

# Report for Congress

Received through the CRS Web

## **Iraq War? Current Situation and Issues for Congress**

**January 29, 2003**

Raymond W. Copson (Coordinator)  
Specialist in International Relations  
Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division

# Iraq War? Current Situation and Issues for Congress

## Summary

On November 8, 2002, the United Nations Security Council, acting at U.S. urging, adopted Resolution 1441, giving Iraq a final opportunity to “comply with its the disarmament obligations” or “face serious consequences.” During January 2003, the U.S. military buildup in the Persian Gulf continued, amid reports that U.S. forces would be ready to launch a war by mid-February or early March. President Bush, other top U.S. officials, and British Prime Minister Tony Blair have indicated that Iraq has little time left to offer full cooperation with U.N. weapons inspectors. However, the inspectors themselves, with leaders of France, Germany, and other countries, are urging that the inspections process be allowed more time. The Administration asserts that Iraq is in defiance of 16 Security Council resolutions requiring that it fully declare and eliminate its weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Skeptics, including many foreign critics, maintain that the Administration is exaggerating the Iraqi WMD threat.

In October 2002, Congress authorized the President to use the armed forces of the United States to defend U.S. national security against the threat posed by Iraq and to enforce all relevant U.N. resolutions regarding Iraq (P.L. 107-243). Some Members of Congress have recently expressed dissatisfaction with the level of Administration consultation on Iraq, and suggested that the Administration should provide more information on why Iraq poses an immediate threat requiring early military action. Administration officials maintain that they have consulted regularly, and have compelling information on Iraqi noncompliance that cannot be released.

Analysts and officials are concerned about instability and ethnic fragmentation in Iraq after any war. U.S. planners are reportedly planning for an occupation of the country that could last 18 months or longer. Whether the overthrow of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein leads to democratization in Iraq and the wider Middle East, or promotes instability and an intensification of anti-U.S. attitudes, is an issue in debate. The extent to which an Iraqi conflict would create a substantial humanitarian crisis, including refugee flows and civilian deaths, will likely depend on the length of the conflict and whether it involves fighting in urban areas.

Constitutional issues concerning a possible war with Iraq were largely resolved by the enactment of P.L. 107-243, the October authorization. International legal issues remain, however, with respect to launching a pre-emptive war against Iraq if there is no new Security Council resolution authorizing such a war. Estimates of the cost of a war in Iraq vary widely, depending in part on assessments of the likely scale of the fighting and the length of any occupation. If war leads to a spike in the price of oil, economic growth could slow, but long-term estimates of the economic consequences of a war are hampered by uncertainties over its scale and duration.

This CRS report summarizes the current situation and U.S. policy with respect to the confrontation with Iraq, and reviews a number of war-related issues. See the CRS web site [<http://www.congress.gov/erp/legissues/html/isfar12.html>] for related products, which are highlighted throughout this report. This report also provides links to other sources of information and updated approximately one each week.

## Contents

Most Recent Developments .....	1
Current Situation .....	2
Overview .....	2
Background .....	2
Recent Developments .....	2
Options for the Future .....	4
Military Situation .....	4
Diplomatic Situation .....	6
Developments at the United Nations .....	6
Foreign Reactions .....	7
Peace Initiatives .....	7
U.S. Policy .....	8
The Administration .....	8
Policy Debate .....	8
Regime Change Goal .....	9
Congressional Action .....	10
Issues for Congress .....	11
Weapons of Mass Destruction Issues .....	11
Post-War Iraq .....	14
Background .....	14
Current Planning Efforts .....	14
Reconstruction/Humanitarian Effects .....	15
War Crimes Trials .....	15
Burden Sharing .....	16
Political and Military Factors .....	16
Direct and Indirect Contributions .....	17
Post-conflict Assistance .....	17
Implications for the Middle East .....	18
Democracy and Governance .....	18
Arab-Israeli Peacemaking .....	19
Security Arrangements in the Gulf Region .....	20
Humanitarian Issues .....	20
Background .....	20
War-Related Concerns .....	21
Refugees .....	22
Aid Agency Planning .....	22
Potential Internal Humanitarian Consequences of War .....	23
International and Domestic Legal Issues .....	
Relating to the Use of Force .....	24
The Constitution and the War Powers Resolution .....	24
International Law and the Preemptive Use of Force .....	26
Security Council Authorization .....	26
Cost Issues .....	28

Economic Effects of a War with Iraq .....	29
Economic Effects of Military Expenditures .....	29
Economic Effects of Higher Oil Prices .....	30
The Role of Confidence in the Economy .....	30
Economic Effects of the First Gulf War .....	30
Information Resources .....	31
CRS Experts .....	31
CRS Products .....	31
Chronology .....	31
Iraq Facts .....	31
Maps .....	31
Reports, Studies, and Electronic Products .....	31
United Nations Resolutions .....	32

## List of Figures

Figure 1. Iraq in the Middle East .....	2
Figure 2. Iraq .....	5

# Iraq War? Current Situation and Issues for Congress

## Most Recent Developments

President George W. Bush, in his State of the Union message to Congress on January 29, 2003, said that “With nuclear arms of a full arsenal of chemical and biological weapons, Saddam Hussein could resume his ambitions of conquest in the Middle East and create deadly havoc in the region.” The President told members of the armed forces that “some crucial hours may lie ahead.” He asked the United Nations Security Council to convene on February 5, to hear Secretary of State Colin Powell present information and intelligence about Iraq’s illegal weapons programs and its links to terrorist groups. Alleging that Iraq “aids and protects” Al Qaeda, the President also condemned what he said was Iraq’s “utter contempt” for the United Nations and the world. In reaction to the speech, Senator Edward Kennedy said he would introduce a resolution seeking “convincing evidence” of an imminent threat before U.S. troops are committed to a war with Iraq.

In a report to the U.N. Security Council on January 27, 2003, Hans Blix, chief United Nations weapons inspector, said there were indications Iraq had developed weapons using deadly VX gas. He added that Iraq had failed to account for large numbers of chemical bombs and quantities of chemical agent; had not provided convincing evidence to inspectors for destruction of its anthrax; and was building rockets with ranges longer than permitted by the United Nations. Blix noted that Iraq had given inspectors access to suspected weapons sites, but complained of incidents of harassment. Mohamed ElBaradei, head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, told the Council that inspectors had found no sign of a renewal of Iraq’s nuclear weapons program, and asked that inspectors be given more time. After the reports, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell told reporters that the opportunity for Iraq to disarm peacefully is “fast coming to an end.”

In an interview published in the *Washington Post* on January 27, retired General Norman Schwarzkopf, who commanded U.S. forces in the 1991 Persian Gulf war, said he would like better information before supporting a new war with Iraq. Schwarzkopf added that “it is very important for us to wait and see what the inspectors come up with.” National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice wrote in the *New York Times* on January 23 that Iraq was not disclosing and disarming its nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons programs, as required by United Nations resolutions, and that its December arms declaration to the United Nations “amounts to a 12,200 page lie.”

## Current Situation

### Overview

Raymond W. Copson, 7-7661

(Last updated January 24, 2003)

**Background.** Bush Administration concerns about Iraq's alleged weapons of mass destruction programs intensified after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. President Bush named Iraq, Iran, and North Korea as the "axis of evil" nations in his January 2002 State of the Union address. Vice President Cheney, in two August 2002 speeches, accused Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein of seeking weapons of mass destruction to dominate the Middle East and threaten U.S. oil supplies.<sup>1</sup> These speeches fueled speculation that the United States might act unilaterally against Iraq. However, in a September 12, 2002

**Figure 1. Iraq in the Middle East**



Source: Map Resources. Adapted by CRS.  
(M.Chin 01/03)

speech to the United Nations General Assembly, President Bush pledged to work with the U.N. Security Council to meet the "common challenge" posed by Iraq.<sup>2</sup> H.J.Res. 114, which became law (P.L. 107-243) on October 16, authorized the use of force against Iraq, and endorsed the President's efforts to obtain prompt Security Council action to ensure Iraqi compliance with its resolutions. On November 8, 2002, the Security Council, acting at U.S. urging, adopted Resolution 1441, giving Iraq a "final opportunity" to comply with the disarmament obligations imposed under previous resolutions, or face "serious consequences."

**Recent Developments.** During January 2003, the U.S. military buildup in the Persian Gulf intensified, as analysts indicated that U.S. forces would be positioned to launch an attack on Iraq by mid-February or early March. Officials maintained that it would be possible to attack later, even in the extreme heat of summer, but military experts observed that conditions for fighting a war would be far better in the cooler months before May. Statements by President Bush and top officials expressed a high degree of dissatisfaction over Iraq's compliance with Security Council disarmament demands, and suggested that key decisions on how the United States should proceed would be made in the final days of January. The

---

<sup>1</sup> "Vice President Speaks at VFW 103d National Convention," August 26, 2002; and "Vice President Honors Veterans of Korean War," August 29, 2002. Available on the White House web site at [<http://www.whitehouse.gov>].

<sup>2</sup> "President's Remarks at the United Nations General Assembly," September 12, 2002. Available at [<http://www.whitehouse.gov>].

President said on January 14, that “time is running out” for Iraq to disarm, adding that he was “sick and tired” of its “games and deceptions.”<sup>3</sup> Secretary of State Colin Powell added on January 16, that January 27 would be an “important date” for decision-making on Iraq.<sup>4</sup> On that date, chief U.N. weapons inspector Hans Blix was to report to the Security Council on Iraqi compliance. National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice said on January 19, that January 27 was “not a deadline,” but that “we are at the verge of an important set of decisions.”<sup>5</sup> Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld asserted on January 20, that “in the case of Iraq, we’re nearing the end of the long road, with every other option exhausted.”<sup>6</sup> On January 26, 2003, Secretary of State Powell told the World Economic Forum, meeting in Davos, Switzerland, that “multilateralism cannot be an excuse for inaction” and that the United States “continues to reserve our sovereign right to take military action against Iraq alone or in a coalition of the willing.” U.S. officials have at times suggested a link between Iraq and the al Qaeda terrorist group, which is held responsible for the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States. Secretary Powell reiterated this allegation at Davos, saying there are “clear ties” between Iraq and terrorist groups, including al Qaeda.

Despite the resolve of U.S. officials, international support for an early armed confrontation is limited. While the Blix report to the Security Council on January 27 was harsher on Iraq than most observers had expected, several earlier statements by Blix indicate that he does not regard the January 27 report as final or definitive, that he believes the inspections are making some progress, and that he wants the inspections to continue for some time. His position has been supported by French President Jacques Chirac and other foreign leaders. A *Washington Post* article appearing on January 19, reported that under current circumstances, the United States would have great difficulty in winning Security Council support for a war against Iraq.<sup>7</sup> British Prime Minister Tony Blair continues to give strong support to U.S. policy, but many other foreign governments and observers are concerned that U.N. inspectors have yet to find a “smoking gun” proving that Iraq has continued its weapons of mass destruction programs, although U.S. officials and others maintain that this was never the goal of the inspections. In their view, the purpose of inspections is to verify whether or not Iraq has disarmed in compliance with past U.N. resolutions. Iraq has not pro-actively cooperated with the inspections process, they argue, and consequently there has been no such verification.<sup>8</sup>

Large public demonstrations against a possible war with Iraq occurred in the United States and in cities overseas on the weekend of January 19-20. A January poll

---

<sup>3</sup> “President’s Remarks on Iraq,” January 14, 2003. Available at [[www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov)].

<sup>4</sup> “Interview with Journalists from New Security Council Member Nations,” January 16, 2003. Available at [<http://www.state.gov>].

<sup>5</sup> *BBC* report, January 19, 2003.

<sup>6</sup> “Rumsfeld Says Iraq Diplomacy is Nearing the End of Its Road,” *New York Times*, January 21, 2003.

<sup>7</sup> “A Skeptical U.N.: Support Ebbs for U.S. War Plans,” *Washington Post*, January 19, 2003.

<sup>8</sup> David Kay, “It was Never About a Smoking Gun,” *Washington Post*, January 19, 2003.

by the Pew Research Center indicates that 68% of Americans favor military action to remove Saddam Hussein from power, but only 26% would favor such action if the United States were to act unilaterally.<sup>9</sup>

**Options for the Future.** Whether the Administration will choose to launch a war against Iraq without broader international support remains to be seen. Some may urge that policymakers accede to wishes of Security Council members who want the arms inspection process to be given more time. Others argue that this approach would reward Iraq's alleged delaying tactics, and that there would be serious economic, military, and political costs to leaving a large U.S. military force in the Middle East indefinitely. It may be that dramatic evidence of Iraqi non-compliance will emerge in the near future, and that this will bring stronger international backing for a war. According to reports, some governments in the Middle East region, despite their denials, have used back channels to urge Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and other Iraqi leaders to resign from office, possibly going into exile under some sort of guarantee of immunity from prosecution. If a new regime agreed to carry through with disarmament, this eventuality could avert war altogether.<sup>10</sup> However, many analysts, noting Saddam's past intransigence, doubt that he would make such a move. Some observers are hoping for a military coup that will sweep Saddam from power, but others suggest that the Iraqi president's control of the armed forces is too sweeping to permit such an event.

## **Military Situation**

**Steve Bowman, 7-7613**

*(Last updated January 23, 2003)*

The United States continues a very large build-up of military forces in the Persian Gulf region and other locations within operational range of Iraq. The Department of Defense (DOD) has released limited official information on these deployments; but press leaks have been extensive, allowing a fairly good picture of the troop movements underway. The statistics provided, unless otherwise noted, are not confirmed by DOD and should be considered approximate.

The number of U.S. personnel deployed to the Persian Gulf region (both ashore and afloat) is reportedly approaching 80,000, and is reportedly expected to reach over 150,000 some time in February. Another 100,000 personnel may be placed on alert for later deployment should that be required.<sup>11</sup> DOD has announced that, as of January 22, 2003, there are 78,906 National Guard and Reservists from all services now called to active duty, an increase of over 20,000 in one week.<sup>12</sup> In addition to

---

<sup>9</sup> "Public Wants Proof of Iraqi Weapons Programs; Majority Says Bush Has Yet to Make the Case." Available at [<http://people-press.org>].

<sup>10</sup> "Officials Support Exile for Hussein," *Washington Post*, January 20, 2003.

<sup>11</sup> "Rumsfeld Doubles Carrier Groups in Gulf Region," *Washington Times*, January 22, 2003; "Main Developments Concerning Iraq," *Associated Press*, January 22, 2003.

<sup>12</sup> See the DOD website: [<http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Jan2003/d20030122ngr.pdf>].



U.S. deployments, Britain is deploying an armor Battle Group with 27,000 personnel to the Persian Gulf region.

**Figure 2. Iraq**



Source: Map Resources. Adapted by CRS. (M.Chin 01/03)

The United States has personnel and materiel deployed in the Persian Gulf states of Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. With the possible exception of Kuwait, it is still not clear what level of cooperation/participation can be expected from these nations if the United Nations Security Council does not pass another resolution specifically authorizing the use of force against Iraq. Outside of the Persian Gulf region, only the United Kingdom, Australia, Denmark, and Poland have offered military contributions if the Security Council does not act further. The White House press office announced in November 2002 that the United States had contacted 50 nations regarding cooperation in military operations against Iraq, but declined to provide specific details on responses.<sup>13</sup> The United States has also approached NATO Headquarters concerning the use of certain NATO assets (e.g., AWACS aerial command aircraft). NATO postponed action on the request, and French and German opposition to military

<sup>13</sup> White House press Conference, December 5, 2002.

action against Iraq at this time makes a NATO commitment appear unlikely in the near term. Negotiations continue with Turkey over possible U.S. troop deployments and the use of Turkish airbases. No clear commitment has been obtained, but U.S. personnel have been allowed to begin surveying some Turkish airfields to determine their potential usefulness for U.S. operations.

Though Administration spokesmen continue to maintain that no final decision has been made regarding the use of force, press reports speculate that late February is currently seen as the most likely time-frame for the onset of military operations.<sup>14</sup> This would permit the completion of a large force deployment, with the possibility of completing operations before the arrival of Iraqi summer weather.

### CRS Product

CRS Report RL31701, *Iraq: Potential U.S. Military Operations*

## Diplomatic Situation

Carol Migdalovitz (7-2667)

(Last updated January 23, 2003)

**Developments at the United Nations.** U.N. Security Council Resolution 1441 of November 8, 2002 gave Iraq a “final opportunity to comply with its disarmament obligations” under previous resolutions, and set up an enhanced inspection regime to bring about the “full and verified completion of the disarmament process.” Iraq was required to submit, within 30 days, “a declaration of all aspects of its programs to develop chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons, ballistic missiles, and other delivery systems....” It also was required to provide the United Nations Monitoring, Verification, and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) “immediate, unimpeded, unconditional access” to all sites they wish to inspect. Inspections began on November 27.

On December 7, 2002, Iraq submitted a 12,000-page declaration. On January 9, 2003, Hans Blix, the Executive Chairman of UNMOVIC, appeared at the Council with Mohammed ElBaradei, the Director General of the IAEA, and told the Security Council that the Iraqi declaration, “is rich in volume but poor in new information about weapons issues ....” Blix added that although Iraq had “failed to answer a great many questions,” inspectors had not found “any smoking guns.”<sup>15</sup> Blix and ElBaradei went to Baghdad on January 18-20 to consult with Iraqi officials. Blix later said that Iraq was still not providing proactive cooperation, in that it had not submitted data on its arms inspections, had put conditions on U.N. U-2 surveillance flights, and had not yet consented to private interviews with scientists.

On January 20, a Security Council meeting on terrorism was held at the behest of Council President France to emphasize that the Iraq situation was detracting from

<sup>14</sup> “Russia Says War on Iraq Decided; Allies Urge Peace,” *Reuters*, January 22, 2003

<sup>15</sup> “UN Inspection Report May Complicate U.S. Plan in Iraq,” *Reuters*, January 10, 2003.

international antiterrorism efforts. French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin declared that “today” nothing justifies military action against Iraq.<sup>16</sup> He maintained that “Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction programs are being largely blocked, even frozen,”<sup>17</sup> and that war could not solve the problem of proliferation. German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer, whose country holds a non-permanent seat on the Security Council, rejected war because it could destabilize the (Middle East) region and fuel new terrorist attacks. Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov cautioned against unilateral action that could threaten the unity of the antiterrorism coalition. He noted that the resolution (1441) is being implemented, and problems with implementation are solvable. Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan asserted that the inspectors’ January 27 report should be a “new beginning” for inspections. Secretary of State Colin Powell responded by urging the U.N. not to “shrink from its responsibilities.”

**Foreign Reactions.** The buildup of U.S. forces in the Gulf region appears to be heightening foreign misgivings about the possibility of war. Many Europeans, including the European Union (EU) High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana and Greek Prime Minister Costas Simitis, current holder of the rotating EU Presidency, want the inspection process to conclude before the Security Council decides on military action. On January 23, French President Jacques Chirac declared that “every decision should be taken at the Security Council.”<sup>18</sup> German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder categorically ruled out his government’s voting for a war resolution. Countering the German and French view, Prime Minister Tony Blair said that Britain, which favors a new U.N. resolution authorizing use of force, would support military action if there were “an unreasonable blockage” of such a resolution.

Unease is growing in the Middle East. Turkish Prime Minister Abdullah Gul has said that his government wants the crisis to end without war, while the leader of his party, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, has urged “the world’s decision makers” to heed the “rising call for peace.”<sup>19</sup> Iranian President Mohammed Khatami has urged Iraq to give in to international regulation, while Saudi Arabia seeks more dialogue even if the U.N. decides on war. Crown Prince Abdullah, the Saudi de facto leader, reportedly will call on an Arab summit in Bahrain in March to reject “external, non-legitimate aggression” against any Arab state, referring to unilateral U.S. action against Iraq.<sup>20</sup> An Egyptian official had warned earlier that “any strike on Iraq would mean more terrorism in the region, not to speak of the chaos that will spread in the region, in addition to the fact that a strike will not have the desired result.” There are unconfirmed reports that Arab governments are trying to negotiate a deal for Saddam Hussein to go into exile, but these have been denied.

**Peace Initiatives.** There are no major peace initiatives at present, but there is considerable diplomatic activity. After consulting with their governments, Turkish

---

<sup>16</sup> “Powell to UN: Confront Iraq,” *Chicago Tribune*, January 21, 2003.

<sup>17</sup> “France Vows to Block Resolution on Iraq,” *Washington Post*, January 21, 2003.

<sup>18</sup> “France and Germany Condemn U.S. Haste,” *Financial Times*, January 23, 2003.

<sup>19</sup> “Turkey Urges Peace, Prepared to Host Iraq Meeting,” *Reuters*, January 21, 2003.

<sup>20</sup> “Saudi Arabia Makes Rare Proposal for Arab Reforms,” *Reuters*, January 15, 2003.

Prime Minister Gul convened a meeting of the foreign ministers of Syria, Iran, Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia in Istanbul on January 23, aimed at finding a peaceful solution to the crisis by persuading Saddam Hussein to cooperate fully with the U.N. Representatives of these governments may meet again in Damascus, Syria. Foreign Minister George Papandreou of Greece, the current holder of the rotating European Union presidency, plans to lead a peace mission to moderate Arab countries in late January.

### **CRS Products**

CRS Report RL31629, *Iraq-U.S. Confrontation: International Attitudes*

CRS Report RS21323, *The United Nations Security Council – Its Role in the Iraq Crisis: A Brief Overview*, by Marjorie M. Browne

CRS Report RL31611, *Iraq-Kuwait: United Nations Security Council Resolutions – 1992-2002*

## **U.S. Policy**

### **The Administration**

**Kenneth Katzman, 7-7612**

*(Last updated January 27, 2003)*

The Bush Administration has characterized the regime of Saddam Hussein in Iraq as a grave potential threat to the United States and to peace and security in the Middle East region. The Administration asserts that Iraq is in defiance of 16 U.N. Security Council resolutions that, among other requirements, mandate that Iraq fully declare and eliminate its weapons of mass destruction (WMD) programs. President Bush has stated that Iraq must fully and actively cooperate with a new U.N. disarmament effort, or the United States will lead a coalition to disarm Iraq, presumably through a major U.S.-led military offensive.

**Policy Debate.** Several press accounts indicate that there have been divisions within the Administration on Iraq policy. Secretary of State Powell has been said to typify those in the Administration who believe that a long term program of unfettered weapons inspections would succeed in containing the WMD threat from Iraq.<sup>21</sup> He reportedly was key in convincing President Bush to work through the United Nations to give Iraq a final opportunity to disarm unilaterally. However, press reports appearing in late January 2003 indicated that Secretary Powell had come to believe that the weapons inspections are not working and that war may be required, with or without U.N. authorization. The Secretary was reportedly highly critical of opposition to a war on the part of the French government. Press reports suggest that Vice President Cheney and Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, among others, have consistently been skeptical that inspections can significantly reduce the long-term

---

<sup>21</sup> Lynch, Colum and Karen DeYoung. U.S. Officials Meet to Take Stock of Iraq Policy. *Washington Post*, October 16, 2002.

threat from Iraq and are in favor of military action against Iraq. These and other U.S. officials reportedly believe that overthrowing Saddam Hussein would pave the way for democracy not only in Iraq but in the broader Middle East, and reduce support for terrorism. Those who favor military action believe that Iraq is concealing active WMD programs and will eventually try to use WMD to harm the United States unless it is completely disarmed. Skeptics, including many foreign critics, assert that the Administration is exaggerating the WMD threat from Iraq, and that launching an attack might goad Baghdad into using WMD as a last resort.

The Security Council is strongly divided in its evaluation of the new inspections regime, as it has been for most of the post-Gulf War period. The United States and Britain believe that Iraq must actively cooperate in its disarmament and that passive cooperation, such as permitting facility inspections, is insufficient. France, Russia, and China have tended to minimize individual Iraqi violations as long as Iraq, for the most part, is admitting the inspectors to all facilities they seek to visit. The outcome of such Council deliberations could determine whether or not the United Nations authorizes military action against Iraq to enforce its inspection mandates. France told the Security Council on January 20, 2003 that, for now, it is opposed to military action and believes the inspectors should be allowed more opportunity to complete their work in Iraq. It has threatened to veto a resolution to authorize war at this time.

**Regime Change Goal.** The Bush Administration's decision to confront Iraq under a U.N. umbrella has led the Administration to mute its prior declarations that the goal of U.S. policy is to change Iraq's regime. The purpose of downplaying this goal may be to blunt criticism from U.S. allies and other countries that note that regime change is not required by any U.N. resolution on Iraq. However, in practice, the United States draws little separation between regime change and disarmament; the Administration believes that a friendly government in Baghdad would be required to ensure complete elimination of Iraq's WMD. Press reports in October 2002 said that the Administration is recruiting an Iraqi opposition force of up to 5,000, using equipment and training funds (\$92 million remaining) authorized by the Iraq Liberation Act (P.L. 105-338, October 31, 1998). This force could support a U.S. attack or work on its own to destabilize Saddam Hussein. The Administration is reportedly working with Iraqi exile groups to determine future policies and priorities in a post-Saddam Iraq.

### **CRS Products**

CRS Issue Brief IB92117, *Iraq: Weapons Threat, Compliance, Sanctions, and U.S. Policy*

CRS Report RL31339, *Iraq: U.S. Efforts to Change the Regime*

CRS Report RS21325, *Iraq: Divergent Views on Military Action*

## **Congressional Action**

**Jeremy M. Sharp, 7-8687**

*(Last updated January 24, 2003)*

Since the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990, Congress has played an active role in supporting U.S. foreign policy objectives to contain Iraq and force it into compliance with U.N. Security Council resolutions. Congress has restricted aid and trade in goods to some countries found to be in violation of international sanctions against Iraq. Congress has also called for the removal of Saddam Hussein's regime from power and the establishment of a democratic Iraqi state in its place. In 1991, Congress authorized the President to use force against Iraq to expel Iraqi forces from Kuwait in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 678 (P.L. 102-1).

On October 16, 2002, the President signed H.J.Res. 114 into law as P.L. 107-243, the "Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002." The resolution authorized the President to use the armed forces to defend the national security of the United States against the threat posed by Iraq and to enforce all relevant U.N. resolutions regarding Iraq. The statute conferred broad authority on the President to use force and required the President to make periodic reports to Congress "on matters relevant to this joint resolution." The statute expressed Congressional "support" for the efforts of the President to obtain "prompt and decisive action by the Security Council" to enforce Iraq's compliance with all relevant Security Council resolutions.

Some lawmakers have been dissatisfied with the level of consultation and communication between Congress and the White House since the signing of P.L. 107-243. Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle has stated that the Bush Administration has failed to report to Congress on its diplomatic efforts and military preparations within 60 days, as he said was required by P.L. 107-243.<sup>22</sup> In response, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld said he did not believe that the resolution required a written report, and that his verbal briefings should suffice. If the Iraq - U.S. confrontation continues to intensify, calls for greater Administration consultation with Congress could become more frequent. Secretary of State Powell and Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, came to the Capitol on January 21, 2003, for a closed briefing with the Senate. According to the press, several Senators asked that the Administration give weapons inspectors in Iraq more time, and several later commented that the Administration should do a better job of explaining why Iraq poses an immediate threat to the United States.<sup>23</sup>

Members of Congress have participated in several recent delegations to the Persian Gulf region. In December 2002, two Members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Senator Chuck Hagel and Senator Joseph Biden, visited northern Iraq, Turkey, Israel, Jordan, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar. The two

---

<sup>22</sup> Janet Hook, "New Anxiety Over Bush's Foreign Policy Some members of Congress – including Republicans – criticize the president's handling of simultaneous crises in Iraq and North Korea." *The Los Angeles Times*, January 16, 2003.

<sup>23</sup> "Hill Pressures Bush on Iraq," *Washington Post*, January 25, 2003.

Senators also addressed the 150-member Kurdish Parliament. Congress has called for Iraq to release information on the whereabouts of an American pilot who was shot down during the 1991 Gulf War.

Following a war or significant “regime change” in Iraq, the United States will likely seek to influence future internal political and economic developments in that country. Congress may be asked to provide funding for a range of foreign assistance programs that would facilitate U.S. long-range objectives in Iraq. The extent and cost of U.S. programs would depend on the post-war scenario. The Administration may ask Congress to appropriate new funds for refugees and/or to support coalition partners in the Middle East, who may suffer economically in the event of regional instability. Congress may also be asked to authorize a program of assistance specific to Iraq along the lines of the FREEDOM Support Act of 1992 (P.L. 102-511) that authorized aid to the former Soviet Union or the Afghanistan Freedom Support Act of 2002 (P.L. 107-327). In considering aid levels, Congress will have to weigh aid to Iraq against other budget priorities.

### **CRS Products**

CRS Report RS21324, *Congressional Action on Iraq, 1990 - 2002*

CRS Issue Brief IB92117, *Iraq: Weapons Threat, Compliance, Sanctions, and U.S. Policy*

## **Issues for Congress**

### **Weapons of Mass Destruction Issues**

**Sharon Squassoni, 7-7745**

*(Last updated January 27, 2003)*

Iraq’s chemical, biological and nuclear weapons programs, along with its long-range missile development and alleged support for terrorism, are the justifications put forward for the use of U.S. military forces. Iraq had varying capabilities in all weapons of mass destruction (WMD) before the 1991 Gulf War. Iraq had a well-financed and broad-based nuclear weapons program, most of which, according to International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors, was eliminated or dismantled during inspections conducted between 1991 and 1998. Questions remain about Iraq’s nuclear weapons design work, the alleged procurement of uranium from Niger (which Iraq denies) and whether scientists have continued working on nuclear-weapons-related projects. Bush Administration officials have also pointed to Iraq’s procurement of high-strength aluminum tubes as evidence of a clandestine program to produce weapons-grade uranium with centrifuges, but IAEA Director General Mohamed ElBaradei disputed that conclusion, reporting to the UN Security Council in January 2003 that Iraq’s reported use of the material for conventional rockets was deemed credible.

Much less is known about Iraq’s biological weapons program. Iraq apparently produced anthrax, aflatoxin and the toxin agents botulinum and ricin. Questions

remain about the production and destruction of anthrax, although new information on biotechnology developments since 1998 was included in Iraq's December 7, 2002 weapons declaration to the United Nations Security Council. Iraq's capabilities in chemical weapons and ballistic missiles, in contrast, are well-known. Iraq produced blister agents ("mustard gas") and both persistent and non-persistent nerve agents (VX and Sarin). While inspectors destroyed 38,500 munitions, 480,000 liters of chemical agents and 1.8 million liters of precursor chemicals in inspections from 1991 to 1998, significant questions remain. For example, the fate of about 31,600 chemical munitions, 500 mustard gas bombs, and 4,000 tons of chemical precursors are still unknown, as are Iraq's capabilities to produce VX agent. In 1995, Iraq admitted it had produced 4 tons of VX agent, but UNSCOM inspectors believed it had imported enough precursor chemicals to produce 200 tons. There is also evidence that VX agent was weaponized, although Iraq has not declared this. In October 2002, the Central Intelligence Agency assessed that Iraq had renewed chemical weapons production and probably had stockpiled a few hundred tons of agent. In addition, the discovery in late January 2003 of 16 empty chemical munitions shells not previously declared points to further discrepancies in Iraq's December 7, 2002 declaration of all its capabilities.

Iraq had a robust missile force and missile production capabilities prior to the Gulf War, but much of this was destroyed during that war and in inspections from 1991 to 1998. About 130 Soviet-supplied Scud missiles remained after the war and inspectors accounted for all but two. Iraq is permitted to produce missiles with ranges shorter than 150 kilometers and has made progress in producing Ababil and Samoud missiles of permitted ranges. In its December 7 declaration, Iraq admitted that some flight tests of those missiles did exceed the 150km-range by 50km. U.S. analysts believe that Iraq may be concealing 12 Scud missiles and is manufacturing propellant for longer-range missiles. Key unresolved issues include documentation of missile programs, the fate of 300 tons of special missile propellant, and indigenous missile production.

The U.N. Monitoring and Verification Commission (UNMOVIC) and the IAEA have conducted over 400 inspections from mid-November 2002 to mid-January 2003. Both UNMOVIC and the IAEA have repeatedly stressed that Iraq must not only permit inspections to take place, which they have done thus far, but must also actively cooperate with the investigation and voluntarily provide accurate information. Since November 2002, few new details have been uncovered, apart from the discovery in mid-January of empty chemical weapons shells not previously declared and of 3000 pages of undeclared documents on uranium enrichment in a private home.

In his report to the U.N. Security Council on January 27, 2003, Chairman Blix noted that Iraq has cooperated "rather well," but suggested ways in which Iraq could help produce evidence and transparency that could lead to confidence in disarmament. These include greater Iraqi cooperation in finding items and activities (e.g., 122mm chemical warheads), in finding documents, particularly those in private homes, in providing names of personnel and in ensuring that interviews are credible. Director General ElBaradei's report noted that inspections since November 2002 have identified no prohibited nuclear activities but urged states to continue to provide intelligence information. ElBaradei specifically suggested that the inspection process



“should be allowed to run its natural course” and that credible assurances could be provided within the next few months. The Bush Administration has interpreted the January 27 report as a definitive statement of UNMOVIC and the IAEA’s findings to date, and the White House spokesman has said that the “report...clearly shows Iraq is not complying.”

A potential key to inspections progress is credible interviewing of scientists. The Bush administration has maintained for several months that interviews with scientists should be conducted outside of Iraq. Blix has resisted this approach, stating that he does not run a “defector agency,” but on the other hand, UNMOVIC has been unable to interview scientists in private in Iraq. Until recently, Iraq held that individual scientists could choose whether or not to comply with interviews. In talks with UNMOVIC and IAEA in Baghdad on January 19 and 20, 2003, however, Iraq said it would encourage its scientists to comply with interview requests. Nonetheless, many analysts have pointed out that whatever the Iraqi government may say, there is a potential threat to scientists’ families remaining in Iraq, and that this may make any scientists who go outside the country unwilling to fully disclose what they know. Deputy Defense Secretary Paul D. Wolfowitz said on January 23, 2003, that Saddam Hussein had ordered that scientists and their families be killed if they cooperated with U.N. weapons inspectors. Iraq’s refusal to permit U-2 surveillance flights is another issue of concern to inspectors.

Many analysts regard getting more information on Iraq’s WMD programs as essential, whether or not military force is used. In the case of war, such information will be primarily useful in targeting weapons infrastructure and possibly the weapons themselves. A key question for the moment is whether the information the United States may possess on these programs should be utilized in support of the inspections process, or held back to support war-time targeting. Although some intelligence information has been shared, according to Secretary of State Powell, the United States will present new evidence soon to prove its case. Some reports suggest that the Administration has been reluctant to release more information for fear of jeopardizing intelligence sources while others suggest that the Administration is reserving this information for the potentially difficult diplomatic negotiations within the U.N. Security Council on the use of force.

### **CRS Products**

CRS Issue Brief IB92117, *Iraq: Weapons Threat, Compliance, Sanctions, and U.S. Policy*

CRS Report RL31671, *Iraq: UN Inspections for Weapons of Mass Destruction*

CRS Report RS21376, *Iraq: WMD-Capable Ballistic Missiles and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs)*

## Post-War Iraq

**Kenneth Katzman, 7-7612**

*(Last updated January 21, 2003)*

**Background.** The same U.S. concerns about fragmentation of and instability in a post-Saddam Iraq that surfaced in prior administrations are present in the current debate over Iraq policy. One of the considerations cited by the George H.W. Bush Administration for ending the 1991 Gulf war before ousting Saddam was that a post-Saddam Iraq could dissolve into chaos. It was feared that the ruling Sunni Muslims, the majority but under-represented Shiites, and the Kurds would divide Iraq into warring ethnic and tribal groups, opening Iraq to influence from neighboring Iran, Turkey, and Syria. Because of the complexities of planning for a post-war Iraq, and the potential for major inter-ethnic and factional feuding if Saddam falls, some observers believe that the Bush Administration would prefer that Saddam Hussein be replaced by a military or Baath Party figure who is not necessarily committed to democracy but would comply with applicable U.N. resolutions. Administration statements, however, continue to express a strong commitment to democratizing Iraq. Some regional governments that fear destabilizing effects on their own regimes from a war, including Saudi Arabia, are said to be trying to persuade Saddam to go into exile in order to prevent war.

**Current Planning Efforts.** The Administration is planning for a post-Saddam regime. The Administration asserts that, if it takes military action and ousts the government of Saddam Hussein, it will do what is necessary to bring about a stable, democratic successor regime that complies with all applicable U.N. resolutions. Some press reports say that the Administration is planning for an approximately 18 month occupation of Iraq led primarily by U.S. military officials, working in concert with Iraqis to build a democratic post-war Iraq.<sup>24</sup> Other reports indicate that some military planners would prefer that the United Nations and U.S. allies play a major role in governing post-war Iraq on an interim basis. In September 2002, the Congressional Budget Office estimated that U.S. occupation force levels would range between 75,000 and 200,000 personnel, at a cost of \$1 billion to \$4 billion per month. (See below, **Cost Issues**)

The exiled Iraqi opposition, including those groups most closely associated with the United States, generally opposes a major role for U.S. officials in running a post-war Iraqi government, asserting that Iraqis are sufficiently competent and unified to rebuild Iraq after a war with the United States. The opposition groups that have been active over the past few years, such as the Iraqi National Congress, believe that they are entitled to govern post-Saddam Iraq, and fear that the Administration might hand power to those who have been part of the current regime. For now, the Administration has rebuffed the opposition and decided not to back a "provisional government," composed of Iraqi oppositionists, that would presumably take power after Saddam is overthrown.

---

<sup>24</sup> "U.S. Is Completing Plan to Promote a Democratic Iraq," *New York Times*, January 6, 2002.

As part of the post-war planning process, the U.S. State Department is reportedly running a \$5 million “Future of Iraq” project in which Iraqi exiles are meeting in working groups to address issues that will confront a successor government.<sup>25</sup> The working groups in phase one of the project have discussed (1) transitional justice; (2) public finance; (3) public and media outreach; (4) democratic principles; (5) water, agriculture, and the environment; (6) health and human services; and (7) economy and infrastructure. Phase two, which began in late 2002, includes working groups on (1) education; (2) refugees, internally-displaced persons, and migration policy; (3) foreign and national security policy; (4) defense institutions and policy; (5) free media; (6) civil society capacity-building; (7) anti-corruption measures; and (8) oil and energy.

**Reconstruction/Humanitarian Effects.** It is widely assumed that Iraq’s vast oil reserves, believed second only to those of Saudi Arabia, would be used to fund reconstruction. However, many observers believe that an Iraqi regime on the verge of defeat could destroy its own oil fields. Iraq set Kuwait’s oil fields afire before withdrawing from there in 1991. The Administration reportedly is planning to secure Iraq’s oil fields early in any offensive against Iraq to prevent this from happening. A related issue is long term development of Iraq’s oil industry, and which foreign energy firms, if any, might receive preference for contracts to explore Iraq’s vast reserves. Russia, China, and others are said to fear that the United States will seek to develop Iraq’s oil industry with minimal participation of firms of other countries. Some press reports suggest the Administration is planning to exert such control,<sup>26</sup> although some observers speculate that the Administration is seeking to create such an impression in order to persuade Russia that it has an interest in participating in a coalition against Iraq.

**War Crimes Trials.** An issue related to regime change but somewhat separate is whether Saddam Hussein and his associates should be prosecuted for war crimes and, if so, whether that should be pursued while Saddam is still in power. The Administration reportedly has reached a consensus that, if there is U.S. military action that overthrows Saddam, that he and his inner circle would be tried in Iraq.<sup>27</sup> The Administration is gathering data for a potential trial of Saddam and 12 of his associates, but at the same time, some officials have indicated that Saddam and might be allowed a safe haven if he leaves Iraq voluntarily before a war.<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup> “State Department Hosts Working Group Meeting for Future of Iraq Project,” *Washington File*, December 11, 2002.

<sup>26</sup> “After Saddam, an Uncertain Future,” *Insight Magazine*, February 3, 2003

<sup>27</sup> “U.S. Seeks War Crimes Trial Data.,” *Washington Post*, October 30, 2002.

<sup>28</sup> “Exile for Hussein May be an Option, U.S. Officials Hint,” *New York Times*, January 20, 2002.

## CRS Products

CRS Report RL31339, *Iraq: U.S. Efforts to Change the Regime*  
 CRS Report RL30472, *Iraq: Oil-for-Food Program, International Sanctions,  
 and Illicit Trade*  
 CRS Report RL31585, *Possible U.S. Military Intervention in Iraq: Some  
 Economic Consequences*

## Burden Sharing

Carl Ek (7-7286)

(Last updated January 27, 2003)

In November 2002, it was reported that the U.S. government had contacted the governments of 50 countries with specific requests for assistance in a war with Iraq. According to press reports, several governments have offered help of one kind or another; other countries, according to Bush Administration officials, also intend to support the war effort but, for domestic political reasons, would prefer not to publicize their contributions. Nevertheless, at present it appears unlikely that a coalition comparable to that of *Desert Storm* in 1991 will arise.

**Political and Military Factors.** Some observers believe that the Bush Administration's effort to build a coalition against Iraq is being conducted as much for diplomatic as for military reasons. On the international political front, analysts contend that the United States will seek to enlist allies in order to demonstrate that it is not acting unilaterally – that its decision to use force to disarm Iraq has been endorsed by a broad global coalition. In most cases, foreign decisions to participate or cooperate likely will be predicated upon the results of U.N. arms inspections and the further actions of the U.N. Security Council. Although the political leaders of some Islamic countries are reportedly sympathetic to the Bush Administration's aims, they must consider hostility to U.S. actions among their populations.

From a strictly military standpoint, active allied participation may not be critical. NATO invoked Article 5 (mutual defense) shortly after the September 11, 2001 attacks, but during the subsequent war in Afghanistan, the United States initially relied mainly on its own military resources, accepting only small contingents of special forces from a handful of other countries. Allied combat and peacekeeping forces entered the fray in larger numbers only after the Taliban had been defeated. Analysts speculate that the Administration chose to “go it alone” because the unique nature of U.S. strategy, which entailed special forces ground units locating and then calling in immediate air strikes against enemy targets, necessitated the utmost speed in command and communications. An opposing view is that the United States lost an opportunity in Afghanistan to lay the political groundwork for an allied coalition in the conflict against terrorism. During *Operation Allied Force* in Kosovo in 1999, some U.S. policy-makers complained that the requirement for allied consensus hampered the military campaign with a time-consuming bombing target approval process. Another military rationale for having primarily U.S. forces conduct operations against Iraq is that few other countries possess the military capabilities (e.g., airborne refueling, air transport, precision guided munitions, and night vision

equipment) necessary to conduct a high-tech campaign designed to achieve a swift victory with minimum Iraqi civilian and U.S. casualties.

**Direct and Indirect Contributions.** Britain, the only other country that has had warplanes patrolling the no-fly zones in Iraq, is expected to make contributions of ground, air, and naval forces. Australia has deployed a combat task force, and it is believed that other countries, such as Poland and Canada, may support coalition forces once a conflict begins. Washington and Prague have discussed the possibility of reinforcing Czech anti-chemical weapons specialists in Kuwait, where they have been stationed since March 2002. Japan, constitutionally barred from dispatching ground troops, recently reinforced its fleet of naval vessels patrolling the Indian Ocean. Sweden has indicated that it might contribute field hospitals. Although the German government has said that it would not contribute troops to combat, Chancellor Schroeder has stated that German AWACS crews might help patrol the Turkish-Iraqi border in the event of a war.

There are other forms of support that might prove valuable. For example, countries could grant fly-over rights, or back-fill for U.S. troops that might redeploy to Iraq from Central Asia or the Balkans. In addition, gaining permission to launch air strikes from countries close to Iraq would reduce the need for mid-air refueling, allow aircraft to re-arm sooner, and enable planes to respond more quickly to ground force calls for air strikes; Djibouti, Kuwait, Spain, Italy, Romania and Bulgaria have offered the use of their airbases and seaports. On January 15, the United States formally requested several measures of assistance from the NATO allies, such as AWACS, refueling, and overflight privileges; the request was deferred. The Bush Administration has reportedly sought permission from the Turkish government to use Turkish bases and ports, and to move up to 75,000-80,000 U.S. troops through southeast Turkey to establish a northern front against Iraq; the response is still pending and is a key issue for U.S. planners. Reports appearing on January 17, 2003, indicated that Turkey might permit only a much smaller U.S. contingent due to domestic opposition to a war with Iraq. At the Bush Administration's request, the Hungarian government is allowing the use of an air base for the training of up to 3,000 Iraqi opposition members to assist coalition forces as non-combatant interpreters and administrators.

Although the Persian Gulf states generally oppose an attack on Iraq in public statements, more than 50,000 U.S. troops currently are stationed in the region, and Saudi Arabia and Qatar host large U.S. military command centers. Whether the United States will be permitted to use facilities in Saudi Arabia in carrying out an attack on Iraq remains unclear. U.S. troops based in Kuwait would likely play a key role in any ground attack against Iraq.

**Post-conflict Assistance.** After the 1991 Gulf war, several nations – notably Japan, Saudi Arabia and Germany – provided monetary contributions to offset the costs of the conflict; it is not yet known if such would be the case after a war against Iraq. However, U.S. policymakers hope that several nations likely would contribute to caring for refugees and to the post-war reconstruction of Iraq by providing humanitarian assistance funding, programs for democratization, as well as peacekeeping forces.

**CRS Products**

CRS Report RL31339, *Iraq: U.S. Efforts to Change the Regime*  
CRS Report RL31533, *The Persian Gulf: Issues for U.S. Policy, 2003*

**Implications for the Middle East**

**Alfred B. Prados, 7-7626**

*(Last updated January 23, 2003)*

A U.S.-led war against Iraq – depending on its intensity, duration, and outcome – could have widespread effects on the broader Middle East. Demographic pressures, stagnant economic growth, questions over political succession, and festering regional disputes already raise many uncertainties regarding the future of the Middle East. Although some have voiced fears that Iraq might fragment along ethnic or sectarian lines as a by-product of such a war, a redrawing of regional boundaries as occurred after World War I (and to a lesser extent World War II) is highly unlikely; however, political realignments could take place, along with new alliances and rivalries that might alter long-standing U.S. relationships in the region.

The opportunity to craft a new government and new institutions in Iraq might increase U.S. influence over the course of events in the Middle East. Conversely, U.S. military intervention could create a significant backlash against the United States, particularly at the popular level, and regional governments might feel even more constrained in accommodating U.S. policy goals. Governments that did decide to support the U.S. effort would expect to be rewarded with financial assistance, political support, or both. Turkey, for example, is aware that use of bases on its territory would be critical in providing U.S. forces with essential staging areas. Turkish officials say their country has lost billions of dollars in trade over more than a decade of U.N. sanctions against Iraq and are already pressing for compensation. Similarly, Saudi Arabia, should it assent to U.S. use of its bases or facilities, would be likely to push for political concessions, including a stronger U.S. effort to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict. (See below.)

The ability of the U.S. Government to obtain the support or acquiescence of Middle East governments and their citizens for a U.S.-led campaign against Iraq will be a critical factor determining the effects of such a war on regional issues of interest to the United States. These include democracy and governance, the protracted Arab-Israeli peacemaking process, and security arrangements in the Gulf region. Two other issues, terrorism and access to oil, are treated elsewhere in this report.

**Democracy and Governance.** Some commentators believe that a war with Iraq culminating in the overthrow of Saddam Hussein would lead to a democratic revolution in large parts of the Middle East. The Bush Administration itself has repeatedly expressed support for the establishment of a more democratic order in the Middle East, although skeptics point out that key U.S. allies in the region have authoritarian regimes. Some link democracy in the Middle East with a broader effort to pursue development in a region that has lagged behind much of the world in economic and social development, as well as in individual freedom and political

empowerment. In a speech at the Heritage Foundation on December 12, 2002, Secretary of State Colin Powell announced a three-pronged “Partnership for Peace” initiative designed to enhance economic development, improve education, and build institutions of civil society in the Middle East. Separately, Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia has reportedly proposed an “Arab Charter” that would encourage wider political participation, economic integration, and mutual security measures.

Democratic reform in the Middle East, however, is likely to entail trade-offs and compromises that may affect U.S. strategic plans in the region. Critics have often charged that U.S. Middle Eastern policy is overly tolerant of autocratic or corrupt regimes as long as they provide support for U.S. strategic or economic objectives in the region. Some commentators imply that U.S. pursuit of democracy in the Middle East is likely to be uneven, effectively creating an “exemption” from democracy for key U.S. allies. Other critics argue that the minimal amount of assistance contained in the Powell initiative (\$29 million the first year) reflects only a token effort to support democratization and development. (Arab reactions to the Powell initiative tended to be cool, some arguing that the United States should deal with Arab-Israeli issues first.) Still others fear that more open political systems could lead to a takeover by Islamic fundamentalist groups, who often constitute the most viable opposition in Middle East countries, or by other groups whose goals might be inimical to U.S. interests. Finally, lack of prior experience with democracy may inhibit the growth of democratic institutions in the Middle East.

**Arab-Israeli Peacemaking.** The timing of further initiatives to move forward with Arab-Israeli peacemaking has been among the issues covered in recent debates over a possible war with Iraq. Administration officials and other commentators argue that resolving the present crisis with Iraq will create a more favorable climate in which Arab-Israeli issues can be addressed. Proponents of this view cite the experience of the first Bush Administration, which brought Arabs and Israelis together in a landmark peace conference at Madrid in 1991, after first disposing of the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait. Many believe that the then Bush Administration secured wide Arab participation in the coalition to expel Iraq from Kuwait by promising a major post-war effort to address the Arab-Israeli conflict. Officials of the present Bush Administration continue to speak of their vision of pursuing an Arab-Israeli peace settlement after eliminating current threats from Iraq.

Others believe that U.S. priorities should be reversed, arguing that the current stalemate in Arab-Israeli negotiations, together with on-going violence between Israelis and Palestinians, poses a greater potential threat to the United States than a largely contained Iraq. They point out that support in the Middle East for a U.S.-led coalition against Iraq is far weaker than it was in 1991, and cooperation from Arab and Muslim states at best is likely to be limited and reluctant as long as Arab-Israeli issues continue to fester. They warn that disillusionment over the present stalemate in Arab-Israeli negotiation, combined with a war against Iraq, runs the risk of inflaming popular opinion against the United States and encouraging an increase in anti-U.S. terrorism.<sup>29</sup> Regardless of priority, however, it is likely that a war with Iraq

---

<sup>29</sup> A former high U.S. official described the “Arab street” as “explosive”; however, many (continued...)

will be followed by further pressures on the U.S. Administration to intensify its efforts to resolve the long-standing Arab-Israeli conflict.

**Security Arrangements in the Gulf Region.** Changed conditions in the Persian Gulf region in the aftermath of a war with Iraq could breathe new life into long moribund proposals for a Gulf regional security organization, perhaps with the participation of other U.S. regional allies in the region such as Egypt and Jordan. Over time, such an organization, if effective, might help alleviate burdens that currently devolve upon the United States in countering threats to regional stability and might also play a useful role in the war against terrorism. On the other hand, the departure of Saddam Hussein from the scene could remove a leading incentive for Gulf states to expand their involvement in regional security arrangements. Furthermore, a U.S.-led war that did not enjoy widespread acceptance among the Middle East populace might make local governments reluctant to participate in a regional organization if it were perceived as a U.S. creation. It is possible, too, that Gulf states would prefer to continue relying on their bilateral ties with the United States for security guarantees rather than moving toward a multilateral approach.

### CRS Products

CRS Report RS21325, *Iraq: Divergent Views on Military Action*  
 CRS Report RL31533, *The Persian Gulf: Issues for U.S. Policy*  
 CRS Issue Brief IB92117, *Iraq: Weapons Threat, Compliance, Sanctions, and U.S. Policy*

## Humanitarian Issues

**Rhoda Margesson, 7-0425**

*(Last updated January 23, 2003)*

**Background.** Since the end of the 1991 war with Iraq, surveys and studies show a continuing decline in the health and nutrition status of the Iraqi civilian population, estimated at 27 million,<sup>30</sup> especially among children and the elderly. But it is difficult to determine how much of the suffering is due to the sanctions imposed on Iraq and how much is due to other factors. Imposition of U.N. sanctions followed a nearly decade-long war between Iraq and Iran, during which spending on the social welfare system declined. Decades of conflict and the bombing during the Gulf war damaged or destroyed much of the public infrastructure such as water and sewage plants and many public buildings. Some argue that supplies of water, food, medicine,

---

<sup>29</sup> (...continued)

observers point out that Middle East governments had little trouble containing incipient anti-U.S. demonstrations during the Gulf war in 1990-1991.

<sup>30</sup> Total population numbers for Iraq vary by source from 24 to 27 million people. "UNICEF Humanitarian Action: Iraq Donor Update January 14, 2003." See [<http://www.reliefweb.int>].



and electricity are a matter of urgent concern.<sup>31</sup> However, much of the information available on the conditions within Iraq is also considered unreliable. Some groups question the accuracy of statistics publicized by the government, but have no independent sources of information. All estimates of the number of deaths due to lack of food or medical care vary widely based on the source.

U.N. and other humanitarian agencies provide aid to Iraq through the Oil-for-Food Program (OFFP), which uses revenue from Iraqi oil sales to buy food and medicines for the civilian population.<sup>32</sup> Both bilateral and multilateral aid have continued to flow into the country since the end of the war, although it is difficult to assess the total amount provided by all donors outside the OFFP. During the 1990s, the OFFP alleviated some of the worst effects of the sanctions, but the humanitarian situation (defined as urgent need for food, shelter, and basic health care) remains serious and has continued to deteriorate over time. Some improvements have been seen in nutrition, health services, water supply and sanitation, but there is now greater dependence on government services. Health and nutrition problems have been tied to the consequences of war, sanctions, shortcomings of assistance, and the deliberate policies of the Iraqi regime.

**War-Related Concerns.** The implications of war in Iraq include a potential humanitarian emergency with population movements across borders or within Iraq itself. Four issues are of critical interest to Congress in that context. First, how the war will be fought and for how long; will it be a protracted, urban war with heavy civilian casualties or a shorter war with less impact on the Iraqi people? Second, what type of humanitarian assistance will be provided to displaced populations (aid priorities, use of oil revenues) and the role of other donors? Third, how will assistance programs be implemented—through U.S. occupation, U.N. administration, or U.N./donor assistance? And finally, what will be the impact of refugee flows on stability in the region and the role of neighboring countries in contributing to post-war efforts?

A U.N. Task Force assembled to coordinate the U.N. response to a possible conflict predicts a conflict in Iraq could cause 500,000 casualties, create 900,000 refugees, and displace 2 million people, leaving about 10 million Iraqi civilians (nearly 40% of the Iraqi population) in need of emergency assistance.<sup>33</sup> However,

---

<sup>31</sup> “Agencies Fear Consequences But Plan for War in Iraq; Iraq Stocks up Food Ahead of Possible US War.” *Turkish Daily News*, December 27, 2002.

<sup>32</sup> For more information about the Oil-for-Food Program (OFFP) see CRS Report RL30472, *Iraq: Oil-for-Food Program, International Sanctions, and Illicit Trade* by Kenneth Katzman.

<sup>33</sup> “War in Iraq Will Have Major Impact on Global Economy, U.N. Says,” *Deutsche Presse Agentur*, January 10, 2003. The U.N. report “Likely Humanitarian Scenarios” that contained this information was originally kept strictly confidential, but a Mennonite organization obtained a copy and posted it [<http://www.cam.ac.uk/societies/casi/pr/pr030107undoc.html>]. According to the U.S. Committee for Refugees, Jordan had 1.64 million refugees at the end of 2001; 350,000 Iraqis have settled there since the 1991 war. “Aid Groups Get Ready for War—Nearby Nations Expect Flood of Iraqi Refugees,” *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, (continued...)

some analysts believe that if the war is a brief one, casualties will be considerably fewer. The United Nations reportedly estimates that 4.5 million to 9.5 million Iraqis would need food soon after the onset of hostilities.<sup>34</sup>

**Refugees.** Iran, Turkey, Jordan, Syria, and Kuwait have publicly stated that they will prevent refugees from entering their countries.<sup>35</sup> Iranian leaders have stated that refugees will not be allowed over Iranian borders, but refugees would be provided assistance in Iraq, which is a similar strategy used by Iran in Afghanistan.<sup>36</sup> However, Iran is also setting up 19 camps within its borders just in case. Turkey has said that it would prefer not to allow refugees over its borders and is planning to build 13 camps in northern Iraq. However, Turkey is also planning five more camps within its borders and has started preparations to build one camp of 24,000 tents. The Red Crescent team is making preparations to accommodate up to 100,000 people and treat up to 7,000 injured by bombs and fighting.<sup>37</sup> Kuwait's government has said it will not let refugees enter the country from Iraq but that displaced people could be cared for in the demilitarized border zone between the two countries. The government is also preparing to establish a camp for refugees. According to relief agency officials, Jordanian authorities appear determined not to allow Iraqi refugees into Jordan. Saudi Arabia has not publicly discussed the need for preparation for refugees, but there have been reports that the government is making some plans.<sup>38</sup>

**Aid Agency Planning.** The United Nations has an extensive infrastructure in Iraq to oversee the OFFP.<sup>39</sup> Few nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have offices in Baghdad and only a handful have a presence in Iraq. The Iraqi regime restricts NGOs—for example, those that work in the North cannot have offices in the South. In addition, U.S.-based organizations are required by the U.S. Government to have a license to operate in Iraq.<sup>40</sup> Among NGOs, there is a concern that U.S. and

<sup>33</sup> (...continued)

December 23, 2002.

<sup>34</sup> “Supplies Amassed Along Front Line of Iraq’s ‘Other’ War; As U.S. Military Prepares for Fighting, Relief Groups Mobilize to Save Lives,” *Washington Post*, January 5, 2003.

<sup>35</sup> “Aid Groups Cagey on Contingency Plans for Iraq War,” *Reuters*, January 15, 2003.

<sup>36</sup> Iranian police chief Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf recently said, “No Refugees will be Allowed into our Territory if America Attacks Iraq.” “Tehran Sends Mixed Signals on Iraqi Refugees,” *RFL/RL*, January 16, 2003; “Iran Prepares for Possible Iraqi Refugee Influx,” *Reuters*, January 16, 2003.

<sup>37</sup> “Turkey to set up 24,000 tents at Iraq border for possible refugee influx,” *Agence France-Presse*, January 15, 2003; “Supplies Amassed Along Front Line of Iraq’s ‘Other’ War.”

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has four offices inside Iraq, and works primarily with 100,000 Palestinians, 23,000 Iranians and 13,000 Turks—all of whom are refugees. “U.N. Seeks \$37.4 million Humanitarian Supplies in Case of Iraq War.” *Dow Jones International News*, December 23, 2002.

<sup>40</sup> “U.S. Plans Humanitarian Assistance for Iraqi People in Case of War,” January 16, 2003, [<http://usinfo.state.gov/regional/nea/iraq/>]. “Uncertainty Dogs Relief Groups’ Plans to Care (continued...)”

other military leaders have underestimated the potential humanitarian crisis in Iraq.<sup>41</sup> NGOs have also complained that the U.S. government has delayed approval of licenses required for U.S. agencies in Iraq, Iran, and Syria because of U.S. sanctions.<sup>42</sup> As a result, according to Interaction (an alliance of U.S.-based international development and humanitarian non-governmental organizations), very few U.S. or international organizations are operating in and around Iraq, which means that they have no network in place and little experience in the area.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, according to NGOs, Pentagon officials have suggested that aid organizations should not expect to operate in much of Iraq for several months after a start of hostilities.

Some international organizations, such as the International Committee for the Red Cross, have stockpiled supplies in and around Iraq, but there is a reluctance to do this because these organizations do not want to send a message that they believe a conflict is inevitable.<sup>44</sup> U.N. humanitarian agencies met with key donors in Geneva on December 13, 2002, to develop possible humanitarian scenarios and contingency plans. The United Nations has appealed for \$37.4 million to provide humanitarian assistance and food, increase staffing for relief operations, and develop joint services for the aid community in Iraq.<sup>45</sup> UNHCR has been putting together a contingency plan to address the potential for large-scale population movements. The United Nations Department of Peacekeeping is reportedly planning to establish an office that could help with the coordination and distribution of humanitarian aid.<sup>46</sup>

**Potential Internal Humanitarian Consequences of War.** The United Nations has explored the ways in which the current poor humanitarian situation inside Iraq could worsen during a conflict.<sup>47</sup> With more than two thirds of the country receiving food assistance and many suffering from malnutrition and other health problems, this situation could get worse if parts of Iraq became isolated and humanitarian agencies could not gain access to these areas. Food security is a critical concern in Iraq. Reportedly, families cannot make their rations last the full month or they need to sell part of it for other necessities—leaving them without any food stored in reserve and more vulnerable, particularly if food distribution were to be

---

<sup>40</sup> (...continued)

for Iraq Refugees,” *Financial Times*, January 6, 2003.

<sup>41</sup> AlertNet, “Agencies Should Resist Being Taken for Granted,” January 17, 2003, <http://www.reliefweb.org>.

<sup>42</sup> “Aid Agencies accuse US of Hindering War Relief Preparations in Iraq,” *Agence France-Presse*, January 17, 2003.

<sup>43</sup> Interaction, *U.S. Relief and Development Organizations Concerned Over Potential Humanitarian Consequences of War in Iraq*, November 2002, [[http://www.interaction.org/media/Hot\\_Iraq.html](http://www.interaction.org/media/Hot_Iraq.html)].

<sup>44</sup> “This Time Around, War Would Hit Iraq Harder,” *The Washington Post*, Oct. 29, 2002.

<sup>45</sup> “U.N. Appeals for \$37.4 million in Iraq Aid.” *AP On Line*, December 23, 2002.

<sup>46</sup> “Iraq War Could Put 10 Million in Need of Aid,” *The Washington Post*, January 7, 2003.

<sup>47</sup> “Strictly Confidential U.N. document “Likely Humanitarian Scenarios,” December 10, 2002, [<http://www.cam.ac.uk/societies/casi/pr/pr030107undoc.html>].

interrupted.<sup>48</sup> Military destruction of roads or railways could also destroy the food distribution systems within Iraq and those from the international community. If power stations were hit, the already damaged water and sanitation systems could be further damaged, which could lead to epidemics, such as cholera and hepatitis. According to the United Nations, particularly with an increase in displaced populations “the outbreak of diseases in epidemic if not pandemic proportions is very likely.”<sup>49</sup> Water and sanitation are of greatest concern. Shortages in medical supplies, drugs and vaccines have also been reported, and current stocks are predicted to last only 4 months at current consumption rates.

In the confusion of war or in the context of a power vacuum, some observers have suggested that Iraqis may initiate revenge killings and seek to resolve grievances through violence or some form of revolt. In 1991, some Shiites executed Baath party officials. Such an environment with a breakdown of the social order could have serious humanitarian impacts, such as large-scale deaths and serious human rights abuses, particularly towards women.<sup>50</sup>

Depending on the type of warfare, many Iraqis could suffer the unintended consequences of military action, or the effects of chemical and biological weapons if used by their government. If units of the Iraqi army took a scorched earth policy, as they did with the Kuwaiti oil wells in the Gulf War, there could be serious environmental and health consequences.

## **International and Domestic Legal Issues Relating to the Use of Force**

**Richard Grimmett 7-7675; David Ackerman 7-7965**

*(Last Updated, January 24, 2003)*

The potential use of United States military force against Iraq necessarily raises a number of domestic and international legal issues – (1) its legality under Article I, § 8, of the Constitution and the War Powers Resolution; (2) its legality under international law if seen as a preemptive use of force; (3) the effect of United Nations Security Council resolutions on the matter; and (4) the implications of such a use of force for the numerous statutes providing special emergency powers to the President. The following subsections give brief overviews of these issues and provide links to reports that discuss these matters in greater detail.

**The Constitution and the War Powers Resolution.** The potential use of military force by the United States against Iraq necessarily raises legal questions under both the Constitution and the War Powers Resolution. Article I, Section 8, of the Constitution confers on Congress the power to “declare War”; and Congress has

---

<sup>48</sup> “UNICEF Humanitarian Action: Iraq Donor Update,” January 14, 2003.

<sup>49</sup> “Strictly Confidential U.N. Document.”

<sup>50</sup> “Statement on War with Iraq,” Women’s Commission for Refugee Women and Children, International Rescue Committee, [<http://www.womenscommission.org>].

employed this authority to enact both declarations of war and authorizations for the use of force. Article II of the Constitution, in turn, vests the “executive Power” of the government in the President and designates him the “Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States ...” Because of these separate powers, and because of claims about the inherent authority that accrues to the President by virtue of the existence of the United States as a sovereign nation, controversy has often arisen about the extent to which the President may use military force without congressional authorization. While all commentators agree that the President has the constitutional authority to defend the United States from sudden attack without congressional authorization, dispute still arises concerning whether, and the extent to which, the use of offensive force in a given situation, such as may be contemplated against Iraq, must be authorized by Congress in order to be constitutional.

The War Powers Resolution (WPR) (P.L. 93-148), in turn, imposes specific procedural mandates on the President’s use of military force. The WPR requires, *inter alia*, that the President, in the absence of a declaration of war, file a report with Congress within 48 hours of introducing U.S. armed forces “into hostilities or situations where imminent involvement in hostilities is clearly indicated by the circumstances.” Section 5(b) of the WPR then requires that the President terminate the use of the armed forces within 60 days (90 days in certain circumstances) unless Congress, in the interim, has declared war or adopted a specific authorization for the continued use of force. The WPR also requires the President to “consult” with Congress regarding uses of force.

In the present circumstance these legal requirements have been met and any controversy about the President’s unilateral use of force avoided. As noted earlier in this report, P.L. 107-243, signed into law on October 16, 2002, authorized the President “to use the Armed Forces of the United States as he determines to be necessary and appropriate in order to (1) defend the national security of the United States against the continuing threat posed by Iraq; and (2) enforce all relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions regarding Iraq.” As predicates for the use of force, the statute requires the President to communicate to Congress his determination that the use of diplomatic and other peaceful means will not “adequately protect the United States ... or ... lead to enforcement of all relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions” and that the use of force is “consistent” with the battle against terrorism. P.L. 107-243 also specifically states that it is “intended to constitute specific statutory authorization within the meaning of section 5(b) of the War Powers Resolution.” It also requires the President to make periodic reports to Congress “on matters relevant to this joint resolution.” Finally, the statute expresses congressional “support” for the efforts of the President to obtain “prompt and decisive action by the Security Council” to enforce Iraq’s compliance with all relevant Security Council resolutions; but it does not condition the use of force on prior Security Council authorization.

### CRS Products

CRS Electronic Briefing Book, *Terrorism*, “War Powers: Statutory Authority for the Use of Force Against Iraq,” available online from the CRS site at [<http://www.congress.gov/brbk/html/ebter226.html>]

CRS Electronic Briefing Book, *Terrorism*, “War Powers: Domestic Legal Considerations” [<http://www.congress.gov/brbk/html/ebter126.html>]

CRS Report RL31133, *Declarations of War and Authorizations for the Use of Military Force: Historical Background and Legal Implications*

**International Law and the Preemptive Use of Force.** In his speech to the United Nations on September 12, 2002, President Bush described the regime of Saddam Hussein in Iraq as “a grave and gathering danger,” detailed that regime’s persistent efforts to acquire weapons of mass destruction and its persistent defiance of numerous Security Council resolutions requiring Iraq to disarm, and raised the specter of an “outlaw regime” providing such weapons to terrorists. In that speech and others, the President has left little doubt that, with or without U.N. support, the United States intends to act to force Iraq to disarm and otherwise abide by its past commitments and that the U.S. may well use military force to accomplish that objective.

Given that the United States has not itself been attacked by Iraq, one question that arises is whether the unilateral use of force against Iraq by the U.S. would be deemed legitimate under international law. International law traditionally has recognized the right of States to use force in self-defense, and that right continues to be recognized in Article 51 of the U.N. Charter. That right has also traditionally included the right to use force preemptively. But to be recognized as legitimate, preemption has had to meet two tests: (1) the perceived threat of attack has had to be imminent, and (2) the means used have had to be proportionate to the threat.

In the past the imminence of a threat has usually been readily apparent due to the movement of enemy armed forces. But the advent of terrorism, coupled with the potential availability of weapons of mass destruction, has altered that equation. As a consequence, the legitimacy under international law of a preemptive attack on Iraq by the United States, absent any Security Council authorization, may not, at the outset, be readily determinable; and the circumstances eventually determined to provide justification for such an attack may shape what, in the future, is deemed to be a lawful preemptive use of force.

### CRS Products

CRS Report RS21314, *International Law and the Preemptive Use of Force Against Iraq*

CRS Report RS21311, *U.S. Use of Preemptive Military Force*

**Security Council Authorization.** Prior to widespread adoption of the Charter of the United Nations (U.N.), international law recognized a nation’s use of force against another nation as a matter of sovereign right. But the Charter was

intended to change this legal situation. The Charter states one of its purposes to be “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.” To that end it mandates that its member states “refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations” and that they “settle their disputes by peaceful means ....” It also creates a system of collective security under Chapter VII to maintain and, if necessary, restore international peace and security, effectuated through the Security Council. While that system was often frustrated by the Cold War, the Security Council has directed its member states to impose economic sanctions in a number of situations and to use military force in such situations as Korea, Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait, and the Balkans. In addition, the Charter in Article 51, as noted above, continues to recognize the right of States to use force in self-defense.

Whether further Security Council authorization is necessary to give U.N. authority to the use of force against Iraq is debatable. It is at least arguable that the authorization the Council adopted in 1990 remains in effect. In the wake of a number of resolutions concerning Iraq’s invasion and occupation of Kuwait, Resolution 678, adopted November 29, 1990, authorized Member States “to use all necessary means to uphold and implement Resolution 660 (1990) and all subsequent relevant resolutions and to restore international peace and security in the area.” In Resolution 687, adopted April 3, 1991, the Council set forth various requirements – including unconditional Iraqi disarmament, and unconditional Iraqi agreement not to develop or acquire chemical, biological or nuclear weapons or facilities or components related to them – as obligations that Iraq had to meet as conditions of the cease-fire. Resolution 687 specifically reaffirmed previous U.N. resolutions on Iraq, including Resolution 678. It can be contended, therefore, that a failure of Iraq to meet the conditions set forth in Resolution 687 vitiates the cease-fire and brings the authorization contained in Resolution 678 back into play.

Nonetheless, that may not be the view of a number of members of the Security Council, and it remains a fact that the Council has not enacted any further explicit authorization for the use of force against Iraq since 1990. On November 8, 2002, in the wake of President Bush’s challenging address to the United Nations a month earlier, the Security Council did adopt Resolution 1441; and the focus now is on Iraqi compliance with that resolution. Resolution 1441 stated that Iraq was in “material breach” of its obligations under earlier resolutions, imposed “an enhanced inspections regime” in order to give Iraq “a final opportunity to comply with its disarmament obligations,” and stated that Iraq would face “serious consequences” if it continued to fail to meet its obligations. The resolution obligates the Council to “convene immediately” should Iraq interfere with the inspections regime or otherwise fail to meet its disarmament obligations.

## CRS Products

CRS Report RS21323, *The United Nations Security Council – Its Role in the Iraq Crisis: A Brief Overview*

CRS Report RL31611, *Iraq-Kuwait: United Nations Security Council Resolutions Texts – 1992-2002*

CRS Report 91-395, *Iraq-Kuwait: U.N. Security Council Texts and Votes – 1991*

CRS Report 90-513, *Iraq-Kuwait: U.N. Security Council Resolutions Texts and Votes – 1990*

## Cost Issues

**Stephen Daggett, 7-7642; Amy Belasco, 7-7627**

*(Last updated January 23, 2003)*

Currently, the Defense Department appears to be financing the mobilization of forces and the deployment of equipment for a potential war with Iraq using either supplemental appropriations that Congress provided last year for global counter-terrorism operations or regular FY2003 funding. The Administration is expected to request supplemental appropriations to cover additional expenses either in February, when the FY2004 budget is submitted, or shortly thereafter. In the mean time, the FY2003 Omnibus Appropriations bill, H.J. Res. 2, may include some interim measures to give the Defense Department flexibility in paying for the buildup of forces in the Persian Gulf. The House-passed version of H.J. Res. 2 includes a provision providing DOD with \$2.5 billion in additional general transfer authority – the regular FY2003 defense appropriations bill provided \$2 billion, equal to amounts usually provided in recent years.

The Defense Department has not provided any estimates of the potential costs of a war with Iraq. The Office of Management and Budget has prepared an internal estimate, which reportedly projects costs of \$50-60 billion, but it has not issued the estimate publicly, and it has not explained the assumptions underlying its projections.

Two congressional estimates of costs are available, however.

- On September 30, 2002, the Congressional Budget Office prepared estimates of the costs of two illustrative campaigns – a heavy ground option involving 370,000 troops deployed to the region and a heavy air option involving 270,000 troops. It projected that costs of these options could range from \$9 to \$13 billion to deploy forces to the Persian Gulf, from \$6 to \$9 billion a month to fight a war, from \$5 to \$7 billion to return forces to their home bases, and from \$1 to \$4 billion a month for a continuing occupation.<sup>51</sup>

---

<sup>51</sup> The CBO report is at [<ftp://ftp.cbo.gov/38xx/doc3822/09-30-Iraq.pdf>].



- A week earlier, the Democratic staff of the House Budget Committee prepared an estimate based on costs of the Persian Gulf War of 1991. Its estimates ranged from \$31 billion for a conflict lasting 30 days with 125,000 troops to \$60 billion for a conflict lasting 60 days with 250,000 troops. The estimate also calculated that interest costs of increasing the deficit to finance the war would total an additional \$17 to \$33 billion over 10 years. The study did not address occupation or reconstruction costs.<sup>52</sup>

CBO and the House Budget Committee Democratic staff estimated only the direct budgetary effects of a war. Neither considered the possible economic consequences, which could, in turn, affect federal revenues and outlays indirectly. In November 2002, William Nordhaus of Yale University prepared a study that estimated the total economic costs. Using the CBO and House Budget Committee staff estimates as a starting point, he calculated that total costs could range from a cumulative total of \$120 billion on optimistic assumptions to \$1.6 trillion on unfavorable assumptions.<sup>53</sup>

## **Economic Effects of a War with Iraq**

**Marc Labonte, 7-0640**

*(Last updated January 24, 2003)*

U.S. military operations in Iraq would potentially have two distinct effects on the economy. First, an increase in military expenditures, if deficit financed, could increase aggregate demand in the short run. Second, if military operations led to a sudden and persistent spike in the price of oil, economic growth could fall and inflation could rise in the short run. Specific economic estimates are hindered by uncertainty surrounding the scale and scope of operations, the effects of operations on oil prices, and the response of (and effect on) neighboring oil-producing countries.

**Economic Effects of Military Expenditures.** In the past, military conflicts have been financed through higher taxes, lower government spending in non-military areas, government borrowing from the public, or money creation. Higher taxes or lower government spending may play a small role in financing any U.S. operation in Iraq; money creation would almost certainly not play a role. Government borrowing from the public, through the issuance of U.S. Treasury securities to finance a larger budget deficit, appears likely to be the primary form of financing any military operations in Iraq. If this were the case, the military outlays would boost aggregate demand in the short run. Some of the boost in aggregate demand would be directed to foreigners instead of domestic producers since the operations would occur abroad. Some of the boost in aggregate demand would be “crowded out” by higher interest rates, which reduce investment spending and other interest-sensitive spending, and

---

<sup>52</sup> See [[http://www.house.gov/budget\\_democrats/analyses/spending/iraqi\\_cost\\_report.pdf](http://www.house.gov/budget_democrats/analyses/spending/iraqi_cost_report.pdf)].

<sup>53</sup> See [[http://www.amacad.org/publications/monographs/War\\_with\\_Iraq.pdf](http://www.amacad.org/publications/monographs/War_with_Iraq.pdf)] .

dollar appreciation, which reduces exports and the production of import-competing goods. If economic activity were still sluggish when an invasion took place, less of the boost in aggregate demand would be crowded out. In any case, even the highest cost estimates of the operations suggest that the outlays would be too small relative to GDP to have significant economic effects. Wars may shift resources from non-military spending to military spending, but since military spending is included in GDP, this would not by itself lead to a recession.

**Economic Effects of Higher Oil Prices.** Perhaps the greatest unknown economic factor in a military conflict with Iraq is the effect it would have on oil prices. Economic theory suggests that oil shocks lead to higher inflation, a contraction in output, and higher unemployment. Effective policy responses are difficult because expansionary policy would exacerbate the inflationary pressures while contractionary policy would exacerbate the contraction in output. Military operations against Iraq would be likely to reduce Iraqi oil output temporarily. Whether this led to a sustained spike in oil prices would depend on whether other oil producers increase their production to fill the gap or whether the military operations could accomplish their objectives quickly with little collateral damage to Iraqi oil facilities, topics beyond the scope of this report. Evidence suggests that an increase in the price of oil would have little effect on the economy if it is transient.

**The Role of Confidence in the Economy.** Many of the negative economic forecasts by private analysts concerning a potential conflict are being driven in large part by their assumptions that the conflict would reduce consumer and business confidence and stock market values. These effects are highly speculative, as they have not been important factors in many past American wars.

**Economic Effects of the First Gulf War.** Most economists do not attribute the 1990-1991 recession to the Gulf War. Rather, they attribute it to contractionary monetary policy, the spike in oil prices that accompanied the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, and problems in the U.S. banking sector. The Gulf War did not begin until the recession was almost over. As a percentage of GDP, military outlays actually fell during the Gulf War, unlike the typical war-time military buildup that expands aggregate demand.

### **CRS Products**

CRS Report RL31585, *Possible U.S. Military Intervention in Iraq: Some Economic Consequences*, by Marc Labonte.

CRS Report RL31176, *Financing Issues and Economic Effects of Past American Wars*

CRS Report RL31676, *Middle East Oil Disruption, Potential Severity and Policy Options*

## Information Resources

This section provides links to additional sources of information related to a possible war with Iraq.

### CRS Experts

A list of CRS experts on Iraq-related issues may be found at [<http://www.crs.gov/experts/iraqconflict.shtml>].

Those listed include experts on U.S. policy towards Iraq, Iraqi threats, U.N. sanctions and U.S. enforcement actions, policy options and implications, war powers and the use of force, nation-building and exit strategies, and international views and roles. Information research experts are also listed.

### CRS Products

For a list of CRS products related to the Iraq situation, see [<http://www.congress.gov/erp/legissues/html/isfar12.html>].

The reports listed deal with threats, responses, and consequences; international and regional issues and perspectives; and authorities and precedents for the use of force.

### Chronology

For a chronology of Iraq related events since October 2002, see CRS Report RL31667, *Iraq-U.S. Confrontation: Chronology and Scheduled Events*.

### Iraq Facts

For background information on Iraq, including geography, population, ethnic divisions, government structure, and economic information, see the *World Factbook, 2002* published by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency.

[<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/iz.html>]

### Maps

For basic maps related to the Iraq situation, see CRS Report RS21396, *Iraq: Map Sources*. The html version of the report includes hot links to a wide range of map resources.

### Reports, Studies, and Electronic Products

This website includes links to a wide range of sources relevant to the Iraq confrontation.

[<http://www.congress.gov/brbk/html/ebter233.html#ppos>].

The following site focuses on official sources, including sources in both the legislative and executive branches of the U.S. government, foreign government sources, and sources of information at international organizations.

[<http://www.crs.gov/products/browse/iraqdocs.shtml>].

## **United Nations Resolutions**

On November 8, 2002, the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1441, holding Iraq in “material breach” of its disarmament obligations. For background and text, see

[<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2002/SC7564.doc.htm>]

For a compendium of resolutions since 1992, see CRS Report RL31611, *Iraq-Kuwait: United Nations Security Council Texts, 1992-2002*.