



FEBRUARY 2003

Iraq: the regional fallout



— OVERVIEW —

The regional fallout from war on Iraq can best be understood in the context of the contemporary state system. Iraq is not a hermetically sealed box that can be redesigned in isolation from its regional links and relations. Competing interests within and reverberations across the surrounding countries will vastly complicate the prosecution of war and subsequent rebuilding of Iraq.

The contemporary state system in the Middle East region is less than a century old. Constructed on the ruins of the Ottoman Empire in the wake of the First World War, a configuration of separate states has taken shape that cut across pre-existing socio-economic links, ethnic groups and tribal loyalties. Turkey, the former hub of the Ottoman Empire, regrouped under Kemalist Turkish nationalism. Iran consolidated its statehood on its Persian heritage. For the Arabs, however, state-building meant carving out a place in the wider Arab nationalist context.

The distinctive national identities that now define Iraq and its Arab neighbours are the product of the centralizing strategies of the various governments, galvanized initially by anti-imperialism and enduringly by competition with one another.

Whatever the motives for intervention, on the ground US actions will be interpreted in the light of recent history and perceptions. In Iraq itself the desirability of liberation will be weighed against the costs. Across the wider Arab world, the United States is viewed as the new imperial power with a commitment to the defence of Israel. There are echoes of this in Iran (see section on that country below). Washington's various policies in the Middle East over the years have been explained publicly as pursuit of the US national interest, including access to oil and defence of Israel. Regional governments have variously placated and defied the United States, as has suited their interests, but even its friends in the region know that a US war on Iraq will challenge the nationalist and Islamic credentials of most of them.

Iraq itself is a construct, devised under British tutelage out of three Ottoman provinces, that brought together Kurds, a Sunni Arab minority and a Shia majority in a new amalgam that has been kept together by militaristic rule, a cult of personality, manipulation of internal ethnic and sectarian divisions, anti-imperialism and competition, not to mention war, with Iraq's neighbours. A war for regime change in Iraq will either break this mould and risk chaos, or end up reinventing the same formula for ruling Iraq which has prevailed hitherto.

In any case, military intervention in Iraq will disrupt the oil and trade links that have taken shape under the sanctions regime. The Syrian economy now depends on the hard currency derived from oil exports, using smuggled Iraqi oil to meet domestic consumption. Under UN dispensation, Jordan has received oil supplies from Iraq at less than half the market price. Cut this and the Jordanians will be obliged to buy energy at commercial rates. They will also lose a lucrative trading relationship with Baghdad, at least for the duration of hostilities.

The Turkish economy will also be hit by war, though the package of loans and grants negotiated between Ankara and Washington is designed to compensate Turkey for the fallout. Certainly, there will be an interruption to revenue derived from transporting Iraq oil to the Mediterranean. An even bigger concern for Turkey, however, has to do with the future of the Kurds in Iraq. Were the Iraqi Kurds to try to assert formal political independence in the midst of war, Turkey might feel sufficiently threatened by the possibility of a wider movement emerging to act to prevent them from succeeding.

Turkey is not the only country with a stake in what happens to the Kurds. Iran and Syria have Kurdish communities on their borders with Iraq. Kurdish separatism has not been a significant issue for Syria, but could become one if Iraqi Kurdistan erupts and there is fallout across the border. The collective interests of Turkey, Syria and Iran in seeing Kurdish nationalism circumscribed look set to limit the prospects of Kurdish autonomy gaining strength.

Iran must also view the consequences of US intervention as another step in its encirclement by US forces and clients. That said, there is no love lost between Iranians and the regime of Saddam Hussein. Seeing him toppled will suit many of the different currents of opinion in Iran, but these vary in how they contemplate what comes after. Better representation for Iraqi Shia in a new polity might sit well with Iran's heritage of championship of Shia interests. However, if Iraq's centres of Shia learning are able to thrive again this could translate into a form of competition.

All Iraq's neighbours anticipate a flood of refugees in the face of a US invasion. Ministering to these will

demand international assistance, but none of the neighbours will want to play host to significant numbers of refugees for more than a short period. In this respect the neighbouring states will have an interest in seeing a US-led war move swiftly to a decisive outcome, enabling rehabilitation and rebuilding.

Along with Turkey and Iran, all the Arab states dread a chaotic outcome to war on Iraq, yet they have mixed feelings about a decisive US victory too. Governments across the region know that their populations are likely to see such an outcome as blatant US imperialism, a grab for oil and a plot to protect Israel. They are also conscious of talk in Washington, spearheaded by the neo-conservative hawks, of bringing democracy and American values to the region. Most expect to come under US pressure to reform their own political systems.

The following section examines three broad scenarios for Iraq in the event of a war. The first of these, a *coup d'état*, has two strands: one a coup that occurs in time to avert war, the other a coup once an invasion is well under way. The second scenario is for an inconclusive outcome of an invasion and prolonged hostilities, with US forces caught in the cross-fire of internal strife. The third scenario posits a US victory and imposition of a US-run interim administration in Iraq.

Having examined these scenarios, the analysis will proceed to examination of the various consequences for Iraq's neighbours, including some thoughts on the implications for Syria and Jordan of an eruption on the Israeli-Palestinian battlefield.

The intention here is not to cover the whole region. The focus is on Iraq and its neighbours. Developing the themes raised in the introductory overview, the country analyses look at the pillars of state authority in each case, the way a war could affect and potentially undermine those pillars, and the consequences for stability.

— IRAQ —

The levers of power

Iraqi politics, from the creation of the state in the aftermath of the First World War, have been dominated by four interlinked structural problems. These are the deployment of organized violence by the state to dominate and shape society; the use of state resources – jobs, development aid and patronage – to buy the loyalty of sections of society; the use by the state of oil revenue to give it autonomy from society;

and the recreation of communal and ethnic divisions within Iraqi society by the state as a strategy of rule.

These interlinked facets of Iraqi politics have contributed to the domestic illegitimacy of the state, and fuelled its tendency to embark on military adventurism beyond its own borders. These factors also underlie the present regime's drive to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Seen in this light, Saddam Hussein is not the cause of Iraq's violent political history or Iraq's position as a fount of regional instability. Instead, he is a symptom, albeit a powerful and enduring one, of deeper, long-term dynamics within Iraq's politics. The degree to which these dynamics can be overcome will depend upon the extent and nature of external influence in the aftermath of regime change. This in turn is dependent on the way war is waged.

The working assumption here is that a US attack opens with a short but intensive air war of anything from one to three weeks, followed or accompanied by an invasion of up to 350,000 troops, from the air, from Kuwait and from Turkey. The scenarios for the outcome of such an invasion depend crucially on the extent of US military control when the fighting stops. In addition, the speed of an Iraqi military collapse, the extent of Iraqi civilian casualties, the ability of invading forces to impose law and order on the whole of the country, and the approach and commitment of US forces to rebuilding the state will all have an impact on the stability of post-Saddam Iraq.

Prospects for a *coup d'état*

The initiation of combat could, conceivably, trigger a *coup d'état* from within the military establishment, but the chances of this are not great. For the last twenty years Saddam Hussein has successfully secured the quiescence of senior military figures with a mixture of fear and patronage. The hub of his regime rests on those tied to him by clan and family loyalties, with the most sensitive jobs of overseeing the security services and the military usually entrusted to direct blood relatives. Basing the heart of the regime on close family members makes it very difficult for those at the top of the state to plot against the president.

Were it to occur, an early coup would presumably allow US President George W. Bush to claim that his resolute deployment of US troops to the region resulted in regime change. This could be sold to the American population as a victory – getting rid of Saddam Hussein without loss of US forces.

The key demand of the US and the international community, disarmament of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), would then be exacted by withholding the lifting of sanctions, much-needed

development finance and international expertise until the new military government had either disarmed itself or let the UN weapons inspectors interview all those connected with the Iraqi WMD programme and inspect all the sites previously used for weapons production. With war averted, the concerns of the international community, the arguments within the UN Security Council and the considerable hostility of international public opinion could be expected to dissipate quickly. Meanwhile, Washington would presumably count on establishing good bilateral relations with the new military government.

However, this early coup scenario would leave the United States and the international community with the smallest amount of influence over the new Iraqi government and Iraqi society. The US and the UN would have little ability to directly reform the Iraqi political dynamics that gave rise to the problem of Saddam Hussein in the first place. Indeed, one of the benefits of a new military government from the perspective of George Bush would be its ability to guarantee order and stability in Iraq. To do this it would have to resort to exactly the same methods as the Baathist regime of Saddam Hussein: violence, patronage and oil wealth. Societal divisions and the illegitimacy of the state would be further exacerbated.

In the medium to long term the chances of the regime stability would not be great. The new rulers of Iraq would have to demand the loyalty of the officer corps and heads of the security services. They would inherit the levers of power that Saddam Hussein has used to rule Iraq, but could not be expected to use them with the knowledge and skill that Saddam has developed since taking power in 1979. The incidence of coup attempts would hence be expected to rise dramatically, as other equally ambitious generals would deploy their own army and Republican Guard divisions to seize power.

A comparison can be drawn with the period of intense instability that dominated Iraqi politics from the violent coup that abolished the monarchy in 1958 to the coup that established Baath Party rule in 1968. A series of violent and potentially successful military coups could take place against a background of popular discontent and political mobilization. Until 1963 this political mobilization was driven by the Iraqi Communist Party. After a coup in 2003, it would be driven by a population bitterly disappointed by a change of regime that gave them no respite from oppression and dictatorship. Let down by the promises of the United States and the international community, Iraqi popular opinion would be likely to coalesce around violent radical Islamism. An early coup, in the short term, would save the US from the uncertainties of invasion. In the long term, however, it would lead to increased domestic and ultimately regional instability.

More probable than a *coup d'état* in time to avert war is one that occurs after an invasion, as US forces close on Baghdad. The regime of Saddam Hussein has developed a series of overlapping security services and bodyguard units. Each competes with the others and each in turn is spied upon by the others. Without outside intervention the possibility of one organization developing enough power or confidence to threaten the president is slight. This system remained intact and operationally coherent all the way through 1991, when, in the wake of total military defeat, rebellions in the south and north of the country swept towards Baghdad. Even though Saddam Hussein himself thought his removal was imminent, there was no coup against him.

For a late coup to succeed, therefore, two things would have had to happen. First, and most importantly, a US invasion would have been successfully launched. It would have overwhelmed Iraqi defences across the country and would be moving speedily towards Baghdad. This would then highlight to the core of the Iraqi president's bodyguards, the *Himaya* and the Special Security Service, that regime collapse was imminent. In addition, allied bombing and extended fighting would have broken the security networks that oversee the army and disabled the regime's ability to command the majority of the troops within the territory it still controlled. This combination could provide a window of opportunity for potential coup plotters.

By this late stage in any military campaign troops loyal to Saddam Hussein would be garrisoned in and around downtown Baghdad. Either elements of the Special Republican Guard or what was left of the Republican Guard after allied bombing would then move against the president. The *Himaya* and the Special Security Service, when faced with the choice of fighting to the death to save a president with only a few days left to rule or stepping aside, might choose the latter or at least not fight to the bitter end. In such circumstances high-ranking generals, almost certainly Tikritis and probably from Saddam's own clan, the Albu Nasir, would be those in a position to seize power. This would happen as US troops reached the suburbs of Baghdad.

This eventuality would obviate the possibility of a long siege of the city of Baghdad or house-to-house fighting between US troops and Iraqi special forces still loyal to Saddam Hussein. This would presumably recommend it to US and allied leaders in the final stages of any campaign. However, it would also give rise to many problems in its aftermath. The result would be a political and strategic hybrid. US forces would be in control of the majority of the country. They would have defeated or accepted the surrender of the mass majority of Iraq's armed forces. As allied

troops moved up the country from the south they would have dismantled the governing structures of Baathist rule and set up a rough-and-ready system of administration behind the front line. Once a ceasefire was declared they would be in control of and, more importantly, responsible for the majority of Iraq's population.

Crucially, however, they would not control Baghdad, a city of nearly five million people (in a population of 23 million), the hub of the state and the centre of the country. Allied forces would be negotiating with the new leaders in Baghdad from a position of strength, but they would still be negotiating. The new rulers in Baghdad would be military officers, from the outer edges of the ruling elite. As the new leaders they would still have partial control over what the British political scientist Charles Tripp has described as the 'shadow state'. This is the system of patronage through which Saddam Hussein created a loyal constituency of up to one million people spread across the country. Any postwar attempt to reform the state would have to take into account the new rulers in Baghdad and their protégés across the country, who would still be running state institutions and guaranteeing order. The temptation for US administrators, short of resources and time because of American domestic pressures, would be to use these individuals to guarantee order at the lowest possible cost. As with post-Taliban Afghanistan, existing socio-political formations would be utilized – thus, in effect, restoring the old ruling formula without attempting root-and-branch reform.

When faced with a late coup US forces would almost certainly accept it to avoid fighting in Baghdad. But this would limit the autonomy with which they could reform the country. The new governing elite in waiting (the Washington-based exiles of the Iraqi National Congress or INC) would be jettisoned for the new generals in Baghdad. They would govern with US and possibly UN oversight, but would ultimately resort to the same methods of rule as the Baath Party. Resources would be distributed through the institutions of the state set up by US forces but also through the remaining networks of the shadow state. As US troops were withdrawn and US public opinion lost interest in Iraq, the shadow state and its new masters would dominate.

A new governing structure would not have been built. Instead, a veneer of legal-rational bureaucracy would have been placed on top of the shadow state with its tried and tested use of violence, patronage and favouritism. The shadow state would slowly come to dominate as international oversight decreased. Iraq would in the medium term be prone to insecurity, depending on the ruthlessness and efficiency of the new rulers in Baghdad. The population would be demobilized but resentful. The state would dominate

society through the use of high levels of organized violence. The governing elite would colonize the economy, with corruption being a major tool of regime consolidation.

Protracted conflict

A protracted military conflict would be the worst possible outcome for the Iraqi population as well as the international community and the president of the United States. President Bush's re-election prospects will rest on the outcome of his Iraq project. For that reason alone, US domestic opinion will be a key factor in the conduct of this campaign. American public opinion will not tolerate a long campaign and the resulting high US troop casualties. This means air power; long-range artillery and the overwhelming use of US military superiority will dominate the war. The possibility that this could result in high levels of Iraqi casualties could be outweighed by the necessity to limit US battlefield deaths.

Two things that could complicate or even extend a US campaign would be the success of the Iraqi government's defensive plans or a spontaneous uprising by sections of the Iraqi population, broadly comparable to that which occurred in the wake of the Gulf War in 1991. Iraq's plans to defend itself have made a virtue out of necessity. Baghdad has reportedly decentralized army command and control down to the lowest level possible. Responsibility for each urban centre, from Basra in the south to Mosul in the north, has been delegated to a trusted high-ranking soldier. Each town has been garrisoned with troops and has stockpiles of weapons. When hostilities start, martial law will be declared and troops brought on to the streets. The hope is that by giving local control to a senior military officer, resistance will continue even if Baghdad is cut off.

By centring its defence on urban areas, Iraq hopes to achieve two objectives. First, by moving away from static defences in open country, the aim is to reduce if not negate the US air superiority that was used to such devastating effect in 1991. Secondly, by drawing US troops into urban combat the aim is to slow down the advance on Baghdad. The Iraqis have long held the view that US public opinion will not tolerate large numbers of American casualties and the hope is that enough US troops will be killed to force a US withdrawal.

The Iraqi Ministry of Information has developed a highly efficient press handling system. Once bombing begins, with its inevitable civilian casualties, the hope is that international press coverage will put pressure on Washington to stop the war prematurely, much as it

did in 1991. The Iraqi government clearly realizes that to be decisive any attempt at regime change will have to triumph in Baghdad. With this in mind, all troops and security services loyal to the government will, in the last instance, be massed in and around the capital.

If the US military stopped short of Baghdad and ended the war without fully securing Iraqi territory or removing the present Iraqi regime, the results in the short, medium and long term would be highly destabilizing. The danger in leaving a weakened Iraqi government in control of some Iraqi territory would be that sections of the Iraqi population and/or sections of the Iraqi military would seize control of parts of the country. If the state were weakened but no other institution were put in its place, law and order might totally collapse. The comparison to Somalia is not mere hyperbole.

Different centres of power, allied to different neighbouring states, could emerge across the country, filling the vacuum left by withdrawing US troops. These forces would either harness popular support or use force to control the areas of the country they ruled. A situation comparable to that which developed in the Kurdish enclave from 1991 to 1996 could arise. Neighbouring countries would be drawn into a putative civil war supporting one of several Iraqi groups fighting one another for dominance. The result would be domestic anarchy and regional instability. Mass refugee flows internal to the country and across the region would ensue. If the United States staked so much political capital on regime change and did not achieve it, its power in the region and across the world would be severely damaged.

The second complicating factor that could slow up a US advance on Baghdad would be an uprising in the south of the country comparable to that of 1991. The main forces involved in that instance were retreating soldiers forced out of Kuwait by overwhelming allied firepower. Thoroughly routed, without leadership and with a strong sense of betrayal, these soldiers joined with members of the local population in revolt against institutions of the Iraqi state. The levels of violent retribution against state officials were very high. If heavy US bombing again ignites an uprising, US troops will not only have to fight Iraqi troops but will have to forcefully impose order on the Iraqi population. This can be expected to slow their advance but also to generate resentment against them among ordinary Iraqis who would otherwise be expected not to hinder US troops as they seek to remove Saddam Hussein's regime. This would not stop the war or indeed the advance on Baghdad, but would store up potential problems for US troops once they were running the country.

US military victory and rule

Supposing a US invasion reaches a swift and decisive victory, it can be persuasively argued that US problems with Iraq would really begin the day after the ceasefire. Those people associated with President Bush Senior's decision not to fight on to Baghdad in 1991 have consistently cited the desire not to become embroiled in Iraqi politics as the reason for withdrawal.

Once in possession of the country, US policy-makers and their allies will have to decide whether they can commit the time (three to ten years), resources and personnel to tackle the underlying structural problems dominating Iraqi politics or whether instead they will simply change the personnel at the head of government, leaving them to govern in a very similar way to the old regime. The minimalist approach may well come to dominate. Once the war has been won the altruistic explanations for US involvement in Iraq will have to compete with a US economy in possible recession and a US public very sensitive to further casualties. The long-term, costly and ambitious reform of Iraq may well be sacrificed to the short-term electoral politics of the United States.

Within the US administration these concerns are represented in two broad approaches to the problem of post-Saddam Iraq. One is a macro transformationalist approach associated with the neo-conservatives at the Pentagon and the other is a minimalist approach associated with the State Department and CIA, aimed at conserving the existing governing structures in Iraq, but changing the highest echelons of the governing elite. Each approach has its proxies within the Iraqi opposition, the transformationalists supporting the Iraqi National Congress and the conservationists backing the Iraqi National Accord (INA).

In the first three to six months after an invasion US forces will have to concentrate on imposing law and order, stopping sections of the Iraqi population from mobilizing to exact revenge on the old elite. The Joint Chiefs of Staff at the Pentagon have demanded high concentrations of US troops to guarantee that they have enough manpower to secure this aim. At the popular level, there will be a propensity to wreak revenge and settle scores. Large numbers of military and security personnel from the old regime will still be at large in the country. These individuals could well coalesce around one of the new or returning exiled political parties, using their training and weaponry to destabilize any new government. Again, US military commitment will be tested in the disarmament of such groupings.

Assuming law and order can be secured, one contender for power will be the INC. The members of

this grouping will push for the establishment of a constitutional assembly to decide how Iraq will be governed. The return of numerous exiles, many absent since 1958, and their inclusion in a new government, could be turned into a powerful focus for resentment. If civilian casualties in the campaign are high and if US imposition of law and order is heavy-handed, then a militant, Iraqi nationalism focusing on 'imperialist invaders' and their recently returned 'collaborators' could quickly find vocal support among those not included in the government and those suffering economically in the aftermath of regime change.

The first main test of US resolve will be in the Kurdish north of the country. The two main Kurdish parties – the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) – have autonomous governing structures but also fully armed militias and shadow states of their own. If the US military, as one of its top priorities, does not seek to disarm the Kurdish factions and reintegrate the Kurdish enclave into Iraq proper, then a minimalist programme will have come to dominate US postwar strategy. Either way, the Kurds have been preparing to preserve as much as they can of the autonomy they have enjoyed over the past decade.

Iraq and the Bush doctrine

Success in a new war against Iraq would be a defining moment in the evolution of the 'Bush doctrine'. In many respects the doctrine is an attempt to codify international relations in the post-Cold War era, recognizing and institutionalizing the political effects of globalization. The fallout from the attacks of 11 September on New York and Washington has been used to rework the US understanding of state sovereignty in the developing world. The aim is the suppression of all terrorist activity emanating from these territories, the introduction of transparency in banking and trade arrangements and the disavowal of weapons of mass destruction.

In this sense, the internal dynamics of Iraqi politics are not the primary concern in the anticipated war. For the Bush administration, the current regime in Baghdad is instead a potent symbol of a defiant Third World state. Despite invasion, continuous bombing and a decade of the harshest sanctions ever imposed, it has continued to reject the demands of the US and the international community. By engineering regime change in Baghdad, Washington would clearly signal its commitment to the Bush doctrine as well as the lengths it would go to achieve its core foreign policy goals.

The driving objectives of the Bush doctrine mean that the root-and-branch reform of Iraq's governing structures may not receive the extended US commitment required. Instead, as the size of the task undertaken in Iraq dawns on US policy-makers and wider public opinion, the temptation to follow a minimalist approach could be too strong to resist. Iraqi leaders at a local and national level who appear to be able to guarantee order will be bolstered with resources and support. The short-term interests of stability will dominate the long-term hopes for reform and a democratic and stable Iraq.

Regime change in Baghdad will deliver to the US much greater regional and international leverage, but may well not affect the socio-political dynamics within Iraq itself. If so, both the *coup d'état* and the US victory scenarios would preserve the status quo in the region but would also leave Iraq as a potential source of violence, instability and WMD procurement in the medium to long term.

— TURKEY —

New and underlying variables

A war on Iraq poses problems for Turkey on a variety of counts. The government is headed by a new and untested political leadership, which enjoys the benefit of the first outright majority in the parliament for years, but which has somehow to satisfy the expectations of its grass-roots Muslim support base while not alienating the traditional secular power elite. Turkey's shaky economy and the imperative to pursue restructuring do not make for an easy ride, even without the economic fallout from war in Iraq.

Having made a pitch for membership of the European Union, the new Justice and Development Party (AK) government was already confronting a mixed reception from the EU membership when the Union itself entered a crisis over the Iraq issue. To make matters worse, Turkey became embroiled in a row within NATO – membership of which has been a proud Turkish tradition – that pitted its staunch ally the United States against what Washington dubbed the 'old Europe' of France and Germany, also over the Iraq issue. On Europe's and NATO's southeastern flank, Ankara has hoped to capitalize simultaneously on its favourable relations with Washington and orientation towards Europe. But its aspirations have been overtaken by the transatlantic rift.

Engagement in an Iraq war will threaten the government's position *vis-à-vis* the religious core of its political support, but staying out is all but impossible

given the level of dependence on the United States. Moreover, the possibility of fragmentation in Iraq raises the spectre of renewed Kurdish separatism within Turkey. An Iraqi *coup d'état*, especially an early one, would be the least troublesome scenario for Turkey since this would head off most of the potential dangers.

An outright US victory and imposed government would pose problems for the domestic credibility and popularity of the AK government, as Turkey would almost inevitably play a role, however limited and unwilling, in the foreign alliance that triumphed in Baghdad. The worst scenario of all from a Turkish perspective would be protracted conflict resulting not in the replacement of one strong central authority by another, but in the fragmentation of Iraq. Beyond the negative economic consequences of a long war, Turkey has nothing to gain from a break-up of Iraq. Far from nursing any territorial ambitions in Iraqi Kurdistan, Turkey has no interest whatsoever in expanding the amount of ethnically Kurdish territory under its control. It also would not wish to see any new state with a distinctly Kurdish identity emerge in what is now northern Iraq. Indeed, it would see any such state as a direct threat to its own security.

At stake for Turkey in the Iraq crisis are the status and political heritage of the new AK government; the vulnerability of the battered domestic economy to war on Turkey's southeastern border; long-running foreign policy objectives; on-going dependence on the United States; and the Kurdish issue.

Government credentials

The new AK administration is in a peculiarly awkward predicament. AK is the successor to two 'religious' parties, the Welfare Party and the Virtue Party, each of which was shut down by the secular establishment on the grounds that it espoused policies that threatened the secular principles on which the Turkish constitution is based. AK is still partially dependent on the 'religious' vote, and both its leadership and its rank and file are either survivors or heirs of the earlier parties. Its sweeping victory in the 2002 elections, however, was the result of a successful wider appeal to the whole Turkish electorate, based as much on distancing itself from the anti-secular policies of the Welfare and Virtue Parties, as on offering a fresh alternative to the fragmented secular parties that it has replaced in power.

AK thus faces a difficult challenge to turn its electoral mandate into effective government. It needs to retain sufficient engagement with its religious roots to maintain its traditional base of support. At the same time, it must retain the secular voters who actually

brought it to power, and can do nothing that might suggest that its move onwards from the old religious agenda was no more than a tactical ploy to win votes. It must also avoid a showdown with the secular establishment, which continues to control not only the army but the judiciary and most of the national administrative machinery as well. This establishment has demonstrated in the past that it will attempt to dismantle any political party which appears intent on operating against the secular principles of the Turkish constitution, and that it can do so with at least the tacit support of the majority of the Turkish people.

The government's need to maintain contact with its roots while appealing to a wider, and in many cases suspicious, audience puts it in a difficult position on the Iraqi issue simply because of the religious dimension to the US confrontation with Iraq. A US-led assault on Iraq, irrespective of how it is justified, will be portrayed and perceived in some quarters as an attack on the Muslim world. The Turkish government will be vulnerable to accusations of collusion in any such attack because of the religious nature of its core support. It is, however, equally vulnerable to criticism from the secular camp if it is seen to be distancing itself from firm action against Iraq for religious reasons. Turkey's diplomatic initiative to find a common approach with Iran and Arab governments to head off war seems not to have worked.

Economic fragility

The Turkish economy is mired in recession. Economic conditions remain the most important issue in domestic politics, and the greatest obsession of Turkish voters. War in Iraq threatens to derail economic recovery in four respects. First, it will disrupt and possibly destroy entirely cross-border trade with Iraq itself. This trade, much of it unofficial, has grown steadily since the Gulf War, and while it is difficult to estimate its true scale, its loss can be ill-afforded by an economy that is already treading a line close to bankruptcy.

Second, war in Iraq could trigger a refugee crisis, with Turkey likely to feature as one of the most attractive destinations for those seeking to escape from the northern third of the country. Leaving aside for the moment the political consequences of such a displacement, the Turkish economy is in no condition to shoulder the added burden. Public finances cannot support a massive influx of hungry refugees, and the labour market cannot provide them with jobs.

Third, at least in the near term, war in Iraq must almost certainly put up the price of oil. Turkey has a large energy deficit, and the country is a significant net

importer of oil. It is ill-equipped to handle either a larger energy bill or the inflationary consequences of such a bill.

Finally, Turkey is critically dependent on foreign financial support both to buy it time to put its house in order and to underwrite the restructuring of an economy which remains stubbornly unbalanced in favour of an underproductive and over-staffed public sector. Turkey has only been saved from default and at least a partial economic meltdown by IMF support over recent years, and it cannot afford to have that support withdrawn, particularly with a new government still striving to put the elements of its domestic economic programme in place. The connections between international monetary policy and national diplomacy are ill-defined, but whatever the realities of the situation, Turkish policy-makers and Turkish markets will be nervous about any possibility that a cooling of Turkish diplomatic relations with the United States could damage the IMF's commitment towards rescuing the Turkish economy.

Imperatives of the Turkish-US alliance

Turkish foreign policy has traditionally trodden an uncertain path between greater engagement with Europe and the pursuit of a role as a regional Asian power. In recent years, however, the goal of membership of the EU has increasingly dominated the country's policy position. The other dominant theme in foreign policy has been, and remains, enthusiastic participation in international alliances and forums, particularly NATO and the United Nations. Turkish membership of these bodies has always been seen as important for supporting the country's claims to legitimacy and, in the case of NATO at least, in underpinning domestic security policy.

Ankara's long-standing military relationship with Washington has been reinforced by the legacy of Turkey's involvement in the Gulf War, with American-led forces imposing the northern half of the no-fly zone from Turkish air bases. Turkish policy-makers in general, and the military in particular, continue to value both the US relationship and the material and technical assistance it brings with it – assistance vital to Turkey's attempt to modernize an army which is still trying to move away from its past as a mass conscript force.

With the added dimension of the economic assistance needed to escape from its ongoing fiscal woes, Turkey can ill afford to damage its relationship with the United States. The other pressures on the government are such that most, if not all, other

dimensions of national policy would best be served by Turkey staying out of a US-led attack on Iraq. Given the economic and longer-term military importance of the American relationship, this does not appear to be an option and Turkey is therefore seeking maximum recompense.

The Kurdish issue

Perhaps the most important issue of all in Turkish minds, and certainly the one that impacts most strongly on the military dimension of policy-making, is that of the Kurds. People of Kurdish origin make up the largest and most distinct ethnic minority in Turkey, and Turkish policy-makers have always been concerned that assertions of Kurdish identity threaten the unity of the state. Until recently, this threat has been underpinned by the guerrilla war waged in southeast Anatolia by the PKK – an armed separatist organization against which Turkey deployed significant military forces, and in pursuit of which the Turkish army repeatedly entered Iraqi territory. The PKK threat has died away in recent years following the capture of its leader Abdullah Ocalan, but memories of the threat it was deemed to pose are still fresh, and the government continues to maintain significant military and paramilitary forces in the Kurdish regions of the country.

The prime Turkish concern about any collapse of central authority in Iraq is that it might produce a breakaway Kurdish state in the north of the country. Even if events did not reach this pass, Turkish policy-makers fear that any reassertion or strengthening of a separate Kurdish identity on the Iraqi side of the border could have a knock-on effect in the Kurdish areas of Turkey. Even if this did not lead immediately to the re-emergence of the PKK or any successor organization, the army in particular would see the rebirth of Kurdish separatism as a real and direct threat both to Turkish sovereignty and to the internal unity of the Turkish state.

IRAN

Acceleration of the dynamic for change

Over the past year, there has been considerable anticipation and matching anxiety in Iran over the potential consequences of a US attack on Iraq. While Iran viewed the US war against the Taliban with a degree of trepidation tinged with barely disguised glee

at the apparent rapidity with which its old foes had crumbled in the face of the US onslaught, Iranian views on the impending war against Saddam Hussein's Iraq have been more ambivalent. Certainly among members of the establishment, the prospect has generated fear. This has much to do with President Bush's decision to define Iran as part of a tripartite 'Axis of Evil', and the concern among some Iranian policy-makers that the United States intends to pursue 'regime change' in Iran after dealing with Iraq.

In Iran no one holds a torch for Saddam Hussein. The prospect of regime change is therefore not automatically negative. For the duration of a conflict the Iranians will be braced to withstand any fallout across the border. Tacit cooperation from the authorities to facilitate or at least not impede US operations can be expected, though the potential for some elements to engage in activities which could provoke US antipathy cannot be ruled out. In the aftermath of war, a principal Iranian concern would be US intentions with regard to the Islamic Republic in the context of the 'Axis of Evil'.

In the event of protracted conflict in Iraq, Iran could find a role as a useful ally to Washington, particularly given its influence with the Kurds in the north and the Shia in the south. The United States, possibly through Britain, could be expected to seek Iranian assistance in bringing the war to an end and securing the stability of the wider region. A protracted war would also help the Iranian state divert attention from internal problems. In the first instance, the Iranian authorities may impose martial law; however, the reform trend may be assisted by the fact that hardliners could find their attention increasingly diverted to influencing events in Iraq. Open intervention is unlikely as long as other regional powers do not intervene. Nevertheless, it is probable that, as with Afghanistan, Iran will use proxies to advance its interests.

There is, of course, the danger that inter-factional fighting in Iraq may spill over into Iran, heightening tensions, especially along the border. At the very least, Iran is braced for an influx of refugees, though it recently reduced the numbers it is willing to host to 200,000 – an indication in itself that the government fears the domestic consequences of the impact of Iraqi refugees.

The advent of a US client regime in Baghdad, under a coup scenario, will be deemed a 'success' for US policy, with or without democratization, and will portend the further isolation of Iran, in both economic and political terms. If contracts for energy development are made available to Western companies, this will present unwelcome competition for Iran. Popular opinion will be deeply suspicious of US political aims, but the internal nationalist (and

secular) dynamic for change in Iran will be strengthened by the imposition of change in Iraq, and the prospects of worsening economic conditions.

Arguments for a compromise with the United States, as clearly the dominant power, will garner more support.

An outright US military victory will not only ensure that oil companies move towards Iraq, it will also presumably embolden the US administration to proceed against other members of the 'Axis of Evil', heightening pressure on Iran. This will take the form of propaganda and economic measures directed against the regime, in particular targeted pressure against members of the conservative clerical establishment, with the seizure of assets abroad, justified in terms of the 'war against terrorism'.

Whether the US promotes democracy or not, it is likely that there will be a new mood of political openness in Iraq which can only result in envy among Iranians who will consequently push for an acceleration of the reform process at home. Indeed, the overwhelming opinion of ordinary Iranians could well be enthusiastic. How far this goes, however, will depend on whether Washington makes a distinction between state and society in Iran and does not inadvertently unify them by antagonizing nationalist sentiment.

More serious for the clerical establishment will be the realization that the two centres of Shia learning, Najaf and Kerbala, will now be free to indulge in theological debate and pronouncements which are likely to be highly critical of the concept of *velayat-e faqih* (Guardianship of the Jurisconsult). Dissident clerics unable to voice opinions in Qom, the hub of Shii theological debate in Iran, will simply migrate back to Iraq, and as did Ayatollah Khomeini in the 1970s.

The most dramatic outcome of a US occupation of Iraq could be a period of very possibly violent upheaval in Iran (within a year of the conclusion of the war), producing a transformation of the Iranian state towards an intensely nationalist, secular republic.

However, the process of change and democratization is already under way in Iran, independent of regional and international influence. The three scenarios outlined above will essentially have an accelerating effect. Though protracted conflict might ensure regime survival in Iran in the short term, only an outright US defeat, or withdrawal, would reinforce this trend for the long term. Any US presence is likely to have a dramatic impact on internal Iranian development, and in the event that the Americans find themselves fighting a protracted urban war, it is likely that Iranian conservatives will see this as an opportunity to make themselves useful and realign the country toward a rapprochement.

A dynamic domestic political environment

The complex, highly fractious and often bitter process of democratization in Iran has frequently been characterized as a contest between the 'reformists' (who favour political liberalization) and 'conservatives' (who favour order). While considerable progress has been achieved since the election of President Khatami in 1997, the conservative elite have proved increasingly determined to resist change, almost at any cost. This resistance accelerated in the aftermath of the reformist seizure of the sixth Majlis (parliament) in February 2000, and has resulted in the widely held perception that the process of reform has reached a dead-end, and that the hopes and aspirations of millions of Iranian voters have been dashed.

In fact, the general population in Iran, far from resigning themselves to apathy, have simply moved ahead of their politicians in their demands for change and in particular the nature it should take. Particularly among the young (who make up the overwhelming majority of the population), there has been a loss of faith in reformist politicians, some of whom appear just as willing to operate within the system as their conservative rivals. However, the young have not lost faith in the idea of reform, and in reality have determined to define it in a direction which many reformist politicians (including the president) would find unpalatable.

The new ideas have yet to be formulated in a coherent manner, and no single leader has yet emerged to define and/or epitomize them. This incoherence disguises the underlying dynamic, which is irrepressible in the long term. To make matters more confusing, in parallel with this general societal trend a vibrant debate is under way within the Shia hierarchy in Qom, where a growing division is emerging between the 'Iranian' clergy and their 'Iraqi' rivals. (By 'Iraqi' is meant those scholars who are officially Iranian but nevertheless migrated from the religious centres in Najaf and Karbala in Iraq, where they spent most of their lives.) If religious scholarship can flourish once more in Iraq, this may compound the divisions in Qom.

State and society

War will have consequences for the growing and increasingly wide divisions between the Iranian state and society, which must be addressed. While elements of the establishment may try to ignore the vicissitudes of an increasingly disenchanting public, there are many other elements, including the Supreme Leader himself,

who recognize that the durability of the current order requires some acknowledgment of the demands of society.

The growing paranoia of the conservative establishment is in many ways predicated on the realization that they have by and large lost the support of the Iranian public and, crucially, that some extreme hardliners in the establishment seem intent on aggravating an already tense situation. This has resulted in a recent edict from the leadership, instructing all security forces to avoid situations which may needlessly provoke an agitated public. Whether such a directive is adhered to is another matter, but it does indicate a recognition that the establishment rests on fragile and brittle social pillars.

This growing gulf between state and society has emerged from a division of opinion among conservatives themselves, an influential minority of whom have felt that the leadership has been too tolerant of the reformist movement. These elements, characterized by the deputy commander of the Revolutionary Guards, Zolqadr, and the Head of the Judiciary, Ayatollah Shahrudi, have pushed for a more forceful implementation of 'revolutionary' values (as they define them), and have not been shy to challenge the leadership when necessary.

Such elements now believe that pursuit of 'Iranian Islam' has increasingly resulted in 'Islam' being relegated to a very poor second behind 'Iran', in regime policy. They have therefore sought to redress this imbalance, as they see it, by emphasizing Islam, to such an extent that they have simply antagonized the Iranian populace further and accentuated the division between state and society. More interestingly, in pursuing such policies they have increasingly alienated supporters on the right. Thus the old distinction between reformists (left) and conservatives (right) is now being subsumed within a new division between hardline Islamists and the rest.

Nationalism

The Islamic Republic enjoyed a measure of popular acceptance so long as it was seen as having successfully wedded the identities of Iran and Islam into a singular composite. Now, not only is this marriage falling apart, but defenders of the Iranian national interest have begun to denigrate radical Islamic dogma as pro-Arab rather than Iranian.

A number of incidents have heightened this perception, but probably the most crucial was the realization that members of Al-Qaeda had indeed slipped into the country, as alleged by the United

States. More importantly, the belief has grown (though for obvious reasons it remains difficult to verify) that hardline sections of the Revolutionary Guards had been complicit in smuggling these people in. For many Iranians it confirmed their fear that the national interest was being held hostage to a particular Islamic dogma, which was intent on provoking conflict with the United States.

Presumably, in the context of a US campaign in Iraq, there will be the same potential for hardline elements to undertake actions which will not only provoke the United States but also further alienate their fellow Iranians, who will see them as jeopardizing the national interest.

Fascination with the United States

There appear to be three broad strands to Iranian reactions to a US invasion of Iraq. Hardline Islamists appear enthusiastic about a clash with the 'Great Satan', seeing in war the possibilities of recapturing the mood of unity and self-sufficiency that was characteristic of the Iran-Iraq war years (1980–88). The vast majority of the population, including many elements of the centre-right, see any conflict with the United States as potentially disastrous. However, this majority falls into two camps: elements of the leadership, such as Rafsanjani, who greet the prospect as a challenge to be handled with pragmatism; and a significant proportion of the population who are positively enthusiastic about a potential détente with the United States.

US-Iranian relations need not, therefore, be a casualty of a US invasion of Iraq. On the contrary, this could presage a rapprochement. That will depend, however, on what attempts are made by Iranian hardliners to sabotage this possibility and how Washington reacts in the event of such attempts. The US administration has its own hardliners, who propose to follow regime change in Iraq with pressure on Iran to forgo its support for Palestinian opposition to Israel, notably Hamas and Islamic Jihad, as well as Hizballah in southern Lebanon. They also want Iran to learn a lesson from US treatment of Iraq and abandon any ambitions to develop weapons of mass destruction.

The pragmatists in Washington and Tehran may be able to head off their respective hardliners for the duration of war; thereafter it depends on the outcome whether the United States will have the capacity to focus on Iran. Meanwhile, the pressures for change in Iran are likely to be accelerated by developments in Iraq.

— SAUDI ARABIA —

In contrast to the potential in Iran, where the forces of change may be galvanized in ways that facilitate relations with the United States, in Saudi Arabia the consequences of war look set to further undermine what used to be a cosy relationship between the government and Washington. Also in contrast to popular sentiments in Iran, in Saudi Arabia public opinion is deeply hostile to American policies and increasingly to all things American. This trend will be exacerbated by war on Iraq.

The power and legitimacy of Al-Saud rule in the Kingdom have been built on the basis of its alliance with the Al-Sheikh, the fount of Wahhabi Islam; oil wealth and patronage; and a strategic alliance with the United States. Encompassing a mix of pre-state regional communities, tribes and sects, the Saudi state identity has been forged on the basis of these three pillars. All three have come under increasing strain in the last decade or so, and a war on Iraq is set to destabilize the balance between them.

In the event of a protracted conflict, the Kingdom could at least avoid the limelight for a while. The advent of a client regime in Baghdad, however, would probably give the United States a new vantage point from which to turn the focus back on to the Saudis. Saudi Arabia appears to be locked in paralysis with conservative *salafi*/Wahhabi forces constraining democratic and modernizing developments in the society. The country's relationships with its immediate small state neighbours and with the world superpower are eroding, losing their vitality because of its own internal ossification.

No matter what the outcome of the current crisis, Saudi Arabia's regional political and economic weight will diminish; its influence in OPEC will decline sharply. The Saudi regime's relationship with America in the post-Saddam era would be dependent on serious economic reforms and the elimination of Wahhabi power. In the absence of economic growth and with its control of public opinion slipping away in the face of provocative images beamed out by Arab satellite television and on the Internet, the Saudi regime cannot sustain its strategy for maintaining control in the long term. Internal dissatisfaction and anger will be channelled towards the ruling establishment in Najd, perhaps even more than towards America.

Mounting pressures from the United States and from within are likely to increase in the face of war, so the sooner the regime responds to popular demands for political reform, the better it will be to prepare to face the sweeping changes affecting the Middle East in the months and years ahead. The Al-Saud/Wahhabi connection is unlikely to survive any reform

programme in its current form, but it is unlikely to survive in any form at all without reform.

The Najdi/Al-Saud/Wahhabi axis

The regime in Saudi Arabia can be understood as a coalition between the political power of the Al-Saud and the religious power of the Wahhabis. Both hail from the Najd area at the centre of the Arabian Peninsula. Each supplies legitimacy to the other. The Wahhabi side of the coalition has become more powerful since the 1991 Gulf War, with the Al-Saud making numerous concessions to the religious establishment.

The religious establishment and their various organizations such as the Committee of the Order of the Good and the Forbidding of Evil and their employees, the *mutaw'a* (religious police), the Ministry of *hajj* (pilgrimage), the Ministry of Religious Affairs and religious endowments have gained greater influence. This is particularly evident in the educational system.

Dissent expressed in the Wahhabi narrative has become more threatening, while radical *salafis* on the fringes have raised questions about the moral and political legitimacy of the Al-Saud as the nation's rulers. The most evident and dangerous expression of this radical *salafi* dissent is Osama Bin Laden, now stripped of his Saudi nationality. Bin Laden uses this language to utterly reject the legitimacy of the Al-Saud. The tensions already manifest within the Al-Saud/Wahhabi alliance intensified after the attacks of 11 September, intensifying struggles over control of education, the judiciary, and even economic areas.

Moreover, within the royal family there are those who align themselves with the radical *salafi*. This could lead to cracks within the royal family itself. Power struggles among the Al-Saud are already closely related to the process of religious radicalization, as seen in different statements made by Interior Minister Prince Naif and Crown Prince Abdullah with regard to domestic social reforms, trade liberalization and curtailing the financing of terrorism. War will undoubtedly exacerbate these tensions within the Al-Saud/Wahhabi axis, since the United States will exert huge pressures on the Al-Saud to rein in Wahhabi influence and power.

A US war on Iraq is expected to bring a hostile reaction on the Saudi street, testing the relationship between the palace and the people. The authorities will have to decide how to maintain public order or contain disorder, but may not be able to put up a unified stand if some elements within the Al-Saud and Wahhabi establishment are sympathetic to the

protesters. If such elements are actually instrumental in organizing protests, this could amount to a 'betrayal' by one of the partners in the coalition. Demonstrators may in any case defy edicts from the religious establishment. The radical *salafi* elements could resort to violence against 'Western' targets in the Kingdom.

Hitherto the Al-Saud have used a mixture of coercion, religious legitimization and patronage to maintain their rule. Once war begins, all three of these devices will be challenged if, as is foreseeable, the Saudi regime loses its aura of power and reveals its weakness. In the face of a US invasion and occupation of Iraq, the regime will appear increasingly vulnerable, hesitant and dependent on America. This will encourage people who doubt the regime's right to rule. If economic conditions deteriorate this will compound the problem.

A war will increase the potential of heightened regional, tribal and sectarian consciousness. The Hejazis in the west, for example, are Sunni but not Wahhabi and may be emboldened to reassert this distinction. The Shia minority in the Kingdom, whose sense of alienation is reinforced by the fact that the Wahhabis consider them to be heretics, might feel strong enough to assert their dissatisfaction with the existing rule and perhaps even revive their own claims to self-rule and independence. This could be a consequence of a resurgence of Shia identity in Iraq, whether in the context of internal warfare or as part of a more inclusive political order.

An idea gaining currency among the Saudi intelligentsia is that, should the United States be successful in changing the regime in Iraq, it would be encouraged to split Saudi Arabia into the oil-rich eastern province where the majority of the population is Shia, and the Hejaz region of Mecca and Medina previously ruled by the Hashemites. This may be fantastical, but the fact that the fear exists is illustrative of the profound sense of uncertainty and attendant insecurity.

Oil wealth and patronage

Oil revenues are the mainstay of the state's wealth, and the regime's economic legitimacy has been based on a personalized system of patronage. Different regional or tribal groups have been drawn into relationships of dependency and loyalty through patronage. Oil money is distributed throughout the population through chains of patron-client relationships which link the fringes of Saudi society to the ruling princes. This applies as much to the state bureaucracy as it does to economic life and employment.

In the face of declining revenues relative to per capita demands, the Al-Saud have had to cut back on the system of patronage, scaling back the welfare system and reducing employment security. The initial impact of war will no doubt be an oil price spike and increasing demand on Saudi supplies, to make up for a shortfall from Iraq. This will at least provide the government with an injection of resources to disperse to help revive its patronage links.

Repayment of domestic debts run up by the state and/or members of the royal family and appeasement of the tribes by restoring and increasing handouts to them would buy calm in the heat of the crisis. Such measures would do nothing, however, to guarantee long-term development and security in the continued absence of a programme of economic investment and diversification. Prospects for investment in Saudi Arabia cannot be expected to improve under any of the war scenarios. Meanwhile, if there is prolonged conflict the political fallout in Saudi Arabia will become progressively worse, as indicated above. Meanwhile, recession in the developed world will rebound on the Saudis too.

A short war, with a US victory or a *coup d'état*, does not augur much better for the Kingdom. In either event, as Iraqi production comes back on-stream and new investment expands Iraqi capacity, OPEC as a whole and Saudi Arabia in particular will be under pressure to accommodate an increased Iraqi market share. Meanwhile, the Al-Saud watch with trepidation as production in Russia and the Caucasus looks set to increase. An extended crisis in Venezuela would help them, but would not resolve the systemic problem of plentiful oil supplies world-wide.

If the United States succeeds in changing the regime in Iraq and replacing it with a client state, the Al-Saud could anticipate that this state will supplant the Kingdom in terms of US favour. American control of Iraq would be the worst prospect for Saudi Arabia because US reconstruction of Iraq would be intended to create a secular ally who would assume the mantle of regional leadership and hegemony. Iraq would become the region's focus of international trade, US foreign investment and integration into the global economy.

Changes in the neighbourhood

This eventuality will also have implications for Saudi Arabia's relations with its Arab neighbours and allies in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Oman, Kuwait and also Yemen could be expected to develop closer relations with Iraq, potentially at the expense of their alliance

with Saudi Arabia. Against the background of tense relations between Saudi Arabia and the United States over the Iraq crisis and use of military bases, the 'new friends' have become more independent of Saudi Arabia. As explained by a Qatari, 'Saudi Arabia cannot protect us any more.' These states need a new umbrella, and in a postwar region that umbrella is likely to be provided by the United States and potentially its new creature, Iraq.

A changed Iraq could acquire a position of greater political influence in the region that goes beyond its military/economic power. Bahrain and Kuwait relate to Iraq culturally, linguistically and tribally. If Iraq wants to engage in economic development, these neighbours would be a more likely place to start than Saudi Arabia. The Kingdom and Iraq have always had conflicting ideologies and interests. Obviously much depends on the outcome of war in Iraq and future stability. The more stable the outcome of regime change, the faster Saudi Arabia's relative marginalization is likely to occur.

The strategic alliance with the United States

This alliance has provided internal and external protection for the Saudi regime, in return for which the United States has secured long-term access to a reliable source of oil supplies. For the United States Saudi Arabia served as a stabilizing force within OPEC, while the alliance bolstered Saudi leverage in the region.

After half a century of a mutually beneficial relationship, the fallout from the events of 11 September appears to have damaged it irreparably. Confronted by the Iraq crisis, the Saudi regime has made conflicting statements about the use of its military bases by the United States. The Al-Saud fear that cooperation with the Americans may not guarantee long-term stability and would further undermine their domestic legitimacy. In the face of a US quest for 'regime change' in Iraq, the Saudi regime does not want to be next in line. Yet military cooperation may not benefit the Al-Saud much, since relations with America are now strained to breaking point. Indeed, the build-up to the war may have already demonstrated the dispensability of the Al-Saud, as US military planners will undoubtedly recoil from relying on the Saudis again, given their non-committal stance in the run-up to war. Even if the Al-Saud do cooperate in the war, this prospect does not appear to cut much ice with their detractors in Washington.

Although Saudi Arabia was not included in Bush's 'Axis of Evil', it did gain the epithet 'kernel of evil' from one US analyst. Al-Qaeda's terrorist network is seen as arising directly from Wahhabi teachings. The Al-Saud realize that American demands to contain terrorism will persist after any war on Iraq is concluded. In particular there will be demands for the Al-Saud to clamp down on the global network of charities supported by Saudi citizens, including those funded and led by members of the royal family. Demands to suppress the political power and influence of Wahhabi radicals will also persist.

Over time, these pressures from the Bush administration are unlikely to lessen. Indeed, they could become worse when President Bush seeks re-election in 2004. Already, leading US Democrats are more critical of Saudi Arabia's policies than administration figures, and consider the Bush administration as too lenient – for example, for letting Osama Bin Laden's family leave America two days after the terrorist attacks and without being interviewed by the FBI. The closeness of leading figures in the Bush administration to Saudi Arabia, through their oil industry connections, seems an issue tailor-made for Democrats to play to their advantage in the forthcoming election.

Moreover, both Democrats and Republicans appear intent on deepening American interference in Saudi domestic affairs. It is an almost universal belief in America that restricting the influence of the Wahhabi religious establishment and bringing about moves towards democracy are two policy choices that must be pushed if Saudi Arabia is no longer to be a hothouse breeding new Bin Ladens. But any Saudi attempt to secularize the state might backfire, as the regime could become even more vulnerable to accusations that it is an American protectorate. The reason for this is simple: there is nothing at hand to replace the legitimizing sanction provided by the Wahhabis.

Regardless of the outcome of a war on Iraq, the wider problem of terrorism would not be solved as long as the sources of Islamic militancy remain unaddressed. During the course of the war, the United States would expect Saudi Arabia to fill the oil supply gap, support military action and even pay some of the costs as it did during the 1991 war. Under any scenario, Saudi Arabia is in a predicament.

— JORDAN —

Jordan is frequently seen as the state most vulnerable to fallout from an Iraq war. This is in part because of its strategic location, with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict raging and unresolved to the west and instability turning to war in Iraq to the east. The possibility that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict could flare up and maybe even spill over into Jordan is a major concern. Another factor is the fragility of the Jordanian economy, which is dependent on the Iraq connection as well as international support. A refugee influx, if not quickly reversed, would put a strain on resources and potentially on social cohesion. In addition, the government must balance the conflicting demands put upon it by the United States and the anti-Americanism rife among the population.

In the face of war, therefore, Jordan could have to cope with a refugee crisis; loss of trade and supplies of Iraqi oil, leading to economic recession and hardship; a flare-up on the Israeli-Palestinian (and possibly Israel-Lebanon/Syria) front; public outrage at both Israel and the United States leading to violent demonstrations on the streets; new recruits for extremist militant groups dedicated to attacking American interests on Jordanian soil; and an unstable outcome in Iraq. Consequently, an early *coup d'état* in Baghdad would be the least alarming scenario for Jordan. Failing this, a *coup d'état* later in the war would be better for Jordanian long-term stability than either a US victory and imposed government (because this would actually fuel anti-Americanism in Jordan) or chaos in Iraq, which would leave Jordan trapped between two war zones.

Weighing the scenarios

The best outcome of the crisis for Jordan would be a regime in Baghdad with legitimacy among Iraqis, namely one not imposed by the United States, and with sufficient strength to hold the country together, but friendly relations with Washington. Such a regime could even be an asset in the quest for Arab-Israeli peace, if it desisted from Baghdad's traditionally bellicose line on Israel and endorsed a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in line with Jordanian policy. However, as discussed in the section on Iraq, a *coup d'état* scenario may not be stable for long.

If it did endure, a stable Iraq with a strong regime, recognized by Iraqis, would be good for Jordanian trade and business development. It could also be a place for Iraqi exiles to return to, which would relieve

Jordan of the burden of having them in its midst. Jordan would also hope to benefit from the development of Iraqi oil, possibly as a conduit for its export.

If, however, an early coup is not likely and one late in the US military campaign is quite probable, then Jordan will have to suffer the consequences of the campaign itself before benefiting from a more or less stable outcome. The immediate effects of war on Jordan will be the same in any of the three scenarios. There will be a refugee crisis which the Jordanians hope to handle by putting up camps on the border.

There will also be an immediate cut-off of Iraqi oil supplies to Jordan. The government has made provision for this with a stockpile off-shore in the Gulf of Aqaba. However, the real problem will be finding the money to replace the Iraqi supply of oil with a substitute at market rates. The US has promised to see that Jordan is taken care of, but promises of aid could take a while to materialize.

Once war is launched there are likely to be demonstrations in the Jordanian streets. The government will have to calculate how much public outcry to tolerate to let off steam, and the consequences of suppression. The official line so far, including the king's 'Jordan First' campaign, has been to position the government as protector of Jordan's national interests in the face of regional problems. Consequently, the people generally will probably identify with the need to preserve peace in Jordan as a relative haven in a war-torn neighbourhood, rather than directly confronting the government.

In sum, if the war is short, the Israeli-Palestinian front does not boil over, the end result is a pro-US military coup in Baghdad, and aid is forthcoming to get Jordan through the crisis, then Jordanian stability and prospects will be reasonably well served.

A US victory in Iraq and extended occupation would have mixed consequences for Jordan. The advantages would be that war would not drag on and the Israeli-Palestinian front would have less chance to boil over, and that Jordan, as a friend of the United States, could expect to have a role in Iraqi economic reconstruction.

The downside of this scenario derives from the fact that US strategies for redesigning Iraqi politics are not very credible and, as discussed above in the Iraq section, the system is highly likely to revert to its old ways. Even assuming the US does stay and work assiduously at restructuring the Iraqi political system into a democracy, if Iraqi oil is used to finance US schemes and US troops are visibly present for the years required, then charges of imperialism will take hold.

The inclination among Jordanians will be to distrust the Americans and their motives. This will oblige the Jordanian government to temper its alliance with

Washington. Most crucially, if the Americans fail to turn a victory in Iraq into a two-state peace agreement for Israel-Palestine, then negative perceptions of Israel and the United States will persist, and some of Jordan's most deeply rooted problems of identity and stability will impair development.

If conflict is protracted, Iraqis turn on one another and the American and allied forces are caught in the fray, the consequences for Jordan will be bleak. All the immediate effects of war, outlined above, will endure for an extended period. The economic malaise will be more difficult to overcome. Popular resentment will be more intense and unpredictable. The refugee problem will require more than emergency help and the Iraqis in Jordan will not be headed for home.

Fears for the Israeli-Palestinian front

The worst-case scenario would be an escalation on the Arab-Israeli front. Both the Palestinians and the Lebanese and Syrians know that Israel will respond crushingly to any provocation from the Palestinians or Hizballah. This knowledge may be sufficient to dissuade both groups from attacking the Israelis when war starts. However, the violence will erupt again eventually.

It is to be expected that some suicide attacks by Palestinians on Israelis will occur if the war drags on. Israel may respond by reoccupying Gaza and certainly by increasing military control of the occupied territories. It will probably not attempt an expulsion of Palestinian civilians, but may try to deport some militants and could bring down the remnants of the Palestinian Authority. Public opinion will react negatively to a clamp-down in the occupied territories, but the Jordanian government, for fear of Israel transferring Palestinians to Jordan, will not open its borders to them. Instead, restrictions to the entry of Palestinians to Jordan, already tight, will be doubly so for the duration of the war. This is not a sustainable position if the conflict drags on. Consequently, the government will face a dilemma and have no serious prospect of a rejuvenated peace process down the line.

Social cohesion and identity

Given the influx of Palestinian refugees from across the river Jordan in the 1948 war that established the state of Israel, and further displacement in the 1967 war – when Jordan lost control of the West Bank to Israel –

the population is a mix of East Bank Jordanian nationals and citizens of Palestinian origin, including over a million registered refugees. The Hashemite monarchy has to balance the interests of both communities. Those of Palestinian origin tend to predominate in the business community, while the indigenous East Bankers predominate in the public sector, particularly the armed forces and security services.

Since ascending the throne, King Abdullah II has sought to modernize the economy and reform the bureaucracy. His 'Jordan First' initiative apparently envisages a skill-based economy that emphasizes the benefits of education and the promotion of talent. The persistence of tribal affiliations and expectations of royal patronage militate against this. The maintenance of social cohesion requires the king to respond variously to the contrasting demands coming from the urban elites and the more traditional communities outside the capital and within the armed forces.

Jordan's tentative moves towards democratization have also given voice to Islamist groups, both within the lower house of parliament, which has limited power, and in the community at large. Meanwhile, the king is also expected to defend the cause of the Palestinians, which, in different permutations, is emotive for all sectors of the population. For the East Bank establishment the Palestinian cause is an Arab nationalist issue, to be championed by the monarchy, but not at their expense within the domestic make-up of the Kingdom. For citizens of Palestinian origin it is a matter of deep personal concern and identity within Jordan. Were a Palestinian state to be established west of the Jordan river, Palestinians living in Jordan would be expected to choose their nationality and could not then hold both Palestinian and Jordanian passports. For the Islamists in both communities the Palestinian cause is a facet of a wider pan-Islamic agenda.

Caught between Palestine/Israel and Iraq

Ever since its creation in the aftermath of the First World War and collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the state of Jordan has been repeatedly characterized as a buffer state. According to some of its own citizens, this requires it to perform a regional balancing act to survive. Faced with a war on Iraq while there is still conflict on the Palestinian front, Jordan will be under enormous pressure from several directions at once. Its strategic alliance and historically friendly relations with the United States will not serve as much protection, given the hostility of its population to the United

States for supporting Israel against the Palestinians and distrust of US war aims in Iraq.

At least half the total population is of Palestinian origin. Of these, as indicated above, 1.2 million are registered refugees, many of them still languishing in UN-administered camps and seething with resentment. Since the Gulf War of 1991, many Palestinians hitherto living and working profitably in the Gulf region have relocated to Jordan. Iraqi exiles have made their home in Jordan too and will not be in a rush to return to Iraq until they see how events develop there. Consequently, the Jordanian authorities will not relish receiving another flood of Iraqi refugees in the event of war.

Though well trained and disciplined, the Jordanian armed forces are not a match for those of Israel, or of Iraq for that matter. Consequently, the Kingdom relies for its security on the belief that the Israelis value Jordan as a buffer between their own country and more hostile Arab states and will therefore avoid actions which could destabilize the Kingdom. Were this understanding with Israel to falter, the danger for Jordan is that the Israelis would regard it as a dumping ground for the Palestinians west of the river Jordan.

On its eastern front, Jordan is wary of the resurgence of a powerful Iraq which might ignore its sovereignty in a confrontation with Israel. The delicacy of Jordan's domestic and strategic situation means that it cannot participate in a war, but must trust to its neighbours and the United States to protect it from the fallout.

The nature of the economy

Devoid of any natural resources to speak of, and with only a limited agricultural base, Jordan's economic survival has depended on foreign assistance, transit trade, remittances and nascent industrial and technological ventures. Economic development has been hindered by a patronage system, corruption and consequent lack of efficiency. During the 1980s, when Iraq was at war with Iran, Jordan began to thrive as a conduit for supplies of all kinds, including military, to its eastern neighbour. As a result of the 1990–91 Gulf crisis and war, Jordan suffered a dramatic loss in trade with Iraq, support from Gulf states and remittances from nationals in the Gulf. Palestinians relocating to Jordan did bring back wealth, but put it mostly into property, creating a mini boom in this sector but not helping the macro economy.

Under the sanctions regime in Iraq during the 1990s, Jordan did secure UN dispensation to receive Iraqi oil at knock-down rates, in payment of an old debt. Half of Jordanian oil needs have been met by Iraq at no

cost and the other half at around \$16 a barrel, well below market rates, which the Jordanians pay through trade. This line of supply will be cut off under any war scenario, obliging Jordan to buy at market rates. Trade with Israel and the Palestinians flourished briefly after Jordan signed its peace agreement with Israel in 1994. However, with the advent of the *Intifada*, Palestinians have minimal buying power and public opinion is firmly against trading with Israel. International aid is therefore a lifeline for Jordan and it needs peace on both fronts to achieve significant economic growth.

— SYRIA —

A war in Iraq poses significant concerns for the government of Syria if not the population as a whole. The internal balance of power in Syria is very much predicated on Syria's regional role and on US goodwill. Should these be removed, Syria might enter a period of instability, or be compelled to embark on political and economic reform. Both options could well destabilize the regime. The threat of an Israeli attack on Hizballah forces in southern Lebanon, which might involve Syrian troops in Lebanon, could escalate into a direct military confrontation with Israel. War on the Iraq front could affect the internal cohesion of Syrian society, which presupposes the quiescence of its Kurdish minority. In addition, the fragility of the Syrian economy is a factor since it would be adversely affected if Iraqi oil and trade were to be cut off.

Any of the scenarios for regime change and/or war posited here would have repercussions for Syria in these four areas, as the rest of this section demonstrates.

Syria's regional balancing act

Advisers to the late President Hafez el Asad like to tell the story of how he started worrying about the implications for Syria of the demise of the Soviet Union long before it actually happened. His main concern then was how Syria would survive and maintain a role as a key player in a region where it has so few, if any, friends and, most importantly, how to reach an accommodation with the United States in the absence of Soviet protection. Syria has achieved this by performing a diplomatic balancing act among the key players in the region and thence with the United States, now the sole superpower.

Syria mixes Baathist rhetoric with behaviour guided by *realpolitik*. The ruling Syrian Baath Party has a long-established rivalry with its Iraqi counterpart. Relations

have ranged from open conflict to regional competition, with only a brief period of rapprochement in the late 1970s. In the 1980s Damascus sided with Iran against Iraq in their eight-year war and subsequently joined the US-led coalition in the 1991 Gulf War. More recently, especially after the death of Hafez el Asad, Syria's posture has been one of quiet collaboration with Iraq. Its relations with Turkey, Jordan and Egypt have also followed a similar pattern of balancing rhetoric with pragmatism. Syria's close coordination with Saudi Arabia and Iran, with both of which Damascus is ideologically at odds, manifest the same *realpolitik* calculations.

Relations with the United States have had their ups and downs. On the positive side, Syria's membership of the UN Security Council gave it prestige as a representative of the Arab group. Meanwhile, its vote for Resolution 1441 was cast partly to demonstrate to Washington that it plays by the rules, in the hope that its interests as the country with the longest border with Iraq will be taken into consideration. Syria has also gained favour by its cooperation in the war on terror, principally through sharing intelligence that led to the apprehension of Al-Qaeda suspects.

On the downside, Syria's position on Israel and its sponsorship of groups such as Hamas and other radical Palestinian factions based in Damascus does not please Washington. Also, while diverging from Iran on the issue of regime change in Baghdad, it maintains joint support for Hizballah in Lebanon. Another negative, from the US point of view, is Syria's receipt of Iraqi oil exports in violation of the UN embargo. More seriously still, in May 2002 John Bolton, US Assistant Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, accused Syria of actively pursuing chemical and biological weapons programmes, warning that it was but one step away from joining the 'Axis of Evil'.

Syria fears change on principle, in expectation of the costs that may be involved in adapting to a new regional order, and every scenario for war carries its own very high risks. In particular the arrival of a US client state in Baghdad would mean that Syria could no longer represent itself to Americans as the more palatable of the two Baathist regimes: remove Saddam Hussein and this comparative advantage would be gone. Moreover, if Saddam is replaced by a US-sponsored regime, this, in conjunction with friendly governments in Turkey, Jordan and Israel, would leave Syria surrounded and without the same array of possibilities for manoeuvring on the regional stage. Even if Syria did not turn out to be next on the US list for treatment, it would be unsettling for Damascus to watch other facets of the regional power balance reordered.

Threat of an Israeli attack

Israel has made it known that Hizballah forces in Lebanon have acquired medium-range missiles capable of hitting some major Israeli cities and has been threatening a pre-emptive strike. This is all the more disturbing for Damascus because Israel links Hizballah attacks to Syria and Iran and has hinted heavily that retaliation for them would not be limited to Lebanese targets; Syrian troops inside Lebanon would also be in the firing line. In Washington, meanwhile, where Syria is still on the US list of states that sponsor terror, an Israeli-sponsored lobby tried to have the Syria Accountability Act passed on in Congress. These factors have led Damascus to the conclusion that, in the midst of war in Iraq, Israel might deliver a blow at Syria.

Another rationale for the threat of an Israeli attack is that the military in Israel were unhappy with the way the Barak government pulled them out of Lebanon. In retrospect, this made it look like a victory for Hizballah, and it was portrayed as the first defeat for Israel by an Arab military action. The resulting image of vulnerability is interpreted as having encouraged the Palestinians to think they could do the same. For the Israeli military establishment, the *Intifada* and the suicide bombings could be seen as mimicking Hizballah's strategy. Hence it is alleged that the Israeli military are itching for revenge and would dearly love to launch a strike on Hizballah to show that they can control the situation. In addition, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon himself has a few older scores to settle in that area. This, at least, is how the speculation runs in Damascus.

Syrians also fear being linked with Palestinians and Iraqis in Israeli eyes. The Israeli press has reported that Iraq gave Hizballah medium-range missiles that would have been smuggled through Syria. Sharon alleged that Iraq also transferred chemical and biological weapons to Syria in order to keep them from the attention of UN inspectors. Furthermore, according to an Israeli army investigation of a terror attack near a kibbutz in March 2002 in which six Israelis were killed, the perpetrators were two Palestinian residents of Lebanon who belong to Islamic Jihad. The pair were apparently sent out on the attack by Hizballah, which also trained them and provided firearms and the ladder that they used to scale the electronic border fence.

It is probable that, as it successfully did in the Gulf War, the United States will ask Israel to exercise restraint while it wages its war in Iraq. It is all the more necessary now given that there seems to be so little Arab support for a war. The difference this time round is that the mood in Israel is less accommodating and

there is concern, which arose after 11 September, that the United States may be compromising its support to Israel in order to appease the Arabs. In any case, if Saddam Hussein were to attack Israel with anything resembling a chemical weapon, Israel would abandon any self-restraint it might reluctantly have adopted.

The Kurds and Syria's internal cohesion

There are about 1.5 million Syrian Kurds – almost 10 per cent of the total population (16 million). Although fewer in number than those in Iraq and Turkey, most of them live in the Jazirah, a strategic area which borders both Iraq and Turkey. The Jazirah is the wealthiest region in Syria. It has the largest water reserves (Euphrates, Tigris, Khabour), it is the main agricultural production centre (including wheat, barley and cotton) and it has plenty of oil reserves. The irredentist tendency among Syrian Kurds is not as marked as in Iraq. Historically, the main issue for the Syrian Kurds is more that of the recognition of their national and cultural identity than of their independence from Damascus. However, if there is a fragmented Iraq or a federal state as a result of the war, it is possible that they may have further ambitions. In this respect, Syrian concerns are not dissimilar to Turkish ones and on this issue the Turks can have more influence on the United States.

There have recently been some problems involving the banned opposition Kurdish Yakiti party. On 10 December 2002 about 150 of the party's members staged a quiet demonstration in front of the parliament in Damascus – the first of its kind in the forty years since the Baath Party's rise to power in Syria. This led, a few days later, to a wave of house-to-house arrests by Syrian security officers.

The sensitivity of the situation was demonstrated by President Bashar el Asad's visit to the Jazirah, the first ever by a Syrian president. Another indication was the recent arrest and imprisonment of the Damascus correspondent of *al-Hayat* newspaper, Ibrahim Hamidi, who was usually perceived as being close to the regime; this was linked to a report he wrote about the Kurds in Syria.

The economy

The oil that Iraq has been channelling to Syria is estimated at 150,000 to 200,000 barrels per day, which allows Syria to export more of its own production of 530,000 b/d, about half of which goes for domestic

consumption. The very active formal and informal trade between the two countries is encouraged by the Syrian government. Iraq has become Syria's main export market for industrial and agricultural goods. In the past two decades, the oil industry has become vital to the Syrian economy, and the state is heavily dependent on it. Income from oil accounts for 40–50% of the state budget and 60–70% of export earnings.

Syria and Iraq signed a free trade agreement as well as a large number of sector agreements in 2002. A conservative estimate of loss of income resulting from an interruption of oil and trade with Iraq is about \$2bn a year. This would have dire consequences for the ailing Syrian economy. To put it in perspective, this is a country with an annual budget of \$7–8bn and annual government revenues of about \$5bn.

Iraqi oil has bought the Syrian economy some time, but it is in the real economy that Iraq may also be vital in the future. Notwithstanding its aversion to war, Syria has high hopes for its potential involvement in the reconstruction of Iraq, and for that it would need a regime it can deal with. Syria has ambitions to route most of Iraq's imports from Europe through the port of Tartous and to provide it with labour and technical assistance. It also counts on channelling Iraqi oil to the Mediterranean. Furthermore, Syria is not likely to receive any economic incentives or compensation from Saudi Arabia as it did when it joined the Gulf War coalition in 1991; this is because Saudi Arabia itself is opposed to the war. Another source of revenue for Syria derives from its involvement in Lebanon, where hundreds of thousands of Syrian workers accrue much-needed hard currency. This could be threatened by the war or by subsequent challenges to the Syrian role in Lebanon.

A no-win situation for Damascus

All the war scenarios threaten Syria's interest in maintaining the status quo, juggling its alliances and relations with regional powers and sustaining its own regime. Worst of all would be a break-up of Iraq and internal instability in that country. Some form of *coup d'état* would cause Syria least pain, but from a government perspective none of the potential outcomes will be palatable; they may not even be sustainable.

The best variant of a *coup d'état* would be what is now called 'Saddam Light', meaning a new Iraqi leader who would cooperate with the US but not be totally controlled by Washington. His accession to power would not be seen as total victory for the United States. It would also mean that military

operations would have to cease for a while and US ambitions for a wider regional change would be dampened.

As noted, this eventuality would probably still result in Syria losing the benefits of cheap, smuggled Iraqi oil, but the trade might continue and if Damascus played its cards right it could be compensated by aid, if not from Saudi Arabia, then from Europe or the United States. The situation could be sufficiently unstable for Syria to be able to manoeuvre itself into a pivotal role of mediation or pressure.

There is a dark side to even this scenario for Syria – namely, if a coup were led by Islamic fundamentalists who would then be hostile to the secular regime in Syria and encourage Syria's own radical Islamists to act. Barring that possibility, Syria would be able to cope, though some members of the population, hoping for major reforms, could be disappointed.

In the case of Iraq erupting in chaos the first consequence would be the interruption of oil exports to Syria and disruption of trade. This would plunge Syria into economic mayhem and would threaten the internal stability of its own regime. Of all the scenarios

this is also the one most likely to generate a large number of refugees that Syria cannot cope with. There is the risk of unrest among Syria's Kurdish population, who would be supportive of the Kurds in Iraq.

No civil war happens without affecting the neighbours, who are compelled to support different factions. Civil war in Iraq would strain Syrian relations with both Iran and Saudi Arabia and would put pressure on all three countries to intervene for conflicting purposes. Heightened sectarian and religious tensions in Iraq might also have an effect on the internal balance within Syria and there would be fear of chaos spreading by contagion. For Syria this constitutes a nightmare only outmatched by the direct involvement of Israel in a war.

A government installed by the US would be a dangerous scenario for Syria because it would then be surrounded by pro-US governments in Turkey, Israel, Jordan and Iraq. This would make Syria stand out as the only 'rogue' on the block! Such an eventuality would also be perceived as a success for the US military operation, bringing with it the danger of expansion to a wider agenda of regime change in the region.

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