Gregory Hooker

Shaping the Plan for Operation Iraqi Freedom
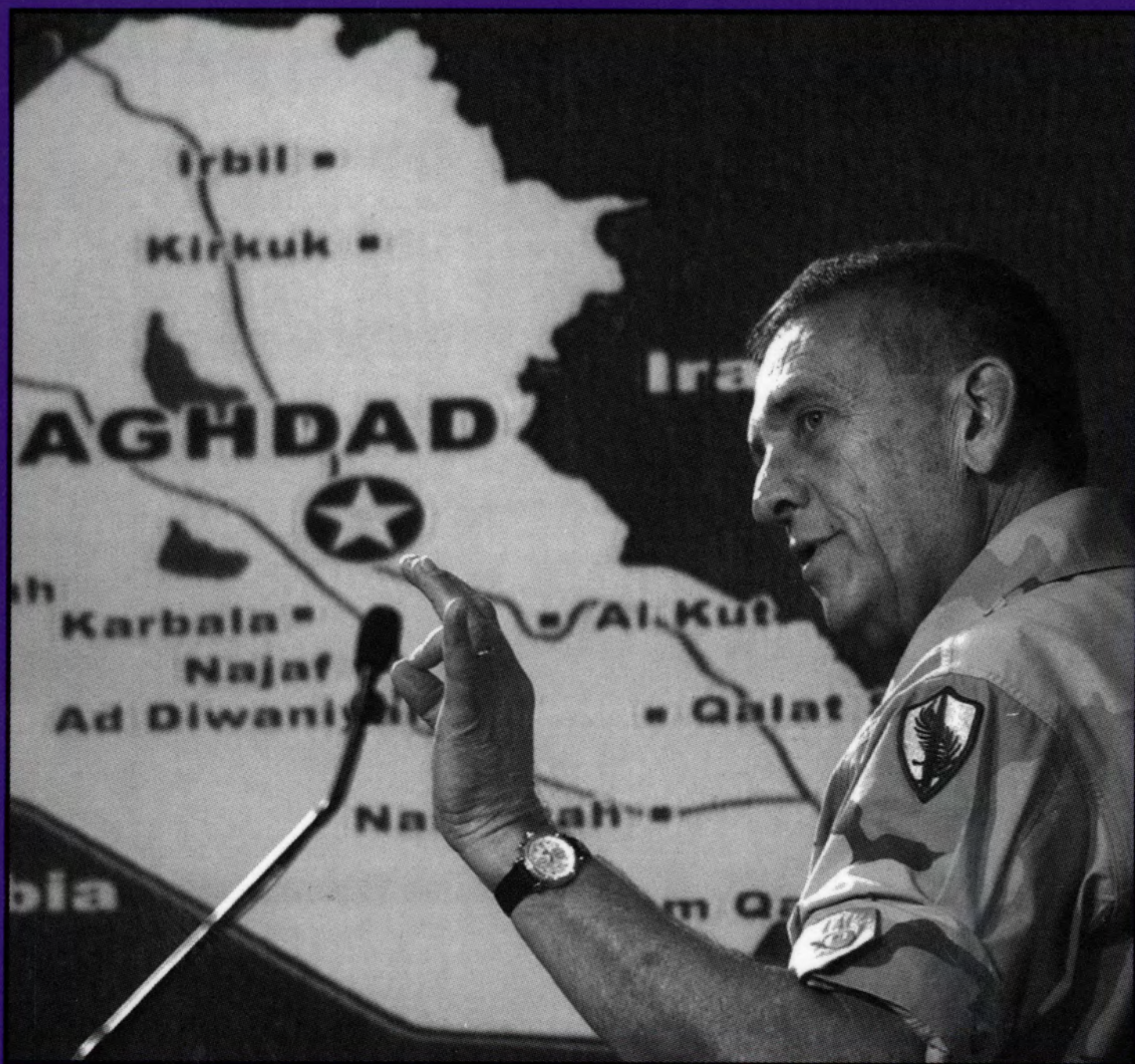
The Role of Military Intelligence Assessments

Shaping the Plan for Operation Iraqi Freedom

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REVISED EDITION

GREGORY HOOKER

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Cover photo: General Tommy Franks, commander of CENTCOM, stands before a screened map of Iraq, March 30, 2003. Copyright AP Wide World Photos/Steve Senne

About the Author

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Mr. Hooker worked and traveled extensively inside Iraq during deployments spanning from 1995 to 2003. He worked in northern Iraq in support of Kurdish relief efforts; served as a UN Special Commission (UNSCOM) inspector in Iraq during 1996 and 1998; supported post-conflict leadership conferences in early 2003; and was deployed to establish the National Intelligence Center in Baghdad in late 2003.

Mr. Hooker previously served as the senior Iraq analyst at U.S. European Command (USEUCOM) during Operation Provide Comfort. During Operation Desert Storm, he supported military operations in Iraq from the National Security Agency. He holds a master's degree in strategic intelligence from the Joint Military Intelligence College.

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Preface

There has been much debate about U.S. intelligence efforts leading up to Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), with many questioning the manner in which interactions between policymakers and intelligence analysts in Washington affected the conduct of the war. While certain particularly controversial issues (e.g., weapons of mass destruction) have been the subject of high-level commissions and reports, much less attention has been devoted to the military's overall success in predicting Iraqi capabilities and potential courses of action during the war itself—a feat made possible in large part by the work of military intelligence analysts based at U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) in Tampa, Florida. Nor has much detail emerged about how U.S. intelligence efforts fed into the planning process for the war and its aftermath.

These issues are important in part because of the vigorous criticism that war planners faced as OIF unfolded. The United States adopted what many at the time saw as a risky strategy: initiating combat before the arrival of an important additional division, racing ahead to Baghdad at breakneck speed while supply lines remained vulnerable to attack, and then charging into the city without pausing to regroup and reinforce. Some speculated that this strategy was being pressed upon a reluctant military by overly optimistic hawks at the Defense Department and White House.

Given this background, The Washington Institute is pleased to present Gregory Hooker's in-depth examination of how military intelligence assessments actually shaped OIF planning. Greg is refreshingly frank about the strengths and weaknesses of U.S. intelligence efforts,

providing a remarkably candid and dispassionate analysis of what were sometimes contentious debates regarding appropriate strategy.

In particular, he discusses the lengthy "iterative" process that resulted in several different war plans, with each successive plan calling for shorter buildup times and fewer forces. Not only did this extra planning require many months of effort, it also led to severe security restraints that isolated professional planners and limited dialogue with outside agencies—all while failing to prevent frequent high-level leaks of detailed information about the evolving war plan. Ironically, the actual execution of OIF had more in common with the initial version of the plan than with the later variants.

As Greg notes, the effort expended on generating these alternative plans would have been better spent preparing for the postwar environment in Iraq. His study describes the weaknesses in the interagency planning process for post-Saddam Iraq, showing that ultimate "ownership" of this phase fell to civilian agencies that were not well coordinated, had no empowered leadership, and suffered from political influence.

Gregory Hooker has been working on Iraq in various capacities for the past fifteen years, and we at The Washington Institute have been delighted by our collaboration with him. His analysis is in the best traditions of U.S. intelligence: sober, careful, and solid.

Robert Satloff
Executive Director,
The Washington Institute

Executive Summary

Intelligence assessments regarding Iraq's capabilities and potential courses of action were key factors in planning Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). These assessments drew on work conducted throughout the intelligence community, leveraging many years of collection and analysis following Operation Desert Storm.

The process by which the intelligence assessments were developed and the plan constructed had an influence on the substantive results and conclusions. The process itself was greatly influenced by the differing viewpoints between intelligence professionals and Pentagon policymakers. The latter viewed the Iraqi regime as vulnerable to a low-intensity insurgency and susceptible to being overwhelmed by U.S. military technology. This viewpoint suggested that a small coalition force and short buildup times prior to the war would be sufficient to defeat the regime and achieve coalition objectives.

Military professionals were dubious about these views, but the evolving system of "iterative" or "adaptive" planning provided a venue for policymakers to frequently insert ideas and exert downward pressure on the available coalition force size. These competing ideas were never reconciled—there was no authoritative, systematic review and consolidation of viewpoints between intelligence producers and senior policymakers. Instead, the planning process attempted to achieve a compromise between these competing outlooks.

Specifically, the differing viewpoints were expressed with alternative sets of planning assumptions, which produced three different versions of the OIF war plan. Each successive version called for shorter coalition buildup times and, consequently, lower coalition force levels. The

increasingly unrealistic assumptions of the later plans were eventually abandoned; the execution of OIF, in the broadest terms, had more in common with the first version of the plan than the later variants that had been highly "refined" by the iterative process. Hence, the iterative process wasted many months of time and energy, not only in the production of alternative variants but also in support of (or defense against) frequent executive-level meetings.

In addition, severe security restraints served to complicate the practical aspects of planning, isolating planners and limiting assistance from outside agencies while failing to prevent frequent leaks of detailed information about the evolving war plan. The unresolved policy debate in Washington about the Iraq war was likely a key motivation for the high-level leaks, with various participants in the debate attempting to make their case public.

Moreover, the interagency planning process for the post-hostilities environment in Iraq was weak, contributing significantly to intelligence shortfalls following the major combat phases of OIF. Ultimate "ownership" of the post-hostilities phase fell to civilian agencies, which were not well coordinated, had no empowered leadership, and suffered from political influence. The failure to establish a robust, professional organization that could outline post-hostilities policies in advance—policies that would have a positive effect on the security environment—confounded the attempts of analysts to assess the situation in Iraq after the regime's fall.

ASSESSING SPECIFIC MILITARY INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATES

The substance of the intelligence assessments that guided the planning of OIF reflected a broad range of questions

that directly impacted the coalition plan for conducting the war. Although analysts examined a variety of possible alternative answers to these key intelligence questions, the "most likely" outcomes were accorded unusual importance because the compressed planning timelines limited the effort that could be expended on alternative scenarios.

Several significant intelligence questions were successfully addressed, including the following: Will Iraq reorient its forces? Will it preemptively attack the coalition in Kuwait? Will it mount a deliberate urban defense within Baghdad? Will it employ its air force? Yet, planners failed to correctly identify Iraq's most likely course of action with regard to other questions: Will Iraq preemptively attack the Kurds? Will it attack Israel with Scud missiles? Will it use weapons of mass destruction? In still other cases, answers to complex questions were partially correct but failed to fully explain the eventual outcome: Will Iraq exploit hydrology to impede the coalition maneuver plan? How strong is the Iraqi will to fight? Will Iraq employ a scorched earth policy? When will Iraq receive unambiguous warning of coalition intent?

In addition, several key mistakes in the judgments that underpinned the assessments had a ripple effect in creating errors. For example, analysts generally overestimated potential Iraqi responses. The regime's capacity to defend Iraq far exceeded its actions before and during OIF. Intelligence assessments were modeled not only on the regime's gross capabilities, but also on its demonstrated willingness and ability to act in the past. Yet, the regime seemed to operate far below its capacity.

Another fundamental error was the failure to appreciate how slowly the regime would realize the imminence of war. Baghdad's severe miscalculation, made despite an

abundance of information to the contrary, resulted in Iraqi complacency toward reasonable military preparations.

Finally, planners made a fundamental analytical error in not fully appreciating the speed and scope of the collapsing morale and will to fight within the Iraqi military. This led to a misinterpretation of the defensive posture and preparations that Iraq made but never actually employed—all of which led to an exaggeration of the capabilities ascribed to the Iraqi military.

Introduction

Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, there has been a growing interest in reforming the U.S. intelligence community with the goal of improving its performance. The war in Iraq and the failure to find weapons of mass destruction have further accelerated the desire among civilian and military leaders to reexamine the intelligence community. Much of the attention in these oversight and reform efforts has focused on the large intelligence and security agencies based in Washington. Largely missing from this debate has been an examination of the role of military intelligence organizations outside the national structure in the production of assessments guiding America's primary military responses to the post–September 11 security threats: the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq.

This paper will examine the broad roles that intelligence analysis played in shaping the military strategy in Iraq. Since the changes brought about by the Goldwater-Nichols Act in the mid-1980s, the primary responsibility for drafting U.S. military plans had fallen to regional commands. The Pentagon and the Joint Staff did not conduct military planning; instead, they identified strategic missions, arbitrated the apportionment of forces to execute plans, and approved the final concept. The regional commands were the actual authors of the planning, operating with a degree of anonymity and obscurity, quietly building and maintaining their war plans with some independence from the charged political atmosphere of Washington. The regional command responsible for the Middle East was U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), based at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida.

CENTCOM's planning of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) was guided in part by expectations of Iraqi strategy. These expectations, developed as intelligence estimates, played a significant role in the shaping of the plan for OIF. Planners attempted to identify Iraq's options in the face of conflict, forecast which of those options were most likely, and then highlight the strengths and vulnerabilities of each option. Comparing the realities of Iraq's behavior—eventually revealed during the execution of OIF—to the assessments produced before the war gives insight into the challenges of such estimative intelligence.

This paper is divided into two key areas, "process" and "results." In chapter 1, the process that produced these estimates will be examined as a means of understanding the eventual intelligence conclusions. This intelligence process, shaped by its time, place, and personalities, defined the specific conditions in which the planners worked and offers necessary context for understanding the estimates of enemy behavior. The doctrinal templates, and the frequent variations from the doctrinal approaches, will be examined, and their effect on OIF intelligence planning will be highlighted.

In chapter 2, the key questions that were answered by CENTCOM's estimates, the ultimate result of the analytical work, will be examined. This includes an evaluation of how closely the estimates described the eventual realities of enemy behavior during OIF's execution. It also examines those estimates that were partially wrong and suggests possible reasons for the errors.

Chapter 1

PRODUCTION OF MILITARY INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATES FOR OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

I ntelligence processes for supporting deliberate military planning have become relatively standardized over the years. But the idealized approach to intelligence support is inevitably remolded based on conditions specific to a given planning evolution. Intelligence estimates are influenced by numerous factors, some integral to the normal planning process and some accidental. From the beginning, the process for Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) was subjected to forces that would move it well outside the norm.

SHIFTS IN DOCTRINAL NORMS

An intelligence estimate is generally produced at the very beginning of the process of planning for war. In mid-2001, however, the procedure for U.S. war plan development and maintenance was in a degree of disarray. For many years, the U.S. national strategy had been based on the concept of fighting two near-simultaneous wars: in Korea and Iraq.[1] Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld had broken with this concept in early 2001, and had delayed the cycle of two-year reviews and updates for standing war plans while a new approach was defined.[2] The standing U.S. war plan for Iraq, known officially as OPLAN 1003-98 (see figure 1, next page), was already overdue for its scheduled update when

Figure 1. Evolution and Taxonomy of Iraq War Plans

1003-98: Produced on the normal two-year planning cycle, beginning in 1998 and ending in 2000

1003V Generated Start: Produced in an abbreviated planning process, with primary work conducted between December 2001 and March 2002

1003V Running Start: Produced in abbreviated planning between March and July 2002

1003V Hybrid: Produced in abbreviated planning from July to October 2002

Operation Iraqi Freedom: The operational execution of 1003V, with combat phases beginning in March 2003

the September 11 attacks occurred; it awaited the finalization of the secretary of defense's new planning system.[3]

This factor was not significantly detrimental to the process of building the new plan, however, because the revamped post–September 11 version of OPLAN 1003 needed to be very different from its predecessor. It would not have been possible to execute the old plan "off the shelf" without substantial work to account for the new requirements. The "pre–September 11" OPLAN 1003-98, largely defensive in nature, was planned against a scenario in which Iraq launched an invasion of Kuwait, just as it had in 1990. Much of the plan focused on defensive actions to stop the Iraqis and then recover Kuwaiti territory.[4] Although one of the branch plans (contingency options) for 1003-98—the Strike Transition branch—examined a purely offensive coalition scenario, it was thinly developed

and largely conceptual. The new plan would be a dramatic departure, since it focused exclusively on a scenario in which the coalition attacked first and for the specific purposes of defeating Iraq and changing its regime.

In some ways, the new coalition offensive scenario simplified the operational planning for employment of friendly forces, since the coalition force buildup prior to the war would not experience the problems associated with the coalition defensive scenario: loss of ports and airfields during the Iraqi advance, disruption of friendly strategic force movements due to ongoing combat and sabotage, the inherent competitive drain on logistics between support to fighting units engaged in defensive combat, and the need to build up combat power to eventually mount a strategic counterattack.

The new offensive scenario required significant rethinking of intelligence inputs to planning, however. Much would have to be reconsidered. The old OPLAN 1003-98, in which Iraq would initiate the invasion, created at the outset a detailed and very specific scenario for the Iraqis. Their commitment of forces, not to mention their international political situation after having attacked an Arab neighbor, would have closed off many options and narrowed their range of action.

A situation in which the coalition initiated the attack, however, would preserve and even create options for Iraq. Examining Iraq's options in terms of the doctrinal standards of measuring national power—military, diplomatic, informational, and economic—suggests that if Iraq were on the defensive, it would retain a great degree of freedom.[5] Iraq would better preserve its military options by keeping its entire military uncommitted and at the ready. And it would have better diplomatic and informational

power because it would not have just invaded a neighbor, triggering international condemnation and heightening the fears abroad of additional Iraqi military action. It would be in a better position economically because, rather than placing its economy on a war footing and potentially inviting new sanctions and reinvigorated enforcement of existing sanctions, it would continue to trade and receive the benefit not only of income generated but also the potential leverage it provided over regional trading partners. These factors required planners to significantly rethink Iraq's options in creating the new, offensive version of the plan.

The initial work on a purely offensive OPLAN 1003, which eventually became known as 1003V, began in late November 2001 at the direction of the secretary of defense, a little more than two months after the September 11 attacks.[6] Eventually, three separate versions of 1003V were produced. A group of U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) staff members were isolated in a workspace at the CENTCOM headquarters to begin developing the plan. In support of these efforts, a small team of analysts within the J2 (intelligence) staff at CENTCOM was dedicated to the task. Initially the work consisted mainly of staff meetings to develop a broad, conceptual approach to the problem, with intelligence analysts providing "live" oral input that covered potential strategies and approaches to an invasion of Iraq. Simultaneously, the intelligence support team began developing more formal, deliberate sets of products.[7]

Such intelligence assessments are important elements of deliberate military planning, aimed at generating several products: Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Battlespace (JIPB), an Intelligence Annex to the plan, and a formal military intelligence estimate. Key compo-

nents in producing the plan for OIF, these products gave the CENTCOM staff a common picture of the enemy's capabilities and likely enemy courses of action (ECOAs).[8] They also served as the basis for conducting war games and plan refinement, driving efforts that addressed potentially disruptive enemy courses of action.[9] Drawing on the intelligence staff in Tampa, Florida, and using inputs from the intelligence community at large, the first military intelligence estimate was produced in early 2002.

MILITARY INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATES VS. NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATES

There is a distinct difference between military intelligence estimates and the National Intelligence Estimates (NIEs) produced for the U.S. government leadership by the National Intelligence Council. The National Intelligence Council, located at CIA headquarters and in the service of the director of central intelligence, is charged with synthesizing strategic-level estimates through deliberations with the intelligence community. Military intelligence estimates, written by the command responsible for an OPLAN, focus more narrowly on the conditions and circumstances that will affect military operations. Military estimates explore enemy actions in very specific hypothetical contexts: the scenarios that are constructed from planned coalition actions. Estimates of enemy actions require an intimate understanding of potential coalition actions, and to be effective, such estimative processes must be embedded within the military staffs that conduct the planning.

At the beginning of a peacetime two-year planning cycle, CENTCOM typically would have sought an NIE. Such estimates are desirable because they describe au-

thoritatively and in broad terms a strategic environment. Representing the widest possible coordination among all U.S. intelligence agencies, NIEs bring together the best minds on a given topic for the best-vetted product.[10] During the planning for OIF, however, an NIE was not immediately sought for several reasons. First, the NIE on Iraq had been extensively revised and updated in late 1999, well after the last major clash with the coalition during Operation Desert Fox in 1998. Since that time, the Iraqi military had not changed substantially. Second, the compressed timelines for completion of the plan pointed toward a more streamlined "in-house" production of estimates. Although the beginning of OIF's combat phase was still more than fifteen months away, the CENTCOM staff had prepared initially for a potential execution in spring 2002, about a year before combat began.[11] Third, planners faced tremendous pressure to maintain operational security. The plan was submerged in a classified "compartment" at CENTCOM headquarters, inaccessible even to most of the national intelligence community.[12] For many months, NIE coordination across multiple agencies of the intelligence community was not feasible.

Eventually an NIE was produced within a very short time frame, beginning in September 2002 and ending with its publication the next month. It was written largely in response to a congressional request.[13] The NIE's rapid production schedule relied heavily on the existing products in the intelligence community from various agencies. Principal contributors included the CIA, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the National Ground Intelligence Center, and the Marine Corps Intelligence Agency. Coordinated during several video teleconference meetings among the various producers, the NIE's conclusions were in general

agreement with the CENTCOM military estimate. The nature of the NIE and the context in which it was produced made it more relevant to political leaders than to military decisionmakers. In fact, by the time the NIE was published in October 2002, all three versions of OPLAN 1003V had already been developed fully. They had been planned and drafted, their estimates had been written, their war games had been conducted, extensive force deployment plans had been developed, and each plan's concept had been briefed to the president.

SECURITY

Security issues frequently hampered the planning process, with severe security measures creating a situation in which a relatively narrow group of individuals were engaged in the substantive work.[14] For the intelligence support, this affected not only the ability to initiate intelligence community products such as the NIE, but also a wide range of important lower profile studies. This was especially true in the case of specialized intelligence products that would usually be produced by people other than the CENTCOM J2 staff. Some specialized intelligence problems were satisfied by organizations with niche expertise, systems, and processes that could not readily be duplicated in Tampa. Sometimes these intelligence requirements could be given to the traditional producers but presented as if they were scheduled updates of existing databases or products. In this way, officials hid the specific purpose and preserved security.[15] At other times, the Tampa staff would stretch the limits of their own production capability, undertaking work that traditionally had not been performed at CENTCOM headquarters.

Just as the onerous security requirements gradually relaxed during summer 2002, several incidents occurred to reawaken concerns. Frequent speculation in the media about the plan for war had already created unease. Then, a steady stream of articles with Washington datelines provided details about the 1003V concepts as they developed; some of these gave sufficient detail to suggest that journalists had been given direct access to copies of the original CENTCOM briefings.[16] In part, the public policy debate was being waged through potentially destructive leaks of highly classified data. The differences in viewpoints about how best to approach a war in Iraq were acute, including a number of fundamental issues: the advisability of going to war, the role of airpower, and the size of the ground force. These differences included not only partisan political debates but also disagreements within the uniformed military leadership.[17] Most often, the presumed motivation of those leaking the information was to criticize the planning, and this criticism appeared to originate from senior leaders in the Pentagon.[18]

A team of Air Force agents from the Office of Special Investigations (OSI) came to CENTCOM headquarters to conduct interviews as part of an investigation ordered by the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) to determine the source of the leaks.[19] This was done despite the unlikelihood that the leaks had originated in Tampa. After all, Washington-based journalists were writing the stories, often explicitly citing "Pentagon sources." These sources generally gave unfavorable critiques of CENTCOM planning and undercut the command's work to build a viable war plan in secrecy.[20] Despite this, time and energy were expended conducting investigations in Tampa. No outcome of the investigation was ever made public.

The lack of repercussions for the steady leaks contrasted dramatically with the increasing security pressures at CENTCOM headquarters, where an air of cynicism filled planners. Rumors circulated through the planning elements that 1003V was not, in fact, intended for execution. According to this theory, it was part of an elaborate information operations campaign to put pressure on the Iraqi government, in order to compel compliance with Washington's demands to cooperate with weapons of mass destruction inspections.[21] To some planners, this theory seemed the only logical way to explain the seemingly outrageous and reckless revelations of classified material by senior officials.

Another event during summer 2002 added difficulty to the security environment. On August 2, two laptops were reported missing from a workspace at the Intelligence Directorate's Plans Division. More specifically, the laptops were stolen from a workspace dedicated to providing intelligence support to 1003V planning. CENTCOM's facilities at MacDill Air Force Base were locked down, and personnel not on duty were recalled to work. Once again, teams of Air Force OSI investigators came to CENTCOM to conduct interrogations of personnel who potentially had "green badge" access to the work areas adjacent to the J2 Plans offices. This group included more than a thousand personnel, so the OSI organized mass "interviews" using an investigative technique that involved multiple questionnaires. The interview sessions lasted late into the evening of August 2 and continued intermittently into the following week.[22] The investigations created tremendous friction and added stress to the work environment at MacDill. In some instances, planners were advised of their legal rights prior to ques-

tioning. Finally, an Air Force sergeant working as an administrative assistant—and unconnected to the 1003V planning—admitted to taking the computers for personal use. Although it did not appear that any information had been compromised, he was tried and convicted in a Tampa-convened court-martial and sentenced to serve time in prison.[23] The episode clearly demonstrated that CENTCOM personnel, engaged in military preparations for war, viewed security far differently than senior officials in Washington, where the most sensitive information was regularly leaked without consequence.

INTELLIGENCE METHODOLOGY

The military intelligence estimates focused on a wide range of enemy capabilities and tried to explain possible enemy courses of action. The ECOAs were intended to represent the realistic and plausible capabilities of the enemy that could be employed in combat—not simply worst-case scenarios. The full range of these capabilities was described in the estimates, and then the difficult assessments were made concerning which specific enemy actions were most likely.[24]

Analysts building these estimates have several key sources from which to draw. First, they must understand the purely military capabilities of the enemy, in particular the worst-case extremes of the ECOAs. This is probably the easiest intelligence problem on which to collect data and to analyze. By observing the large-scale activities of a given nation's military units, intelligence analysts can draw fairly certain conclusions as to its gross military capabilities. In recent years, Iraq's military has also been more active than most in the region—with training, exercises, and real

operational activity—providing regular measures of its operational performance and capabilities. Most significantly, the United States had direct and continuing experience studying Iraq's military since Operation Desert Storm. The large commitment of U.S. military forces to monitoring Iraq in the decade following Desert Storm resulted in intense long-term data collection and analysis of Iraq and its military by the intelligence community.[25]

A second key method for estimating enemy actions is to consider intent, drawing on current intelligence indications. Determining intent is generally difficult, however, since the enemy will not always posture for war until the conflict threatens. In examining many nations, the intelligence community could at least venture a guess at patterns of decisionmaking. The actions of Saddam Hussein's totalitarian government, however, could not be easily predicted. By concentrating power at the top, Saddam could improvise his decisions in unpredictable ways as a situation developed.

A third important indicator of potential courses of action is the adversary's prior behavior. Precedents are powerful analytic tools because they do not necessarily require an understanding of the underlying mechanics driving the adversary's particular decision or action. Gaining such understanding is a much more difficult problem analytically, and one not always supported by the available data.[26]

Fourth, scenarios can be "gamed out," or simulated, with analysts looking into the adversary's point of view and attempting to model the mechanics of its decisionmaking process. Gaming an ECOA is the most important and also the most unreliable part of the estimate. It leverages other analytic methods and then forecasts behavior in a specific set of circumstances resulting from, in this case, the coali-

tion plan. It requires establishing assumptions about the enemy's view of the battlefield, its objectives, its strategy, and its perception of the coalition's vulnerabilities. Enemy actions, and especially reactions, are a critical part of estimating the likely ECOAs throughout the execution of the plan. Iraq, which before the invasion was in a somewhat passive, strategically defensive posture, would be largely reacting rather than initiating action, so forecasting its behavior would require an accurate understanding of coalition actions and their relative timing. The resulting analysis, then, is subject not only to errors in understanding the enemy but also to changes in the coalition's plan. The judgments that form an estimate are ultimately a subjective combination of all elements of the analysis.

An estimate of ECOAs is underpinned by a baseline analysis of the enemy's objectives and centers of gravity—the sources from which an enemy derives its power or freedom of action.[27] The traditional center of gravity analysis in 1003V was replaced by a concept of "lines and slices" developed by the CENTCOM commander. This analysis attempted to portray the coalition's key capabilities as a series of "lines" and then to portray the enemy's key capabilities as "slices." These intersecting lists formed the rows and columns of a matrix, allowing for an examination of how each coalition "line" of operation would be leveraged to weaken or defeat an Iraqi "slice" of capability.[28]

The validity of estimates is sometimes difficult to assess because of the way they influence strategy. The planning process and accompanying intelligence inputs are meant to identify risks posed by the enemy for the purpose of mitigating those risks through friendly action. In the case of OIF, by highlighting potential enemy actions, the estimates made those ECOAs less likely because U.S. forces had taken

preventive actions or postured themselves to respond rapidly. This phenomenon helps to explain some, but not all, of the forecasts for OIF that were off the mark.

An examination of intelligence methodology would not be complete without comment on the central role of Microsoft PowerPoint software in the planning process. CENTCOM (like much of the Department of Defense) had come to rely on this software to allow staff officers to create slideshows and presentations that could be used to deliver information or provide briefings. It provided an efficient way to quickly convey information in simple terms, and its format allowed for the easy incorporation of graphic elements—pictures, maps, charts—that helped portray data. The time constraints, production pressures, and the need to quickly assemble standardized products with input from numerous staff sections all played to the positive qualities of PowerPoint. The potential of PowerPoint as a "sales" tool—a slick means of packaging a message persuasively—was also useful, given the degree of policy debate surrounding the plan and its three variants.

In other ways, however, PowerPoint was a hindrance.[29] Sometimes the substance of the intelligence information conveyed in the slides would become a hostage to, or an invention of, the "salesmanship" imperative. Prior to the September 11 attacks, the software had largely supplanted the production of narrative products in the CENTCOM J2—rather than simply supplementing them—and become the primary means of communicating with decisionmakers. Narrative production by its nature encourages a more deliberative and rigorous cognitive process than that required to create a slideshow—which combines eye-pleasing graphics with terse bulleted statements that summarize information. PowerPoint had come to define a shallow and

superficial style of intelligence production. The early planning for 1003V was captured almost wholly in PowerPoint format. Eventually the narrative intelligence products caught up, with production of the first military intelligence estimate in spring 2002 and the further development and refinement of other more substantive products.

ORGANIZATIONAL DYNAMICS

During the time of OIF's planning, CENTCOM was deeply engaged in the execution of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in Afghanistan. Because OEF was America's principal response to the September 11 attacks, the command felt tremendous pressure to succeed. Prior to OEF, much of the intelligence focus of the command had been on Iraq, thus requiring a massive post–September 11 diversion of resources toward analysis of Afghanistan and terrorism. Intelligence focus on Iraq had to compete for resources with OEF priorities on many fronts: analytical manpower, equipment, collection resources, and asset exploitation.[30]

Support to deliberate military planning is an inherent function of a Major Command (MAJCOM) staff, but generally not the highest priority intelligence function overall. Even during peacetime conditions, the "current intelligence" mission—the "headline news" reporting that focuses on day-to-day developments—would be the primary pursuit of the intelligence directorate (see figure 2 for a list of CENTCOM directorates). During crises, there is inevitably a shift in resources to address current intelligence problems. In November 2001, when OIF planning commenced, resources from two major elements of the J2 were identified and isolated in order to better focus on the planning. The formal responsibility for intelligence

Figure 2. CENTCOM Staff Directorates

J1	Personnel
J2	Intelligence
J3	Operations
J4	Logistics
J5	Plans and Policy
J6	Communications
J8	Resources and Assessment

support to planning lay within the operations division of the J2. Several months later, in 2002, a separate plans division was established within the J2. The CENTCOM Joint Intelligence Center (JIC) provided analytical support. A combined team of analysts from the JIC and several J2 planners were dedicated to providing 1003V with intelligence support. After the September 11 attacks, CENTCOM's main parking lot was closed off and filled with rented trailers that were used as office space (see satellite photo on page 18). The J2 support staff were moved into this trailer park in order to enhance security by separating them from the rest of the J2 staff. This allowed J2 support personnel to work more closely with the leading J3 and J5 directorate planners for OIF, who also worked from a trailer in the former parking lot.

Together, the J3 and J5 led the development of 1003V. During the development of each version of 1003V, much of the initial work was conducted in Operational Planning Teams (OPTs), which engaged in brainstorming

Source: U.S. Geological Survey

sessions to evaluate different operational concepts. Intelligence support in these meetings provided immediate feedback on enemy capabilities and possible reactions to proposed coalition activity, helping to pick out operational concepts that were most promising and worthy of being developed.

The J2 director was regularly briefed on the progress of the planning and regularly convened meetings with his principal staff. His senior advisors would gather weekly for "graybeard" meetings to discuss specific intelligence issues related to the planning, examine analytical problems, make decisions on resources and production, and provide guidance. The J2 also directed the establishment of an Analytic Steering Committee, a group of analysts from the national intelligence community who would meet via secure video teleconferences to discuss substan-

tive intelligence issues—without explicitly identifying or overtly discussing the implications for war plans, as dictated by the security sensitivities. This process, initiated well before the drafting of the NIE, was a useful means of soliciting the opinions and assistance of the wider intelligence community.[31]

OPERATIONAL DESIGN: PHILOSOPHICAL DEBATES

The operational design of CENTCOM's plan—the broad strategic concept—was influenced by expectations of the adversary's options and likely actions. Planning for OIF was characterized by a now well-documented debate over the appropriate U.S. force size.[32] This debate occurred primarily between two parties: senior civilian leaders within the Office of the Secretary of Defense, who argued to limit the coalition force size, and the military leadership at CENTCOM, who generally advocated larger force numbers.[33] This debate turned in part on an understanding of coalition capabilities, but also on expectations of Iraqi military capability and performance.

The debate was partially rooted in policies advocated long before the September 11 attacks. As far back as the mid-1990s, a cadre of civilian analysts and academics had advanced the idea that a relatively small coalition force could assist an Iraqi oppositionist insurgency in unseating Saddam's regime.[34] These individuals believed that the regime was fundamentally brittle and vulnerable to collapse under pressure from U.S.-supported opposition. Against the backdrop of these ideas, the Iraqi Liberation Act was passed in 1998, advancing a policy of encouraging oppositionists and triggering a broad political debate and polarizing viewpoints. Although the Clinton administra-

tion eventually accepted a policy of regime change, it was unenthusiastic about pursuing such a course.[35]

When the Bush administration came to power in 2001, a number of the early proponents of regime change came to hold senior civilian positions in the OSD. The civilian OSD leadership sent a representative to Tampa for the December 2001 discussions that shaped OIF's broad strategic outlines. Representatives continued to visit the planners at various points during the construction of 1003V and were present at some of the war games conducted for the plan.[36]

In 2002, the OSD established an internal body, the Office of Special Plans, to focus on 1003V. Although the Office of Special Plans has been blamed for heavily filtering data and intelligence at the Pentagon, it made no direct attempt to influence CENTCOM intelligence at the working level or dictate conclusions that fit a preconceived agenda.[37] Instead, personnel in Washington and Tampa continued to operate with their divergent views of Iraqi capabilities. Rather than resolve the intelligence questions toward a common understanding to facilitate planning, the process instead accommodated different sets of assumptions about the overall degree of force required to conduct OIF. Consequently, the plan was recast several times, with decreasing coalition force buildup available for each new version of 1003V. Three complete versions were produced, each with its own detailed enemy analysis and force movement requirements. The "iterative" or "adaptive" planning style adopted by the secretary of defense allowed for frequent interaction with the CENTCOM leadership and was the venue for advocacy of OSD-preferred military options, built on unspoken assumptions of adversary capabilities.

There was never a final reconciliation of the varying points of view about Iraqi capabilities (or other issues) that drove these differing perceptions. Each side in the debate marched on, advocating its preferred operational concept, without a substantive discussion that reconciled the points of view and led to a consensus on the enemy situation.

The advocates of regime change not only had specific ideas about Iraq's capabilities, they were also deeply suspicious of the institutions that had been executing U.S. Iraq policy in the past. For example, they criticized the CIA for its inability to conduct covert operations against Iraq, highlighting the agency's apparent reluctance to work with certain opposition groups, particularly the Iraqi National Congress. The criticism even included public identification of the covert head of the CIA's Iraq Operations Group.[38] These suspicions also encompassed the Defense Department and CENTCOM. The CENTCOM commander from 1997 to 2000, Gen. Anthony Zinni, had testified to Congress that unseating the Iraqi regime by leveraging an oppositionist insurgency was unrealistic. On each side of the debate, the perceptions and suspicions may have contributed to the inability to resolve fundamental assumptions about Iraq's capabilities.

The expectation among many Bush administration officials that a small group of oppositionist insurgents could take the lead in successfully unseating the regime set the stage for the debate over coalition force levels. There was, however, another set of ideas—which might fall under the general heading "rapid decisive operations" (RDO)—from which the OSD adopted the idea that a smaller U.S. force size would be more appropriate. Like the supporters of oppositionist warfare to unseat the regime, the RDO ad-

vocates made broad assumptions about both coalition and enemy capabilities, many of which the CENTCOM staff came to question.

One of the most popular notions co-opted from RDO was "shock and awe." This concept was introduced early in the planning, in the second week of January 2002, during discussions between the secretary of defense and the CENTCOM commander.[39] The idea had been developed previously in a short book written by strategists at the National Defense University. It described the desired effects of rapid military operations to overwhelm an adversary, which would suffer "psychological . . . as well as physical and concrete effects beyond the destruction of enemy forces and supporting military infrastructure."[40]

These ideas were attractive because they suggested that a new, unorthodox approach might help the United States defeat Iraq with a limited force. Qualitative coalition advantages coupled with a selective application of force would reduce quantitative coalition force requirements. In practice, this idea appealed to the OSD's desire for a smaller coalition force and a more rapid execution. Indeed, as the originators of shock and awe asserted, "For a policymaker in the . . . Pentagon . . . there are always broader sets of operational concepts and constructs available for achieving political objectives than may be realized."[41] The OSD leadership strongly believed in this principle, and pushed hard for consideration of alternative means of achieving victory.

Part of the challenge in operationalizing these ideas (i.e., shock and awe and the oppositionist insurgency strategy) related to ongoing coalition military pressure against Iraq. The Iraqis had suffered a defeat from coalition military power in 1991, followed by more than a

decade of continuous daily contact with coalition military and intelligence efforts aimed at enforcing the U.S. "containment" policy. These included:

- A no-fly zone in the north, from which coalition forces engaged in frequent attacks on targets

- A no-fly zone in the south, from which coalition forces engaged in frequent attacks (and which was eventually expanded to 32 degrees north, just outside of Baghdad)

- A ground presence in the north until late 1996, including military forces, a diplomatic presence, and intelligence operations[42]

- Frequent spikes in military operations, including the June 1993 punitive strikes for an assassination attempt against former president George H. W. Bush, Vigilant Warrior in October 1994, Desert Strike in September 1996, Desert Thunder I in January–February 1998 (strikes not executed), Desert Thunder II in November 1998 (strikes not executed), Desert Fox in December 1998, and frequent "surge ops" by U.S. Navy–led maritime interception operations (MIOs) to aggressively curtail oil smuggling in the Persian Gulf

- Aggressive disarmament activity with the UN Special Commission (UNSCOM), including military intelligence collection carried out by support aircraft, intelligence activities on the ground, and diplomatic and international pressure[43]

- Economic pressure that resulted from the imposition and enforcement—including enforcement by military means—of UN economic sanctions

Given the high levels of continuous military pressure, the Iraqi military and populace were inured, to a degree, to coalition capabilities, making it difficult to actually create shock and awe. Even new capabilities in the U.S. inventory would have been "previewed" in operations against Iraq, gradually allowing Iraq's military to adjust expectations and even attempt to develop countervailing tactics and equipment to defend the country. For example, the precision levels achieved in 1998 by the first mass use of the Block III Tomahawk Land Attack Missile (TLAM) during Desert Fox helped the Iraqis refine techniques for the rapid relocation of military, industrial, and government facilities in periods of heightened tension.[44] In another example, the sustained low-intensity bombing campaign that followed Desert Fox exposed the Iraqis to a number of emerging U.S. capabilities, including Predator unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and precision weapons such as joint direct attack munitions (JDAMs) guided by global positioning system (GPS) technology. The experience gave them time to devise tactics in response. Iraq's efforts to engage Predator UAVs included experimentation to perfect interception geometries with manned air force interceptors, eventually resulting in a shoot-down.[45] Iraq also used its ground-based air defense, which successfully shot down several Predators prior to OIF.[46] Use of JDAM and TLAM precision-guided weapons helped refine Iraqi air defense dispersal tactics and led to the Iraqi purchase of GPS jammers that would later be employed during OIF.[47]

According to intelligence planners, even Iraqi civilians became inured to the harsh conditions of the interwar period in a way that would make shock and awe difficult to enact. For example, broad disruptions of Iraq's electrical power system, with its apparent practical and psychological effects on daily life and military defense activity, seemed on the surface like a potentially useful way to create shock and awe.[48] But when OIF planners at CENTCOM considered the merits of deliberately attacking the Iraqi power system, many considerations were factored into the calculus—operational, legal, postconflict reconstruction—and one that led to the tactic's rejection was the expectation that denying power would have no dramatic effect on Iraqis. After years of sanctions and a decaying power infrastructure, irregularity in power service was a routine part of daily Iraqi life. When rolling blackouts would strike neighborhoods in Baghdad after sunset, shop owners and restaurateurs would quickly start up their personal generators and supply their own power.[49] Years of military and economic pressure had eliminated any expectation that a severe shock could be induced through the disruption of electrical power.

Simultaneity in initiating air and ground offensives was another idea that grew from the focus on shock and awe. In Desert Storm, the beginning of the air war had preceded the ground war by thirty-eight days. It was judged that the combined effects of both, if launched simultaneously (or nearly so), might overwhelm Iraq.[50] This idea was controversial, however. Without a bombing campaign to "soften up" the Iraqi ground forces, the coalition would launch its campaign against relatively fresh troops who had not been subjected to the practical and psychological hardships of enduring sustained attacks. Examining the anticipated

effects of simultaneous attacks on the enemy, the intelligence directorate concluded that a separation of less than forty-eight hours would provide certain advantages. One advantage was that the Iraqis would likely be settling in for a lengthy bombing campaign and would not expect rapid ground attacks. Also, Iraqi command, control, and communications likely would not be fully restored during the first forty-eight hours of air strikes.[51]

OPERATIONAL DESIGN: MULTIPLE APPROACHES

It is difficult to fully isolate all of the issues that drove the arguments on coalition force size and the timing of a prospective attack. Even the CENTCOM commander believed that the original OPLAN 1003-98 called for an unnecessarily large force. Ultimately, a direct argument on force size was circumvented by the creation of multiple OIF plan versions that called for different force sizes and attack dates.

In the first weeks of planning, conceptual work broadly considered three different scenarios based on variations in coalition force size as a function of support around the Middle East. These scenarios were called "Robust," "Reduced," and "Unilateral," in reference to the different possibilities for basing and staging coalition forces. An operational imperative in each of these scenarios was that coalition offensive operations begin as soon as possible. Planners therefore considered an initial seizure of Iraqi territory with a small coalition force. This force would seize oilfields and other key terrain-based objectives, which would become a base of support for a coalition-sponsored insurgency.[52] From an intelligence perspective, such plans held tremendous risk, giving Iraq a window of opportunity

to act against a weak coalition force. They also relied on a non-U.S. force, using low-intensity means, in an attempt to achieve decisive results.

In late December 2001, these theoretical discussions were replaced by a new set of assumptions to build a broader, more deliberate offensive. Planners generally considered the constraints of the coalition force to be challenging as compared to the enemy picture presented by the intelligence staff. Planners saw their initial version of 1003V, the "Generated Start" plan, to be the only version. The four-phase plan involved a ninety-day buildup of forces, followed by a near-simultaneous initiation of coalition air and ground attacks. After the planners had worked for several months, they traveled in February 2002 to Scott Air Force Base in Illinois, the home base of U.S. Transportation Command (TRANSCOM). The Generated Start movement and logistics planning (the Time-Phased Force and Deployment Data, or TPFDD) was reviewed with TRANSCOM, CENTCOM headquarters, and CENTCOM's component command planners. For greater efficiency, the Generated Start war game was conducted simultaneously with the plan's TPFDD conference.[53]

Following the rapid initial development of Generated Start, work began in Tampa on a new version of the plan, called "Running Start." Based on different assumptions, Running Start specifically called for a faster coalition buildup and a smaller number of coalition forces. Running Start also provided for the immediate initiation of an air campaign if the Iraqis provided a justification for doing so. Three versions of the air campaign were presented, with different target emphases and effort levels, designated "blue," "white," and "red." During the air attacks, ground forces would be built up for a period of about forty-five

days, after which the ground campaign would commence. Work on this new concept eventually overshadowed efforts to complete the original version of the plan. Running Start saw a similar pattern of development followed by a movement of staff planners to TRANSCOM for a simultaneous war game and TPFDD conference in July 2002.[54]

Concurrent with the work on Running Start—the second version of the plan—a number of Operational Planning Teams were established in Tampa to examine issues and planning excursions that were common to all variants of 1003V. J2 analysts played a role on all of these teams, including the following:

- The Turkey OPT examined the possibility of opening a substantial second front in the north by attacking with a large conventional ground force through Turkey. Despite the significant operational challenges of attacking through Turkey with a large conventional force, there were potential benefits from an intelligence perspective. The larger the coalition military effort in the north, the more likely Iraq's ground forces would remain split between the north and the south, easing the coalition's main effort in the south.

- The "spikes" OPT examined ways in which the coalition could repetitively raise and lower tensions in a manner that would wear down the Iraqi military and desensitize it to the possibility of a decisive coalition attack.

- The "Fortress Baghdad" OPT focused on the ways in which Iraqi forces were expected to defend Baghdad. Although analysts did not expect Iraq to implement

a deliberate defense of the city, the OPT developed contingency plans in the event that such a defense was attempted.[55] The planners tried to identify ways in which Iraqi reinforcement of Baghdad could be prevented, but they came up with no effective means. According to timelines for transportation feasibility and unit movement, the Iraqis would be able to rapidly move a large force into the city if they chose. The planning therefore shifted to developing an operational concept known as "Inside Out," which was aimed at defeating Iraqi forces that mounted a deliberate defense inside the city. Inside Out emphasized covert means, information operations, and airpower—instead of a ground forces siege—to collapse the Iraqi defense in the city.[56]

- The oil OPT was meant to identify ways of preventing the Iraqi regime from sabotaging its own oil industry.

Following the development of Running Start, CENTCOM developed a third version of 1003V, the "Hybrid." This name was somewhat deceptive, since the new plan did not fuse its two predecessors but rather continued the trend toward assuming a swifter coalition buildup and a smaller coalition force that would execute offensive operations more quickly. The Hybrid plan involved a short buildup, followed first by an initiation of air attacks after sixteen days and second by a ground offensive at the thirty-two-day mark. Developed in Tampa, the Hybrid plan, like the other versions, was evaluated at a combined war game and TPFDD conference at Scott Air Force Base in early October 2002.[57]

A fourth and final operational concept—called "Velocity"—was conceived in October 2002 but never fully developed as a stand-alone version. The idea behind Velocity was an intense coalition strategic bombing campaign that would quickly force a regime collapse.[58]

The enemy courses of action were similar in the three variants of 1003V. Of these, the Running Start version had the most significant differences. Its idea to initiate air attacks on the first day of coalition operations would presumably restrict enemy reactions while at the same time increasing the coalition's vulnerability to disruptive Iraqi spoiling attacks.

The primary CENTCOM war games for 1003V were conducted in conference rooms at TRANSCOM headquarters in Illinois. In addition to the planners from CENTCOM headquarters, war game participants included 1003V planners from all key component commands (representing the central commands of the four primary military services: ARCENT, MARCENT, NAVCENT, and CENTAF), as well as representatives from major subordinate units and supporting agencies. The enemy actions were "played" by a CENTCOM J2 staff "red cell," sometimes with assistance from CIA analysts.

The war games for each successive version of the plan did not emphasize the interplay of friendly and enemy forces. They fell more into the category of friendly-force synchronizations, or "rock drills." Game "turns" would involve each participant describing his or her organization's activities, allowing all participants to ensure deconfliction and coordination of their actions across time, space, and mission. Enemy actions—no matter how disruptive—generally did not interrupt the game flow or change the friendly scheme of maneuver; participants noted them as

potential stumbling blocks and areas in which to further explore measures to mitigate risk. The war games also tended to focus on "most likely" enemy actions, without fully exploring the range of possibilities. Most of the time and energy in the war games—along with much of the planning—was concentrated on the tasks considered most challenging: the highest intensity conflict during the plan's combat phases. The Phase IV environment—i.e., the period that would follow the conclusion of major combat—was not closely examined. The war games were conducted simultaneously with TPFDD conferences at TRANSCOM, reinforcing the general focus on friendly-force synchronization.

In large part, the nature of the war games was dictated by the severely compressed timelines for the production of multiple variants of the plan. There was not enough time to fully test, through rigorous war gaming, all the branches, sequels, and ECOAs that might arise from the three 1003V variants. This forced planners to focus initially on building a coherent set of friendly actions. By the time the friendly-force picture was beginning to take shape, however, the planning effort had shifted toward building a new variant of 1003V.

Two key issues defined the different versions of the plan and distinguished them from one another: (1) the time available between the beginning of force movements and the initiation of the ground offensive—which essentially dictated the force size; and (2) the relative timing of major combat actions: A-Day (the beginning of the air campaign) versus G-Day (the beginning of the ground offensive). For two reasons, the timing of the ground offensive relative to the initiation of the coalition buildup was absolutely fundamental in defining the strategic

outlines that differentiated the plan versions. First, the coalition objective was regime change, which was deemed to require a ground offensive. The initiation of all other military activities—air attacks, covert actions, insertions of special operations forces —were all subordinate to the main effort, the decisive actions of the ground offensive. Second, the bulk of the transportation requirements involved the preparations for the ground offensive, making it effectively a pacesetter for the execution of any given operational design.

The original, pre–September 11 version of the Iraq war plan, 1003-98, allowed 114 days to build up forces prior to the start of an offensive ground assault into Iraqi territory.[59] The defining characteristics of the post-1003V plans were their shorter buildup times. Each of the three new versions allowed for increasingly less time to build up forces prior to G-Day. Generated Start allowed ninety days, Running Start allowed forty-five days, and Hybrid allowed thirty-two days. This trend reflected the desire of the OSD for faster execution with smaller coalition force levels.[60]

In the end, though, the execution of OIF most closely resembled the Generated Start plan, with its longer buildup timeline (see figure 3). The OIF deployments, which began on December 6, 2002, allowed for 103 days of coalition force buildup prior to G-Day, March 20, 2003. Additionally, the execution of OIF, with A-Day and G-Day occurring nearly at the same time, was closest to Generated Start, the only one of the four plans that featured near-simultaneity.

This conclusion is interesting for several reasons. First, it runs counter to the frequently repeated suggestions by senior participants in OIF that the Hybrid plan was the ver-

Figure 3. Comparison of Iraq War Plan Timelines
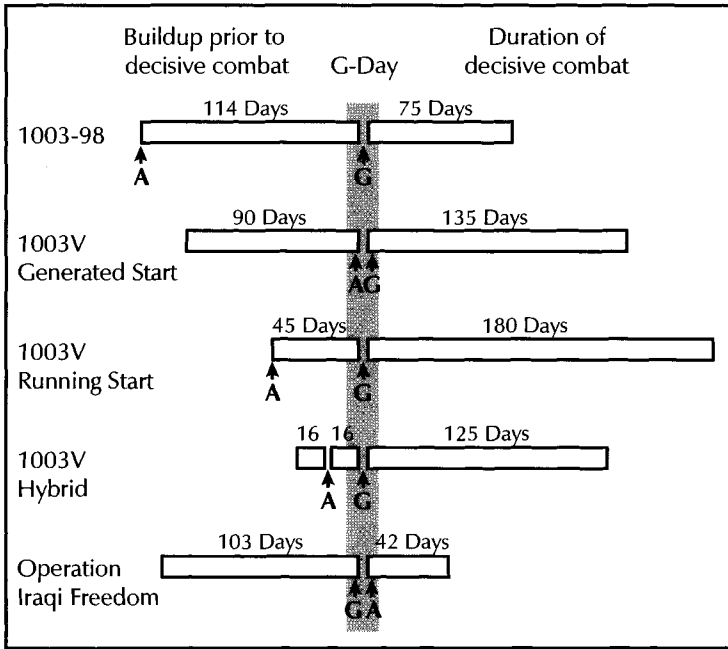
sion ultimately executed.[61] Hybrid, with its thirty-two-day buildup to G-Day and its sixteen-day separation between A-Day and G-Day, does not accurately describe OIF's execution. Second, such a conclusion contradicts the idea that both the substance and process of the pre–September 11 version of the plan were fundamentally flawed. The secretary of defense and other senior leaders in the Pentagon reportedly held the original plan in low regard, and they were generally critical of the military's deliberate military planning process.[62] OSD leaders believed that the military's system for deliberate planning was not sufficiently agile and did not reexamine assumptions as conditions changed over time.[63] Instead, the OSD favored a concept of "itera-

tive" or "adaptive" planning, a process in which it could frequently inject guidance and advocate entirely new sets of assumptions to build new variants.[64] In the end, however, the execution of OIF owed more to 1003-98 than it did to the increasingly "refined" variants of 1003V that employed the ever-shorter movement timelines inspired by OSD thinking. The fact that OIF resembled Generated Start begs the question: Was it necessary to produce a string of OPLANS with increasingly unrealistic execution timelines? The continual production of new operational concepts had a cost—it contributed to the inadequate development of the Generated Start plan.

Another problem with iterative/adaptive planning was the time and effort that CENTCOM officials needed to frequently create and "package" briefings to update the national leadership. The pressures on senior officers drove the CENTCOM staff to expend a tremendous amount of time on the mechanics and style of the presentations. Many of these briefings were known as "in-progress reviews." Rather than present a subject once, and conclusively, briefings were presented multiple times. Each iteration demanded the energy and effort necessary to meet presidential standards, even though the analysis was understood to be incomplete and that further presentations would be necessary as the planning evolved.

The confusion relating to the 1003V variant that was eventually executed owes, in part, to the concept of "N-Day." Defined as the date that units would be notified of impending deployments, N-Day is the first step in moving toward posturing for war. As the later variants of 1003V dictated shorter deployment timelines before G-Day, planners sought to regain lost days through a contrivance that redefined N-Day. Called "pre–N-Day"[65] (or

sometimes "Phase 0"[66]), this contrivance allowed for the pre-positioning of units prior to the "official" declaration of N-Day. This was dubious bookkeeping—the units in question were an integral part of the war plan and were being moved under presidential order to the relevant theater of operations to prepare to fight that war. The deployments that began under the Joint Chiefs of Staff order of December 6, 2002, were, in effect, a "shadow" N-Day; the "official" N-Day was more than two months later, on February 22, 2003.[67]

PHASE IV

In retrospect, the difficulties in stabilizing Iraq following major combat—the first three phases of 1003V—suggest that more should have been done to plan and prepare for the "postconflict" environment in Phase IV. This highlights one of the most frustrating areas of military planning, interagency coordination. All deliberate military planning includes interagency coordination, but ultimately it does so only in the form of recommendations. The military commander has little power to compel agencies outside the Defense Department to act in ways that increase the chances for success in any given enterprise. Such was the case with Iraq.

CENTCOM's responsibilities in OIF with regard to humanitarian aid and reconstruction focused on the transition from high-intensity combat to the post-conflict period, when the security environment was still uncertain and officials had to deal with the immediate aftermath of war—a time when it would be difficult for coalition civilian aid agencies, UN agencies, and nongovernmental organizations to meet immediate humanitarian needs. As a task,

however, the sustained effort for relief and reconstruction fell outside the sphere of CENTCOM.[68]

Beginning in 1998, the command had done extensive work planning a scenario that focused on restoring order in post-Saddam Iraq. A variant of 1003, the plan was known as "Desert Crossing." Formed as a CENTCOM initiative during the Clinton administration, it began as an attempt to topple Saddam's government using drastically reduced military resources—a theme that would be revived in the planning for OIF.[69] But Desert Crossing eventually came to focus on a scenario in which Iraq's totalitarian regime collapsed without any U.S. military effort. The operation focused on the period following the collapse, during which the U.S. military would conduct a stabilization and peace-enforcement mission. Though Desert Crossing required extensive interagency actions, CENTCOM took the lead in building advocacy for the interagency planning—military and civilian—required to secure Iraq internally. The key event in fostering interest and support outside the Defense Department was a national-level seminar-style war game held in June 1999. CENTCOM leadership and staff planners, including intelligence personnel embedded in the Desert Crossing development, traveled to Washington to conduct the war game and meet with counterparts from civilian agencies. The activity succeeded in winning a degree of "Beltway" interest, drawing senior participants from relevant agencies and the National Security Council. The Desert Crossing war game closed with a verbal consensus to initiate the formal mechanism for interagency coordination, Presidential Decision Directive 56.[70] But the degree of substantive interagency work was limited, and the effort lacked a single agency to provide leadership. CENTCOM continued work on the plan, incorporating it

as the "Peace Operations" branch plan of 1003-98. It was scheduled for full development as a stand-alone OPLAN prior to the secretary of defense's suspension of the planning cycle in early 2001.

Prior to OIF, the work done for so-called peace operations may have been largely unused or ignored on an interagency level. One account has cited ideological preconceptions among senior Bush administration officials, as well as cabinet-level conflicts, as reasons that the postwar planning did not succeed: existing plans were ignored, and ongoing efforts were complicated by rivalries.[71] Some sources have suggested that advocacy among senior defense officials for initiating OIF led them to view posthostility concerns as an argument against execution of the plan.[72] Regardless of the reasons for, and sources of, blame, the approach to handling postwar Iraq was clearly fractured. Unlike the situation for military operations, planning for civilian stabilization and reconstruction lacked the unity of effort and purpose defined by a single commander and an explicitly articulated plan.[73] This turmoil was evident to CENTCOM planners.[74] The lack of a single, empowered institution staffed by technocrats and charged with drawing the practical plans and making professional recommendations caused the process to be buffeted by disorganization and unrealistic ideas.

In addition, the military intelligence estimates for Phase IV were lacking in one important respect: their underestimation of the insurgency that targeted the coalition. There were several reasons for this miscalculation. First, the planning process tended to focus resources and efforts against the traditional military problem: defeating Saddam's conventional army. Second, intelligence assessments misjudged the degree of support among Iraqis

for the coalition. Although planners expected violence and civil disorder in Phase IV, they generally thought it would be sectarian violence among Iraqis rather than predominantly insurgent violence against coalition forces. This errant view was prevalent in the thinking not only at CENTCOM but throughout the intelligence community. Third, the interagency process and the primacy of civilian organizations in administering postwar Iraq made it difficult to foresee the social complications that would result from those civilian agencies' policies. The effect of early postwar de-Baathification efforts and the dissolution of the Iraqi army are examples. The creation of such policies by the Coalition Provisional Authority and the role that these decisions played in creating and sustaining insurgent movements could not have been anticipated by intelligence analysts during the planning.

PROBLEMS WITH THE PROCESS

Several conclusions can be drawn about the process that produced CENTCOM's key military intelligence estimates used for planning the war.

- *First, planners should have reconciled their assessments about the enemy.* Pentagon and CENTCOM staffs—and other elements within the intelligence community—never reconciled the differences that separated their views and that drove the OSD to advocate faster execution of combat with a smaller coalition force than the military believed to be prudent.

- *Second, the National Intelligence Estimate should have been drafted earlier, in response to Defense Department (rather*

than congressional) requirements. The NIE would have united the senior intelligence community analysts in a single forum, the logical venue in which to reconcile the fundamental differences in views regarding the enemy.

• *Third, a more focused set of assumptions about the enemy might have allowed for a better, more thorough, and comprehensive development of a single plan—instead of three plans.* A typical planning cycle would have involved a single plan constructed over two years rather than three plans in less than one year, all while planners simultaneously supported the nation's main effort in Afghanistan. Advantages could have included more rigorous war games and more thorough examinations of branches and sequels outside the "most likely" estimates, which were sometimes wrong. In large part, the nature of the war games and the overall depth of planning were dictated by the severely compressed timelines for the production of multiple variants of the plan.

• *Fourth, the secretary of defense's iterative/adaptive planning process was a distraction to the military's efforts to construct 1003V.* The iterative approach, with its greater involvement of the OSD in the process of deliberate military planning, injected numerous ideas into the dialogue, many of which were amateurish and unrealistic. Rather than refining the plan in successive operational variants, this process ultimately drove the planners toward increasingly unrealistic assumptions that were eventually abandoned in favor of earlier concepts less heavily influenced by the OSD's iterative inputs.

- *Fifth, the lack of policy consensus at the national level resulted in frequent, deliberate leaks of highly classified war plans in the media as a means of influencing policy.* Advocacy for the execution of the war, arguments to justify or undermine it, and debate about the appropriate strategy all fueled disclosures of ongoing military planning.

- *Sixth, the interagency process represents a fundamental weakness in war planning.* No matter how extensive the military planning and intelligence preparation for a postconflict scenario, the U.S. government lacks doctrinally recognized institutions with a clear mandate and sufficient authority and resources to conduct posthostility planning and administration. Within the military, a high degree of order, organization, resources, assets, doctrine, and capability provided the flexibility to overcome intelligence gaps and operational challenges in the major combat phases; the interagency process did not have the same unity of effort and did not appear to benefit from the work initiated by CENTCOM's pre–September 11 advocacy of interagency planning to rebuild a postconflict Iraq. Whereas the military had professional staffs that could provide objective, reasoned advice to protect the combat phases of the plan from many of the unrealistic ideas being promoted by U.S. government officials, the posthostility planning phase lacked such a strong leader supported by a professional institution with an independent staff.

- *Seventh, the planning focused strongly on the traditional military tasks, to the exclusion of postcombat requirements.* In

particular, the military intelligence estimates did not correctly predict the rapid development of a significant anticoalition insurgency.

NOTES

1. The concept of fighting two "MRCs," or major regional contingencies, drove U.S. force structure in the 1990s. See Steven Metz, *American Strategy: Issues and Alternatives for the Quadrennial Defense Review* (Carlisle, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, September 2000), pp. 13–14. Available online (www.carlisle. army.mil/ssi/pdffiles/00290.pdf).

2. Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004), pp. 1–2, 31–36.

3. The two-year cycle was interrupted by new concepts for planning. See "Transforming the Joint Strategic Planning System," briefing prepared by the Army War College for professional military education, September 2, 2003; available online (www.tecom.usmc.mil/cce/references/pme/(E)%20JSPS%20AWC%20BRIEFING%20030905. PPT).

4. Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, pp. 36–37, 40.

5. U.S. doctrine defined the national instruments of power in Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Warfare of the Armed Forces of the United States* (Joint Publication [JP] 1) (Washington, D.C.: Joint Chiefs of Staff, November 2000), pp. 5–7.

6. Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, p. 31.

7. Military intelligence analyst, interview by author, Tampa, Fla., October 2003; see also Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, pp. 36–37, 75–77.

8. The key U.S. doctrinal document that describes this process and its products is Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Battlespace* (JP 2-01.3) (Washington, D.C.: Joint Chiefs of Staff, May 24, 2000). Available online (www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jpintelligenceseriespubs.htm or www.fas.org/irp/doddir/dod/jp2_01_3.pdf).

9. Ibid., pp. III-3–III-4.

10. The official description of the purpose of NIEs can be found on the National Intelligence Council website (see www.cia.gov/nic/NIC_about.html).

11. Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, p. 43.

12. The extraordinary secrecy measures extended even to the cabinet level, where the director of central intelligence was not initially apprised of the plans. Ibid., p. 3.

13. Congress requested the NIE in anticipation of a vote to authorize the use of force against Iraq. See Congresswoman Jane Harman, "The Intelligence on Iraq's WMD: Looking Back to Look Forward," speech at the Los Angeles World Affairs Council, January 16, 2004. Available online (www.fas.org/irp/congress/2004_cr/harman011604.html).

14. Tommy Franks, *American Soldier* (New York: Regan Books, 2004), pp. 362–363, 384, 435; and Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, pp. 53, 76–77.

15. In fact, this practice was used by all the staff directorates as cover for their work, which was described as a scheduled 1003 update. This cover was even cited by the secretary of defense in his initial discussion with the president concerning the drafting of 1003V. See Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, p. 2.

16. A number of high-profile articles leaked key details of the planning during summer 2002. See Thom Shanker and David Sanger, "U.S. Envisions Blueprint on Iraq Including Big Invasion Next Year," *New York Times*, April 28, 2002; William Arkin, "Planning an Iraqi War but Not an Outcome," *Los Angeles Times*, May 5, 2002; Eric Schmitt, "U.S. Plan for Iraq Is Said to Include Attack on Three Sides," *New York Times*, July 5, 2002; Eric Schmitt, "U.S. Considers Wary Jordan As Base for an Attack on Iraq," *New York Times*, July 10, 2002; and David Sanger and Thom Shanker, "U.S. Exploring Baghdad Strike as Iraq Option," *New York Times*, July 29, 2002.

17. See for example Thomas Ricks, "Some Top Military Brass Favor Status Quo in Iraq: Containment Less Risky Than Attack," *Washington Post*, July 28, 2002.

18. Jack Shafer, "Newspaper War: Why Do Our Iraq Battle Plans Keep Showing Up in the *New York Times*?" *Slate.com*, July 30, 2002; available online (http://slate.msn.com/id/2068652).

19. Franks, *American Soldier*, pp. 384–385.

20. Ibid.

21. Military intelligence analyst, interview by author, Tampa, Fla., June 2002.

22. An account of the investigation by one of the lead OSI agents highlighted their involvement, including their method of narrowing the suspect list and use of the questionnaires on the night of August 2 as part of the investigative technique. See Maj. Mike Richmond, "OSI Comes Through in Must-Solve Laptops Case," *Global Reliance* (September–October 2002); available online (http://public.afosi.amc.af.mil/global/sep_oct_02/laptops_case.asp).

23. David Ballingrud, "MacDill Laptop Case Ends with Guilty Plea," *St. Petersburg Times*, January 30, 2003.

24. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, *Joint Tactics*, pp. III-3–III-4. See also *Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield* (FM 34-130/MCRP 2-12A), Department of the Army Headquarters, July 8, 1994; available online (www.usmc.mil/directiv.nsf/0/d01ef5f8ed1ee7cc85256f5800687f9e/$FILE/FM%2034-130.pdf).

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid.

27. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (JP 1-02) (Washington, D.C.: Joint Chiefs of Staff, April 12, 2001), p. 67.

28. Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, pp. 54–57.

29. CENTCOM is by no means unique in this; the overreliance on PowerPoint is widely recognized as a problem within military staffs. See for example Greg Jaffe, "What's Your Point, Lieutenant? Please, Just Cut to the Pie Charts," *Wall Street Journal*, April 26, 2000.

30. Military intelligence analysts at CENTCOM, interview by author, Tampa, Fla., November 2001.

31. Military intelligence analyst, interview by author, Tampa, Fla., October 2002.

32. Anthony Cordesman, *The Iraq War: Strategy, Tactics, and Military Lessons* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies Press, 2003), pp. 149–159. See also Franks, *American Soldier*, p. 373.

33. Mark Thompson and Michael Duffy, "Pentagon Warlord," *Time*, January 27, 2003, pp. 22–27.

34. Richard Perle, "No More Halfway Measures," *Washington Post*, February 8, 1998. See also Paul Wolfowitz, "The United States and Iraq," in John Calabrese, ed., *The Future of Iraq* (Washington, D.C.: The Middle East Institute, 1997), pp. 112–113.

35. Daniel Byman, Kenneth Pollack, and Gideon Rose, "The Rollback Fantasy," *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 1999, pp. 24–41.

36. Intelligence analyst at CENTCOM, interview by author, October 2004.

37. Ibid.

38. Richard Perle, "Are U.S. Defense and Intelligence Communities Equipped to Interpret and Deal with the Region?" speech at the American Enterprise Institute, Washington, D.C., October 14, 1998.

39. Although extensive efforts were made to study the concept and find relevant applications, the CENTCOM commander, in his memoir, refers to shock and awe in a generally disparaging manner; he associates it with media hyperbole, without acknowledging the degree of effort expended to incorporate it into the plan. See Franks, *American Soldier*, pp. 437–438, 479.

40. Harlan Ullman and James Wade, *Shock and Awe: Achieving Rapid Dominance* (Washington D.C.: National Defense University Press, December 1996). Available online (www.ndu.edu/inss/books/books%20-%201996/Shock%20and%20Awe%20-%20Dec%2096/index.html).

41. Ibid.

42. Robert Baer, *See No Evil* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2002), pp. 171–218.

43. Scott Ritter, *Endgame* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1999), pp. 134–137.

44. Military intelligence analyst, interview by author, Tampa, Fla., October 2003.

45. Kathleen Rhem, "Iraqi Plane Shoots Down American Predator Unmanned Aircraft," *Defense Forces Information Service*, December 23, 2002. Available online (www.defenselink.mil/news/Dec2002/n12232002_200212236.html).

46. Ibid.

47. Diana Lynne, "GPS-Jammer Contractor Plays Both Sides of War," *WorldNetDaily*, March 29, 2003; available online (www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=31773). See also Lt. Gen. Michael Moseley, "Coalition Forces Air Component Command Briefing," U.S. Department of Defense, April 5, 2003; available online (www.defenselink.mil/news/Apr2003/t04052003_t405mose.html).

48. In fact, appendix B of Ullman and Wade's *Shock and Awe* discusses the denial of electricity in a hypothetical sense—with regard to new weapons technologies—and also in more specific terms by possible use of existing weaponry.

49. UNSCOM inspector, interview by author, Tampa, Fla., February 2003.

50. Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, p. 97.

51. Military intelligence analyst, interview by author, Tampa, Fla., June 2002.

52. Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, pp. 22, 57.

53. Based on published sources, with factual corrections by the author that explain the planned simultaneity of A-Day and G-Day. See Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, pp. 98–99.

54. Ibid., pp. 133–135, 145–146.

55. The fears about Baghdad were greater among U.S. political leaders than within the military leadership; much of this OPT was likely motivated by the unabated concerns of the national security advisor, Condoleezza Rice, and presidential advisor Andrew Card. Ibid., pp. 64, 126, 147.

56. Franks, *American Soldier*, p. 391.

57. Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, pp. 145–147.

58. Military intelligence analyst, interview by author, Tampa, Fla., October 2003.

59. Based on published sources, with factual corrections by the author. See "OPLAN 1003 Major Theater War–East," *Globalsecurity. org* (available at www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/oplan-1003. htm).

60. These timelines were reflected in the shorthand frequently used by Gen. Franks to describe the plans according to the length of their phases. Generated Start was "90-45-90," Running Start was "45-90-90," and Hybrid was "5-11-16-125." As described in Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, pp. 145–146.

61. Franks, *American Soldier*, pp. 417, 433. See also Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, pp. 146, 287–288, 401.

62. Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, pp. 1–2, 36.

63. Ibid., pp. 31–35.

64. As a nondoctrinal concept unique to Rumsfeld's tenure in the OSD, iterative planning has no explicitly defined meaning. Senior officials involved in the OIF iterative planning process have described it in different ways. See Paul Wolfowitz, speech to the Association of the U.S. Army, Washington, D.C., October 8, 2003; Franks, *American Soldier*, p. 333; and Donald Rumsfeld, remarks made at a "Pentagon Town Hall Meeting," Washington, D.C., March 6, 2003.

65. Franks, *American Soldier*, pp. 409–410.

66. Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, p. 102.

67. Ibid., pp. 231–234.

68. Ibid., p. 413.

69. Military intelligence analyst, interview by author, July 1999.

70. The directive, issued in 1997, formulated the policy developed by the Clinton administration regarding such coordination. See "The Clinton Administration's Policy on Managing Complex Contingency Operations," National Security Council White Paper, May 1997. Available online (http://clinton2.nara.gov/WH/EOP/NSC/html/documents/NSCDoc2.html).

71. James Fallows, "Blind into Baghdad," *Atlantic Monthly*, January–February 2004.

72. Ibid.

73. Ibid.

74. Military intelligence analyst, interview by author, Kuwait, March 2003.

Chapter 2

ASSESSING THE ACCURACY
OF THE ESTIMATES

The CENTCOM intelligence effort to support the construction of the 1003V campaign plan resulted in a number of specific products. Collectively, these products addressed a range of issues and attempted to answer many difficult questions. Twelve key questions examined by these products will be discussed in the following pages. The military estimates that were developed by the intelligence staff will be presented, and an initial effort will be made to rate the estimates' accuracy with regard to actual events.

The estimates considered the full range of the enemy's potential "answers" to these questions. Ultimately, however, and by design, the estimates are intended to narrow the assessment to a specific single answer: the "most likely course of action." This single answer is important because it is accorded the most weight and consideration during the planning process. During the 1003V planning, the "most likely" answer carried special significance. The multiple versions of 1003V and its compressed development timeline did not permit extensive war gaming or branch plan development. This made the most likely enemy courses of action (ECOAs) a critical reference point, with alternative ECOAs receiving comparatively little attention.

1. WILL IRAQ REORIENT ITS GROUND FORCES?

Estimate. CENTCOM's intelligence estimate anticipated that there would not be a major repositioning of forces in the Iraqi military prior to the conflict; rather, it projected that units would reposition locally and make relatively minor adjustments from their prewar locations in the lead-up to the conflict.

Analysis. This answer was not the most obvious choice and was the subject of some analytic debate. Iraq had many options to mount a credible defense of its territory against the coalition offensive; it had a very large and experienced ground force, consisting of twenty-three divisions: seventeen regular army (RA) and six Republican Guard (RG) divisions.[1] Making the most effective use of this force, however, would require major repositioning of its units.

Prior to the conflict, Iraqi ground forces were engaged in three general mission areas (see figure 4, next page). Most were deployed north of Baghdad, oriented along the "Green Line" separating Kurdish-controlled territory from the rest of Iraq, guarding Saddam's government against its greatest internal threat. Iraqi ground forces were also deployed to the south in counterinsurgency operations against Shiite oppositionists, fighting either in the marshes or in a static defense along Highway 6, parallel to the border with Iran. These forces included no RG divisions, whereas the frontline force deployments in the north did. Finally, four RG divisions were deployed in central Iraq, roughly in a ring surrounding Baghdad.[2]

These preconflict deployment locations did not provide for an optimal defense against the coalition. It was fairly clear that the coalition's main approach would be from the

Figure 4. Prewar Deployment of Iraqi Military Forces
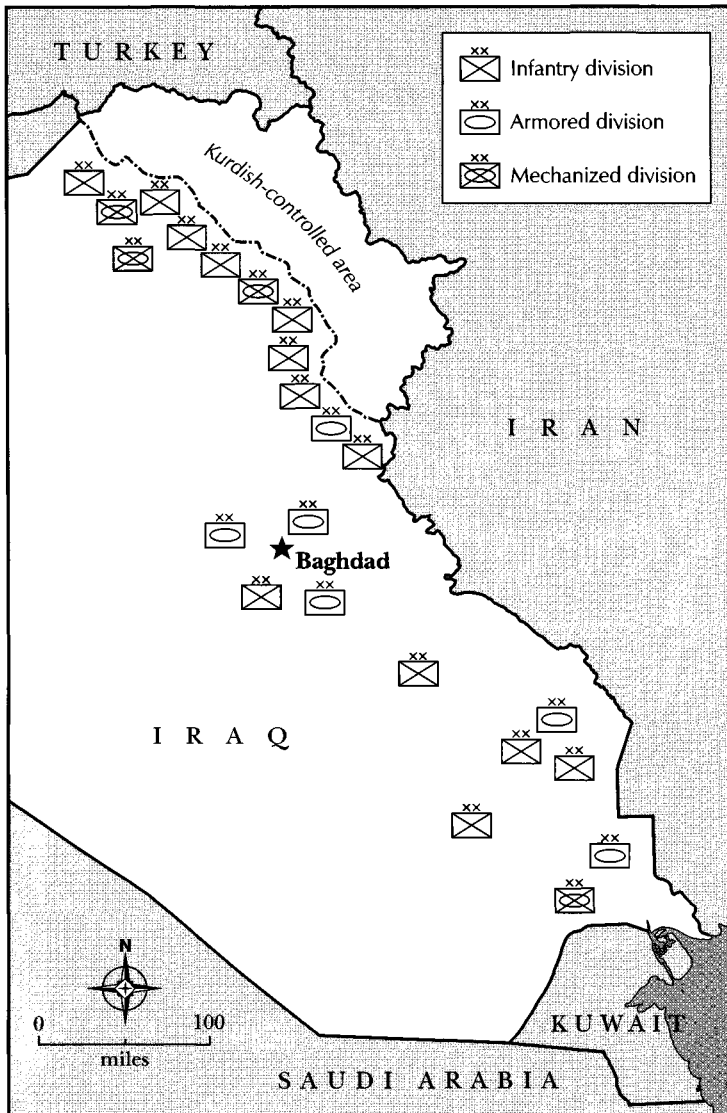
Source: Adapted from "Iraq Order of Battle," *Globalsecurity.org* (available at www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/iraq/iraq-orbat-map.htm).

south. The Desert Storm precedent, the longstanding U.S. relationship with regional allies, and the increasing force buildup in the south during the months prior to the invasion all argued for a main axis through Kuwait. Deploying forces from the east, through Iran, or the northwest, through Syria, was politically improbable, though the north and west were potential sources of concern for Iraq. Turkey and Jordan both had longstanding military relationships with the United States and had both hosted coalition military activities in the years since Desert Storm. The threat of a ground invasion from these axes was much less great than from the south, however. Deploying troops through Turkey or Jordan presented significant political and logistical challenges. In the case of Turkey, the political challenges were demonstrated by Turkey's eventual refusal to allow the 4th Infantry Division to deploy through its territory. Even if these countries had acceded, their proximity to Iraq, their relatively open societies, and the long lead times for logistical buildup would all have conspired to give the Iraqis substantial warning time to reposition their forces to prepare for a coalition advance.

All of this suggests that the logical choice for Iraq would have involved the movement of some of its forces to the south. For several reasons, however, the CENTCOM intelligence estimate concluded that Iraq's forces would remain largely in their preconflict locations.

First, it was speculated that Iraqis would encounter problems in moving their forces south due to UN Security Council Resolution 949. This resolution restricted the Iraqi military from enhancing its forces in the south and provided important legal grounds for the near-routine bombing of Iraqi air defense sites since December 1998. Iraqi force enhancements could similarly provide a legitimate excuse for the coalition to begin weakening Iraqi

ground forces through attrition with air attacks, in the same manner that it had worn down Iraqi air defenses for several years.

Second, from Iraq's point of view, the Kurds still presented a significant military threat, so substantial forces could not be moved south. Iraqi military deployments in the north had always been somewhat out of proportion to the magnitude of the Kurdish threat. In their offensive into Irbil in August–September 1996, the Iraqis used more than four divisions (including two RG divisions), a much greater force than was required. Iraqi military sensitivities probably related to the rapid loss of control in the north after the post–Desert Storm Kurdish uprising, and also to a Kurdish offensive in March 1995 that took a heavy toll on some Iraqi units and eventually led to the temporary disbandment of an entire division.

The coalition plan for Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), in fact, encouraged Iraq's natural inclination to keep large numbers of divisions tied to watching the Kurds. In large part, the coalition's activities in the north were intended to alarm the Iraqis without actually provoking offensive action. Coalition actions would include special operations attacks, information operations, and an elaborate deception campaign.[3] Military strategists felt that the Iraqi leadership would be vulnerable to having these fears exploited, helping to lock the northern Iraqi divisions in place.

Third, Iraqi forces would be close to their normal garrison locations if they did not engage in significant movement, easing their logistical burden. Anticipating that the onset of a massive air campaign would severely restrict mobility, the Iraqi military would want to keep its forces on defense in familiar terrain near their supply lines, and to avoid exposing them to more coalition air attacks.

Result. The estimate was correct. One division-level movement took place, but the overall design of Iraq's defense did not change. There was no strategic shift of combat power from northern or central Iraq to strengthen the weak defense of the south. In late February 2003, several weeks prior to the invasion, the Republican Guard's Adnan Mechanized Division was moved from Mosul, in the north, south to the Tikrit area (still north of Baghdad).[4] This shift may actually have resulted from the coalition deception campaign that was intended to keep forces in the north.[5]

2. WILL IRAQ EXPLOIT HYDROLOGY TO IMPEDE COALITION MANEUVERING?

Estimate. The Iraqis were expected to make extensive use of tactical, small-scale hydrological impediments in an effort to hamper the coalition scheme of maneuver, but they were not expected to cause strategic, large-scale flooding capable of creating significant impediments.

Analysis. Iraq's use of hydrology to impede Iranian advances was a key feature of its defensive scheme during the Iran-Iraq War.[6] The terrain in southern Iraq favors this defense technique. The major lines of communication (LOCs)—the transportation arteries—are elevated several meters above the surrounding terrain, which is generally unsuitable to cross country mobility, being either swampy or bisected by berms separating agricultural fields. During the rainy season, agricultural fields are typically wet and difficult to move through—OIF combat phases were set to occur in the heart of the rainy season. The overall effect is that, instead of moving through the river valleys, invading forces would have to traverse the elevated roadways, which themselves

are vulnerable to tactical exploitation by defenders. Rivers and irrigation structures frequently cut across the roadways, making travel perilous, especially at bridge sites. Although temporary bridges could be constructed by troops if existing ones were destroyed, this process would create delays and vulnerabilities for coalition forces.[7] Moreover, a strong Iraqi defense could be constructed behind water obstacles, significantly slowing a coalition advance.

In addition to the tactical problems that use of hydrology could present, the Iraqi military could have created potentially larger-scale strategic or operational-level problems. The Tigris and Euphrates rivers are both dammed and diverted in Iraq, creating large reservoirs. In addition, several other rivers that feed into either the Tigris or Euphrates are dammed. This might have allowed the Iraqis to use water-control structures to flood large areas in southern Iraq in a way that could significantly impede the coalition's maneuvering. Some flooding might have been severe enough to cause major changes to the coalition's routes.[8]

After extensive study, however, it became clear that Iraq had only a minimal capacity to engage in strategic flooding in early 2003. Several years of drought had left reservoirs depleted and rivers running below normal levels.[9] With these facts at hand, the anticipated worst-case impacts of Iraqi flooding attempts would not have been impressive. In addition, the economic costs to Iraq could have been high, since mass flooding would be most effectively achieved by destroying dams. It also would have weakened morale, since several towns immediately downstream from the dams, such as Haditha and Mosul, were generally loyal to the regime. Attempts to create operational/strategic flooding were therefore judged to be an unlikely course of action.

Result. These assessments were only partly correct. As expected, Iraq made no use of hydrology as an operational/strategic impediment to the coalition scheme of maneuver. In fact, there is no evidence that any preparations had been made at major dams or that any related contingency plans had been formed.

But Iraq did undertake some actions to create tactical impediments for the coalition, although these efforts were far less extensive than expected. Many bridges had been mined with explosives, but only a few were actually destroyed. The general breakdown in Iraqi command and control and its overall lack of defense contributed to this end, undercutting any attempts to tie tactical defense to hydrology.[10] On the whole, the Iraqis had made some defensive preparations, but as the actual fight approached, they made only sporadic and halfhearted attempts to execute them.

3. WILL IRAQ ATTACK THE COALITION PREEMPTIVELY IN KUWAIT?

Estimate. Iraq was not expected to launch a preemptive attack against coalition forces in Kuwait.

Analysis. A preemptive attack against the coalition was not beyond the realm of contemplation. During Desert Storm, Iraqi ground forces attacked Ras al-Khafji, in Saudi Arabia, providing an interesting example of its willingness to launch a spoiling attack against a superior adversary. Although the attack occurred in late January 1991—after the air war had begun—it preceded the U.S. ground campaign by several weeks. The attack on Ras al-Khafji also showed Iraq's ability to hastily organize an offensive

action using only regular army forces, and to launch shallow crossborder operations. A similar spoiling attack would have been well within Iraq's capabilities prior to OIF. In addition, Iraq's air force and ballistic missile force offered ways to attack—though they would be less disruptive to the coalition—without committing to a large-scale movement of ground forces.

Before OIF, Saddam had a limited number of offensive military options, though his personality may have driven him to actively seek opportunities to break out of his passive, defensive stance and initiate aggressive action. Setting aside his personality, he would have had a practical reason to preempt the coalition in attacking: it could throw off the timing of the buildup of coalition forces. One strategic vulnerability for the coalition was that it had to move its forces through a limited number of air and sea ports. Even if Iraqi forces could not come close to capturing or destroying these facilities, by merely demonstrating a threat, they might delay and disrupt the coalition and dishearten regional allies. Iraq could also disrupt the timing and organization of the coalition offensive by attacking the invading forces as they moved into position near the border.

Despite these potential advantages to a preemptive attack, analysts judged such a measure unlikely for several reasons. First, the Iraqi military had only limited prospects of achieving meaningful success in an offensive against the coalition. Even if an Iraqi force were to successfully delay or disrupt coalition preparations, the Iraqis would not likely survive a withdrawal, much less achieve any success in permanently holding or denying territory to their enemy. It was not a strategy for winning—merely delaying.

Second, and more significantly, Saddam was believed to view diplomacy as a key weapon in this conflict, and by initiating an attack in a neighboring Arab nation, even against Western forces, he would actually help solidify diplomatic and political support for the coalition. Iraq viewed U.S. reliance on regional support for basing of forces as one of the coalition's key strategic vulnerabilities. Without local basing and staging rights, the United States and its allies would have difficulty bringing military power to bear on Iraq. Support for U.S. military operations from two key allies, Turkey and Saudi Arabia, had grown increasingly restricted during the late 1990s. Iraq had to counterbalance the effectiveness of winning regional diplomatic support against the limited effectiveness of taking military action to decisively impede the coalition. Diplomacy would potentially offer Iraq an option to win or achieve a stalemate; preemptive attack would further isolate Iraq along a route toward eventual defeat, even if such an approach temporarily set back the coalition.

Result. The assessment was correct: Iraq did not attempt to launch preemptive attacks against the coalition in Kuwait.

4. WILL IRAQ ATTACK THE KURDISH ENCLAVE PREEMPTIVELY?

Estimate. Iraq was expected to attack Kurdish centers of gravity in the north prior to the coalition attack.

Analysis. A primary objective in any attack against the Kurdish enclave by Saddam's regime would have been to minimize the threat from the north in order to focus on the southern front. This threat from the north had three

Figure 5. Vulnerability of Kurdish Centers of Gravity

Dahuk

Kurdish Control

Mosul

Irbil

Iraqi Regime Control

Sulaymaniya

Kirkuk
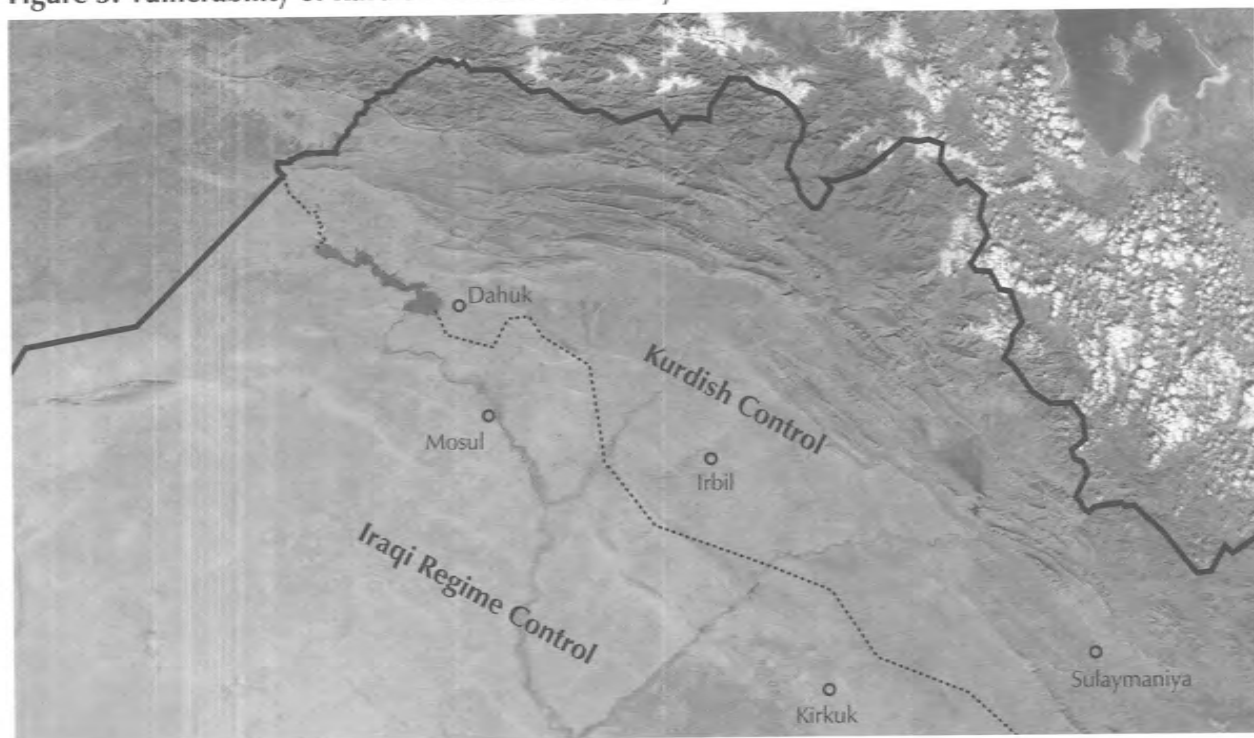
Source: Underlying satellite image courtesy of MODIS Rapid Response Project at NASA/GSFC

potential components: the Kurds (or other Iraqi opposi-tionists),[11] U.S. forces operating in conjunction with the Kurds,[12] and a decisive U.S. conventional force crossing into Iraq from Turkey.

Saddam's brief attack into the Kurdish enclave in August–September 1996 had set a troubling precedent. The results had been largely advantageous for Saddam, who drove the Kurds back in disarray and dislodged the U.S. presence in the north. The attack also gave Saddam a victory, boosting morale in his military and increasing his stature both domestically and in the region. On behalf of the Kurds there was little regional outcry—many nations had their own "Kurdish problems" and were sensitive to such criticism. And the coalition's punitive strikes against Iraqi forces achieved no significant objectives; the most harmful outcome for Iraq was the expansion of the coali-tion's southern no-fly zone to 33 degrees north.[13]

By preemptively attacking the Kurdish-controlled enclaves in northern Iraq, it was thought that Saddam might reap many potential advantages. First, it would have allowed him to seize the initiative, taking a decisive offensive military action in advance of the coalition.

Though fiercely capable as irregular mountain fight-ers, the Kurds had no armor or mechanized units and therefore possessed only limited capability against the regime's armored forces. Particularly vulnerable to attack by Iraqi forces were those areas within the jurisdiction of the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP). The two key cities under KDP control—Dahuk and Irbil, located on relatively open terrain—were within easy striking distance of Iraqi frontline forces and could not be readily defended (see figure 5). Meanwhile, the key center of gravity for the Pa-triotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), the city of Sulaymaniya,

was more difficult to assault but still well within reach of Iraq's northern forces.

If attacked, the Kurds would have had little choice but to fall back into the mountains. Although they would still be capable of launching harassing attacks, the resulting dislocation, disorganization, and loss of credibility would reduce their effectiveness as a significant threat to Iraqi units, even if these units withdrew after an attack. This was a key point—even a small military effort by Iraqi forces would likely have a disproportionately negative impact on Kurds' ability to maintain local support and field a cohesive force of irregular fighters.

Moreover, even if U.S. forces were working alongside the Kurds, this effort could only do so much to help the Kurds recover from an attack waged by Saddam's forces. As demonstrated by the Iraqi seizure of Irbil in 1996, the ambivalence of regional nations (including Turkey) toward Saddam's attacks on Iraqi Kurds could hamper U.S. attempts to use airpower to help the Kurds fight back. Even if Turkey agreed that the United States could conduct strikes, it would be unlikely that airpower alone would blunt the attack in a way that denied Iraq its objective: marginalizing the threat of Kurdish support to a decisive northern front.

An Iraqi advance into the Kurdish enclave could also have complicated U.S. efforts to introduce forces into Iraq through Turkish overland routes. Iraqi forces could have attempted to push twenty to thirty kilometers across the Green Line into Kurdish-held territory (further north and west of Saddam Lake) to establish their defensive position. Such a move, combined with the difficult terrain, would have significantly complicated U.S. plans to initiate combat operations across the Turkish border. Iraqi forces could have threatened several key pieces of terrain necessary to

the coalition offensive: the coalition's forward assembly areas in Turkey, the river crossings at the border, and two key maneuver choke points just inside Iraq, the Zhakho Pass and the "Triborder Gap."

In addition, attacks into the Kurdish north would not have incurred the same regional censure as attacks across the border into a neighboring Arab country. Acting within its own borders against a rebellious minority, the Iraqi government could even expect a degree of sympathy from some of its neighbors.

A key factor in this analysis was the ongoing threat to the Kurds, which had already increased in the months prior to the September 11 attacks. Saddam's regime had positioned itself to economically strangle the Kurds by constructing a bypass road that would link Turkey directly to Iraqi government–controlled territory.[14] This bypass—a second crossing of the Habur River, which separates Iraq and Turkey—had been discussed for many years, and the two countries were finalizing an agreement in summer 2001. In a speech addressed to the Kurds in July 2001, Saddam called for dialogue but made a vague threat if political accommodation could not soon be reached.[15] Following the September 11 attacks, Saddam adopted an even more strident tone with the Kurds. In one speech, he highlighted some Kurds' cooperation with "foreigners" and made even more explicit threats of military action if Kurdish groups did not enter into a political settlement with the central government.[16]

The possible benefits of attacking into the Kurdish enclave seemed to suggest that Saddam's regime would likely pursue this course of action. The timing of such an operation would be critical, however. If the regime waited until the start of the coalition invasion (D-Day), it

might never regain the initiative. And if Saddam's forces struck too late, the potential psychological and deterrent effects of the attack would be lost. The regime might also be reluctant to begin attacks in the north while facing the coalition main effort in the south.

Result. The estimates were incorrect. Iraq made no pre-emptive attacks, large or small. In fact, Iraqi forces made almost no offensive moves in the north, even after they had been attacked.

There are several reasons why the Iraqis may have chosen this course of action. First, the decision by the Turkish parliament not to support a decisive coalition ground force deployment into Iraq from Turkey probably encouraged the regime to avoid conflict in that area. Indeed, no large U.S. conventional force was introduced overland from Turkey as part of OIF. The regime may have calculated that eschewing aggression would facilitate its efforts to retain the sympathy of Turkish parliament members and the larger international community. On the other hand, a vote in favor of the coalition deployment through Turkey might have been the key trigger for the regime, effectively removing any last reasons for withholding offensive action. If such logic is true, then analysts misjudged the Iraqi triggers for military action by suggesting that they were based more on the threat of a large, decisive coalition force in the north than on a special operations effort in which the coalition worked with the Kurds.

Second, the Iraqi leadership appeared comfortable with its military hold on northern Iraq, willing to merely defend its northern front and even accept heightened risk. Tellingly, the only major force movement by the Iraqis in preparation for the war was the previously mentioned repositioning of the Adnan Mechanized Division from

Mosul, a key northern city, to the Tikrit area—an effective removal of this division from supporting Iraq's northern defensive scheme against the Kurds.[17]

5. WILL IRAQ ATTACK ISRAEL?

Estimate. Iraq would likely begin attacking Israel on D-Day, probably using variants of Scud missiles.

Analysis. Iraq's attacks on Israel during Desert Storm caused tension between the Western members of the coalition and its Arab participants. By recasting the conflict as a challenge of the West versus the Arabs, Saddam attempted to impose pressure on Arab members of the coalition. Israel did not retaliate, though, and ultimately the strategy did not cause a permanent rift in the coalition. It did result in a significant diversion of coalition airpower toward hunting for Iraqi Scuds, however.[18] Not only was this Scud-hunting largely unsuccessful, the Scud missiles themselves were not militarily significant.[19]

Although Israel withheld strikes in 1991, there was reason to believe it might adopt a different policy in 2003. The Sharon government had warned that it might retaliate if Iraq struck.[20] This certainly would have harmed coalition unity; some Arab governments supporting the coalition might have faced destabilizing civil unrest.

Historically, then, attacking Israel, with Scuds and rhetoric, was an important part of Saddam's strategy. It fit naturally with his propaganda and the ruling Baath Party's ideology of pan-Arabism.[21] In the years prior to OIF, the regime had only intensified its rhetoric on the matter, with the September 2000 onset of the Palestinians' al-Aqsa intifada becoming a rallying point. In fall 2000,

the Iraqi military made massive deployments to the west of the country, a symbolic gesture of support to Palestinians fighting Israel. The Iraqi government also began a high-profile campaign of paying money to the families of Palestinian suicide bombers.[22]

Iraq's capability for striking Israel was extremely limited, however. Its air force could conceivably carry out missions, but even that was unlikely; Iraqi aircraft would be too vulnerable to coalition and Israeli air defense systems. Even so, Scud variants offered the most reliable delivery means, and Iraq was generally believed to still possess a small inventory.[23]

But Iraqi use of Scud missiles would have been extremely risky, especially before the coalition had initiated hostilities. Iraq had declared repeatedly that it possessed no Scuds, so launching them at Israel would have proved its determination to circumvent UN weapons inspections. This presumably would have closed off any hopes for a diplomatic solution. If Saddam were to attack Israel, he would likely have held off until he perceived that war was inevitable. The coalition's clearly articulated intention to force regime change made the stakes obvious. Once the war began, there would be little left to lose, so Saddam might as well resort to any tactics that pleased him.

Result. The estimate was incorrect. Iraq did not attack Israel, either with Scuds or by other means. The most likely explanation for this result is that Iraq simply did not possess working Scud missiles. The regime may have illegally retained key components, operating equipment, and manufacturing equipment that led to false suspicions and exaggerated evaluations of the true size and capability of its force.

The coalition's substantial efforts during OIF to close the critical Scud-launch baskets in western Iraq were predicated on threats described by the estimates—threats that apparently never existed. Special operations forces and airpower were brought together in a massive campaign to account for the western part of the country, diverting coalition energy and capability and exaggerating the mistakes of Scud hunting efforts conducted during Desert Storm.

6. WILL IRAQ USE WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION (WMD)?

Estimate. Iraq would likely use WMD, probably chemical and biological weapons (CBW), against coalition forces sometime after D-Day but before coalition forces seized control of Baghdad.

Analysis. Saddam led one of the only regimes in the world that had both developed CBW and employed them during a conflict. His willingness to use CBW when pressured, as well as the Iraqi military's practical experience using them in combat against Iran, strongly contributed to the estimate that the regime would consider using CBW against the coalition.

CENTCOM estimates did not delve deeply into the question of whether Saddam did, in fact, possess WMD. The regime's historical use of CBW, coupled with a long-standing view within the intelligence community that Iraq retained CBW capability, led to general acceptance that Saddam likely possessed at least a minimum capability. Given the regime's track record of WMD use and its obfuscation during disarmament efforts, analysts would have required a significant counterweight of intelligence

reporting before they could contemplate the conclusion that CBW options did not exist.[24]

The coalition, however, had a conventional and nuclear retaliatory capability that the Iranians never possessed—a factor that would probably create hesitation among Iraq's leaders. Prior to Desert Storm, the coalition had warned Iraq not to use WMD.[25] This warning was repeated and expanded upon before OIF. In a démarche issued to the Iraqi delegation at the UN in October 2001, Iraq was warned that devastating consequences would result from any use of WMD.[26] The text of the démarche implied that any use of Iraqi WMD could open the way for U.S. retaliation with WMD of its own.

Iraq may also have worried that use of WMD would politically unify the world behind the coalition, since it would prove the entire casus belli. Another possibly discouraging factor for use of CBW was its limited military utility. The coalition was trained and equipped to fight in conditions where the enemy employed CBW. Even though coalition forces would sustain casualties, they would still likely advance in the face of CBW use. It is unclear what the regime believed on this point, though—Iraq could still have decided to use CBW, harboring unrealistic expectations about their utility and effect.

The UN-issued démarche would clearly weigh heavily in Iraq's decisionmaking process. But Saddam faced a threat perhaps even graver than coalition WMD use. The Bush administration's explicit public statements had made clear that its goal—in fact, the very name of the policy with regard to Iraq—was regime change. This existential threat to the regime could erase its inhibitions about using CBW. As coalition forces closed in on Saddam, he would have little left to lose by not using his CBW. Saddam's

survival as Iraq's leader was generally regarded as his chief aim. A defining feature of his rule had been an utterly Machiavellian disregard for the welfare of his people, including members of his tribe and even close relatives.[27] It was considered unlikely that he would concede defeat without using his WMD, whatever the effects might be on his family and nation.

Early use was unlikely, however. Saddam's reliance on diplomacy as a key means of surviving conflict with the United States meant he would likely wait until war was inevitable. As forces approached Baghdad, the regime would then see its last opportunity to use its CBW. The fighting might already have threatened the survival of agents and delivery means, and the command, control, and communication structure necessary to execute attacks would be increasingly less likely to function.

What exactly would Saddam have hoped to accomplish by using CBW? There are at least two possible objectives. First, he may have calculated that the use of such weapons would significantly slow or even paralyze the coalition advance, creating an opportunity to achieve a military stalemate. This strategy would be extraordinarily risky, since it would rely on the coalition not following through on threats of massive retaliation. A second objective in using CBW might be to make a purely punitive final gesture. If Saddam felt that his defeat was imminent, he could initiate CBW use in order to create as much destruction as possible before he himself was vanquished.

Result. The estimate was incorrect. CBW were not employed, indicating the increasing likelihood that Iraq did not have stocks of weaponized chemical or biological agents ready to employ. In this sense, analysts may have fundamentally

misunderstood the Iraqi capability and seeming determination to possess CBW.[28] Right up to and beyond the start of OIF, Iraq employed deception as a tactic. During the war, numerous sources provided information suggesting that Iraq was preparing to use WMD.[29]

7. WILL THERE BE A DELIBERATE URBAN DEFENSE WITHIN BAGHDAD?

Estimate. Iraqi forces most likely would not attempt to mount a deliberate urban defense of Baghdad.

Analysis. This was a key question that concerned planners and policymakers, and it was the subject of debate within the intelligence community.[30] Some of the regime's public statements seemed to suggest that Iraq would focus on an urban defense strategy,[31] and it had some potentially significant reasons to do so. Such a strategy would detract from two key military advantages of the United States: mobility and the use of operational fires. Regarding the former, the city's layout and structures would tend to make U.S. forces maneuver more slowly and predictably. Regarding the latter, the U.S. military's ability to engage Iraqi targets with accuracy and at long range would be complicated by urban terrain. Specifically, the high population density would greatly limit the use of airpower due to collateral damage concerns, while urban structures would provide ample cover and concealment, shortening the average engagement ranges and lessening the coalition advantages in weapons with greater range.

Despite these potential benefits, there was little precedent for an urban defense strategy. The Baath regime had never before withdrawn into major cities as a delib-

erate strategy in its previous wars. The defense of Basra in the Iran-Iraq War and of Kuwait City in 1991 had been conducted principally from the cities' outskirts. Arguably, however, the regime had not ever faced a threat that had pushed it back into Baghdad, so the lack of a Baath precedent was not surprising. In modern times, only one foreign force had ever landed in southern Iraq and marched north to seize Baghdad: the British, in their Mesopotamian campaign against the Ottomans.

In this campaign, initiated in fall 1914, the British ultimately seized Baghdad in March 1917. The British main axis of advance was up the Tigris river valley, and Ottoman forces made judicious use of the difficult terrain to slow the British advance. When the British overextended their lines within sight of Baghdad, the Turks counterattacked and drove the British back down the river valley, spurring a series of setbacks that delayed the seizure of Baghdad for more than fifteen months. The Ottoman forces had not been massed in any one location; they had instead been deployed to take fuller advantage of the difficult terrain along the route to Baghdad. The tradeoff, however, was a much smaller force available when the British finally fought their way to the outskirts of Baghdad. As the British began to encircle the city, the Turks fled.[32]

If, like the Ottomans, the Iraqis wanted to take advantage of the inhospitable terrain, they could not bottle up their forces back in Baghdad; they would have to remain further forward along expected lines of coalition advance. In fact, all the Republican Guard's heavy armored divisions would normally be positioned on the approaches to Baghdad.[33]

The regime had always distrusted the military, and for good reason. The professional military held the regime

and its cronyism in contempt. In turn, Saddam had never had a close relationship with the military, which had attempted coups against previous Iraqi governments as well as his own.[34] Military presence in Baghdad would give units routine access to Iraqi leadership, a situation that might prove instrumental in facilitating a coup. This was clearly understood by the Baath Party leadership. In both of the coups attempted against the Baath regime, renegade military units in the capital had played a decisive role.[35] This is the primary reason the regime had not routinely allowed military units to be garrisoned within the city. In fact, the Special Republican Guard (SRG) had been created from a base of more loyal security forces as a heavily armed paramilitary organization that could hold off a regular army or Republican Guard unit that had moved to Baghdad to seize power. The SRG was based inside Baghdad and around its perimeter.

Another key factor in the CENTCOM estimate was the assertion that, by the time U.S. forces had fought their way through southern Iraq and neared enemy units in and around Baghdad, the Iraqi military would be collapsing. The Iraqi air force would be neutralized, two corps of RA forces would be destroyed or isolated in the south, RG units would be under direct attack—and, most significantly, the U.S. intent to press to the heart of Iraq and destroy the regime would be unmistakable, even to those Iraqi military commanders who tended to doubt the coalition's commitment and resolve. Most of whatever forces had remained loyal to Saddam up to that point were not considered likely to remain loyal during a fight for Baghdad. The defeat of the Iraqi military and the regime would appear inevitable and imminent, presenting any Baghdad defenders with a stark choice: remain loyal to Saddam in his defeat or desert.

Also, RG units had limited training and experience in military operations in urban terrain (MOUT), which are challenging to execute and sustain in an organized fashion. Lacking training, Iraqi forces would have had a difficult time executing an effective large-scale defense with cohesive, mutually supporting units. Small and isolated units engaging in unorganized attacks could not have prevented coalition forces from seizing Baghdad.

In addition to the RG, the SRG and various other paramilitary forces (e.g., the Saddam Fedayeen and the Baath Party Militia) were potentially available to fight in the cities. These forces were not considered to be capable of mounting a significant urban defense, however, and were expected to suffer the same morale decline and inclination to abandon the regime that the RG would undergo.

Result. The estimate was correct: Iraq did not conduct an organized defense within the city. Even under the pressure of the coalition ground advance, there was no attempt to withdraw the RG armored divisions surrounding Baghdad back into the city.

The urban fighting that did occur was not an organized, deliberate defense by units of any size. Baghdad's defenders consisted of small, isolated elements that almost exclusively employed small arms. Rarely, if ever, did the Iraqis defend Baghdad with forces of a size greater than company elements.

8. WHAT IS THE IRAQI WILL TO FIGHT?

Estimate. Iraqi forces would put up only a brief fight and then quickly collapse when in contact with coalition ground forces. The RG would remain loyal longer than

the RA. Iraqi forces were not expected to capitulate under the pressure of Iraqi oppositionists or coalition air attacks alone; it was judged that contact with coalition ground forces would be required to compel mass surrenders and desertions. Finally, the capture of Baghdad would demoralize Iraq's forces, and remaining units would become combat-ineffective from desertions.

Analysis. This question was at the heart of the disputes regarding the 1003V U.S. force size and operational design. Much of the advocacy for smaller U.S. force commitments was derived from mid-1990s "oppositionist" strategies, which postulated that Iraqi insurgent forces could succeed in unseating the regime with only limited U.S. military support.[36] The underlying premise of such arguments was that the Iraqi regime and its military were a brittle, hollow shell that would fall to pieces when challenged. This collapse, it was anticipated, would not result from the equipment or training shortcomings that usually lead to a defeat; rather, it would result from a loss of will among the military to continue fighting for the regime, resulting in mass defections.[37]

Still, there were few examples of armed, organized resistance to the regime, and those that existed did not conclusively suggest that the will of government troops would collapse in the face of conflict. The Iraqi uprising following Desert Storm was not necessarily a good precedent for the coalition; that uprising resulted largely from a huge U.S. military effort—precisely the opposite of what oppositionist strategies assumed. The ongoing Shiite insurgency in the south did not involve battles of sufficient size or intensity to test the resolve of Iraqi government troops.

There were two interesting data points, however, that could serve as potential case studies in assessing the will of Iraqi forces to resist a concerted opposition attack. The first was the PUK offensive against Iraqi units along the Green Line in March 1995. The attacks were surprisingly successful, resulting in a large number of captured government soldiers and equipment. Accounts from observers near the battlefield suggest that Iraqi soldiers fled without fighting, abandoning both their positions and their officers.[38] Although the limitations of the PUK's own military capabilities prevented the group from continuing the offensive, the results suggested a lack of morale among frontline Iraqi units that made them vulnerable to insurgents. The second instance of concerted resistance against the regime was less successful. It was an uprising in central Iraq in May 1995 by some members of the Dulaiymi tribe. Although conflicting accounts surround the event, the essential facts suggest that as many as 100 tribal members seized control of government military equipment, including several armored vehicles, and assaulted an Iraqi prison. The assault failed, and the force was quickly routed. This was because Saddam had sufficient numbers of loyal security forces, and his policies had isolated such tribes effectively enough to narrow the scope of support for an uprising by any single one.[39]

As discussed in chapter 1, the differences in views within the U.S. government concerning the validity of oppositionist-derived scenarios for regime change were never reconciled. Most of the 1003V planning focused on answering the Iraqi "will to fight" question in the context of Iraqi troops in combat with coalition forces. This was a difficult question. Assessing an opponent's will to fight is broad calculation—a sort of social science requiring one

to estimate the actions of a large group of individuals after they have been exposed to unusual circumstances.

The Desert Storm precedent was helpful in this regard. Some of Iraq's forces capitulated quickly during that campaign. In the initial air-war phase of Desert Storm, Iraqi RA forces suffered high rates of desertion, although not severe enough to collapse the Iraqi defense. Many of those who deserted during the air campaign stated that the Iraqi defensive preparations and the presence of loyal RG members greatly inhibited large-scale desertion, but that initiation of the ground war would result in mass surrenders. Their predictions proved to be partly true: the ground war in Desert Storm triggered many surrenders among Iraqi forces, but some Iraqi units continued to fight. This included not only RG units but also some RA units, which fought from their prepared positions. This is significant considering the Iraqis began a massive retreat after the first two days of the ground war; units still had sufficient discipline to attempt to execute an organized withdrawal.[40]

There were several key differences between the circumstances of Desert Storm and those expected for OIF, some of which would boost the morale of Iraqi forces. First, they would be defending their home country rather than seized Kuwaiti territory, a factor that would likely strengthen their resolve. Even if the military detested the regime, Iraqi nationalism and the fear of a coalition occupation might encourage greater effort on their part to defend Iraq. Second, the terrain offered advantages to Iraqi forces that conceivably could not be overwhelmed by the coalition's technological superiority. As discussed previously, Iraqi forces could use hydrology tactics in the south to channel the coalition advance into narrow belts and provide barriers against the rapid maneuver that U.S.

forces used during Desert Storm to surround and cut off Iraqi units in the flat and relatively featureless terrain of Kuwait and southeastern Iraq. Third, Iraqi troops had staged a retreat during the ground phase of Desert Storm. Many Iraqi units engaged by the coalition had abandoned their prepared defensive positions and were vulnerable as they attempted to withdraw to the north. In OIF, however, there would be little point in ordering a strategic withdrawal—the coalition had made clear that its intent was regime change.

Yet, two key differences between Desert Storm and the scenarios envisioned for OIF were expected to make Iraqis more likely to surrender quickly. First, the proximity of Iraqi soldiers to their homes or tribal areas would make desertion much easier than it had been when they had been deployed to Kuwait or Iraqi border areas. Second, Iraqi soldiers' memories of Desert Storm would strongly influence their will to fight. The vastly superior coalition military might, coupled with recollection of the relatively quick repatriation of Iraqi soldiers captured in Desert Storm, might well encourage Iraqi soldiers to desert or surrender in OIF.

On balance, it was judged that the will of Iraqi forces to fight would be similar to that in Desert Storm. Many soldiers would desert, although fewer than before would cross the lines to surrender to the coalition, choosing instead to hide within Iraq. Iraqi units were not expected to surrender solely in response to air attacks or oppositionists, but they would quickly collapse when in contact with coalition ground forces.

Result. Estimates of the Iraqi will to fight were only partly correct. The assessment did not go far enough in predict-

ing how rapidly the Iraqi military units would cease to resist. Most Iraqi military forces deserted more quickly than the estimate anticipated, frequently failing to offer even token resistance to coalition ground forces. The degree of early desertions appeared to render many Iraqi units combat-ineffective prior to their engagement by coalition ground forces. The coalition frequently found operational equipment in tactical positions—but abandoned. And no clashes took place between large unit formations; Iraqi forces tended to melt away as the coalition approached.[41]

Another surprising outcome was the collapse of the Iraqi defense around Kirkuk, in northern Iraq, and the abandonment of the city by regime troops on April 10, 2003. The estimate had concluded that Iraqi units' will to fight could be weakened, but not eliminated, by the combined effects of coalition airpower, special operations forces, and opposition attacks. Although the Iraqi flight from Kirkuk may have begun as an organized withdrawal, the amount of abandoned equipment suggested a breakdown of military order and force desertion.[42]

The experience at Kirkuk raises interesting questions. The intelligence forecast that airpower and oppositionist attacks would not, by themselves, collapse Iraq's military were part of the rationale for attacking Iraq with a large conventional force. The major debate in constructing the plan for OIF had revolved around the size of the force and the potential contribution that airpower, special operations, and oppositionists could make to defeating the regime.

The intelligence assessment that Iraq's twenty-three divisions would continue fighting until directly confronted by coalition ground forces certainly contributed

to the idea that a large conventional force was necessary to defeat Iraq. The experience at Kirkuk might suggest that a smaller coalition force with a different composition could have succeeded in toppling the Iraqi military. This conclusion is highly debatable, however. The advance of a large, decisive conventional force in the south probably contributed to the Iraqi perception that defeat was imminent, making the abandonment of Kirkuk much more likely. News of Baghdad's fall the day before regime forces fled Kirkuk must have had a similar effect. In addition, many operational considerations may still have rendered this approach unfeasible: a smaller force would have had trouble rapidly exploiting Iraqi surrenders and withdrawals; slow exploitation would have favored regrouping and reconstitution of Iraqi forces; the opposition would have been more vulnerable to WMD; and the smaller coalition force available after the fighting would have added complications to the reestablishment of civil order.

Another surprising aspect regarding the Iraqi will to fight was the performance of the country's security forces. These forces, such as the Saddam Fedayeen, were not expected to play a significant role in directly fighting coalition forces. The coalition ground commander, Lt. Gen. David McKiernan, noted that security force attacks were "not the most likely enemy course of action that we wargamed for."[43] Security forces were believed to have little or no capability to fight the coalition military directly. Their main mission being to keep the population in check, they were neither trained nor equipped to engage in attacks against conventional forces. Nor had they generally practiced fighting as organized units against another military force—in fact, they had little formal military training. In addition, some of the security forces, particularly the Sad-

dam Fedayeen, were not regarded as having a very high degree of professionalism. Created as a vanity force by Saddam's unstable eldest son, the Fedayeen had suffered changes in recent years to personnel, equipment, leadership, and mission.[44] Like many of Iraq's security services, the Fedayeen was staffed by regime and Baath Party faithful. Competence was not a key factor in recruitment, but loyalty was required.

In light of these factors, Iraq's use of the security services to ambush coalition forces and interdict lines of communication was a surprising development. Although the military effect on the coalition was limited, the ambush constituted a key component of the overall resistance offered by the regime. Analysts forecasting performance and will to fight had not factored in the significance of regime and Baath allegiance as a motivator to engage the coalition, even by forces unsuited to the task and minimally capable of performing the mission. The regime was pessimistic enough to abandon hope that its military would offer resistance, reverting instead to the armed loyalist militias that had originally helped bring the Baath Party to power in the 1960s.

Finally, it should be noted that the Iraqi military's loss of will to fight was not restricted to tactical-level soldiers exposed to combat. Senior-level officers were demoralized by their own limited capabilities and were alarmed by the irrational orders they were receiving. They lost confidence in their chain of command and began to disregard orders.[45] Their collapse likely accelerated the breakdown in the Iraqi will to fight at the tactical level, even in the absence of direct contact with enemy forces.

The generalized breakdown in command and control within the Iraqi military meant that there was little formal-

Figure 6. Coalition Capitulation Leaflet

Source: U.S. Central Command; available online (www.centcom.mil/galleries/leaflets/images/izd-069.jpg).

ized surrender activity. CENTCOM analysts believed that surrenders throughout Iraq would accelerate once Iraqi units in contact with the coalition began to collapse. Coalition information operations had targeted leaflets (see figure 6) and radio broadcasts at Iraqi forces, encouraging them to surrender and explaining how to form their equipment into "capitulation squares" to signify compliance. Formal capitulations did occur in the west and, most notably, in the north, with the surrender of the Iraqi V Corps. It appears, however, that the rate of individual desertions was so high that Iraqi commanders had little left to surrender.[46]

9. WILL IRAQ EMPLOY A SCORCHED EARTH POLICY?

Estimate. Iraq was expected to destroy its own oil infrastructure and to deliberately create a humanitarian crisis among its civilian population.

Analysis. Desert Storm demonstrated the Iraqi government's willingness to inflict massive damage to Kuwait's industry, environment, and society as a whole. This was done, in part, for punitive reasons—as a gesture of defiance to accompany the Iraqi withdrawal. But some of Iraq's actions also created practical difficulties for the coalition in Desert Storm, complicating military maneuvers, combat operations, and postcombat reconstruction. Would Saddam inflict such damage on his own territory? This may have been a relatively easy decision with regard to Kuwait, but wreaking destruction on his own country might be more difficult.

Saddam's past decisionmaking strongly suggested that he did not regard destruction inside his borders as an impediment to his objectives. Over the years, his attacks against his own population had shown a disregard for Iraqi citizens' basic human rights. The regime would destroy whole villages and towns in deliberate policies of intimidation or as part of forced resettlement to pacify areas of discord. Mass disruptions of the normal functioning of civil society were not uncommon in Saddam's Iraq.

Saddam's policies had also damaged the Iraqi economy, causing severe hardships for Iraqi citizens. His near-constant provocation of external conflicts since his rise to power in 1979 had debilitated Iraq's economy and undercut the nation's large middle class. Although destruction of Iraq's oil industry would inflict hardship on the whole society—including the leadership—Saddam would have little to lose by resorting to extreme measures, considering the well-advertised coalition objective of regime change.

A key advantage of destruction of the oil industry would be the practical effects on the coalition military

maneuver plan. Burning oil wells would create numerous hazards for coalition forces, including impeded visibility from smoke, physical impediments to movement due to fires, and the potential for toxic effluents. A number of large Iraqi oil facilities were located in the south, within thirty miles of the border—including wellheads, pipelines, refineries, and gas-oil separation plants—potentially blocking the path of coalition military maneuvers. Destruction of these facilities would not only complicate fighting in the south but also create standing hazards along the lines of communication through which logistics would continue to flow even after the coalition had fought its way north. Strategists expected that Saddam would focus oil infrastructure sabotage in the south in order to maximize the practical negative impacts on the coalition.

Oil infrastructure destruction was not the regime's only option for hampering the speed of the coalition advance. Two large Iraqi cities, Basra and Nasiriya, lay along the LOCs stretching north to Baghdad. The four major LOCs included Highway 8, Highway 6, Expressway 1, or a combination of highways 8, 7, and 6—and Basra and Nasiriya sat astride all of them. Running along the complex river systems of the Tigris and Euphrates river valley, these narrow LOCs were vulnerable to actions that would block or slow coalition movement along them. If the regime were to precipitate a humanitarian crisis that created refugees, these narrow LOCs could be clogged with civilians seeking food and shelter.

Result. The estimate was only partly correct. In the weeks prior to the beginning of OIF, current intelligence had supplied specific indications of Iraqi intent to engage in deliberate destruction of its infrastructure.[47] The Iraqis

Figure 7. Iraqi Oil Sabotage

Source: Gen. Vincent Brooks, U.S. Central Command daily press briefing, April 3, 2003. Available online (www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/iraq/2003/iraq-030403-centcom07.htm).

did, in fact, make preparations to destroy oil infrastructure, particularly in the south, and they apparently attempted to execute these plans (see figure 7). But they had only limited success at damaging facilities; only a few major oil fires were triggered in the south, despite the fact that many sites had been prepared for destruction. Coalition forces discovered several untriggered demolitions still attached to wellheads.[48]

Several factors contributed to this mixed outcome. In the opening hours of the war, coalition special operations forces and U.S. Marines rapidly seized key oil facilities before destruction plans could be implemented. The regime's command, control, and communications resources dedicated to executing these plans were directly attacked through

strikes at communications centers and with information operations.[49] Although the regime intended to destroy its oil infrastructure, the coalition intelligence warning led to the planning and execution of actions that largely succeeded in preventing the sabotage. In a sense, then, the so-called "warning paradox" may have been in play—the lack of widespread destruction seemed to make the prewar warnings of such sabotage appear unfounded. Another theory held that Iraq's main goal may only have been to threaten large-scale destruction by focusing on "demonstration" attacks against wells that were within sight of the Kuwait border, therefore limiting the total scale of oilfield sabotage.[50]

Iraq made no concerted attempts to force refugees into the path of oncoming coalition forces; only isolated tactical instances occurred. Moreover, efforts by coalition information operations to keep Iraqi civilians near their homes and off of LOCs may have helped prevent a refugee problem that could have arisen incidentally from the fighting.[51]

10. WHEN DOES IRAQ RECEIVE 'UNAMBIGUOUS WARNING' OF COALITION INTENT?

Estimate. Iraq was expected to receive unambiguous warning of the coalition's intent at least two weeks prior to D-Day.

Analysis. "Unambiguous warning" is the point at which a nation's strategic leadership recognizes that an opposing offensive is inevitable. The concept was a key defensive element of Washington's pre–September 11 Iraq war plan (1003-98), which focused on potential Iraqi aggression along the lines of the 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

But the roles were reversed for OIF, seemingly making the calculation of unambiguous warning an Iraqi prob-

lem. For the United States, determining when Baghdad would receive unambiguous warning was a critical decision requiring a political commitment at the highest levels of government, made under time pressures and triggering a sudden, massive, costly, and simultaneous marshaling of active-duty elements, activation of reserve elements, mobilization of the Civilian Reserve Air Fleet, and forward movement of forces. Accordingly, U.S. planners gave significant attention to Iraq's potential handling of this question in the months prior to the war. Such a focus was problematic, however, because Iraq did not approach hostilities with this concept in mind. Instead of having a single, high-stakes calculation that would set in motion a host of activities, the Iraqis had the leisure to increase readiness or adjust force disposition as they received incremental indications of increased coalition intent. Assuming that Iraqis would operate by the concept of unambiguous warning was, in some respects, the classic intelligence pitfall of "mirror imaging": projecting one's own mindset onto an adversary.

The question remained partially relevant, however, because the onset of a strategic warning might suddenly eliminate Saddam's reluctance to execute some courses of action that had previously been unlikely. All of the most detrimental actions that Iraq might be prepared to perpetrate—e.g., preemptive military attacks—would be unlikely while the Iraqi leadership thought there was still a chance for diplomacy to succeed. But after receiving strategic warning—and realizing that the coalition was committed to an invasion—there would be little purpose in delaying military action. All the ECOAs, especially those involving military action, were believed to be much more likely following Iraq's acknowledgment of strategic warning.

Early in the planning of 1003V, analysts expected that Saddam would have several weeks of unambiguous warning. This conclusion was based on several factors. First, official discourse and debate about whether to start a preemptive war against Iraq was likely to make the U.S. strategic intent very clear. Even in early 2002, highly classified details of 1003V were being regularly leaked by advocates and detractors of the plan in order to press their case. This messy debate laid bare sensitive information about the plan; democratic governments may be capable of preemptive war, but not surprise attacks.[52] Second, building an international coalition, with or without UN support, would be another high-profile indication of intent to attack. Third, Iraq had become highly adept at understanding how far to provoke the United States and then deescalate a crisis before it erupted into violence. Saddam would regularly engage in high-stakes gamesmanship, obstructing and threatening the UN Special Commission (UNSCOM) to the point of drawing a military response. The regime once averted military action less than twenty minutes before its execution—Desert Thunder II strikes were about to be launched when Iraq's UN ambassador renewed diplomatic discussion that narrowly prevented the attack.[53] Although Iraq's methods and sources for understanding U.S. decisionmaking were not entirely clear, the regime repeatedly demonstrated sensitivity to when the United States was transitioning from political to military means.

The CENTCOM assessment changed in the weeks leading up to OIF. Despite substantial information available to the regime that could have provided unambiguous warning, Iraq's leaders did not seem to grasp the imminence of the threat. CENTCOM leaders grappled with this question in the weeks prior to the war. A number of video telecon-

ferences were held to discuss and reassess views of Iraq's evolving warning picture, a question that was viewed as a "key read" for the CENTCOM commander.[54]

Result. The answer to this question is not entirely clear, although it appears that Iraq's leaders were slow in concluding that war was inevitable. It is possible that the realization did not come until the final weeks—and maybe the final days—before D-Day. Interviews with senior Iraqi officials captured during OIF would seem to confirm this conclusion.[55]

Many key diplomatic developments took place in the weeks leading up to D-Day that no doubt encouraged Saddam to concentrate his energy on diplomacy. The UN Security Council deadlock in early March 2003 that prevented a resolution explicitly authorizing war was a high-profile split that may have signaled to the regime that the coalition war effort was doomed. The last such high-profile Security Council split on Iraq had dealt a grievous blow to UNSCOM's inspection efforts in the form of Resolution 1134, which indirectly encouraged Iraqi resistance to UNSCOM's mission[56] and eventually triggered the crisis on weapons inspections that undercut UNSCOM's mandate and ultimately ended its existence. In addition, antiwar demonstrations around the globe probably encouraged the regime to question the strength of coalition resolve.

For many years, Saddam's information operations strategy had focused on the "street," both around the region and in the West, in trying to build grassroots support for ending sanctions.[57] He may have placed more weight on grassroots influence than it merited. In appealing to the street, Saddam's strategy had never been clear, even in the region where he intuitively understood the politics and culture. After all, the ability of the "Arab street" to influ-

ence a government's policy was highly suspect in a region dominated by monarchies (Saddam famously labeled such rulers "throne dwarves" in one rant), oligarchies, and authoritarian regimes. Saddam's pursuit of this strategy alienated many in the region's political elite—the very people who actually held power in these societies, just as he did in his own. So while it was probably gratifying for Saddam to see protests in the West, his ability to interpret the impact of these protests on democratic governments would have been suspect.[58] Finally, the Turkish refusal on March 1, 2003, to permit basing and staging of coalition forces may have led Saddam to conclude that diplomacy would ultimately prevent military action.

CENTCOM analysts had assumed that diplomacy would be the key component of Iraqi strategy, but they did not recognize that Iraq's reliance on diplomacy would prevent or slow its military preparations. The full significance of Saddam's seeming utter reliance on political and diplomatic means had not been appreciated.

Some of the expected ECOAs—or even the preparations to conduct those actions—would clearly have undercut Iraq's diplomatic strategy. Others, however, would not have impeded Iraq's pursuit of diplomacy—specifically, the preparation of a deliberate defense using available forces in the south, and tying that defense to the terrain. That is, there would have been little or no penalty for making such military preparations as a hedge against the failure of diplomacy. It is unclear why better efforts were not made, although senior Iraqi military authorities may have concluded independently that there was little point in mounting any resistance against the coalition.

Saddam may also have misread the coalition's timing. While the regime may have believed the threat to be grow-

ing, it concomitantly could have believed that more time remained for nonmilitary means to extricate Iraq from the crisis. Always a risk taker, Saddam may have perceived a bluff on the coalition's part, believing that he had the upper hand. In addition, the international discord with regard to preemptive war probably gave him false hopes. By the time it became clear that the military threat was imminent, his military options may have shrunk drastically, and the regime's window for undertaking reasonable preparations may have closed.

11. TO WHAT EXTENT WILL IRAQ EMPLOY ITS AIR FORCE?

Estimate. Iraq was not expected to make any substantive effort to use its air force against coalition forces. The only possible scenarios in which Iraq might use its air force would be in spoiling attacks against the Kurds prior to initiation of the coalition air campaign.

Analysis. Iraq's air force had suffered severe damage in Desert Storm. Coalition domination of the skies in 1991 had led to the near incapacitation of Iraq's airpower. Much of its fighting infrastructure was destroyed, morale was crippled, and many of its pilots were ordered to fly into the territory of Iraq's implacable foe, Iran, in a desperate ploy to avoid total annihilation of the air force. Many planes were shot down while flying over the border anyway, and those aircraft apparently "saved" by flying into Iran were never returned to Iraq.

The years of sanctions following Desert Storm further undercut the readiness of Iraq's air force. Its aging aircraft could not receive the maintenance and spare parts neces-

sary to remain fully capable, much less the technological upgrades necessary to even remain on par with their pre–Desert Storm capabilities.

Although the Iraqis could still field aircraft during the no-fly zone periods of the interwar era, they could only mount the most limited challenges to coalition enforcement from the air. Following shoot-downs of several Iraqi fighter aircraft during a crisis in January 1993, they largely ceased all attempts to challenge coalition fighters. After January 1993, the Iraqi air force's only serious efforts to challenge coalition airpower were against unarmed reconnaissance aircraft such as U-2s and Predator unmanned aerial vehicles.

Result. The estimate was correct: the Iraqis made virtually no attempt to challenge coalition airpower with their own air force. In fact, the Iraqi air force's primary efforts, as in Desert Storm, centered on taking measures to preserve its fleet. Given the failures of using Iran as a safe haven in 1991 and the potential vulnerability of "hardened aircraft" bunkers demonstrated by Desert Storm strikes, the Iraqis took some extreme measures. Aircraft were dispersed outside of operating bases and, in some instances, buried underground (see photo on page 90 showing a newly disinterred Iraqi MiG-25 fighter). These aircraft burials were not conducted in prepared, earthen bunkers but rather in improvised "graves" in the sand, a desperate measure that carried the likelihood of rendering the aircraft non-flight-worthy.

12. WHAT WILL IRAQ'S SECURITY ENVIRONMENT BE LIKE AFTER THE MAJOR COMBAT PHASES?

Estimate. Iraq was expected to suffer significant sectarian and interethnic violence, accompanied by social disorder

Source: U.S. Air Force

and lawlessness. The rapid development of an armed insurgency that specifically targeted the coalition was not considered likely.

Analysis. Analysts drew on Iraq's post–Desert Storm uprising for clues about the possible environment after the close of the coalition's major combat operations (Phases I, II, and III of OPLAN 1003V). The 1991 uprisings had a strong sectarian component to them. The Kurdish population in the north and Shiite communities in the south rebelled against the regime, which had a fundamentally Sunni and tribal-based identity. Particularly in the south, the uprising was characterized by bloody retribution against the regime and a general decline in social order, including looting and destruction.[59]

The full collapse of the regime after the combat phases of OIF was expected to trigger a similar wave of sectarian violence and lawlessness. Coalition forces were deemed at risk of getting caught in the crossfire of fighting between such communities. There was also the risk of coalition

forces getting drawn into sectarian conflicts by taking sides in local disputes.

Still, few expected that a large-scale insurgency would develop quickly, with the primary purpose of resisting the coalition presence. The collapse of the regime and the defeat of Saddam's army were viewed as decisive changes in the balance of power that would discourage an indigenous insurgency. If the Iraqis had failed to defeat or even effectively resist coalition forces with full resources, organization, and equipment within their borders, it seemed doubtful they would have the desire or capability to mount an effective resistance in Phase IV. In preparing for Phase IV, planners considered the history of the early British occupation, during which a major rebellion in southern Iraq had occurred in 1920. This rebellion took several years to develop, however, and had resulted from specific occupation policies (mainly related to taxation) and imperialist-style diplomacy. In planning for Phase IV, such specific conditions were not foreseen, and the postwar climate certainly was not expected to trigger large-scale armed rebellion quickly.

In a paper written before the war, the National Intelligence Council reached basically the same conclusions about Phase IV security. The council's paper, broadly representative of views throughout the national intelligence community, did predict sectarian violence among Iraqis. It did not present any strong warnings about the rapid rise of a large insurgency targeting the coalition, however.[60]

Result. The estimate generally failed to predict the nature and severity of security challenges in Phase IV. Sectarian violence was, in fact, minimal, while the growth of the insurgency was rapid.

Analysis of Phase IV was one of the weakest and least developed aspects of the military intelligence estimates. The assessments had a bias toward enemy courses of action; the destruction of that enemy (Saddam's regime) consumed the intelligence resources. With civilian agencies taking the lead in most respects, the narrow focus of the military's mission in Phase IV steered the weight of analytical effort for intelligence estimates toward the earlier phases.

The preeminence of civilian agencies in administering Phase IV not only drove the focus of intelligence work, it also complicated any approaches to drafting assessments, even for mission areas that were relevant to the military. Coalition civilian agencies—initially the Office for Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA) and later the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA)—defined through their policies many aspects of the Phase IV environment that would have significant security implications. These policies were not known when the estimate was written, and many were developed and introduced after the combat phases ended. Prominent examples that received public attention were the decisions regarding de-Baathification and dissolution of the Iraqi military.[61] These decisions, made by the CPA in May 2003, helped fuel the growth of armed opposition to the coalition.

Another problem in estimating Phase IV is more general in nature, and endemic to planning estimates. Assessments of conditions near the end of a plan are subject to any erroneous assessments in earlier phases of a plan. This applies not only to errors in intelligence estimates during the first three phases of 1003V, but also to changes in coalition force actions, which would have a significant effect on the calculations and decisions of the adversary. The fact that scorched earth policies were not widely or

effectively employed—contrary to estimates—may have undercut Iraqi citizens' urgency to take revenge on the regime. The surprisingly strong sense of duty and will to fight demonstrated by Iraqi security forces such as the Saddam Fedayeen—also contrary to estimates—may have contributed to suppression of a popular outpouring of revenge against the regime in Iraq's southern cities, where the paramilitary groups were based and charged with maintaining order. These factors, and possibly others, contributed to the lack of significant sectarian violence.

This error in the estimate may also be directly related to the lack of clarity in foreseeing the rise of an insurgency. The reduced pressures on the Sunni Arab minority—their not having to defend against Shiite and Kurdish reprisals—may have given insurgents the freedom to develop a resistance movement rapidly.

PROBLEMS IN THE RESULTS

Overall, CENTCOM's intelligence assessments were a useful tool in building the plan for OIF. The key questions that dictated the broad courses of Iraqi actions were examined, and judgments were made about the full range of potential Iraqi actions and the most likely course of action they would ultimately undertake. Many of the "most likely" forecasts for Iraqi behavior were correct, although some were clearly inaccurate.

Some possible reasons for these analytical errors have already been suggested for each of the individual questions. In general, such errors may have resulted from flaws in the more fundamental predictions of regime behavior. Several possible conclusions can be drawn by comparing the assessments against the actual outcomes:

- *First, the Iraqis were generally overestimated.* Errors in the intelligence assessment tended to give too much credit to Iraq. Many of the military opportunities open to the regime were not exploited. It possessed capabilities for much greater and more effective resistance than it put up. This is especially surprising given the hemorrhaging of classified details about CENTCOM's military plans, beginning almost a full year prior to the beginning of armed conflict.

- *Second, it appears in retrospect that the regime may have fundamentally miscalculated the growing military and political momentum toward D-Day.* The disarray and lack of energy in Iraq's defense in February–March 2003 suggest that the regime was unprepared for a rapid transition to war—that it did not have unambiguous warning until it was too late to act. Iraq's misjudgment may have been based on the strong signals of popular discontent within coalition nations toward the approaching war, as well as the lack of consensus within the UN Security Council. This is particularly surprising given the openness of Western political processes.

- *Third, Iraq's failure to recognize unambiguous warning signs and its overreliance on diplomacy may have had a ripple effect on the accuracy of other judgments in the estimate.* Many of the ECOAs that were considered likely would only have been relevant if the regime had sufficient unambiguous warning time to undertake them. Many of the regime's options may have been forfeited by its slowness to recognize the imminence of conflict and its lack of contingency preparations to allow for rapid transition when it did accept that war was inevitable.

- *Fourth, the Iraqi military's will to fight suffered a broad collapse prior to the conflict.* Misjudging the scale and speed at which the Iraqi military would surrender and desert also had a ripple effect on the accuracy of other predictions. This single factor may have contributed significantly to the general overestimation of Iraq's defense. The collapse in the will to fight may have been so rapid and widespread—prior to combat—that it interrupted any general adherence to the Iraqis' military plans and doctrine. This rendered some forecasts of their behavior moot. All the intelligence indications—doctrinal behavior, precedent, specific intelligence of intentions, and the actual arraying of Iraqi forces—may have done nothing more than describe the idealized Iraqi defense. Limited Iraqi preparations for such a defense continued until war was imminent, but then a breakdown in the will to fight prevented its execution.

NOTES

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3. Tommy Franks, *American Soldier* (New York: Regan Books, 2004), pp. 434–436, 558–560.

4. Bradley Graham, "Republican Guard Troops Moved Nearer to Baghdad," *Washington Post*, February 28, 2003.

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12. Iraq, seeing in Operation Enduring Freedom the U.S. method of using a small force to support indigenous fighters, was likely expecting this approach. The summer 2002 publication of a book written by a CIA case officer that gave an explicit firsthand account of previous U.S. work with oppositionists in northern Iraq may have added to this Iraqi perception. Robert Baer, *See No Evil* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2002), pp. 170–218.

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25. Makovsky, "U.S.-Israeli Consultation on Iraq."

26. Randa Durgham, "Iraqi UN Envoy: U.S. Warnings to Iraq 'Stupid,' Iraq Will Try to Down More Planes," *al-Hayah,* October 11, 2001, translation by Foreign Broadcast Information Service, (GMP20011011000079), October 11, 2001.

27. Baram, *Building toward Crisis,* pp. 8–20.

28. Charles Duelfer, *Comprehensive Report of the Special Advisor to the DCI on Iraq's WMD,* vol. 1 (Washington, D.C.: Central Intelligence Agency, September 30, 2004). Key findings available online (www.cia.gov/cia/reports/iraq_wmd_2004/index.html).

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Conclusion

Intelligence assessments played a key role in shaping the plan for Operation Iraqi Freedom. In an ideal setting, intelligence support to planning is not necessarily focused on correctly positing single answers to high-stakes questions, fully predicting an adversary's actions. Instead, assessments examine a range of enemy actions, suggest likelihoods, and assess probabilities—all in support of developing the friendly force's military plans and contingencies. The compressed production timelines for the Iraq war plan, however, increased the significance of enemy courses of action assessed to be "most likely," sharply focusing the time-constrained planning efforts on those individual scenarios.
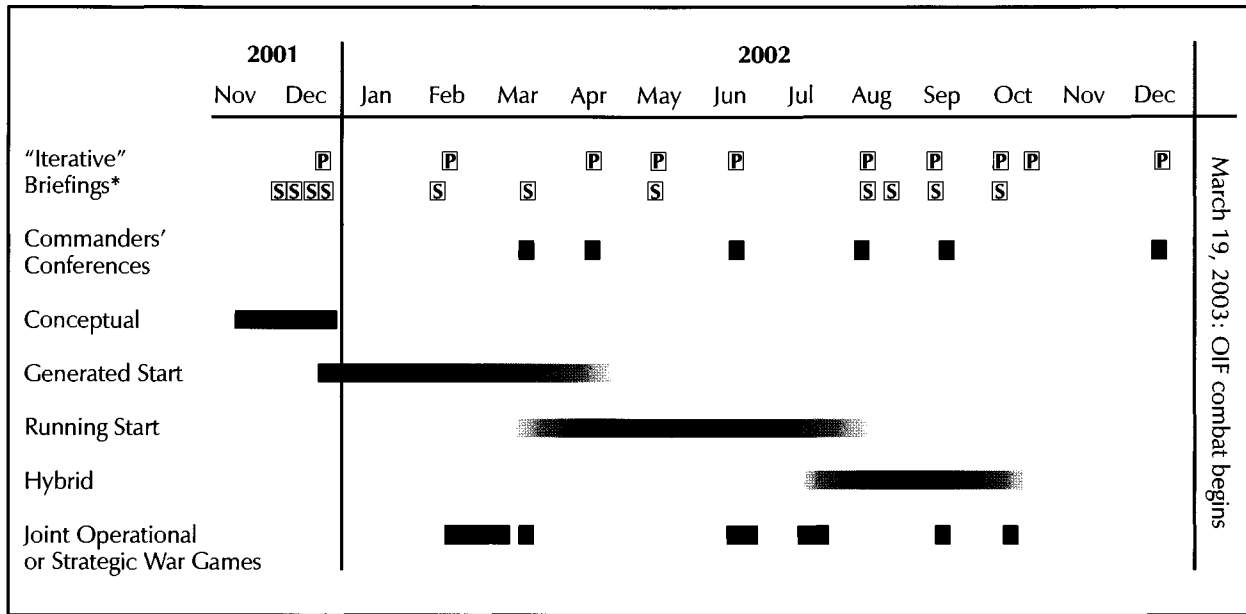
The intelligence estimates were largely correct, but also suffered from several notable gaps and failures. These failures were somewhat surprising, since the U.S. intelligence community had observed Iraq carefully for many years. Following the invasion of Kuwait in 1990, Iraq had been under constant scrutiny by American intelligence, which devoted vast resources to collecting information about the country's military and leadership. The two most fundamental errors in the logic of the assessments were directly related to behavioral problems at opposite ends of the information scale. On one end, understanding the regime's realization of unambiguous warning required insight into the mind of a single individual: Saddam Hussein. At the other end of the scale, predicting the mass desertion of the Iraqi military followed by the rapid onset of a broad insurgency were subjective judgments of culture and social science that largely eluded analysts.

The changing nature of the Defense Department's system for planning wars played a key role in the plan's development. One of the chief successes in the military intelligence estimates was to provide planners with an unbiased intelligence picture of the enemy. Meanwhile, preconceived views and politically motivated "analyses" of Iraq sometimes drove policy advocates in Washington to promote unrealistic ideas. The notion born in the mid-1990s that Iraqi oppositionists could unseat Saddam's regime built an intellectual paradigm that fueled competing sets of assumptions between the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) in Washington and the CENTCOM staff in Tampa. The OSD's assumptions about Iraq created constant pressures on CENTCOM to plan successive options for the war that required smaller U.S. forces, an earlier attack, and quicker execution. In the end, OSD-derived planning assumptions were largely abandoned in favor of more realistic assumptions based on the work of intelligence professionals.

Planning for Iraq's reconstruction may provide disturbing insight into future challenges for U.S. military planning and its intelligence support. The reconstruction planning was not insulated by an institution with a strong staff and a clear mission mandate. This may be indicative of a trend toward future challenges that military intelligence organizations will face. Changes in military planning toward greater "iterative" and "adaptive" methodologies will place greater pressure on such agencies, and the analytic outlook of intelligence professionals engaged in war planning will increasingly compete with the conclusions of policymakers.

APPENDIX

Timeline of OIF Planning

	2001		2002												
	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	

"Iterative" Briefings*
Commanders' Conferences
Conceptual
Generated Start
Running Start
Hybrid
Joint Operational or Strategic War Games

March 19, 2003: OIF combat begins

Sources: Compiled from Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004); Tommy Franks, *American Soldier* (New York: Regan Books, 2004); and author interviews with a military intelligence analyst in Tampa, Florida, 2003.

* "P" indicates a briefing involving the president. "S" indicates a briefing involving the secretary of defense.

Appendix

TIMELINE OF KEY EVENTS IN THE PLANNING OF OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

AFB—Air Force Base
OIF—Operation Iraqi Freedom
OPT—operational planning team

2001

September 11: Al-Qaeda operatives attack the United States.

October 7: Operation Enduring Freedom begins in Afghanistan.

November 21: In a meeting at the White House, President George W. Bush directs Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld to initiate planning for an Iraq campaign.

November 27: Rumsfeld asks Gen. Tommy Franks to begin Iraq planning.

December 1: The Joint Chiefs of Staff issue an order to initiate planning activity.

December 4: Franks briefs Rumsfeld and Joint Chiefs chairman Gen. Richard Myers by video teleconference,

outlining the initial concept of an Iraq campaign. Force size is discussed.

December 12: Franks briefs Rumsfeld by video teleconference regarding the visibility of preparations for war, the associated costs, and the potential for execution in spring 2002.

December 19: Franks briefs Rumsfeld at the Pentagon.

December 27: Franks briefs Rumsfeld by video teleconference.

December 28: Franks briefs the president at his ranch in Crawford, Texas, with senior national security staff participating by video teleconference. The general lays out broad timelines for the "Generated Start" plan.

2002

January 17: Franks addresses his subordinate component commanders by video teleconference, briefing them on Iraq planning for the first time.

January 29: President Bush delivers the first post–September 11 State of the Union address, declaring that he "will not wait while dangers gather" and labeling Iraq a member of the "axis of evil."

February 1: Franks briefs Rumsfeld by video teleconference regarding Generated Start and the simultaneity of air and ground campaigns. The feasibility of launching OIF in April 2002 is discussed.

February 7: At a meeting in the White House Situation Room, Franks briefs the president and senior national security staff on Afghanistan, Generated Start, and issues related to the timing and phasing of OIF.

February 16: A presidential finding is signed authorizing covert activity against Iraq.

February 20: The CIA's Northern Iraq Liaison Element (NILE) enters Iraq.

February 24: CENTCOM's J2 (intelligence) planning support staff complete the first draft of their narrative intelligence estimate.

February 25–March 3: A war game for Generated Start is conducted at Scott AFB in Illinois.

March 6: Franks briefs the vice president in Washington.

March 6–7: At MacDill AFB in Florida, the CIA Iraq operations group gives a back-brief of the NILE survey mission and discusses covert and unconventional warfare capabilities. At the Pentagon, the war game "Prominent Hammer" is conducted to examine strategic political and military issues related to an Iraq invasion.

March 11: Franks and Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz meet at MacDill AFB.

March 18: CENTCOM holds a special operations command component planning conference at MacDill AFB.

March 21–22: At a commanders' conference in Ramstein, Germany, Franks consults with his subordinates on Afghanistan and outlines Generated Start.

March 29: Franks briefs military service chiefs at the Pentagon on planning.

April 3: CENTCOM planners establish two OPTs, one dedicated to civil-military operations and the other (the "spike" OPT) tasked with formulating actions intended to desensitize Iraqi intelligence to indications of coalition preparations for attack.

April 5: The final draft of CENTCOM J2's intelligence estimate is approved.

April 11: CENTCOM planners establish a Turkey OPT, dedicated to discussing options for launching large-scale ground attacks from Turkey.

April 17–19: An intelligence planning conference is held at MacDill AFB.

April 20: Franks briefs the president and senior national security staff at Camp David.

April 24–25: A commanders' conference is held at Camp Doha, Kuwait.

April 28–30: A civil-military operations conference is held at MacDill AFB.

May 1–7: An information operations planning conference is held in Bahrain.

May 10: Franks briefs the Principals Committee in Washington.

May 11: Franks briefs the president and senior national security staff at Camp David regarding "Fortress" Baghdad and air war management.

May 16: CENTCOM planners establish a Baghdad OPT, dedicated to discussing ways of preventing Iraq from mounting an urban defense and to countering such a campaign if required.

May 30: CENTCOM J2 staff brief Franks on Baghdad.

June 4–6: The CENTCOM J2 holds a conference on the intelligence concept of operations for OIF.

June 10–13: An information operations planning conference is held at MacDill AFB.

June 11–14: A theater ballistic missile conference is held at MacDill AFB.

June 13: A Baghdad intelligence conference is held in Langley, Virginia.

June 17–22: The "O-6" war game is conducted at MacDill AFB.

June 19: Franks briefs the president in Washington regarding Baghdad planning.

June 27–28: A commanders' conference is held in Ramstein, Germany.

July 13–14: A targets planning conference is held at Scott AFB.

July 16–19: A CENTCOM war game for the "Running Start" plan is conducted at Scott AFB. The CIA conducts a war game seminar at Carlisle Barracks.

July 23: A planning conference is held for "Exercise Internal Look 03."

July 31: The National Security Agency (NSA) conducts "Rock Drill I" at Fort Meade, Maryland, to assess friendly force coordination of the U.S. signals intelligence (SIGINT) system in support of an invasion of Iraq.

August 1: A commanders' conference is held at MacDill AFB.

August 5: Franks briefs the president and senior national security staff on Afghanistan, force deployments, Running Start, the "Hybrid" plan, Baghdad, and basing/staging and infrastructure upgrades at regional bases.

August 6–11: U.S. European Command (EUCOM) holds staff synchronization meetings in Stuttgart, Germany.

August 14: Franks briefs Rumsfeld at the Pentagon regarding the Hybrid plan and OIF targeting.

August 28–30: The NSA conducts "Rock Drill II" at Fort Meade.

September 6: Franks briefs the National Security Council (NSC) in the White House Situation Room.

September 7: Meeting at Camp David; Franks briefs the president and NSC, and Secretary of State Colin Powell lays out military and diplomatic concerns about the OIF plan.

September 8: The UN Security Council issues Resolution 1441 regarding Iraqi disarmament.

September 9: Franks briefs the service chiefs at the Pentagon.

September 12: President Bush addresses the UN General Assembly regarding Iraq.

September 17: The Pentagon conducts another "Prominent Hammer" war game to examine strategic political and military issues influencing OIF.

September 19–20: A commanders' conference is held at Camp Doha.

October 1: CENTCOM coordinates the drafting of a National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq's conventional forces.

October 2–3: The NSA conducts an intelligence conference at MacDill AFB.

October 4: Franks briefs the president and Secretary Rumsfeld at the Pentagon regarding the Hybrid plan, OIF targeting, Baghdad, and potential Iraqi military tactics (e.g., Scud missile deployment, hydrological threats, oil sabotage).

October 4–5: A war game for the Hybrid plan is conducted at Scott AFB.

October 11: Congress authorizes the use of force in Iraq.

October 12: A hydrology study refereed by the CENTCOM J2 is finalized.

October 16–17: A mapping and geographic information system conference is held at MacDill AFB.

October 17–20: A meeting regarding synchronization between V Corps headquarters and CENTCOM staff is held in Heidelberg, Germany.

October 29: Franks briefs the president in Washington regarding consequence management and regional threats related to weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

November 20: CENTCOM headquarters begins "main body deployments" to Camp al-Saliya, Qatar, for Exercise Internal Look 03.

December 6: De facto "N-day" (initial notification of deployments) for OIF.

December 7–8: Commanders' conference and "rock drill" at Camp al-Saliya.

December 9–15: Exercise Internal Look 03 is conducted as a commanders' mission rehearsal for OIF.

December 19: Franks briefs the president in Washington.

December 21: CENTCOM headquarters' main body begins rotations back to MacDill AFB.

2003

January 6–26: The final Time-Phased Force and Deployment Data (TPFDD) conference is held at Scott AFB.

January 7–9: Final ARCENT ground planning conference, Ft. McPherson, Georgia.

January 9: Franks briefs the president in Washington regarding regional support for OIF.

January 20–22: Final CENTAF air force planning conference, Shaw AFB, South Carolina.

January 27: UN meeting: Hans Blix presents report on current status of UNMOVIC efforts to disarm and monitor Iraq's WMD.

January 28: CENTCOM headquarters begins main body deployments to Camp al-Saliya in preparation for OIF. President Bush delivers the State of the Union address, detailing the Iraqi regime's WMD activity and promising,

"If Saddam Hussein does not fully disarm . . . we will lead a coalition to disarm him."

February 5: Powell addresses the UN Security Council, presenting the administration's formal assessment of Saddam's WMD activities and links to terrorism.

February 22: The official date for N-day, though notification of deployments had begun weeks earlier.

March 1: The Turkish parliament rejects a measure that would have permitted the United States to base and stage major combat units for OIF on its territory.

March 12: Washington abandons efforts to broker a second UN resolution more explicitly authorizing the use of force against Iraq.

March 19: OIF begins.

The aftermath of the war in Iraq has generated a great deal of second-guessing about Washington's prewar planning and intelligence efforts. Largely missing from this debate has been a thorough examination of military intelligence efforts outside Washington.

In this study, Gregory Hooker provides a detailed narrative of the war planning process, spanning the military's initial attempts to refocus on regime change and the government's ineffective preparation for the postwar environment. Throughout, he assesses the prewar intelligence estimates and the various problems that U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) had to overcome, including rampant media leaks, unrealistic strategic proposals, and time constraints caused by competing assumptions between senior policymakers and military planners. In doing so, he provides invaluable insight into challenges that may confront future U.S. war planning and intelligence efforts.

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