ba'athist system of political control, the demonstration of complete vulnerability to American power, and the crumbling of a besieged and suffering garrison in Kuwait" that would "either lead Saddam to yield, or lead others to depose him and deal with us." Edward Luttwak of the

Center for Strategic and International Studies is also convinced that an air campaign against Iraq would convince Saddam and the Iraqi leadership to withdraw their forces from Kuwait rather than risk continued destruction of those strategic and infrastructure targets they regard as critical.

Hans G. Stoll, US Air Force fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, argued in the *Miami Herald* on December 17 that:

An independent air campaign, if properly applied, would ensure the quickest and least costly route to victory. Airpower's inherent characteristics of speed, range, flexibility, precision, and lethality create an attractive means of forcing Iraq to withdraw permanently from Kuwait and "neutralize" Hussein's capability to wage war for the foreseeable future. ... Air is a no-lose proposition. Even if airpower cannot secure victory within a "reasonable" period given to it, then its combat power can be brought to bear directly against Iraqi ground forces in Kuwait. The enemy will have been sufficiently weakened by this time to allow Arab ground forces to reoccupy Kuwait with few US casualties.

Colonel Dupuy's statement to the committee acknowledged that the proponents of airpower might be right in this instance:

Air operations alone against politico-military and military targets just might work. Historically, no previous effort to defeat ground opponents by airpower alone has succeed unequivocally, and most such efforts have failed. But the circumstances now existing are very different from those examples of failure. Contributing to air capability under these circumstances are the greatly improved ability of very lethal air-delivered weapons to hit and destroy ground targets, and [the] availability of a formidable ground force for immediate employment to overwhelm survivors, if necessary, and to occupy the ground, since airpower cannot occupy ground areas."

Opponents of the airpower advocates, however, argue airpower alone has never won a war in the past and would not win one in the Persian Gulf. It was the view of most of the retired senior military officers and military analysts who appeared before the committee that our military plans for the Persian Gulf must be based on the assumption that a combined or integrated air-ground campaign would be necessary to defeat the Iraqi army and liberate Kuwait. To some extent, this reflected tradition: General Donnelly, for example, told the committee that:

I don't think you can predict you will not have to introduce ground forces in Kuwait. I think any campaign as it starts out would hope that we could reduce the amount of— the necessity for ground forces. But I don't believe you are ever going to see a scenario where ground forces are not going to have to be used....I am one of those airmen that still believes that the way you know you have won a war is when a soldier stands on the ground with an M-16 in his hand and no one is shooting at him.

General Powell stated the case for combined air-ground operations most eloquently when he told the committee on December 14 that:

The very first political objective set out by the President in early August [was] not to punish, not to retaliate, not to see if he [Saddam] will change his mind, but if in the final analysis, if all forms of pressure fail and an offensive military option is required, the purpose of the option would be to eject the Iraqi Army from Kuwait. Many experts and others in this town believe that this can be accomplished by surgical air strikes or sustained air campaigns without the use of other forces, particularly not ground forces. The fundamental flaw in such strategies is that it leaves the initiative in Saddam's hands. He makes the decision as to whether or not he feels he has been punished sufficiently so that he has no choice but to withdraw. I hope that such strategies might work. That is the key. They might work, but then again, they might not. It is for that reason that these strategies, in my judgment, are not decisive. They do not go to the heart of our political objective. They are not success-oriented. ... Another flaw in such limited strategies is that it allows Iraq to concentrate essentially on one threat, an air threat. ... The decision still remains Saddam Hussein's as to whether or not he will withdraw from Kuwait. It is a strategy that relies solely on one dimension, a strategy hoping to win, not designed to win. We must implement a strategy that seizes the initiative and accomplishes our mission—a strategy designed to win.

Not surprisingly, the US decision in early November to almost double its forces in the Gulf reflect this view; sufficient military forces for a campaign planned by airpower enthusiasts were probably at hand in early November.

This debate between advocates of airpower and those insisting that ground forces are also necessary appears overdrawn and, to some extent, obscures the reality of how a war in the Persian Gulf is likely to be fought. Proponents of the airpower school warn against the high casualties likely in a frontal attack against Iraqi defenses. General Powell commented, somewhat caustically, that Pentagon planners were as concerned as anyone about minimizing American casualties and were not "mindless." American forces, he told the committee, would not be matched against Iraqi strengths until "they were no longer strengths."

Airpower proponents also worry about the early introduction of American ground forces into the conflict, expressing concern that a "combined" air-ground campaign will involve the immediate and simultaneous application of air and ground power. However, General Powell interrupted a committee member's question when the member asserted that the JCS Chairman was calling for the use of ground and airpower "at the same time" with the assertion that "I never said that."

My review of the testimony presented to the committee, as well as private conversations with former and active defense officials, convinces me that we will fight a phased campaign in the Persian Gulf. The war is likely to begin with an air campaign against strategic and military targets in Iraq and then proceed to a sustained air campaign against Iraqi military forces in or near Kuwait. The final phase of the campaign would involve the commitment of ground forces. Advocates of airpower will likely get a full opportunity to see if airpower can win it by itself. But the US military has made sure that

sufficient ground force capability is available to do the job, if airpower does not force Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait.

Phase I—the Strategic Air Campaign

According to testimony before the committee, the first task in a strategic air campaign against Iraq would be to establish air superiority. Iraqi aircraft, airfield and air defense assets, particularly surface-to-air missiles, would be top priority targets at the outset. Iraq's ballistic missiles would also be targeted from the outset in an effort to preempt any Iraqi attacks against Israel, Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries.

The air campaign would then focus on Iraq's chemical, biological and nuclear capabilities—stockpiles, delivery vehicles, production facilities and so on. Iraqi military command and control complexes would be high priority targets as well. The strategic air campaign probably would include Iraq's defense industrial base as well.

Witnesses appearing before the committee expressed little, if any, doubt that coalition air forces could successfully execute the strategic air campaign. Generals Dougherty and Donnelly, in addition to the former Assistant Chief of Naval Operations for Air Warfare, Admiral Robert Dunn were confident that air superiority could be established rapidly, perhaps in a day or two. The entire strategic air campaign would take somewhat longer, perhaps a week or so in duration.

The anti-Iraq coalition has between 1,200 and 1,300 aircraft deployed in the Persian Gulf, as well as cruise missiles on ships. Land-based aircraft might be capable of two sorties per day and sea-based aircraft could mount one sortie per day from carriers in the Indian Ocean and eastern Mediterranean. An estimate of 2,000 daily sorties seems reasonable. Air attrition rates historically average approximately 0.5 percent of sorties flown, but this campaign would be particularly intense during the initial stages. At a daily rate of 2,000 sorties, aircraft losses during the strategic air campaign might average 10 aircraft per day or 70 to 80 during this phase of the war. Total anti-Iraq coalition casualties, the bulk of which would be American, could be expected to be in the low hundreds including less than a hundred fatalities.

Combat losses during the strategic air campaign could be higher than these rough estimates. Moreover, the coalition's ability to sustain a 2,000 per day sortie rate for an extended period of time may be reduced due to the distances involved, vagaries of weather, and untested logistical support.

The distances from a typical Saudi Arabian airfield to Baghdad is about 700 miles. Bomber operations from Diego Garcia would cover 3,600 miles each way. Carrier operations are even more daunting: from the Red Sea, 700 miles, from the Mediterranean, 800 miles, and from the North Arabian Sea, 1,600 miles. Attacking targets in the Kuwaiti Theater of Operations (KTO) with land-based aircraft in Saudi Arabia and the Emirates will require an average sortie is just over 400 statute miles in radius. As a consequence, the air campaign in the Persian Gulf will require extensive aerial refueling.

These difficulties notwithstanding, none of the military experts appearing before the committee questioned our ability to execute successfully the strategic air phase of a military campaign against Iraq.

Phase II—the Tactical Air Campaign

During this phase of the war, airpower would be used against Iraqi military forces in the Kuwait theater of operations: operational and tactical reserves in their assembly areas, supply depots, field command headquarters, and first echelon forces deployed in their defensive positions along the border and coast in Kuwait. The objective would be to interdict the highway and rail lines of communication north of Basra, destroy the logistics facilities in southern Iraq, reduce and disrupt Iraqi reserves in the rear areas and reduce the forward defenses of the Iraqi army.

The limited road and rail network, the large natural lake of the Hawr Al Hammar, and the marshy conditions of the lower Tigris-Euphrates delta constrict available lines of communication from Iraq to its forces in southern Iraq and Kuwait to a relatively narrow area around Basra. A successful interdiction campaign concentrated on that area would effectively cut off Iraqi forces deployed south of Basra and in Kuwait from their support.

Iraqi forces in their prepared positions in the desert will be readily identifiable to observation from the air and vulnerable to air strikes. There is some question, however, as to how effective air strikes will be against skillfully dug-in Iraqi troops and armor. While the Iraqis have little ability to "conceal" their forces from air attack, their ability to provide "cover" from ground attacks—for example, by digging revetments in which tanks can be concealed—will reduce their vulnerability to air attacks. Air attacks against tanks in the open and on the move are far more lethal than attempts kill each tank individually.

During this phase of the air campaign, it should be possible to generate more sorties because the nominal combat radius required to reach most targets in Kuwait is much shorter than for Iraq. Although air superiority will have been established during the strategic air campaign, the threat from shoulder-fired missiles and anti-aircraft artillery will probably remain formidable. This may require aircraft to attack from high altitude, thus degrading accuracy and effectiveness, or accept increased losses.

Estimating how long or costly this phase of the air campaign will be is difficult. The attrition rate might be relatively constant—70 to 80 aircraft per week at a 2,000 per day sortie rate—but it could go higher if Iraqi ground forces are less vulnerable to air attacks from medium-to-high altitudes than many military analysts suspect. Over the course of two or three weeks, Colonel Dupuy estimated, casualties for the entire air campaign would total 1,800 including about 300 fatalities.

There is little doubt that a tactical air campaign against Iraqi forces would inflict heavy losses on Iraq's logistics infrastructure and to its reserves. Iraq's ability to sustain forces

deployed in southern Iraq and Kuwait would be weakened and the capability of its operational and tactical reserves reduced. How much damage would be inflicted upon the first echelon forces, whose extensive preparations against a possible ground attack would reduce their vulnerability to direct air attacks, is uncertain. As discussed earlier, the ability of the Iraqi army to withstand a sustained air campaign is at the heart of the dispute between airpower proponents and those who challenge the ability of airpower to carry the day on its own.

Phase III—the Ground Campaign

The objective of a coalition ground force campaign against Iraqi forces would be their defeat and forcible ejection from Kuwait. Retired senior military officers and military analysts who appeared before the committee emphasized that the key to accomplishing the campaign relatively quickly and with relatively low casualties would be the use of coalition firepower and maneuver:

—The success of the ground phase of an air-land campaign would depend upon the efficacy of airpower. General Dougherty told the committee that the "only way to avoid numerous casualties at the outset of conflict in this area is to exploit initially the special strength of our external mobile air forces—Air Force, Army, Navy and Marines—it requires the combined efforts of all elements of war fighting—land, sea and air—to force a final resolution."

—Following a massive aerial bombardment of Iraqi forward positions and tactical reserves and extensive artillery preparation, anti-Iraq coalition ground forces would attack to fix Iraqi forces in place in their prepared positions, penetrating and enveloping those positions by ground, airmobile, and amphibious maneuvers.

—In the final stage of the ground campaign, coalition forces would continue a combined air and land attack to destroy Iraqi tactical and operational reserves and trap remaining Iraqi forces in Kuwait.

The three principal variants of the ground campaign were discussed before the committee, by Colonel Trevor Dupuy and James Blackwell from the Center for Strategic and International Studies. A frontal attack was dismissed as extremely unlikely—as General Powell remarked, it would be "mindless" to fight a modern war in this manner.

Coalition ground forces are likely to mount shallow and deep envelopment attacks to counter Iraq's defensive strategy which was so successful against the frontal, human wave attacks of the Iranian army. Attacks against the first echelon forces and the threat of amphibious attacks from the east are intended to hold the forward-deployed forces in their place. The primary purpose of the mobile attack is to destroy Iraq's operational and strategic reserve, particularly the Republican Guard forces along the Kuwait border. The success of this ground campaign would depend in large part on the use of airpower to attack Iraqi reserves at they moved forward to counter the coalition force. Major armor battles, however, could be involved.

The military experts appearing before the committee agreed that a successful ground campaign could be executed with the forces available to the anti-Iraq coalition of the current buildup is completed. Casualty estimates, however, varied widely depending upon the tactics to be employed, the effectiveness of coalition air forces, and the will of the Iraqi forces to fight.

Harvard University military analyst Barry Posen, after noting that unnamed Pentagon sources had told the *New York Times* that American casualties would be in the 10,000 to 20,000 range, was considerably more optimistic:

Given command of the air by the coalition, and some combination of surprise, skill, and luck, the campaign could conceivably go as well as the Israeli campaign in 1967—which would suggest "low" US casualties—with less than 1,000 dead, and 3-4,000 wounded.

Colonel Trevor Dupuy gave the most precise estimates for how costly a war against Iraq might be and how long it might last:

—Based on his evaluation of the forces on both sides and the possible operations and tactics which might be employed, Colonel Dupuy's casualty estimates were as follows:

—1,800, including 300 dead, for a sustained strategic and tactical air campaign;

—9,000, including 1,500 dead, for a combined air-land campaign which sought to envelop Iraqi defensive positions in Kuwait;

—18,000, including 3,000 dead, in the case of a combined air-land campaign that was essentially a frontal attack into the teeth of the Iraqi defensive positions in Kuwait.

Colonel Dupuy estimated that a campaign which would probe for weak spots and then seek to envelop Iraqi positions in Kuwait would last about 33 days, while a campaign that bulled its way through Iraqi defenses might take only 15 days, albeit with higher casualties.

Those appearing before the committee with Colonel Dupuy generally supported his estimates, noting that his predictions on casualty rates prior to Operation Just Cause had been extremely accurate. Several witnesses commented, however, that these estimates were quite speculative. Even those who suspected that casualty rates might be much higher, however, did not question the prospects for eventual success.

Military Outcome. The potential impact of a war in the Persian Gulf, of course, depends on the nature of the war itself—the circumstances under which it is fought, the extent of the damage to the warring parties and its duration. Analytically, there are three principal scenarios for the outcome of military conflict in the Gulf:

—A "Bloodless" Victory. Airpower enthusiasts are vindicated as either Saddam Hussein or a new regime sues for peace and withdraws forces from Iraq. Iraq's nuclear, biological

and chemical capabilities, as well as its air force and air defense assets, are much reduced, but the army survives largely intact. Iraqi casualties and collateral damage are moderate. US casualties are very light.

—A Rapid Victory. A sustained air campaign, first against strategic targets in Iraq and then against Iraqi forces in the Kuwaiti Theater of Operations, is successful and anti-Iraq coalition ground forces retake Kuwait in less than a month with little or moderate resistance from the Iraqi army. Iraqi casualties are high and collateral damage is heavy. US casualties are light to moderate, perhaps three to five thousand including five hundred to a thousand or so fatalities.

—A "Bloody" Victory. The sustained air campaign against the Iraqi Army fails to destroy the ability of Iraq's army to fight. It takes several months for the coalition ground forces to drive the Iraqi army out of Kuwait. Iraqi casualties are high and collateral damage is heavy. US casualties are heavy, perhaps 10,000 to 20,000 including several thousand fatalities.

VI. Advantages and risks of relying on military force

In assessing our military options for resolving the crisis in the Persian Gulf, it is necessary to examine more than the military costs and risks. A war in the Persian Gulf, which, as former Ambassador to Israel Samuel Lewis observed, would be the first Arab-American war ever, would have profound consequences in the region, throughout the world and in the United States. In fact, avoiding the high costs, loss of life and uncertain implications of war is one of the principal advantages of relying primarily on sanctions or diplomacy for ending the crisis.

Calculating what the impact of a war in the Gulf would be is even more speculative than the task of assessing our military options. But it is critical that we reach judgments about what the political consequences of a war might be and their implications for US interests. The United States may have no other choice than to use force to achieve its objectives in the Persian Gulf because sanctions and diplomacy failed to do the job. However, it could be that the costs and risks of a war in the Gulf are too great. Each of us must address this basic "threshold" question: if peaceful means cannot persuade Saddam Hussein to withdraw from Kuwait, should we go to war to make Iraq leave?

Advantages. There are six principal advantages of relying on military force to make Iraq comply with the UN-approved objectives.

First, unlike sanctions or diplomacy, the use of force does not rely on Saddam's or Iraq's cooperation to achieve the liberation of Kuwait. The Iraqi forces are ejected or flee, having lost the fight. As former Under Secretary Joseph Sisco testified, military force "may prove to be the only way to get [Saddam Hussein] out of Kuwait."

Second, Iraq's capability for mass destruction weapons—chemical, biological and potentially nuclear—and the long-range means to deliver them (missiles and aircraft) will be much reduced. While we (and our allies) may not go to war for the sole purpose

of destroying these capabilities, there is little chance that we would go to war without destroying them.

Third, even if the Iraqi army is not heavily damaged, Iraq's ability to wage conventional war, at least in the short term, will be much weaker in the wake of a war. The post-crisis task of containing Iraq will be easier than it would be if the crisis is resolved through sanctions or diplomacy, which would leave Saddam and his military machine intact.

Fourth, Saddam Hussein himself may not survive a war. Several regional experts told the committee that Saddam would likely be replaced by someone else from the Iraqi Ba'athist party, probably from the military. Saddam's successor, however, would be unlikely to be the risk-taker that Saddam is, even if he shared the same tendencies.

Fifth, as Joseph Sisco observed, a "decisive military victory would vindicate the decision of the moderate Arabs to call for US support and in intervention." Our success in defeating Saddam and neutralizing Iraq's military leverage in the region would strengthen the hand of moderate Arab states and give us a strong role in shaping the future regional collective security system.

Finally, the world's access to oil at reasonable prices would be secured in the wake of a war. No longer the regional superpower, Iraq would not be capable of intimidating Saudi Arabia or dominating the region's oil policy.

Risks. There are five principal categories of risk in relying on military force to achieve our objectives in the Persian Gulf. I'll discuss them according to the degree of uncertainty associated with each category of risk, not necessarily the importance or magnitude of the costs being risked.

First, a wave of anti-American terrorism may be set off by a war in the Gulf. In addition to those mounted by Iraqi or Iraqi-backed units, terrorist attacks might be expected from numerous pro-Saddam groups, many of them Palestinian, and from Islamic fundamentalists determined to drive the American infidels out of the Middle East. The absence of terrorist incidents to date reflects Saddam's desire not to provoke a war, not the lack of capability.

How long and intense this anti-American terrorism will be cannot be known. It will certainly last as long as the war does. A war inflicting high costs on the Iraqis is likely to stimulate more terrorist reprisals than one inflicting low costs. A bloodless or rapid victory by the anti-Iraq forces, however, could deflate potential terrorists.

Second, a war in the Gulf could spark increased anti-Americanism among the Arab masses and spur the growth of Islamic fundamentalism. Former Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Herman Eilts observed that US credibility is "not high" because of the "widespread perception of the Arab masses (and of many, perhaps most Arab governments, including those in the anti-Iraq coalition), that the United States is irrevocably pro-Israeli and, as a corollary, anti-Arab, anti-Palestinian and anti-Islamic." He told the committee that:

Among Arab and non-Arab Islamic fundamentalists, the huge US military deployment to Saudi Arabia and its use against Iraq, if this takes place, will be cast as the latest intrusion of Western "Crusaderism," a term that Islamic fundamentalists apply to virtually all forms of Western modernization. Islamic fundamentalism will be strengthened in all Arab states. Saddam Hussein, as reprehensible as he has been, will come to be cast by many Arab and non-Arab Islamists as a martyr.

The rise of anti-American public sentiment throughout the Middle East in the wake of a war seems inescapable.

The extent of Arab participation in a war against Iraq could affect how intense and widespread this public reaction would be. Samuel Lewis noted that it would be worse if only the United States and Great Britain attacked Iraq, but all of the regional experts the committee asked to assess the political impact of a war—Herman Eilts, Samuel Lewis and former Assistant Secretary of State for Middle Eastern Affairs Richard Murphy—believe that the war would be viewed in the region as an Arab-American one, despite the UN authorization or the participation of several Arab states. As Richard Murphy noted, we provide over 80 percent of the offensive combat force and we built the international consensus against Iraq. It is not surprising that it comes across in the region as "an American-led affair."

Joseph Sisco, however, argues that the view that our use of force would produce enduring Arab enmity toward the US and enhance the influence of regimes hostile to US interests has "some substance" but is "overdrawn":

Power attracts and power repels. These would be Arab states and other coalition partners fighting on the front line. Force would be applied collectively, which should ameliorate some anti-Americanism. The moderate Arabs would have triumphed. A tidal wave of radicalism taking over in the region is not likely. Egypt at the center of power can assure its survival against internal forces, and Saudi Arabia has proved not to be an easy prey.

Richard Murphy also told the Committee that:

It is a common slur to assert that "Arabs only understand force." The reality is that although they have repeatedly miscalculated their position vis-à-vis Israel in the post-World War II period, Arab leaders are not suicidal. They respect firmness and consistency in other powers. They understand the abiding American support for Israel's security, respect Israeli military capabilities and have increasingly come to terms with the need to accommodate themselves to the existence of Israel.

If we successfully use force to oust Saddam from Kuwait, we may win increased respect and standing in the region, but it will be accompanied by greater public animosity. However, it is unlikely that, as former Under Secretary of State George Ball claimed, that a war in the Gulf would "leave the United States in the position of a pariah in the whole Middle East with not a single friend except Israel."

Third, a war in the Persian Gulf risks greater political instability in the Middle East. The inevitable surge in Palestinian activity stemming from a war would be destabilizing in Jordan. Herman Eilts testified that:

King Hussein has lost much prestige in the Arab world and in the West by the position he has taken. In a war situation, it may be expected that the Palestinian component of the Jordanian population [now about 60 percent of the total] will be up in arms against the United States and its allies. ... Paradoxically, he [King Hussein] had probably never been more popular at home before than he is now, but this is largely because he is following populist sentiment rather than seeking to mold it. Yet Jordan is suffering badly in an economic sense from the crisis and will suffer even more so in the wake of the conflict. It will indeed require foreign assistance to bail it out, or indeed even to keep it going. One cannot exclude the possibility that a military conflict might cause the Jordanian monarch to lose his throne.

Richard Murphy agreed that Jordan would be most vulnerable in the event of war, particularly if Israel would react to Palestinian uprisings by expelling masses of Palestinians into Jordan. Samuel Lewis, however, believed that it depends on how long the war lasted and how bloody it is: "A lengthy war, a matter of months, would certainly produce a lot of pressure...on moderate Arab governments, in particular the ones that were allied with us." He also noted that "it has been quite a while since there has been a change of government in the Middle East."

Fourth, a war risks creating an unstable balance of power in the Persian Gulf. Of course, Iraq's seizure of Kuwait reflected an unstable balance—Iraq emerged as the regional superpower after the Iran-Iraq war and was not deterred by Saudi Arabia, Syria, Egypt or Iran, much less the prospect of US intervention. Virtually all of the regional experts appearing before the committee expressed concern over the impact that a war against Iraq could have upon the regional power balance because the destruction of Iraq's military machine could lead to the disintegration or dismemberment of the Iraqi state. Human Eilts weaned that war would:

... adversely affect the immediate and the long-term balance of power in the Gulf and Fertile Crescent areas. It will encourage Iran to move into the Shia areas of southern Iraq, Syria to move into the central areas, and Turkey to seek to recover Mosul province. The state of Iraq, politically difficult though it has often been, has to some extent been a balancing element against Iranian westward expansion and Syrian eastward expansion.

It has also been a barrier against past Iranian efforts to export revolutionary Islamic anti-American fundamentalism into the Middle East area.

Former Ambassador to Saudi Arabia James Aldus believes that we face an "exquisitely delicate task" in waging war against Saddam Hussein: "how can we destroy Iraq just enough so that it is no longer a threat to the weakest of its neighbors while it remains strong enough to frustrate the expansionist tendencies of the most powerful of these

neighbors?"

While all agree that a stable balance of power in the Persian Gulf serves our interests, few are sanguine about our ability to achieve one. For both realpolitik and emotional reasons, the US tilted towards Iraq during the Iran-Iraq war which ended with the devastation of Iran's military capability. Our failure to "tilt back" against the new regional superpower undoubtedly contributed to Saddam Hussein's calculation that he could seize Kuwait and get away with it. Joseph Sisco, however, believes that prospects for stability in the Gulf have improved considerably with the end of the Cold War because:

Nations in the area can no longer play off Washington against Moscow and vice versa. There can develop, therefore, despite the indigenous uncertainties, fragility of regimes and radical trends of fundamentalism, an opportunity to bring about balance and stability in the gulf in the aftermath of the current crisis. I say balance and stability, not peace, because the area will continue to be marked by shifting sands, shifting alliances, conflicting ambitions and national interests, ongoing enmities, and few permanent alignments.

Nevertheless, he too cautions against excessive expectations about what we can achieve in the Gulf. He argues, convincingly I believe, that "we must understand the limits of what we can bring about, that neither peaceful means nor force can achieve a comprehensive settlement, only a new balance of power whose permanence cannot be assured."

Finally, a war in the Persian Gulf would have uncertain implications for the Arab-Israeli peace process. All of the regional experts appearing before the committee agreed that after the crisis is resolved; regardless of whether by sanctions, war or diplomacy, the Arabs, Europeans, and Soviets will put great pressure on the United States and Israel to revive the now-stagnant peace process. Many experts argued that a successful resolution of the Persian Gulf crisis, which would strengthen moderate Arab states, weaken the radical ones and demonstrate the power of US-Soviet cooperation, would improve the prospects for settling the complicated Arab-Israeli-Palestinian problem. They also expressed little doubt that a "Saddam win" in the crisis would set back the process, making both Israelis and Palestinians alike even less willing to make compromises.

The impact that a solution to the crisis achieved through war would have upon the post-crisis prospects for an Arab-Israeli settlement is debatable. Samuel Lewis, noting the "role of war as midwife historically for peace-making," argued that the peace process "might work better" after a short war because the Israelis would "be a lot more comfortable about going into risks if Saddam Hussein isn't there." He also believed that if the crisis was resolved successfully by political means and Saddam Hussein was "effectively contained and diminished," it would also be a "good platform" for launching the peace process.

Hermann Eilts, on the other hand, was for more pessimistic about the impact of a war in the Persian Gulf on Arab-Israeli settlement prospects:

Palestinian sentiments will have been aroused even more by what will be seen as a US military action against Iraq. Since Iraq never controlled the Palestinians, its military defeat will hardly affect the PLO leadership. The latter ... has already showed signs of losing control over the intifada and, in a post-crisis situation, there will be increasing violence and counter violence in the West Bank and Gaza and in Jerusalem. Sooner or later, the Israeli authorities will seek to "transfer" as many West Bank and Gaza Palestinians as possible to Jordan. ... Palestinian terrorism against United States and friendly Arab targets will intensify.

Despite wide differences over how a war in the Gulf would affect the prospects for an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict, most of the regional experts appearing before the committee argued strongly that the United States, after a solution to the Gulf crisis achieved by war, would have to revive the peace process. In the words of Richard Murphy:

As I have said, the war will be viewed in the Arab world as basically one between Iraqis and Americans. Those regimes which have sent troops to Saudi Arabia and support our presence there will be accused of having helped the "leader of the Imperialist Zionist conspiracy" destroy a fellow Arab. To the extent the war stimulates Arab nationalist sentiments critical of the United States, the pressure on those allies will increase. The consequences to our other interests of such an accusation gaining currency are unpredictable if only because there has never been an Arab-American war. How we move post-war to energize the Arab-Israeli peace process would be key in giving the lie to predictable radical Arab propaganda that Baghdad suffered because only it was serious about a just and durable solution to the region.

VII. Impact of a war solution on US interests

As I have stated previously in my White Papers on sanctions and diplomacy, no course of action is likely to secure all our interests in the Persian Gulf today. We must weigh the advantages, costs and risks of each of our avenues for resolving the crisis—sanctions, diplomacy and war—to make our final judgments on what we should do in the Persian Gulf.

The principal test for whether a solution to the crisis is acceptable, from our perspective, is the extent of compliance with the UN goals—Iraq's unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait and the restoration of the legitimate government. A solution arrived at through war would accomplish this and address our interest in ensuring that aggression does not pay.

Achieving security and stability in the region requires neutralizing Iraq's military leverage, both its million-man army and its growing capability for mass destruction weapons. A sanctions or diplomatic solution does not address this, leaving the problem of how to contain Saddam Hussein's military machine to the future. A war solution, however, would weaken Iraq militarily and could lead to Saddam's ouster.

But, a weaker, Saddam-less Iraq, as we have seen, does not necessarily mean security and stability in the Gulf. The region has always been plagued by political instability and that is unlikely to change. Nevertheless, a Saddam-led Iraq is a proven quantity—a rogue power that cannot be contained by others in region—and the task of achieving security and stability in the Gulf is likely to be less difficult in the wake of war than after a crisis solution arrived at by sanctions or diplomacy.

While a war solution may achieve more of our objectives than either sanctions and diplomacy, it is by far the most costly and risky option at our disposal for resolving the Gulf crisis. As I mentioned earlier, the principal advantage of peaceful solution is that they avoid a war with its high costs, loss of life and uncertain implications for US interests. One should turn to war only as a last resort, certain that other means for ending the crisis either will not work or have been exhausted.

In addressing the "threshold" question that I posed earlier—namely, "if peaceful means cannot persuade Saddam Hussein to withdraw from Kuwait, should we go to war to make Iraq leave?"—each of us must consider what the consequences of our "losing" the crisis would be. At a recent conference at the National Defense University, according to Samuel Lewis, the conference participants concluded that a diplomatic solution that gave Saddam a victory would be "disastrous" for US interests in the region, because our Arab allies would have to accommodate Saddam Hussein, and would undermine the ability of the collective security mechanism in the United Nations to deal with the myriad of regional conflicts certain to emerge in the post-Cold War era.

The NDU conferees also concluded that the only worse outcome for the United States would be a long, drawn-out war. I think most would agree that this is the worst case. Thus, deciding whether we should go to war in the Persian Gulf, assuming that other means for resolving the crisis are not available, requires two judgments: first, on the likely costs, risks and implications of war, and, secondly, on whether our interests at stake in the Persian Gulf justify going to war.

VIII. Conclusions

In this paper, I have attempted to review our principal military options in the Persian Gulf and analyze the costs, risks and implications of going to war in the Persian Gulf. This report follows my earlier White Papers on sanctions and diplomacy, published respectively on December 21 and December 28, and concludes my examination of the our principal avenues for resolving the crisis—sanctions, diplomacy or war.

My review of the testimony presented to the committee and other available evidence has led me to draw several conclusions with respect to the military option:

On how a war might be conducted—

First, I believe that our military objectives drawn up for a war against Iraq are well defined and limited. Our forces would attack strategic and military targets in Iraq and seek to push Iraqi forces out of Kuwait. It would not be a war to punish the Iraqi people

or seize Iraqi territory.

Second, I believe the debate between airpower proponents and those insisting that ground forces will be necessary to liberate Kuwait misses the point. I am convinced that if we must go to war, we will fight a phased campaign, one that begins with an air campaign against strategic and military targets in Iraq, then proceeds to a sustained air campaign against Iraqi military forces in or near Kuwait and ends with the commitment of ground troops. Advocates of airpower will likely get a full opportunity to see if airpower alone can win the war, but there appears to be sufficient ground force capability available m finish the job if necessary.

Third, while I believe the possibility of achieving a "bloodless victory" is small, the prospects for a rapid victory with light to moderate American casualties, perhaps three to five thousand including five hundred to a thousand or so fatalities, are high. I judge the risk of a bloody campaign, with casualties in the 10,000 to 20,000 range including several thousand fatalities, to be small.

Fourth, I am convinced that we do not face another Vietnam in the Persian Gulf. There are four principal reasons why there is little risk of a long, drawn-out war:

—A war in the Gulf would not be fought in the jungle, but in the desert, where there is little cover and concealment for Iraqi forces.

—There are no friendly countries around Iraq and we would not have to worry about any Cambodian sanctuaries or Ho Chi Minh trails.

—We would not be fighting a guerilla force supported by a sympathetic population, but a uniformed military that has occupied and largely depopulated Kuwait.

—In Vietnam, our military forces were constrained by policies of gradualism and concern about escalating the war to bring in the Soviet Union or China; these constraints will not apply in the Persian Gulf.

On issues affecting our ability to fight a war:

Fifth, while I believe our forces in the Gulf may not reach their peak readiness for combat operations until early February, when the most newly arrived ground units will have had time to acclimate, most of our forces will be ready by January 15. US Air Force and US Navy units will be fully available and ready, as will a large number of our ground combat forces.

Sixth, in the event of a war, I am confident that most, if not all, of our principal allies will join our forces in the air campaign against Iraq and the air-land campaign against the Iraqi forces occupying Kuwait. In particular, I believe that Arab forces are willing to engage Iraqi forces in Kuwait and that we should plan accordingly.

Seventh, I believe that while Saddam Hussein probably will attempt to break up the

wartime coalition against him by attacking Israel, his effort will fail. Israel is likely to respond briefly and in kind, and our Arab allies are likely to keep on fighting Iraq.

On the post-crisis implications of a war:

Eighth, I believe that the political risks of a war in the Persian Gulf probably exceed the military risks. The long-term implications in the region and for US interests are uncertain and we must turn to the military option only as a last resort.

On the bottom line:

Finally, I believe that the interests we have at stake in the Persian Gulf are vital. If all else fails, they are worth going to war for. Our abhorrence of war and concern about its risks must not deter us from securing vital interests. On a vote to authorize the President to use force to liberate Kuwait, the right vote is "yes."

Appendix

Hearings and Consultations with Experts

In addition to materials in the public domain and informal consultation with recognized experts, this report is based on five hearings the committee held on December 12, 13, 14, and 17, 1990. The hearings were focused as follows:

Sustaining the US Buildup and Maintaining a Viable Military Threat, considered the US ability to provide logistics support for the forces deployed in the Persian Gulf and to sustain the current build-up of forces without degradation in the readiness of the force. On December 12 the committee heard from

General Edward C. Meyer, US Army (retired), Chief of Staff of the Army from 1979 to 1983.

Dr. Larry Korb, Brookings Institution, former Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower, Reserve Affairs and Logistics.

General Duane H. Cassidy, US Air Force (retired), Commander, US Transportation Command from 1987 to 1989, and former Air Force Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel.

Military Conflict in the Persian Gulf and Its Consequences—The Air Campaign, discussed the potential for achieving US and UN objectives in the Persian Gulf through an air war only and the costs and uncertainties inherent in such a campaign. During the morning of December 13 the committee heard from:

Dr. Eliot Cohen, Professor and Director of Strategic Studies for the Johns Hopkins School for Advanced International Studies.

General Charles L. Donnelly Jr., US Air Force (retired), former Commander in Chief, US

Air Forces in Europe, and Commander, Allied Air Forces Central Europe. General Donnelly served two years as Chief of the US Military Training Mission in Saudi Arabia.

General Russell E. Dougherty, US Air Force (retired), former Commander, Strategic Air Command and the Director of US Strategic Target Planning.

Admiral Robert F. Dunn, US Navy (retired), former Assistant Chief of Naval Operations (Air Warfare).

Colonel Trevor N. Dupuy, US Army (retired), historian and military analyst.

Military Conflict in the Persian Gulf and its Consequences—The Ground-Air Campaign, addressed the capability for achieving US and UN objectives in the Persian Gulf through a combined ground-air campaign and the costs and uncertainties inherent in such a campaign. During the afternoon of December 14 the committee heard from:

General William E. DePuy, US Army (retired), first commander of the US Army Training and Doctrine Command, responsible for the resurgence of air-ground coordination and integrated campaign planning in the Army.

General Charles L. Donnelly Jr., US Air Force (retired)

General Frederick J. Kroesen, US Army (retired), former Commander in Chief, US Army Europe and Vice Chief of Staff of the Army.

Colonel Harry G. Summers, Jr., military analyst and commentator.

Dr. James A. Blackwell, Jr., military analyst and Deputy Director of Political Military Studies at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Military Conflict in the Persian Gulf and its Consequences, provided an update on the situation in the Persian Gulf and the current status of the build-up of US and Coalition forces. On December 14 the committee heard from:

Dick Cheney, Secretary of Defense

General Colin Powell, US Army, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

Post-Crisis Implications of War In the Persian Gulf, examined the short and long term consequences of a war in the Middle East for Iraq, for the region, and for the United States. On December 17 the committee heard from:

Ambassador Herman Eilts, currently with the Department of International Studies, Boston University, where he is Professor and Director of the Center for International Relations, Ambassador to Saudi Arabia (1965—1970) and Egypt (1973- 1979).

The Honorable Richard Murphy, Senior Fellow on the Middle East for the Council on

Foreign Relations, former Assistant Secretary of State for Middle Eastern Affairs, Ambassador to Syria (1974—1978) and Saudi Arabia (1981—1983).

Ambassador Samuel Lewis, currently President of the US Institute of Peace, Ambassador to Israel from 1977—1985.