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U.S. vs. Saddam

When would war start, and what would happen next?

By Susan Page, John Diamond, Judy Keen,
Dave Moniz and Barbara Slavin 1-9

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Confronting Iraq: Part II

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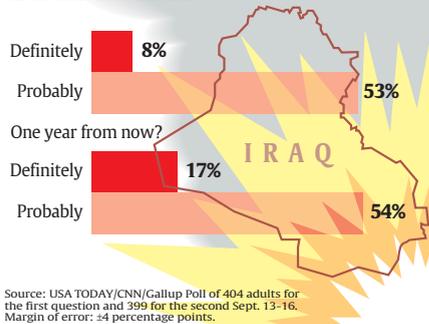
Case Study Expert

Sherry L. Steeley

USA TODAY Snapshots®

Americans say war is likely

Will the United States be at war with Iraq in the next three months?



Source: USA TODAY/CNN/Gallup Poll of 404 adults for the first question and 399 for the second Sept. 13-16. Margin of error: ±4 percentage points.

By Sam Ward, USA TODAY

Confronting Iraq: Part I

Dubious about UN inspections, the Bush Administration is poised to undertake a high-tech military intervention to oust Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. Although some critics dispute that Saddam poses an imminent threat, and opinion is divided on whether the Iraqi people and troops will support Saddam or surrender to U.S. troops, the U.S. is preparing to deploy a wide array of high tech hardware, as well as an anti-Saddam propaganda campaign in order to enhance their prospects of success. Many neighboring Arab countries face domestic antiwar pressure and have specific concerns about the destabilizing effects of war in the region and domestically, U.S. opinion is likewise divided.

USA TODAY polls and expert analysis of the issues highlights the stakes and interests of the various actors involved in the pre-war debate. This case study, exploring economic, political, bilateral, and multilateral facets of the showdown with Saddam Hussein will illuminate the root causes and various scenarios envisioned by the actors involved.

Cover Story

U.S. vs. Saddam When would war start and what would happen next?

By Susan Page, John Diamond, Judy Keen, Dave Moniz and Barbara Slavin
USA TODAY

War is on the horizon.

President Bush has vowed to topple Iraq's Saddam Hussein, and the Senate is scheduled to begin debate today on backing the president. The U.N. is weighing whether to pass a tough new resolution. The Pentagon is moving troops and equipment to the Persian Gulf region.

Why is war looming, and why now? How would it be fought? What are the risks for American troops, U.S. allies and the economy? And what would happen after the war?

USA TODAY reporters in Washington and the gulf region interviewed U.S. and foreign officials, independent experts and Iraqi opposition leaders to try to answer these and other key questions. U.S.

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officials describe a conflict that could start as early as December and end, they hope, within weeks. If Saddam were captured, he would face prosecution for war crimes, but where isn't clear. His ouster could stabilize the region, or inflame it.

Many of the questions defy easy answers -- and, in fact, will be answerable only with the hindsight of history.

Fighting the war

Q: Is war inevitable?

A: If not a certainty, war is clearly likely. President Bush has set a goal not only of eliminating Iraq's suspected weapons of mass destruction, but also of "regime change" -- and Saddam Hussein isn't expected to step aside voluntarily. The CIA is working with opposition groups and seeking potential allies within Iraq in hopes of encouraging a coup, but that's seen as a distant prospect.

Bush says he hasn't made a final decision on going to war. But only Saddam's demise or departure, or some unexpected development, is likely to deter Bush from acting.

Q: Why go to war now?

A: Bush says Saddam's regime poses "a grave and gathering danger" because of the risk that he is developing weapons of mass destruction -- chemical, biological or nuclear arms -- and might provide them to terrorists. The administration has outlined a strategic doctrine of pre-emption: striking potential enemies before they attack. That's a fundamental philosophical shift by U.S. policy-makers in the wake of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. But

some critics dispute Bush's argument that the threat from Saddam is imminent.

Q: When would the war start?

A: As soon as early December, when the Muslim holy month of Ramadan has ended and hot weather has moderated, analysts say. High temperatures make it difficult for U.S. troops to travel in heavy armored vehicles, which can become dangerously hot inside, and to wear the bulky gear that protects against chemical and biological weapons.

Q: How long would the fighting last?

A: Defense analysts believe that Saddam could be out of power within weeks, assuming most of the Iraqi army steps aside, as thousands of Saddam's troops did during the 1991 Gulf War. But they acknowledge that it's possible the battle could last longer if the regular army fought and Saddam's elite Republican Guard dispersed in Baghdad and other large cities. U.S. forces have trained for urban warfare, but such fighting carries a greater risk of civilian casualties and minimizes the advantages of a high-tech arsenal. U.S. war planners want the fighting to be over by the end of April, the start of the hottest part of the year.

Q: How hard would the Iraqis fight?

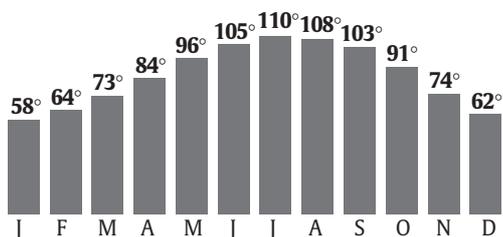
A: U.S. officials are banking on a repeat of the 1991 conflict, when tens of thousands of Iraqi troops chose to surrender rather than die. The Pentagon would launch a massive campaign of leaflets and radio broadcasts -- called "psyops" for psychological operations -- to weaken Iraqi resolve by arguing that the war wasn't aimed at the Iraqi people but rather their tyrannical leader.

A more tailored psyops campaign would target the officers who control Iraq's missiles and its suspected stocks of chemical and biological weapons. The message: Defy Saddam's orders to fire those weapons, or be considered a war criminal.

Q: What sort of war would it be?

A: Very different from the Gulf War. Then, the goal was to defeat the Iraqi army and liberate Kuwait. Now, the goal would be to oust Saddam but not necessarily defeat his military, especially if most Iraqi forces could be persuaded not to fight.

Baghdad's average high temperatures
(By month, in degrees Fahrenheit)



Source: USA TODAY research

By Robert W. Ahrens, USA TODAY

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In this war, the United States would deploy high-tech weapons -- including pilotless surveillance drones and satellite-guided "smart bombs" -- but not a massive invasion force. Instead, a bombing campaign would be followed by fast-moving U.S. ground forces, including elite special operations troops.

Units expected to have a role

1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas
3rd Infantry Division, Fort Stewart, Ga.
101st Airborne Division, Fort Campbell, Ky.
Army Ranger Regiment, Fort Benning, Ga.

Military historians compare the prospective war to a combination of the 1989 invasion of Panama, which removed dictator Manuel Noriega from power, and the recent war in Afghanistan.

Q: Is it possible that Saddam would flee rather than fight?

A: Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld suggests that the United States would accept his exile: "There are a lot of dictators living in various countries around the world in quite quiet splendor." He mentions Haiti's Jean-Claude Duvalier, who fled to France, and Idi Amin of Uganda, who sought refuge in Saudi Arabia. U.S. and diplomatic officials cite Algeria, Mauritania and Morocco as possible homes for an exiled Saddam.

But there are no indications that Saddam would be interested. Since the end of the Gulf War, he has built more than 50 fortress-like structures he calls presidential palaces. He conceals his movements, uses doubles to make it harder to know where he is and rarely sleeps in the same place two nights in a row.

A third possibility: Rather than fight or flee, he could, like Osama bin Laden, disappear without yielding power.

Q: Has the bombing campaign begun?

A: Not officially, but Rumsfeld acknowledges that the United States has changed its response when U.S. aircraft are targeted by radar or anti-aircraft guns while patrolling zones in northern and southern Iraq that have been off-limits to Iraqi aircraft since the end of the Gulf War. Instead of firing back at anti-aircraft batteries or radar sites, the warplanes have begun to bomb air-defense hubs

such as command-and-control centers. Pentagon officials say they're taking advantage of the opportunity to weaken Saddam's air-defense network.

Q: Does Saddam have weapons of mass destruction -- and would he use them?

A: Intelligence officials believe that Saddam has stores of sarin nerve gas, anthrax and perhaps botulinum toxin. But they say he still can't produce the plutonium or enriched uranium needed to make a nuclear weapon.

Whether he would use such weapons is the wild card, and a bigger risk now than it was during the Gulf War. Then, the United States threatened massive retaliation if Iraq used weapons of mass destruction, and Saddam held back. This time, he might believe that he has nothing to lose. Iraqi missiles have a maximum range estimated at 400-550 miles. Officials worry that Iraq could arm a Scud missile with a chemical or biological warhead and fire it at Israel, or pack artillery shells with chemical or biological agents and use them against U.S. forces. A drone aircraft with crop-dusting equipment could spray biological agents on Israeli or U.S. forces. Or a terrorist could smuggle a biological or chemical weapon into the United States.

Crippling Saddam's ability to launch weapons of mass destruction would be a top priority, says Gen. Richard Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Airstrikes would target anti-aircraft systems, missiles and aircraft. Pentagon officials also envision commando raids on the places most likely to conceal chemical or biological arsenals.

1990-91 Persian Gulf Conflict

U.S. forces deployed: 532,000
Other coalition forces: 312,650
Cost: \$61 billion

Key events:

- ▶ Aug. 2, 1990: Iraq invades Kuwait
- ▶ Jan. 17, 1991: U.S. bombing begins
- ▶ Feb. 28, 1991: United States declares hostilities over
- ▶ April 6, 1991: Iraq accepts cease-fire

U.S. casualties/missing

- ▶ 148 battle deaths
- ▶ 145 non-battle deaths
- ▶ 1 missing in action

Source: USA TODAY research

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U.S. war planners target Iraq

Geography

Mostly broad plains; reedy marshes along Iranian border in south with large flooded areas; mountains along borders with Iran and Turkey

Area 168,751 square miles

Population (in millions)

Iraq 23.6
U.S. 288.1

Life expectancy (in years)

Iraq 67
U.S. 77

Languages

- ▶ Arabic
- ▶ Kurdish
- ▶ Assyrian
- ▶ Armenian

Literacy¹

58% of Iraq's population is literate.

Male 71%
Female 45%

1 - 1995 estimate.

Economy

Crude oil reserves: 112.5 billion barrels

Industries

- ▶ Oil
- ▶ Natural gas
- ▶ Phosphates
- ▶ Sulfur

Agricultural products

- ▶ Wheat
- ▶ Barley
- ▶ Rice
- ▶ Tobacco
- ▶ Cotton
- ▶ Dates
- ▶ Poultry

GDP (in U.S. dollars)

Iraq \$57 billion
U.S. \$9.96 trillion

Per capita GDP (in U.S. dollars)

Iraq \$2,500
U.S. \$36,200

Religion

Shiite Muslim 60%
Sunni Muslim 35%

Christian 5%
Jewish and Yezidi less than 1%

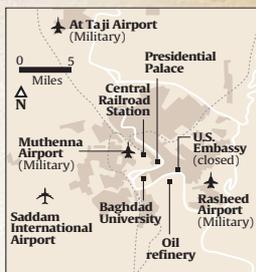
Ethnic groups

Arab 75%-80%
Kurd 15%-20%
Turkmen, Assyrian and others Less than 5%

Baghdad

Population: 5 million

History: Iraq's capital was founded in A.D. 762 and became the intellectual and cultural center of the Islamic world until the Mongols under Tamerlane sacked it in 1401. The city remained in a state of disrepair under the Ottoman Empire. At the end of World War I, Iraq was put under British mandate until 1932, when it gained independence. Saddam Hussein's Ba'ath party took control in 1963, and oil wealth fueled rapid modernization in the next two decades. Known for its historic mosques, monuments and gardens, Baghdad is the center of government, industry and transportation in Iraq. It was rebuilt within two years of the 1991 Gulf War.



Active weapons facilities

- Nuclear
- Biological
- Chemical
- Ballistic missiles

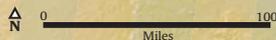
Air bases

- Army bases
- Oil fields

Saddam's palaces

These facilities provide weapons storage as well as protection for the nomadic president.

- Palace built before 1991 Gulf War
- Palace destroyed in Gulf War and rebuilt
- Palace built since Gulf War



Troops

Active 424,000

Iraq 1.4 million

Reserve 650,000

Iraq 1.25 million

Climate

Mostly desert; mild to cool winters with dry, hot, cloudless summers; northern mountainous regions experience cold winters with occasionally heavy snows that melt in early spring, sometimes causing extensive flooding in central and southern Iraq.

Regional high and low temperatures (In degrees Fahrenheit)

Region	Summer average	Winter average	Extremes
Mountains	77°/59°	41°/25°	108°/-22°
Foothills	104°/77°	55°/37°	120°/10°
Tigris/Euphrates delta	104°/77°	64°/39°	124°/19°
Western/southern desert	104°/68°	61°/48°	120°/7°

Sources: International Institute for Strategic Studies "Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction: A Net Assessment"; research by William Risser, USA TODAY

By Frank Pompa and Dave Merrill, USA TODAY

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One scenario that concerns policymakers is the possibility that the United States could topple Saddam but not gain control of all his biological and chemical weapons, which are believed to be widely dispersed. That would be a hollow victory, they acknowledge.

Q: How reliable is U.S. intelligence in Iraq?

A: It has been circumstantial at best since U.N. weapons inspectors left in 1998 amid a dispute over access to suspected weapons sites. Since then, intelligence officials suspect that Iraq has hidden biological weapons labs in schools, mosques and elsewhere. The Iraqis monitor the orbit schedules of U.S. spy satellites and have become adept at timing suspicious activity when the satellites aren't overhead.

Q: Could U.N. weapons inspections be an alternative to war?

A: Probably not. The Bush administration has vowed to block the return of inspectors unless they are backed by a new Security Council resolution that demands access "anytime, anywhere" to Iraqi facilities, including Saddam's presidential palaces. Iraq is unlikely to meet those conditions. The administration believes that a dispute over inspections would bolster the case for war.

Besides, Rumsfeld and Vice President Cheney say that only Saddam's exit, not inspections, can ensure the end of Iraq's program to develop chemical, biological and nuclear weapons.

Reaction in Iraq, around the region and at home

Q: So what would be the role of the United Nations?

A: The Bush administration would like the Security Council to approve a tough new resolution and authorize serious "consequences" if Iraq doesn't comply with it. But Bush has made it clear that the United States is prepared to move ahead without such action by the United Nations.

Q: How would the Iraqi people respond to an attack?

A: Public opinion is difficult to gauge in a dictatorship, of course. Shiite Muslims, who are a majority in a country ruled by minority Sunni Muslims, have long been oppressed by Saddam and are likely to welcome his ouster. Iraqi Kurds also have suffered under Saddam but want to make sure they don't lose the relative autonomy they have had in northern Iraq, protected by U.S. and British warplanes, since the Gulf War.

The Sunnis are likely to be nervous about losing their supremacy. And if an attack led to extensive Iraqi casualties or the war was prolonged, public opinion could turn against the United States.

Q: Would a U.S.-led invasion touch off demonstrations or violence elsewhere in the region?

A: Amr Moussa, secretary-general of the Arab League, warns that a U.S. war in Iraq would "open the gates of hell" in the Middle East. There could be violent protests throughout the region, especially if Israel became involved in the war. The toughest challenge could come in Jordan, which has a majority Palestinian population and a young, pro-Western king. "The street is going to be very angry," Jordanian Foreign Minister Marwan Muasher predicts. "The street will look at this as a war between Americans and Arabs and between Americans and Muslims."

Arab reaction will depend in part on whether the attack has U.N. backing, how long the war lasts, how many Arab casualties there are and how the Iraqi people respond if Saddam is overthrown. If Iraqis are seen celebrating in the streets, that would dampen Arab protests elsewhere.

Q: How would Arab leaders respond?

A: Most Arab leaders don't like Saddam but oppose an attack unless it is sanctioned by the United Nations. Even then, they are nervous about popular unrest. Leaders of Iran, a non-Arab neighbor that fought a long war with Iraq in the 1980s, would be ambivalent -- pleased by Saddam's ouster but perhaps worried that their country might be the next U.S. target.

Q: If Israel were attacked, would it retaliate?

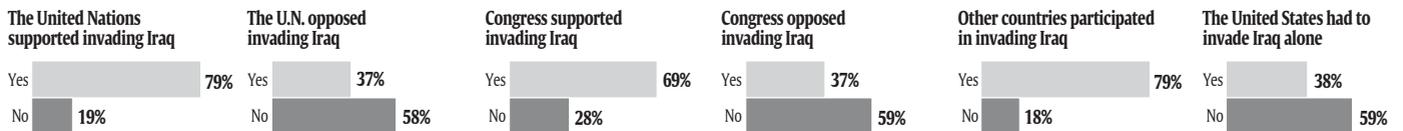
A: Probably. Israeli officials say they reserve the right to retaliate, and the United States has shared with Israel the identification codes needed for Israeli aircraft to take part in the campaign without shooting at U.S. warplanes. That's a shift from the Gulf War, when the United States asked Israel not to retaliate to avoid splintering a coalition that

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Conditions influence support for invasion of Iraq

The support Americans express for invading Iraq varies under different scenarios. Percentages who say they would or would not support an invasion under the following conditions:



Source: USA TODAY/CNN/Gallup Poll of 1,010 adults Sept. 20-22. Margin of error: ±3 percentage points.

By Marcy E. Mullins, USA TODAY

included many Arab states. Israel complied, even though it was hit by 39 Iraqi Scud missiles.

This time, there is no coalition to splinter, and Israeli officials complain that their restraint last time was seen as a sign of weakness. Nevertheless, U.S. officials still worry that Israeli retaliation could inflame Arab sentiments and widen the war.

Q: What would our closest allies do?

A: Only Britain is likely to contribute a significant number of troops or aircraft. Germany has ruled out participating, and the dispute over action against Iraq has soured relations

Helping the United States

U.S. officials are counting on Britain to join an attack on Iraq with troops and aircraft. Middle East countries that are also cooperating:

Bahrain: Regional base for U.S. Navy.

Israel: Storage sites for military equipment; intelligence cooperation.

Kuwait: Hosts largest contingent of U.S. troops now in the region.

Qatar: New U.S.-built base, Al-Udeid, with a 15,000-foot runway, the longest in the Persian Gulf region. An alternative to Saudi Arabia as a command-and-control center.

Saudi Arabia: Command-and-control facilities at air base near Riyadh might be used if U.S. action is sanctioned by United Nations.

Turkey: Air bases already in use to patrol no-fly zone -- an area in which Iraqi aircraft are banned -- in northern Iraq.

between Berlin and Washington. Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder's ruling coalition won a narrow victory last week -- and infuriated the White House -- after Schroeder campaigned fervently against Bush's stance.

Q: What about the American people and Congress?

A: Americans traditionally rally around the president when the nation goes to war. Congress seems poised to pass resolutions authorizing the president to take action. All the likely contenders for the 2004 Democratic presidential nomination who are now in Congress are expected to vote yes, although Bush's 2000 opponent, former vice president Al Gore, says the United States should focus first on battling the al-Qaeda terrorist network.

However, polls show that the public is skeptical of a go-it-alone approach and would prefer that Bush first get backing from Congress and the United Nations. And if a war dragged on, U.S. casualties mounted or terrorists struck Americans in retaliation, public support could wane.

Q: Would a war provoke terrorist attacks against Americans?

A: The Gulf War itself didn't spark terrorist attacks, but the war led to a bigger U.S. presence in the Persian Gulf, particularly in Saudi Arabia. Expelling Americans from Saudi Arabia, with its sites sacred to Islam, became a rallying cry for bin Laden and a recruitment tool for his al-Qaeda network. This time, war planners envision a long-term U.S. military presence in Iraq after Saddam is ousted. Those troops could be subject to attacks. Their presence and the war itself could fuel anti-American feeling and prompt more terrorist attacks.

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War's potential aftermath

Q: What would the United States do with Saddam if it captured him?

A: Try him for war crimes, although just how it would do so isn't clear. The State Department is financing a group preparing a case to indict Saddam for crimes against humanity, such as his use of chemical weapons against Iraqi Kurds in the 1980s. But that effort could be awkward, given the Bush administration's opposition to the new International Criminal Court. The United States might ask another country to host a tribunal, like the one in the Netherlands that is trying former Yugoslav leader Slobodan Milosevic. Some Iraqis would like to set up a court within the country to prosecute Saddam and his top aides.

Q: Who would govern Iraq if Saddam were ousted?

A: So far, there's no obvious person to replace Saddam. Possibilities from the Iraqi exile community include Hatem Mukhlis, a surgeon from Binghamton, N.Y., who is a native of Saddam's home village of Tikrit and comes from a prominent Arab family, and Najib Salhi, a former general who lives in Virginia. In London, Sharif Hussein Bin Al-Ali, a cousin of the last king, ousted in 1958, leads an exile group that wants a referendum to reinstate the royal family.

Ahmed Chalabi, leader of the Iraqi National Congress, an umbrella group also based in London, has close ties with Pentagon officials. But the former banker lacks a following in Iraq.

Analysts say foreign troops would be needed to police Iraq for at least a year and perhaps much longer after Saddam was ousted. Ranking government ministers loyal to Saddam would have to be removed -- U.S. officials are debating just how many -- but most civil servants probably could remain in place.

Q: What role would Iraqi opposition leaders now in exile play?

A: U.S. officials are divided about the role of opposition groups and whether they could help fill a power vacuum in Baghdad and guard against chaos if Saddam was ousted.

There is talk of trying to create a transitional government in exile. The State Department has sponsored meetings over the past six months with the six main opposition groups to discuss aspects of governing Iraq after Saddam. But opposition sources complain that there is still no coherent plan.

The Pentagon is considering training about 1,000 Iraqi opposition members to be used as translators, guides and scouts for U.S. military units.

Q: What would be the U.S. role in establishing a new government?

A: The administration has begun some planning for a post-Saddam Iraq. But Bush has little patience for "nation building," a concept he scorned during the 2000 campaign. He would be inclined to hand off much of that responsibility to the United Nations. The costs of postwar reconstruction could be substantial. After World War II, the United States contributed \$1.3 billion -- nearly \$11 billion in today's dollars -- under the Marshall Plan to rebuild Germany.

Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz says Iraq, which has an educated population and a ready revenue source through oil, could become a flourishing democracy in an Arab world devoid of democratic governments. But some question whether the Bush administration would care who ultimately governed, as long as the leadership was pro-American.



By Sam Ward, USA TODAY

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Q: Could Iraq splinter into several countries?

A: U.S. officials endorse a united Iraq, but there is concern that the Kurds in the north and Shiites in the south might try to break away. Turkey, a key U.S. ally, vehemently opposes an independent Kurdistan that could act as a magnet or a model for its own Kurds, who make up about a fifth of Turkey's population. Iran has similar worries. The region's Kurds have long aspired to have their own state.

Q: What would be the impact of a war on the region?

A: Many opponents of war with Iraq fear that it would unite Arab nations around the world against the United States and its allies. Brent Scowcroft, national security adviser to the first President Bush during the 1991 Gulf War, says Iraqi attacks on Israel could provoke Israel to respond with nuclear weapons, "unleashing an Armageddon in the Middle East." Other Arab governments might become unstable, setting the stage for decades of unrest in the Middle East and inciting terrorists who would see the war as one between Americans and the Muslim world.

Those who support a war say a new, democratic government in Iraq could become a model for the rest of the region. A dangerous dictator would be vanquished. Repressive governments that are havens for Islamic fundamentalism might feel compelled to move toward democracy and root out terrorists if they were convinced that the United States wouldn't tolerate their current situations.

Q: After a war with Iraq, would the United States launch pre-emptive attacks on other countries?

A: Bush has made it clear that he intends to make pre-emptive action a cornerstone of his foreign policy, and he has labeled Iran and North Korea, along with Iraq, as members of an "axis of evil." But there have been no signs that the administration contemplates pre-emptive military action against North Korea. The administration is pushing instead for inspections to verify that North Korea has abided by its 1994 agreement to abandon a nuclear weapons program in return for two civilian nuclear reactors. On Iran, administration officials hope a younger generation will break the grip of the Islamic clerics now in charge.

Of great concern, however, is the possibility that other nations will cite pre-emption as a rationale for military

action against old foes -- that Russia might attack Georgia, China might attack Taiwan, or India and Pakistan might go to war over Kashmir.

Despite the questions about a war with Iraq, Bush says he's prepared to act. "There's doubt in people's minds, I understand that," he said last month. But he said he has no doubt that the United States shouldn't "allow the world's worst leaders to hold America hostage, to threaten our peace, to threaten our friends and allies with the world's worst weapons."

The economic impact

Q: How much would the war cost?

A: Lawrence Lindsey, Bush's chief economic adviser, estimates the cost at \$100 billion to \$200 billion. Even \$100 billion is more than the combined annual budgets for the Education and Veterans Affairs departments. Democrats on the House Budget Committee put the cost at \$48 billion to \$93 billion for a war that lasts 30 to 60 days, depending on how many U.S. troops are deployed.

The non-partisan Congressional Budget Office says that waging the war would cost \$6 billion to \$9 billion a month. Deploying the forces would cost \$9 billion to \$13 billion, the CBO says; returning U.S. forces home afterward would cost \$5 billion to \$7 billion.

In 1991, allied governments paid most of the Gulf War's \$61 billion cost (\$80 billion in today's dollars). This time, the United States would have to pick up most of the tab.

Q: What would be the war's impact on the U.S. economy?

A: Concern about the prospect of war already has weighed on the fragile recovery. The S&P 500 has fallen 29% this year, in part because of worries about Iraq. The stock market has taken the effect of a war into account, some analysts say. Economic anxiety might even be eased once the war began. While the market might dip immediately after the war began, it could soon return to pre-attack levels or even rise.

When Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, fueling talk of war, the S&P 500 dropped 15% in two months. But as soon as

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the U.S. bombing campaign began, the index climbed and was 3% above the pre-attack level when the cease-fire was declared.

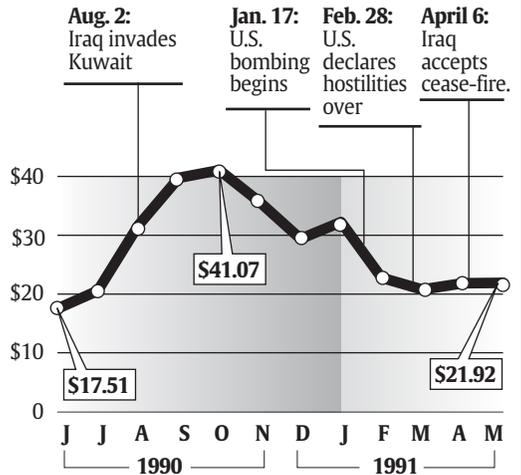
Q: What about oil production?

A: The loss of Iraqi oil during a war wouldn't cause serious shortages, experts say, and U.S. diplomats have sought promises from other oil-producing countries to make up for lost Iraqi production. Iraq now produces 1.7 million barrels of oil a day, 3% of world production. There could be trouble, though, if another major oil-producing country was affected, for political reasons or because the conflict had widened. Economists worry that a sustained spike in oil prices could push the country back into recession.

After the war, installation of an Iraqi government friendly to the West could attract outside investment that would increase Iraqi output, lower the cost of oil and boost the U.S. economy.

Rise and fall of oil prices

Highest monthly price, per barrel, of light sweet crude oil during the 1990-91 Persian Gulf crisis:



Source: Jonathan Cogan of the Energy Information Administration, reported by Lori Joseph, USA TODAY

By Robert W. Ahrens, USA TODAY

These articles were reported by John Diamond, Judy Keen, Dave Moniz, Susan Page and Barbara Slavin, and were written by Page.

Contributing: Steven Komarow in Berlin; Elliot Blair Smith in Islamabad, Pakistan; Vivienne Walt in Baghdad, Iraq; and Barbara Hagenbaugh, Mimi Hall and James R. Healey in Washington.

Behind the Story: A Reporter's Notebook



Dave Moniz
Pentagon Reporter

As a reporter, getting your arms around the Pentagon's planning for Iraq is very difficult. The Bush administration and the Pentagon are masters at withholding information, in many cases where disclosing that information would do no harm.

In the case of war planning, there are legitimate concerns about revealing war plans. This story was an attempt to look at how the U.S. might structure an attack

against Iraq if we go to war a second time. The outline was drawn from interviews with key Gulf War planners now retired from the military, some Pentagon sources and some bright people who study U.S. military tactics. In a sense, the goal was to show how the military has changed since the 1991 Gulf War and reflect the thinking of Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, who has offered hints at how he would like the armed forces to operate in future conflicts.

The story is part speculation, part informed reporting based on the Pentagon's post 911 view of the world. Our

goal was not to disclose war plans -- which we have not seen -- but make some sense of how a war might unfold based on logical assumptions and a few projected war goals:

How does the U.S. fight best?

What is the country's objective in attacking Iraq? Is it defeating the military or getting rid of Saddam? How might Rumsfeld's world view be reflected in this scheme?

Dave Moniz has covered the military for USA TODAY for three years. Previously, he reported on the military for Knight Ridder newspapers for eight years in South Carolina. He has a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Maryland and has read more than 100 books on military tactics, history and strategy in the past decade. He also has attended seminars at the U.S. Army War College and the Knight Center for Journalism. He is a co-founder of Military Reporters and Editors, an organization designed to promote professional reporting on the military and advocate for reporter access to American troops in the field. Last year, he won the Gerald R. Ford Prize for distinguished military reporting. He frequently speaks to military officers about the relationship between the Pentagon and the press.

For discussion

1. What is the primary Turkish concern over potential U.S. action in Iraq? How can broader transnational concerns related to the Kurds be addressed?
2. What are some initial ways to mitigate Jordan's apprehensions? What could the U.S. do in this realm? What are possible reactions of minority religious groups and Palestinian groups in the West Bank, Lebanon, Turkey and around the world in the event of war? What about Israel's likely reaction?
3. What alternatives should be developed in order to offset the possibility of a widening regional conflict in the Middle East? What is the role of the UN in this area? What about the U.S.? Do you think that the individual members of the UN Security Council play a more influential role with players in the Middle East, or do you think that the Security Council as a whole carries more weight? What are the opportunities and potential pitfalls of each approach?
4. What is the rationale of the Security Council members committed to continuing a deliberative inspection process?
5. What are the concerns of U.S. companies regarding war? What are the short-term problems and opportunities? What are the medium-term prospects? Are there sectors or industries that are potential "winners" or "losers" in the event of a military conflict?

Future implications

1. What affect would unilateral U.S. action have on future efforts to encourage recalcitrant regimes to follow the prescriptions of international law?
2. How would unilateral U.S. military action affect actors and decision-makers in local or national conflicts such as those ongoing in Chechnya, Cote d'Ivoire, and Sierra Leone?
3. Which other "rogue states" should the UN confront upon resolution of the Iraq crisis? How does the precedent of successful inspections and a united Security Council impinge upon prospects in North Korea? Libya and the issue of reparations for PanAm 103? In your opinion, would improved enforcement of UN sanctions policies obviate the need for high-stakes inspections?
4. What are the international implications for U.S. businesses with multinational trade and investment interests? How will these be affected by reliance upon the UN apparatus versus unilateral U.S. action?

About The Expert



Sherry L. Steeley is a former Foreign Service officer with a background in development economics, public policy, and international economic law, with a strong interest in education, institutional development, and cross cultural communication, and transnational cooperation. Ms. Steeley has been active in multicultural and multilingual education, and is currently a language instructor for non-native speakers of English at Mount St. Mary's College in Emmitsburg, Maryland, holds an MA from the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, and is a doctoral student at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia.