



Senior Officer Professional Digest

Selected readings from the world's military journals

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CA's Introduction

Professional reading is a commitment to our Army's future. The Senior Officer Professional Digest (SOPD) has been designed to assist you to learn more about the issues that will shape the future of warfare. I commend the SOPD to you and ask that you make time to read the articles and to reflect on their content.



Title *The Threatening Storm: The Case for Invading Iraq*

Author Kenneth M. Pollack

***Publication Details** Random House, New York, 2002.

Synopsis

Unfortunately, the only prudent and realistic course of action left to the United States is to mount a full-scale invasion of Iraq to smash the Iraqi armed forces, depose Saddam's regime, and rid the country of weapons of mass destruction . . . In the case of Iraq, we need to recognise that we have run out of alternatives and our options truly have come down to a dangerous deterrence or potentially costly invasion.

With these words, Kenneth Pollack, former Director of Gulf Affairs at the National Security Council, and perhaps the leading American expert on Iraq, outlines the case for toppling Saddam Hussein. In a sweeping 500-page survey of the Iraq crisis that has become prescribed reading in US policy and military circles, Pollack analyses the five main options for dealing with Iraq in the changed security conditions following the September 11 attacks of 2001:

- **Containment** using UN disarmament provisions and sanctions
- **Deterrence** relying on the US arsenal to deter Saddam.
- **Covert action** to weaken and help topple Saddam
- **The 'Afghan Approach'** of a war using air power/special forces and indigenous opponents
- **Invasion and regime change** followed by the construction of a stable Iraqi state

1. Containment

Pollack believes that containment based on sanctions, no fly zones and weapons inspections have failed. The UN weapons inspection process, in particular, has become a trap as the lack of willingness on the part of the French, Russian and Chinese to pursue genuine disarmament has made it impossible to achieve authentic compliance. Thus the burden of proof has shifted from Iraq evidence of compliance, to the weapons inspectors' provision of clear proof of Iraqi non-compliance – an impossible task.

Saddam constantly plays for time using the method of 'cheat and retreat'. Since the timeline for an effective inspection baseline would be 12-18 months, the Iraqis can easily outlast any military deployment designed to enforce disarmament. In addition, the creation of mobile chemical and biological warfare laboratories and the use of hidden factories and decoy facilities make elimination of WMDs using air power difficult, if not impossible. For Pollack, the inspection route is 'a dead-end street' and cannot yield a long-term solution.

2. Deterrence

The core assumption of deterrence is that Saddam will, in time, acquire nuclear weapons, but be deterred by the US arsenal. In the calculus of deterrence, Saddam is viewed as a rational actor within the international system. For Pollack, the case for deterrence is deeply flawed and rests on old-fashioned Cold War beliefs. While the Soviets were fundamentally conservative decision-makers, Saddam and his regime are the polar opposite in terms of possessing the desirable characteristics for stable deterrence. Saddam 'has a twenty-eight year pattern of aggression, violence, miscalculation, and purposeful underestimation of the consequences of his actions that should give real pause to anyone considering whether to allow him to acquire nuclear weapons'.

In some respects, Saddam may be 'unintentionally suicidal' because of his history of miscalculation. Ultimately, deterrence may not be the costliest policy, but it is the riskiest one. This is because, in the long term, the US and its allies are likely to face a much worse conflict with Saddam should Iraq acquire nuclear weapons.

3. Covert Action

Covert action is largely a substitute for policy and is unlikely to succeed in toppling Saddam. The Iraqi Ba'ath Government is an Orwellian clan regime that has killed, imprisoned or exiled most of its opponents. Saddam is surrounded by his *Murafiqin* bodyguard, wears a bulletproof vest, carries a pistol, and employs doubles and a food taster. A *coup* would be difficult to mount in a police state supported by the Republican Guard and the Special Republican Guard. Covert action may have a place in the disruption of the regime, but not in its overthrow.

4. The 'Afghan Approach'

The 'Afghan Approach' involves using proxy forces and limited US and allied military means to collapse the regime as was done in Operation *Enduring Freedom*. But, as Pollack notes, *the Iraqi National Congress (INC) is not the Northern Alliance and the Iraqi Army is not the Taliban militia*. Saddam has a 300 000 strong army with the elite Republican Guard of 80 000 organised in six divisions (three armoured, two infantry and one mechanised) at its core.

An air campaign in Iraq would resemble Kosovo rather than Kuwait or Afghanistan. *'Under the likely circumstances in a future air war against Iraq, when the Iraqis would have better cover and concealment, as well as civilian populations nearby, we must expect air strikes to do worse than they did during Desert Storm, not better'*. Under the 'Afghan Approach', primary reliance air power might hinder, but cannot prevent ground movement or destroy the Iraqi Army. For this reason, the use of special forces and proxies would be unlikely to succeed.

5. Invasion

Invasion poses high immediate costs but minimises long-term risks. An invasion, followed by the reconstruction of Iraq, provides an opportunity to transform that nation from a malignant growth poisoning the Middle East into an engine for change for the entire region. *'Strangely, then, invasion is actually the conservative course of action in the sense that it accepts higher costs to minimize risks. It is the one policy that would give us the greatest certainty that Saddam Hussein will never be able to threaten the region, the United States, or the world with nuclear weapons'*.

The military requirements would be 4 - 6 divisions and supporting forces and 700 - 1 000 aircraft. A main thrust would involve US and British heavy divisions mounting a swift offensive towards Baghdad. A light, or air mobile division would be required in western Iraq to prevent Scud attacks on Israel, and another light division would need to be deployed in the north in Kurdistan. Airborne brigades would also be required to assault WMD facilities, seize Iraq's largest airfields and to seal off Tikrit, Saddam's tribal stronghold. A worst case scenario would be a six-month campaign with possibly 10 000 US dead and the use of WMD by the

Iraqis. A best case scenario would be a 4 - 8 week campaign with perhaps 500 - 1 000 US deaths and limited WMD use.

Success in an invasion would depend on speed, momentum and initiative by air-ground forces. The paradox of an invasion is the bigger the force, the faster it moves, the lower the casualties. The smaller the force, the slower it moves, the greater the risk of casualties. The great question mark is the possibility of costly urban warfare. There is always the possibility of Baghdad becoming 'a Mesopotamian Stalingrad' with Saddam and his hard-core troops fighting to a finish.

Conclusion: The Legal Justifications for Invasion

Pollock concludes that an invasion can be justified on the two grounds of 'anticipatory self-defence' in international law as defined in 1837 and by employing UN Security Council Resolutions 678 and 687. Resolution 678 authorises member states to '*use all necessary means to uphold and implement Security Council Resolution 660 and all subsequent relevant resolutions and to restore international peace and security in the area*'. Resolution 687 (1991), established the inspections regime and sanctions and was adopted under Chapter VII of the UN Charter that invokes the rights to collective security and self-defence. Iraq has been in breach of 687 since 1998 when it expelled all UN weapons inspectors. The author comments:

It would not be a terrible stretch for Washington to make the legal argument that Iraq's constant, flagrant violations of UN Security Council Resolution 687, among others, requires the United States to once again invoke UN Security Council Resolution 678's authorisation of all means necessary to remove the regime of Saddam Hussein as being the only way to ensure that Iraq will abide by the relevant resolutions.

But Pollack warns there needs to be strong awareness of setting the wrong precedent. He writes: 'We should be wary of making facile arguments based on Iraq's support of terrorism or on its pursuit of weapons of mass destruction alone (i.e. uncoupled from Saddam's behaviour and Iraq's clear violations of international law'). In taking action against Iraq, the US and its allies should not set a dangerous precedent for other nations to make similar claims for preemptive action. In terms of a history of aggression, violations of international law and

refusal to comply with multiple UN resolutions, many of them enacted under Chap VII of the UN Charter, Iraq represents a unique case.

* **Editor's Note:** For reasons of length, books are not normally reviewed in the SOPD. However, Kenneth Pollack's study is included in this Special Edition on Iraq because of its importance in the debate.

Article Title 'An Unnecessary War'

Author John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt

Publication Details *Foreign Policy*, issue 134, January/February 2003, pp. 50-59.

Synopsis

This article, by two respected US international affairs thinkers, outlines the case why war with Iraq is unnecessary. Mearsheimer and Walt disagree with the premise that Saddam cannot be deterred or contained. They contest Pollack's view of Saddam as 'unintentionally suicidal'. They point out:

- In 1980, Saddam attacked Iran in the wake of the Khomeini revolution of 1979, not seeking conquest but to prevent the spread of Islamic Revolution. This was not reckless, but defensive;
- Iraq's 1990 Kuwait invasion had more to do with Iraq's vulnerability and economic weakness. In the subsequent war, Saddam used Scuds on Israel but avoided CBW warheads out of fear of retaliation;
- In 1994, Saddam mobilised troops on the Kuwaiti border to try to modify UNSCOM weapons inspection regime, but when the UN and US threatened to intervene, he backed down;
- When Saddam used WMD against the Kurds they could not respond in kind.

In short, deterrence has worked well against Saddam in the past, and there is no reason to think it cannot work equally well in the future:

Saddam thus has no incentive to use chemical or nuclear weapons against the United States and its allies – unless his survival is threatened. This simple logic explains why he did

not use WMD against US forces during the Gulf War and has not fired chemical or biological warheads at Israel.

A nuclear-armed Iraq would understand deterrence because, if Saddam threatened the US with WMD, he would risk national obliteration.

Furthermore, there is no evidence of an Iraqi/al-Qaeda link. Osama bin Laden is another Ayatollah Khomeini while Saddam Hussein is a secularist. The latter has been trying to acquire WMD for 20 years at enormous cost and would not give them away easily to an Islamist terrorist group.

The Bush Administration's claim that there is an imminent threat is therefore senseless. Its campaign to topple Saddam is about waging a preventive war. Both logic and historical evidence suggest a policy of 'vigilant containment' would work in the event Iraq acquires a nuclear arsenal because the United States and its regional allies are far stronger than Iraq. The authors conclude:

If the United States is, or soon will be, at war with Iraq, Americans should understand that a compelling strategic rationale is absent. The war would be one the Bush administration chose to fight but did not have to fight. Even if such a war goes well and has positive long-range consequences, it will still have been unnecessary. And if it goes badly – whether in the form of high US casualties, significant civilian deaths, a heightened risk of terrorism, or increased hatred of the United States in the Arab and Islamic world – then its architects will have even more to answer for.

Article Title 'The Bush Doctrine and War with Iraq'

Author Jeffrey Record

Publication Details *Parameters: US Army War College Quarterly*, Spring 2003, vol. XXXIII, no. 1, pp. 4-21.

Synopsis

This article examines the September 2002 United States *National Security Strategy* and the Bush Doctrine that is outlined in Chapter V and which identifies three new threat agents to US and Western interests:

- Terrorist organisations with global reach such as al-Qaeda;
- Weak states that harbour them such as Afghanistan;
- Rogue states which flout international law and seek WMD especially nuclear weapons. Rogue states are particularly dangerous because they are ‘a double threat’. They seek not only to acquire WMD, but also have the ability to transfer them to terrorists. The model rogue states are Iraq, Iran and North Korea. With respect to Iraq, Record quotes National Security Adviser, Condoleeza Rice’s September 2002 statement: ‘*we don’t want the [Iraqi] smoking gun to become a mushroom cloud*’.

In summary, the Bush Doctrine postulates ‘*an imminent, multifaceted, undeterrable, and potentially calamitous threat to the United States – a threat that, by virtue of the combination of its destructiveness and invulnerability to deterrence, has no precedent in American history. By implication, such a threat demands an unprecedented response*’.

This response is crafted around the notion of ‘anticipatory self-defense’, often presented as a strategy of preemption. As President Bush put it: ‘we will not wait for the authors of mass murder to gain weapons of mass destruction’. The lines between preemption and preventive war are, however, blurred and are used interchangeably within the Bush administration. The Pentagon’s official definition of preemption is ‘*an attack initiated on the basis of incontrovertible evidence that an enemy attack is imminent*’. In contrast, preventive war is ‘*a war initiated in the belief that military conflict while not imminent, is inevitable, and that to delay would involve great risk*’.

Record argues that the difference between preemption and preventive war is important. Preemptive attack meets Secretary of State, Daniel Webster’s strict criteria first enunciated in 1837 and still the international legal standard, that any threat must be ‘*instant, overwhelming, leaving no choice of means and no moment for deliberation*’. A preemptive war has legal sanction, but a preventive war has none, because the threat in the latter is neither certain nor imminent. The problem with preemption with

respect to Iraq is the lack of convincing evidence of an Iraqi WMD threat to the US, its allies or friends. Record poses a key question:

If an Iraqi attack is not imminent, and indeed is deterrable in any event, then does not a US attack on Iraq become a preventive war based on the assumption of the inevitability of hostilities and the desire to strike before the military balance becomes less favourable (i.e. before Saddam gets nuclear weapons)?

There may be a strong case for war against Iraq, but there needs to be a distinction made between preemptive attack and preventive war. This situation may involve international law having to be revised in the light of new threats. Record quotes the distinguished scholar of just war, Michael Walzer, who has stated, *'perhaps the gulf between preemption and prevention has now narrowed so that there is little strategic (and therefore little moral) difference between them'*. Record goes on to make five criticisms of the Bush Doctrine:

- **Focusing on regime change in Iraq is to focus on the periphery not the heart of the new security threat:** A 9/11 with nuclear weapons is not a fantasy, but a grave threat warranting preemptive attack. However, the war is against al-Qaeda not Iraq. Saddam is tangential to the stateless, itinerant Islamic terrorism of the 21st century;
- **The Bush Doctrine's dismissal of deterrence may be too premature. It may not work against terrorists, but it still works against rogue states:** There are still 'return addresses', even for rogue states, and because of this reality, Saddam's Iraq can still be deterred even under changed conditions.
- **The Bush Doctrine's focus on regime change may reflect reality, but such an approach requires specific threat analysis:** Regime change in Iraq risks a 'clash of civilisations' while a post-Saddam Iraq needs to be carefully thought through as the US has a poor record in war termination and nation-building.
- **The Bush Doctrine's focus on striking first reinforces the image of the US as a unilateral 'hyperpower':** any unilateralism over Iraq threatens the multilateralism needed to fight terrorism. There must be a recognition of cooperative global governance.

The Bush Doctrine sets a dangerous precedent for future preemption: A preemptive/preventive war on Iraq may lead to similar Russian, Indian or Chinese actions against Georgia, Pakistan and Taiwan in the future.

Record concludes, *'However convincing the case for an attack on Iraq, preemption as a declaratory doctrine lacking criteria but applicable to a generic category of states invites real trouble after Iraq, and for that reason could turn out to be a poor, even impossible basis for America's relations with the rest of the world'*.

Article Title *The Day After: The Army in a Post-Conflict Iraq*

Author COL Dennis Murphy, LTC Curtis Turner and LTC Bob Hesse

Publication Details Issue Paper, Center for Strategic Leadership, US Army War College, vol. 14-02, December 2002, www.carlisle.army.mil/usacsl/index.asp downloaded 17 February 2003.

Synopsis

This paper represents the conclusions of a symposia conducted at the Center for Strategic Leadership, US Army War College, over a period of three years. The authors suggest that a war with Iraq will be swift and decisive, but that the real commitment facing the US Army will be in the post-conflict period of civil reconstruction.

They argue that the Army will carry most of the responsibility for imposing conditions of security in Iraq and that it will also play a supporting role in providing humanitarian relief. In the area of post-conflict security alone, the Army will be involved in: *'control of belligerents; territorial security; protection of the populace, protection of key individuals, infrastructure, and institutions; and reform of indigenous security institutions'*. Each of these responsibilities further breaks down into a number of different tasks.

The authors argue that managing the post-conflict environment will place significantly greater and more varied training responsibilities on those responsible for deploying and sustaining the force for a number of years. The problem of sustaining a large force in Iraq over that time will constitute a significant logistical challenge. They conclude that, in the aftermath of war, the Army needs to continue to conduct a periodic, systematic review of the post-war strategic requirements in Iraq to enable the Army to meet its mandated responsibilities.

Article Title *A Wiser Peace: An Action Strategy for a Post-Conflict Iraq*

Author Frederick D. Barton, Bathsheba N. Crocker (Project Directors)

Publication Details Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington D.C. January 2003, www.csis.org

Synopsis

This paper is the result of a collaboration between the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and the Association of the United States Army (AUSA). It takes no position on the justification for the war, but argues that if there is a war, its success will not be judged by military criteria, but by the outcome of the reconstruction of Iraq.

The report examines the extent of the task involved in building a democratic, legitimate and economically viable state in Iraq. It identifies ten key actions that the United States and the United Nations must take *before* the Ba'ath regime is overthrown. Key actions include:

- The creation of a transitional security force specifically trained and prepared to handle civil security needs
- The creation of a transitional administration similar to that which the UN deployed to East Timor in February 2000;
- Expedition of Iraq's return to the community of nations; and the guaranteed provision of targeted aid for reconstruction.

This is an important document that focuses on the need to win the peace as well as the war in Iraq. It flies in the face of earlier unwillingness on the part of the Republican administration to commit itself to nation building. However, that position seems to have changed. Influential groups such as CSIS and AUSA are lobbying the administration to recognise that, in interventions of this type, *'ad hoc, underfunded, and delayed efforts driven by unrealistic timelines and political considerations will not work'*. The time to prepare for a long-term nation-building effort is not after the fighting ends, but before it commences.

Article Title ‘Suicide from fear of death?’

Author Richard K. Betts

Publication Details *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 82, no. 1, January/February 2003, pp. 34-43.

Synopsis

Written by the prominent and influential Director of the Institute of War and Peace Studies at Columbia University in New York, this article warns that an invasion of Iraq might provoke the Ba’ath regime to launch a weapons of mass destruction (WMD) attack inside the United States. Professor Betts warns that, by giving Saddam Hussein significant advance warning of the prospect of war, the US has invited him to prepare a retaliatory strike.

Betts examines the state of mind of a totalitarian dictator whose regime is facing annihilation. He argues that, in the past, Saddam Hussein was reckless, but never took actions that could invite his own destruction. Faced with a zero-sum game, however, it is quite possible that Saddam Hussein (but not the Iraqi people) will consider himself undeterrable.

Betts argues that there are no good alternatives to an outright invasion of Iraq, but that there are a few that are less bad.

- One option is simply to maintain economic and political pressure on the regime with the intention of breaking Saddam’s hold on power.
- Second, the US could continue to foment internal overthrow of the regime.
- Third, the US might launch ‘quasi war’ from a stronghold in Kurdish Iraq.

These alternatives are equally open to the charge that their outcome is even more uncertain than a campaign specifically intended to bring about regime change. Betts does not think that regime change in Iraq is worth the possibility of mass casualties in the US. However, he concludes that, given the difficulty of deterring a war lord who is backed into a corner, any war that is fought must be won quickly and decisively.

Article Title 'Iraq and the Arabs' Future'

Author Fouad Ajami, Majid Khadduri Professor of Middle Eastern Studies, School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University

Publication Details *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 82, no. 1, January/February 2003, pp.2-18.

Synopsis

This article examines the political and cultural landscape of the Middle East in the face of an American-led war to remove Saddam Hussein's regime. The author suggests that, beyond the toppling of the Iraqi Government and the dismantling of its WMD, the aim of American policy in the Middle East should be the modernisation of the Arab world.

He believes that the fight between Arab rulers and their insurgent populations is no longer an Arab problem, but an issue that intimately concerns the United States. A key plank of the Islamist agenda is the idea that justice can no longer be secured in one's own land, from one's own rulers. September 11 provides ample evidence that American unilateralism with regard to this problem is totally warranted. America's goal must be to build a secular, modern order in the Middle East, an endeavour that will greatly benefit the Arabs themselves.

The author reviews the recent history of the Middle East and notes Saddam's role as a figurehead for widespread anti-Western sentiment in the region. Removal of Saddam would destroy the mystique of his *rujula* (manhood) accrued in this anti-Western role and his funding of organisations in states throughout the region (including bounties paid to the families of Palestinian suicide martyrs). At the core of the region's problems is the widespread exercise of population control through fear and torture.

If the people in these countries are resigned to such treatment by their governments, it is largely because they fear that the terror unleashed if they were replaced by Islamist regimes would be far worse. Under these circumstances, the case for war with Iraq is based on the benefits that the *Pax Americana* would bring to the whole region. One significant casualty of a US-led war with Iraq may well be Pan-Arabism. Arab nationalism of this ilk has not proven to be a positive force in the region. Instead, it has

resulted in anti-Western rhetoric that blames any number of problems on 'Western colonialism'. Pan-Arabism (invented by city-dwelling Sunni Arabs) has also been a vehicle for suppressing other communities, both ethnic and religious, within Iraq and the region generally, whether they be Shi'a or Jews, Kurds or Chaldeans.

The article concludes by proposing that the end of Saddam's Iraq might present an opening for democracy in the Middle East. The model commonly cited is Japan after WWII, but Iraq would be substantially better off with even the semi-democratic politics of near neighbours such as Jordan and Turkey. The aura of the victim, long nurtured by the pan-Arabist and the Islamists, could be healed under the tutelage of a liberal power. In any case, the author states, the Rubicon has been crossed and the fallout from any war with Iraq is likely to be far less than the dire consequences that would result from America's stepping up to the edge and then stepping back.

Article Title *Defeating Saddam Hussein's Strategy*

Author LTC Raymond A. Millen

Publication Details Study Paper, Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, January 2003,
<http://www.carlisle.army.mil/ssi/pubs/2003/saddam.pdf> downloaded 15 February 2003.

Synopsis

This paper posits that Saddam Hussein is pursuing a strategy designed to undermine the prestige of the United States and inflame the Arab World against the Western World. The author makes several assumptions:

- First, by drawing US-led coalition forces into urban combat, Western technological advantages can be significantly negated, thereby enhance Iraqi resistance.
- Second, by moving the centre of gravity to the Republican Guard divisions and turning Baghdad into a fortified city, Saddam Hussein can prolong the conflict and increase the risk of heavy coalition casualties, unpalatable to domestic coalition constituencies.

- Thirdly, any collateral damage within Baghdad will '*excite the sensibilities of America's friends and allies*' and inflame the Arab world.

Millen proposes an operational plan that deploys the coalition forces on the perimeter of Baghdad, laying siege but not immediately assaulting it. *The siege would cover the north, east and western approaches, but leave the southern aspect open.* This allows non-combatants and deserters to escape the city and surrender. The halt in '*combat activity temporarily yields the tactical initiative*' but ensures maintenance of strategic objectives. Electronic warfare would isolate Baghdad, and the pause provides time for troops to prepare for urban combat, such as training in combined arms tactics. Psychological operations, involving the dropping of leaflets, intrusive broadcasts and the use of loud speakers could exhort Iraqis to leave the city and provide instructions for surrender.

By employing a horseshoe siege, a serious humanitarian crisis could also be ameliorated. The southern escape route would allow fleeing civilians and combatants to be streamed into camps for processing by military, government, international and non-government organisations. Further, an interim government could be established in Basra, further relegating Saddam Hussein and his regime to irrelevancy.

The author provides specific suggestions for the final assault into Baghdad. He envisions the extensive use of UAVs to target fire from the north, with a squeeze coming from both east and west. Combined arms teams of heavy armour and infantry units would move through the streets, the precision direct fire of the tanks creating breach points in buildings, bunkers, and other fortifications.

The author notes that such a strategy would minimise casualties on both sides, address the risks of collateral damage, and avoid turning Baghdad into rubble. The overarching benefit of this proposal is that it '*parries Saddam Hussein's greatest weapons – the lime-light and propaganda.*'