

2-13-1998

Trends. Military Intervention against Iraq: A Script Analysis of the Opponents

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Recommended Citation

Editor (1998) "Trends. Military Intervention against Iraq: A Script Analysis of the Opponents," *International Bulletin of Political Psychology*: Vol. 4 : Iss. 6 , Article 2.

Available at: <https://commons.erau.edu/ibpp/vol4/iss6/2>

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International Bulletin of Political Psychology

Title: Trends. Military Intervention against Iraq: A Script Analysis of the Opponents

Author: Editor

Volume: 4

Issue: 6

Date: 1998-02-13

Keywords: United States, Iraq, Military Intervention, Hypocrisy, Politics

While the United States Government (USG), the United Kingdom (UK), Australia, Canada, and Kuwait appear to be public proponents of military intervention against Iraq if diplomacy fails, there are a far larger number of opponents to military intervention. These opponents present a host of "storylines," viz., scripts, entailing their rationales. (1) Other countries seemingly violate UN resolutions without risking military attack from the USG and its allies. Iraq's fate exemplifies anti-Arab and pro-Zionist bias, or the vagaries of domestic US politics, imperialism, and hegemony. (2) Iraq has not recently occupied foreign territory. Israel still occupies the West Bank, the Golan Heights, and Jerusalem. Shouldn't Israel be attacked as a result? (3) The USG is attempting to create a UN-sponsored coalition or alliance to attack Iraq. Yet, the USG is in significant financial debt to the UN. On what grounds can it demand UN support or that of its members? (4) There is no military or political threat to the USG from Iraq. Therefore, the USG has no business deploying and employing political and military assets in the Mideast save for embassies and consulates that do not constitute "nests of spies." (5) The horror of killing innocent Iraqis--a horror that will unavoidably occur in a military attack--should supercede concerns over "proving a point," "making an Issue," and "forcing compliance." In fact, a military attack on Iraq should be viewed as an egregious human rights violation. (6) The hypocrisy of USG policy to reinforce and inculcate freedom and democracy throughout the world is exemplified by its moves to protect and ally with Kuwait, Bahrain, and Oman--none of which are beacons of so-called American values. (7) The bankruptness of USG policy is exemplified, not only by its low probability of removing Iraqi assets supporting weapons of mass destruction, but also by the higher probability of inducing terrorist attacks by Arab nationalists and Islamic fanatics against USG targets, those of its allies, and so-called "moderate" Arab countries. (8) A USG-led attack may precipitate the humanitarian disaster of dislocating Iraqi innocents who may flood into adjacent countries.

This less-than-complete list of scripts mirrors the work that needs to be done by USG policy proponents through appropriate propaganda and other perception management techniques to increase the number of public supporters for a "last-resort" attack on Iraq. The task is dauntless and probably unachievable--most likely because the consequences of an attack or attacks have too low a probability of resolving the Iraqi violations and politico-military threat.

On the other hand, initiatives to nurture a political opposition and change of government in Iraq through covert action in conjunction with the Iranian government seem a good bet to resolve violations and the threat from Saddam Hussein. (With Iranian support, this initiative would likely be much more effective than a similar one left in shambles in the midst of intra-Kurdish conflict in northern Iraq. Moreover, the initiative would exemplify a breaking with the USG's dual containment policy towards Iraq and Iran--a policy that has been ineffectual and rightfully criticized. Finally, the initiative would disrupt the balance theory advantage possessed by Iran as two of its putative adversaries, Iraq and the USG, confront each other in conflict.) But is there the political will for such an effort? It's time to write and implement the script. (See Clarke, D.D. (1995). Life scripts: Implicit representations of life course patterns. *Journal of Social Behavior and Personality*, 10, 871-884; Horner, C.A. (February 7, 1998). Military force has its limits. *The New York Times*, <http://www.nytimes.com>; Kuypers, B.C., & Alers, M.B. (1996). Mapping the interpersonal underworld: A study on central roles and their scripts in the development of self-analytic

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