

Hostile Interventions Against Iraq 1991-2004

Try, try, try again – then succeed and
the trouble

US Foreign policy toward Iraq from the end of the Gulf war to the Invasion in 2003

US policy was two fold --

1. **Contain and pressure**

- A. Un authorized economic sanctions
- B. weapons inspections regime
- C. No-fly zones in N. and S. Iraq

2. **Harass, punish and topple Iraq leadership**

- A. Military airstrikes
- B Covert efforts to topple Saddam via assassination and/or coup

Contain and Pressure

To support the no fly zone and the economic sanctions and weapons inspections regimes the US kept a significant military presence in the Gulf from 1991-2003. – varying from 5,000 to 38,000

The estimate cost of the contain and pressure approach was from 1.0 to 1.5 Billion per year (the cost of one week's worth of military occupation of Iraq at 2003-4 rates)

Harass, Punish Topple

- Military strikes

1993– US, UK, and French planes bomb CCC and nuclear complex

1996 - In an effort to help the Kurds in the North who were under attack by Saddam, the US launched 44 cruise missiles at targets in S. Iraq

1998 – In response to a UN report that Iraq was not complying with WMD disarmament – US launched operation Desert Fox – a four day missile and bomber attack on a large number of targets – military installations, presidential palaces, air defense systems, and WMD sites – operation cut short because of protest by Russia, China, France, and Egypt and large demonstrations in the Arab world

1999-2000 numerous strikes as Iraq challenged the no-fly zones

Efforts to oust Saddam

Starting in 191 Pres Bush authorized the CIA to carry out covert ops to oust Saddam -- from 1991-5 the CIA spend over 100 Million on various operations

Three approaches

- 1 Encourage Kurdish groups to trigger a “rolling coup”
- 2 Encourage and promote a silver bullet assassination by security officials or family members
- 3 Promote palace coup by Iraq security units

supported the Iraqi national congress -- Ahmed Chalabi

And the Kurdish KPD and PUK groups -- efforts collapsed in 1996

Next CIA worked with exiled Iraqi military efforts to carry out a “zipless coup”
Failed when Saddam’s agents infiltrated the group

1998 Iraq Liberation Act Passed – authorized large amount of funds to Iraqi opposition forces to overthrow Saddam -- passed almost unanimously in both House and Senate – shows Saddam’s regime as an international pariah and that regime change was the objective of the US

With the new Bush administration -- US policy toward Iraq effectively stayed the same -- economic sanctions, continued covert operations even though officials like Paul Wolfowitz were “fixated with Removing Saddam

9/11 changes the policy landscape

Bush Administration fixate on Iraq right after 9/11

Rice – investigate Iraq – all Qaida connection

Rumsfeld – famous quote

Bush – interaction with Richard Clarke

Wolfowitz – 10-50% chance Iraq had been involved

But had to do Afghanistan first – But General Franks pushed hard in later stages of Afghanistan conflict to start planning for Iraq invasions

Also begin shifting US troops from Afghanistan to the Gulf

Buildup to the Iraq invasion

Commences with the 2002 “axis of evil” state of the union speech

Spring 2002 feverish military planning

Continued efforts over the summer and fall to establish Al-Quada/Iraq link

Efforts to establish evidence of Iraq WMD

July 2002 - Famous Downing Street memo – “Military action now seemed inevitable. Justified by the conjunction of terrorism and WMD. “But the intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy”

Military planning for invasions in high gear

Cheney, Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz pushing hard for invasion

- Powell the main counterweight -- wanted to get UN resolutions (wanted international support and legitimacy in a meeting with Pres Bush in August 02 -- won the day (temporarily) with the “you break it you own it” phrase
- But Cheney sets the terms of the internal and external debates with his late August speech and the key phrase
- “Simply put, there is no doubt that he is amassing them to use against our friends, against our allies, and against us.”
- The now infamous October 2002 CIA National Intelligence Estimate helps “roll” Congress -- serious known flaws -- links of Iraqi officials and Mohammad Atta, efforts to obtain yellow cake, and the aluminum tubes to enrich uranium

After the famous 10/8/02 Senate NIE briefing

Congressional Resolution authorizing the use of force passes the House 296-133 and the Senate 77 to 23

Selling the war

1 Getting international support UN resolution 1441

“material breach” of any part would trigger automatic authorization by the US and other to use “all necessary means” -- difficult sell

2 Managing the reinstatement of weapons inspections by the UN in Iraq and the shell game

3 Convincing the American public on WMD “it’s a slam dunk”

- Bush effective decision to use force made in late December
- War plans readied
- State of the Union speech “The British government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa”

- Congress no obstacle – Feith testimony as an example
- Colin Powell’s 76 minute speech to the UN about Iraq’s WMD and links to al Qaeda - “the Powell buy-in”
- Dealing with a lack of international support in 01/2003
- 1 Attach the credibility of the UN weapons inspection process
- 2 consider ways to provoke a coup or military action by Saddam

Constant US military deployments to the region continued and by early March 2003 US forces in the region totaled 208,000 with an additional 50k to arrive soon and also 44,000 coalition troops

US military analysts estimated that the US forces would reach Baghdad within 30 days with fewer than 1,000 casualties (as long as Saddam did not use WMD)

Continued difficulty with France on 1441 but also some “trusted” allies like Chile and Mexico

But much of this actually was overblown – The US did establish the coalition of the willing (49 in total) but even states that did not publically support the US helped – Germany, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia

- The end game
- 1 The 48 hour ultimatum plan
- 2 Inform Congress then national speech
- 3 Start specials operations in Iraq
- But CIA intell about location of Saddam – so decision made to start conflict early in hopes of decapitating top leadership

- All phases of the invasion plan shrunk and speeded up

- Baghdad falls 4/9 5/ Bush declares major combat operations over

- But due to
- A lack of post war planning,
- Disbanding of Iraqi army
- Small size of the US occupying force – and removal of significant forces
- Host of “small” mistakes by the CPA

- The insurgency takes hold

- Note that shortly after the Iraq regime -- UN (international) recognition of effort– legitimacy o, financial support for reconstruction, recognition of US and UK occupying forces until and Iraqi government could be put into place