Iraqi security concerns in the region
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For Iraq, it might be true to say that the worst that could have happened, has happened - or very nearly. Thus, during the past decade or so, the fears and ambitions of a particular Iraqi government, heading a particular kind of regime, led to the use of armed force to enhance the security of Iraq, as interpreted by that government. This involved Iraq in intense, often prolonged bouts of armed conflict, the effects of which have been devastating for the country. Its social structure, its economy, its military capability and its sovereignty have been severely harmed as a result of the government's military adventures. In fact, so great has been the damage, that the very future of Iraq as a unitary state has been called into question. In other words, all those attributes of the state which the government was seeking to secure or to reinforce have been undermined as a direct consequence of its policies. Yet the government in question remains in power, capable still of speaking for Iraq, of giving voice to a distinctively Iraqi set of security concerns.

Whilst power should not be equated with authority and whilst there may be many in Iraq who obey government directives for purely prudential reasons, it should be clear by now that the government of Saddam Hussein is neither as isolated from, nor as out of touch with Iraqi society as some may have wished to believe. Saddam Hussein, his ascent to power and his methods of rule, as well as the spoken and unspoken justifications for his continued domination of Iraqi politics, are products of the dynamics of Iraqi society - a society associated with and to some extent shaped by the history of the Iraqi state. The political order constructed simultaneously with the foundation of that state, as well as the geostrategic location of the state itself, have contributed to the "security education" of those who have aspired to rule Iraq. The success of those who have managed to rule the state has often depended upon their capacity to speak to and for those Iraqis fearful of an alternative dispensation of power.

Interestingly, these fears have remained remarkably constant for most of the recent history of the state. It is here that a common theme emerges, understandably, perhaps, in the light of the ways in which Iraq has been

governed since its establishment, but disturbingly for Iraq's relations with its neighbours. The theme in question has been the sensed vulnerability of Iraqi political society to the machinations of Iraq's regional neighbours, working through groups in Iraqi society which are taken to be disaffected with the existing dispensation of power. The opportunism of their imagined relentless hostility to the existing political order is presumed to combine with the malign intentions of international forces, facing Iraqi governments in each decade with coalitions of internal and external enemies. Regardless of whether this has actually been the case, it has been the chief way in which domestic political opposition has been portrayed by the government of the day, either as part of a conscious strategy to discredit domestic opposition forces, or because this is really the way in which the Iraqi government and those who rely upon it tend to regard the rest of Iraqi society and the world beyond the borders of Iraq.

In the light of the present discussion, therefore, the questions to be asked are:

a) to what extent did or do the concerns of the present regime reflect more than the concerns of Saddam Hussein and his coterie ? In other words, can one discern perennial concerns among substantial sections of Iraqi society regarding the region which will persist, even after the demise of Saddam Hussein ?

b) in what ways have Iraq's recent experiences and present ordeals served to reinforce these concerns about regional threats to security - both in the sense of conforming to the image of the region and its threatening nature which pre-dated Iraq's present plight and by making such images of threat more real to a larger number of Iraqis, creating thereby a genuine sense of commonly shared danger ?

c) what of the implications for the future, in two senses:

1) what will be thought to be the most effective way of addressing these regional security concerns and, above all, what part will armed force play in these calculations ?

2) what will be the strength of these images over time ? What kinds of developments might have to take place to allay some of these fears about security, or to detach them from important and influential constituencies in Iraq, such that they no longer become the principal prisms through which Iraqi governments view the region ?

A. Enduring security concerns

In thinking about the security of Iraq, the rulers of the state have long had to face two central questions concerning the very existence of Iraq. These tend to emerge sharply in the public debate or the public discourse of the regime, whenever a crisis looms in domestic, as in regional politics. The two questions are part of Iraq's historical-political legacy, as well as of its geopolitical situation. In the first place, there is the realisation that Iraq is a new entity, created by the British Empire primarily in order to satisfy the needs (and even the internal political lobbying) of that Empire. With the disappearance of that Empire and thus the logic of its Middle Eastern policies, the permanence of its legacies in the region must clearly be called into question. The second feature is a result of longer, but no less unsettling historical forces and concerns Iraq's status as a "frontier state". As in all such frontier zones, identities have become blurred and do not conform to the neat lines of the frontiers of territorial states depicted on maps of the region. Thus, although Iraqi governments have sought to portray the state as guarding the frontier of the Arab world from the non-Arab peoples to the East, the situation of Iraqi society is more complex than that. It is true that Iraq's population is primarily Arabic-speaking, the Arabic speakers are divided, in sectarian terms, between the Sunni and the Shi'i. The latter not only constitute the majority of the Arab population, but also share a sectarian identity with the Persians to the East. Furthermore, in this frontier zone, 24% or so of the population of the state are Kurdish.

The results of these legacies have been visible throughout the twentieth century existence of Iraq. In the first place, successive governments have sought to overcome this feeling of impermanence and uncertain identities through a strident brand of Iraqi nationalism, insisting on the glorious history of a 5000 year old Iraqi nation. This has been pursued with no less vigour by Iraqi governments, such as the present one, which have sought to portray themselves simultaneously as the standard-bearers of Arab nationalism. Equally, the lurking fear of social and political disintegration may well have contributed to the notorious violence of Iraqi political conflict. The present regime may have developed this aspect to a new degree of intensity, but Iraqi political history has always been dogged by violence born of insecurity - an insecurity, the roots of which lie in the belief that the very future of the state may be at stake in any given political dispute.

For these reasons, crucial psycho-social insecurities feed into what might be called the "situational" or objective insecurities which derive from more conventional concerns regarding the vulnerability of the state's resources to regional disruption or exploitation. It seems quite probable that these will continue to shape the policies of successive Iraqi governments as long as the dominant dispensation of power in Iraq continues to be one marked by clannishness, authoritarian rule and neo-patrimonialism. The present regime of Saddam Hussein is but the latest in a long line of broadly similar regimes which have organised Iraqis' lives and determined the prevailing view of security whether under monarchy or republic. They and Iraq itself are caught in the bind that, whilst this may seem to be the most effective way of ruling Iraq in the short to medium term, it sets up a distinctive cycle of insecurity which has brutalising effects on much of the population of Iraq and disruptive effects in the region.

1. Social schism and regional enemies

The most obvious fear under the present regime, has been the degree to which Iran might seek to exploit sectarian disaffection among the Shi'i population of Iraq. The particular fear which political movements among the Shi'i excite, concern the radical reshaping of the political order in Iraq which a resentful and united Shi'i community might bring about. During the past fifteen years, communal resentments have been voiced in the numerous Islamic protest groups which have found fertile ground among the Shi'i, playing as much on their social and political grievances as on their sectarian complaints. In fact, there has never been a single Shi'i "community" in Iraq in a political sense, but rather different groups and categories and communities among the Shi'i. Various ploys have been tried by the government to ensure that these divisions among the Shi'i remain as potent as ever in order to prevent the crystallisation of communal solidarity. These have ranged from the co-option of prominent lay Shi'i into the patronage system of the regime, the increasing "nationalisation" of the Shi'i clerical networks, and the cultivation of the Shi'i tribes in parts of southern Iraq. At the same time, this has been accompanied by a more brutal policy of executing members of prominent clerical families, hunting down members of underground Islamic organisations such as Al-Da'wa and the apparent destruction of the southern marshlands, together with the communities of Shi'i villagers and farmers which they have hitherto sustained.

The same anxieties can be seen to apply in relation to the Kurdish populations of the north. On the one hand, the Iraqi government is obviously apprehensive about the potential of Kurdish nationalism, whether it aims at the setting up of a separate, independent Kurdish state or brings sufficient weight to bear to create a genuinely federal state in Iraq. In itself, therefore, this movement would be disruptive of the existing political order, obliging a reappraisal of the future of the Iraqi state. However, as with the Shi'i, the Iraqi government is even more apprehensive about the uses to which the Kurds might be put by regional states hostile to Iraq. Thus, in particular, the assistance given to Kurdish nationalists by the Turkish or the Iranian governments, or, in present circumstances, by the alliance of forces ranged against Iraq as a result of the war for Kuwait, is something which any government in Baghdad must fear. The response has been similar and has centred on the attempted co-optation of individuals and factions from the various Kurdish communities, as well as the brutal suppression of any organised form of dissent whenever that has fallen within the power of the Iraqi government. The notorious *anfal* of 1988-89 was an example of how the Iraqi government believed that the Kurdish threat could be neutralised: communities were uprooted and destroyed in an effort to isolate Kurdish areas from contact with Iran and a systematic purge was carried out within Kurdistan to destroy the Kurdish nationalist forces.

Whilst attention has focused on the plight of the Shi'i and the Kurds and their suspected disloyalty to the central government of Iraq, it should also be noted that both under this government and under previous governments, the regional loyalties of much of the Sunni Arab section of the population has also come under suspicion. The dominant fear in this regard appears to have been - and still to be - that those who espouse an Arab nationalist creed might start looking for their inspiration beyond the borders of Iraq itself and will thus become agents of the enemies of the Iraqi government in the Arab world. Throughout the 1960s, the suspicion fell on those who looked to Nasser and to Egypt for leadership, rather than to the government in Baghdad. Under the present, nominally Ba'thi regime, the fear has been that the Syrian Ba'th might find among disaffected members of the Iraqi Ba'th party willing accomplices for President Asad's regional ambitions. This has led to occasional, often ferocious purges of the Iraqi Ba'th and has contributed to the enduring hostility between the Ba'thi regimes of Baghdad and Damascus.

The point to be made in all this, is that for any Iraqi government, including the present one, which rules dictatorially, domestic insecurities will be reflected in and will contribute towards regional insecurities. In some sections of the population - such as the Shi'i or the Kurds - whose members are excluded in large measure from the most powerful positions in the state, the suspicion is that a collective ideal (Islamicist or nationalist) may begin to work amongst them, transforming them into a fifth column at the service of Iraq's regional enemies. However, even where such a collective hostility cannot be assumed to exist, such as among the clans of the Sunni Arab population, the fear is that disaffection may lead to conspiracy with Iraq's regional enemies, not necessarily for idealistic reasons, but purely out of opportunism. Thus, disillusioned Ba'this are assumed to be working hand in hand with the Syrian government and disgruntled military officers and others are seen to be sponsored by Saudi Arabia. In regimes, such as the present one, which are composed of a self-selected elite, often linked by kinship ties, all other Iraqis are in some senses "outsiders" and all are, therefore, potential collaborators with the regime's many regional enemies, imagined or real.

2. *Geostrategic situation and regional vulnerabilities*

Just as in any territorial state, regardless of the form of its government or the particular array of regional allies or enemies at any particular time, there are certain fears in Iraq concerning the situational vulnerability of the state in the region. These appear to revolve around four main themes: the defensibility of frontiers; access to the sea; vulnerability of oil resources; the fear of water shortages. All of these fears may be connected with the vulnerabilities outlined in the preceding section and are also exacerbated by the legacy of Iraq as an imperial creation, where boundaries were drawn which may be regarded now as somehow unfair or unacceptable. Consequently, although the handling of the issues which might arise from these fears may be associated with the style and insecurities of a particular government of Iraq, the concerns from which they arise would be of central importance to any government of the Iraqi state.

Concern about the defensibility of the frontiers of Iraq has taken two particular forms. The first, mentioned in the foregoing section, has to do with the permeability of those frontiers to regional forces seeking to encourage disaffection and rebellion within Iraq. Thus, the mountains of Kurdistan and

the marshes of the south have been seen by successive Iraqi governments as areas which are both difficult for the central authorities to control and which are also permeable to infiltration from Iran and from Turkey. The *anfal* in Kurdistan of 1988-89 was in part aimed at bringing the area back under the control of the central government. Equally, the present operations aimed at draining the marshes and destroying them as potential refuges for opponents of the government are intended to "seal" that particular border.

The second concern about the defensibility of borders has more to do with conventional military operations. In this regard, the vulnerability of the narrowing south of Iraq, in which Basra is situated, is considerably greater than that of Baghdad. Nevertheless, as became apparent during the war with Iran, the awareness of the relative lack of strategic depth to the country and the fear of the demographic and military weight of Iran, were powerful incentives to devise other means of the defence. It seems almost certain that it was with this context in mind that the Iraqi government began to develop its programmes for the production of weapons of mass destruction. The development of missile technology, and of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons were not perhaps primarily expressions of Iraqi ambition, but of the insecurity of the Iraqi leadership when contemplating its "frontier" location. There is good reason to suppose that this is a factor which will shape Iraqi security concerns well into the future.

Related to these concerns about the vulnerability of Iraq's frontiers is the concern about its lines of communication and trade with the outside world. In this respect, there is a commonly voiced complaint in Iraq that its frontiers were deliberately drawn by the British to ensure the weakness and vulnerability of Iraq, particularly in regard to access to the sea. The strength of feeling behind this and the insecurities to which it has given rise, have been all too evident both in the conflict with Iran over the Shatt al-Arab and with Kuwait over access to the port of Umm Qasr. In the latter case, of course, it became conflated with the claim to Kuwait itself as a "natural" part of Iraq, "unnaturally" split off from the motherland by the imperial stratagems of the British imperialists. Again, these are complaints and claims which have been associated with Iraqi governments since the establishment of the state itself (needless to say, not much has been heard from the same sources about the possible revision of the border demarcation which included Kirkuk in Iraqi territory) and are likely to continue to be of relevance to Iraq's regional relationships.

In part, the fear of the Iraqi government (now realised and enforced by the UN embargo) is that Iraq will be prevented from exporting oil since its relatively limited access to the sea will make it dependent upon those countries through which Iraqi oil must transit by way of pipelines. The vulnerability of oil pipelines to hostile regional states has been amply demonstrated and, despite diversification of routes for the export of oil, the concern will remain. However, there is another concern which clearly animated the Iraqi government prior to August 1990 and which is likely to do so again, once Iraqi oil comes onto the market. This involves not the physical security of the oil itself, but the security or stability of the price which Iraq can expect to gain for its oil. In the context of the needs of the Iraqi economy, as defined by its government, the inability of Iraq to prevent other countries from overproducing and from contributing to the diminished income accruing to Iraq, made it powerless to protect its national interests.

Even allowing for the usual hyperbole associated with such pronouncements, the bitter denunciations by Saddam Hussein of the Gulf oil producing states prior to the invasion of Kuwait suggested a sense of insecurity and crisis shared by many in Iraq - a sense of insecurity, furthermore, which the other oil producers were ill-advised to ignore. In principle, therefore, Iraqi concerns about the security of its oil production and pricing may be a complicating factor in its relations with most of its regional neighbours: the pipelines across Turkey, Syria and Saudi Arabia sharpen the sense of physical vulnerability, whilst the pricing and production policies of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the Emirates and Iran excite fears for the security of Iraq's national income.

Of equal potential concern, are Iraq's fears about the security of its water supplies. As a country which depends very largely upon the two river systems of the Tigris and the Euphrates, Iraq is uniquely sensitive to upstream developments on either of these two rivers. These are the perennial fears of the downstream state in any such system, but where political enmity is added to water fears, an explosive atmosphere of insecurity and resentment is created. Thus, Iranian irrigation works on the tributaries of the Tigris have added to the suspicion that already exists in Iraq that this will be yet one more weapon which the Iranian state will use to establish its regional hegemony. Of even greater concern, given the scale of the works being conducted in Turkey on the GAP project and in Syria on the Assad Dam, are the implications for the future flow of the Euphrates in

Iraq. These concerns were sharp enough prior to Iraq's present state of isolation, but now there is a belief that Iraq's voice will no longer be heard or given equal weight in discussions on how to manage these international water systems, or indeed that water will deliberately be used as an instrument of state power to further weaken Iraq.

These fears are unlikely to dissipate with the passing of the present government of Iraq. Equally, even if the future political dispensation in Iraq should be radically different from that which has hitherto existed, there is every reason to believe that the underlying concerns outlined above will work powerfully on Iraqi perceptions of the region. Although they may be managed differently, they will form the underlying basis on which Iraqi governments will judge the security of the country's interests - as well as the standard against which opposition forces will be able to judge how well any particular government is protecting those interests. How explosive they will be, will largely depend upon the vulnerabilities and insecurities of the regime in power at the time. On past record, it will be difficult to disentangle these "situational" concerns, from those arising from the determination of Iraqi governments to maintain intact a particular, clannish dispensation of power within the country.

As long as Iraq is governed by authoritarian regimes, relying on a mixture of force and bribery, as well as on networks of the *Ahl al-Thiqa* [people implicitly trusted by the rulers, usually, but not exclusively on account of their common origins], then the insecurities outlined above - that is, the fears of the potential disintegration of the state due to social disaffection - will be amplified among the rulers at any given moment. This is all the more likely to take the specific form visible at present, but long festering in Iraqi politics, as long as the dominant ruling network continues to come almost exclusively from clans of the Sunni Arab minority. Fear of the unknown networks, impulses and ambitions among other sectors of the population will clearly exaggerate or lend a certain sharpness to the suspicion that they may form a conduit for regional hostility.

B. Recent experiences and sharpened fears

There can be little doubt that, whatever Iraqis feel about their government, the events of the past ten years have tended to sharpen their fears about the regional threats to their security. Firstly, there was the war with Iran1980-88 which also witnessed an anti-Iraq alliance between Iran and Syria. Secondly, there was the

rising tension with the Gulf oil producers and Iraq's major creditors, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, which resulted in Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990. This, in turn, produced the international and regional alliance which unleashed operation Desert Storm and drove Iraq from Kuwait. Thirdly, these events sparked the Kurdish and the Shi'i rebellions, resulting eventually in the loss by Baghdad of control over much of the north of the country. Meanwhile, for the past three years or so, Iraq has been under a strict UN sanctions regime, as well as having been subjected to an enforced disarmament programme.

All of these events have been used by the present government to promote its view of the perils both internal and regional which face the Iraqis - and to justify their own domination of the state. Even with the passing of this government, the experiences of these years, whatever blame may be assigned to Saddam Hussein by his successors, will leave a legacy, both in the objective situation of Iraq and in the attitudes of many Iraqis towards the region. In part this may be sharpened by the discovery made by Saddam Hussein to his cost during the Kuwait crisis: that the ending of the Cold War had removed the possibility of playing one great power off against another. Hitherto, even though Iraq's regional enemies might have looked to a superpower patron to enhance their strength relative to that of Iraq, it had at least been open to Iraq to seek to check such a move by looking for a superpower patron of its own. This had formed an essential part of Iraq's regional strategy and had constituted a form of security guarantee, even if that guarantee was not always as solid as it was imagined to be. With the collapse of the USSR, such a move was no longer possible and Iraq had to experience, unmediated, both regional and international enmity which it did not have the resources to resist. The effect of this has been to sharpen the sense of isolation in Iraq and, if anything, to heighten the insecurities experienced as a result of the experiences of the previous decade or so.

As far as the objective situation is concerned, borders will have been re drawn in favour of Iraq's regional enemies, particularly Kuwait and Iran. The economic debt, accumulated during the years of war with Iran and augmented by the reparations bill associated with that war and with the invasion of Kuwait, will be massive - whatever mitigating arrangements may be negotiated with an Iraqi successor to Saddam Hussein. The longer the present situation in the north persists, the more enduring will be the legacy of the Kurds' experience of self-government and relative autonomy, making it harder to foresee their willing incorporation into an Iraqi state of the kind which has hitherto existed.

Nor is it difficult to believe that the shared adversity of most of the inhabitants of Iraq will have left its mark on the collective imagination of Iraqis. The memory of war with Iran in which perhaps half a million Iraqis lost their lives and the memory of the widespread destruction and hardship caused by the military operations of Desert Storm, in which most of Iraq's regional neighbours participated directly or indirectly are not going to fade quickly. They will tend to colour the images of the destructive power which lurks in the region, reinforcing the sense of peril and insecurity on which authoritarian Iraqi governments have relied so successfully to achieve their own leadership ambitions. This is, in sum, the troubling legacy of the past fifteen years, overlaid on an already heightened sense of insecurity. It is not that Saddam Hussein has created a new set of security fears - rather, that the very violence and disruption of Iraq under his leadership has provoked the hostility of precisely the forces which were wary of Iraq in the first place. In doing so, however, the impression may well have been left that these forces were hostile to Iraq all along and had simply been looking for an excuse to mount an attack on Iraq's national interests. Again, this is the version of events currently propagated by the present regime and there is reason to suppose that it is regarded as plausible within Iraq.

C. Responses and future concerns

Given the array of security concerns outlined above and the strong possibility that they are not confined simply to Saddam Hussein and his immediate entourage, the question arises of how they are most likely to shape Iraq's regional policies in the future. One of the most notorious aspects of their past and present influence on Iraqi policies, is that they have provoked a distinctly military response. That is, the Iraqi state was created and maintained by armed force, initially deployed by the British, but very soon undertaken by the Iraqi armed forces themselves. For the first decades of the state's existence, their chief task was the suppression of internal rebellion, whether by the tribes of the south or the Kurdish aghas of the north. The belief that the kinds of social revolt faced by Iraqi rulers could only be satisfactorily addressed by the use of coercion has been a constant and depressing theme of Iraqi politics.

Apart from a few token engagements in the various Arab-Israeli wars, and a militarily threatening posture towards Kuwait in 1961, there was little evidence

of Iraqi use of force as a serious instrument of regional policy. Iraqi governments seemed generally aware of the limitations on their capacity to use armed force successfully in the region. This appeared to change towards the end of the 1970s. The humiliation at the hands of Iran in 1975, the massive increase in Iraq's oil income and the apparent disengagement of Egypt from the central Arab-Israeli conflict encouraged the Iraqi government to think of playing a more assertive regional role. In order to do so, however, a military instrument more fitting for Iraq's purposes needed to be created, corresponding both to its government's ambitions, but also to its security fears. It was during this period that Iraq began to build up its conventional forces and to take an increasing interest in the acquisition of non-conventional means of warfare.

The spectacle of regional weakness and threat presented by revolutionary Iran in 1979-1980 led to the belief that military force could be used to win a victory that would curb the twin threats to Iraq's domestic and regional security. The cost of this miscalculation became rapidly apparent, but, in part thanks to the intransigence of the Iranian regime, the war was transformed into one of survival for Iraq and all the communities it contained. It also led to the massive armament programme of Iraq in conventional as in non-conventional military technologies. If military force had been unable to secure for Iraq's government the goals it had set out to achieve in 1980, by 1988 it was clear that the overwhelming nature of the military force at its disposal had obliged the Iranian government to rethink its military objectives. Consequently, armed force had indeed been instrumental in ensuring the security of Iraq.

In the years which followed, it was perhaps not surprising that the Iraqi government should have believed that the exemplary use of armed force against Kuwait would secure for it the results it desired. Once again, it was to be thwarted, with militarily far more disastrous consequences. The enforced dismantling of Iraq's various military programmes and the slow degradation of much of the rest of Iraq's military forces whilst the acquisition programmes of its regional neighbours proceed apace, make it difficult to imagine how an Iraqi government in the near future could believe that the use of armed force in the region might be a viable strategy. Nevertheless, there are spheres of its security in which armed force may yet be regarded as efficacious.

The most obvious concerns the tried and tested sphere of internal security. Since the declaration of the protected Kurdish zone in the north, the southern Iraqis

have borne the brunt of the government's determination to enforce control and to prevent regional exploitation of Iraq's weakness. There can be little doubt, however, that the same treatment will be extended to the Kurdish zone, if ever international protection is lifted. In that respect, therefore, this Iraqi government or any authoritarian successor will have little compunction about using armed force as the chief bulwark of its security within the confines of the Iraqi state. It is only because the confines of that state are still penetrated by the forces of the international anti-Iraqi coalition that the Iraqi government has not been able to exert full control.

In this respect, much will depend upon the circumstances attending the demise of the present regime. For many Iraqis, within the defence establishment and in society at large, there is a fear that the forces which the present regime has kept so brutally in check are also those which may explode in intercommunal violence and regional intervention should the regime collapse. It is this image which Saddam Hussein has used to his advantage, to discourage thoughts of his overthrow. Nevertheless, should that event occur, the possibility of serious armed conflict between sections of the population and of the armed forces themselves cannot be discounted. In this connection, it is less Iraq's capacity to embark upon new military adventures in the region which dominates fears for the future, as its capacity, through social and political upheaval, to invite mutually hostile intervention by regional states, anxious to secure their interests in the convulsions of the Iraqi state.

The present Iraqi government, in an attempt to re-integrate itself into the Arab world and into the international, as well as regional community, is evidently trying to cultivate neighbouring states, seeking to play one off against the fears of the others, or using the lure of Iraq's potential wealth to break out of its restricting encirclement. It is also probable that, diminished as it is, Iraq's actual or potential military strength may be used by this or by successor governments as a means of underlining Iraq's indispensability to the "Arab cause", whether that cause is defined as being threatened by Israel to the West, or by Iran to the East. Much will, of course, depend upon whether other Arab states are willing to subscribe to such definitions of the "Arab cause", but voices have already been heard outside Iraq, arguing for the ending of Iraq's forced disarmament because of the damage it is supposed to be doing to the Arab world's future security. Certainly, such a thesis has been encouraged by the present Iraqi government and it would seem logical that any future government would argue this more

forcefully and more plausibly in the years to come. Whatever the success of these efforts, there is no hope of the current dispensation of power changing in Iraq until the present regime goes. As mentioned above, there is a possibility that the circumstances triggered by its going will throw into question the future of the Iraqi state.

Alternatively - and some would see this as much more likely - the present regime would be replaced by one with different personnel, even with a different and initially promising public rationale, but with the same auhoritarian impulse at its heart. In those circumstances, the security concerns outlined in this paper will remain more or less the same. Indeed, one might say that the emergence of such a successor regime would have been prompted by the concern that a certain order should be preserved as the central organising principle of the Iraqi state. Endeavouring to secure that order will remain a preoccupation of Iraqi governments, leaving them with similar vulnerabilities to those of the present regime. As far as the region is concerned, the strategy for handling what they regard as threats to the interests of the Iraqi state may take a more conciliatory - and ultimately more effective - turn. However, whilst this might be imaginable on such issues as frontiers, oil and water resources, the attitude is likely to be much less forgiving when the territorial or collective integrity of Iraqi state comes into question. Yet, as long as Iraq continues to be ruled by a succession of cliques which maintain themselves in power by force and patronage, the integrity and security of the state must remain in question.