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## Trends. The Iraqi Crisis

Editor

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Not so long ago Iraq presented a security threat to the world, according to the United States Government and its United Kingdom ally. Both insisted--at times with concurrence of an ever-changing set of representatives of other governments--that the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) be allowed to make no-notice and highly intrusive inspections of Iraqi sites that might harbor proscribed weapons, weapons components, weapons technology, and assets that could be used to engage in the proscribed. When Iraq successfully stonewalled inspection attempts, it was even bombed by US and UK military forces via the rationale that the Iraqi security threat demanded such intervention.

Since the bombing, the dire Iraqi threat has not significantly registered on the mass media radar screen--a favorite tool of public diplomacy. Of more significance has been the ongoing bombing of Iraqi northern and southern "no-fly zones" by US and UK military forces--allegedly to respectively protect Kurdish and Shiite populations.

Well, what has happened to the crisis exemplified by the Iraqi security threat to the world? Did the US and UK bombing (after the inspection-stonewall) destroy all proscribed Iraqi assets, real and potential? Are the ongoing bombings whittling done these assets? Was the Iraqi security threat vastly overblown after Operation DESERT STORM for various political purposes? Are the US, the UK, and other like-minded governments truly stymied by Iraqi stonewalling and the political pressures of its allies, enablers, and cynical others? Is some millennial death wishing brewing?

Meanwhile, the UN Security Council has recently allowed Iraq to exceed the \$5.2-billion six-month ceiling on oil sales--at least \$7 billion is expected during the 6-month period ending in November 1999. Pressures to amend, suspend, or abolish other sanctions continue to grow. Regardless of the facts about the Iraqi security threat, there continues to be damage to the credibility of the US and the UK--with a real security threat blow-back. Are leaders asleep at the wheel...or more likely are they still debating how to steer? (See Bombing Iraq as therapeutic intervention: Symptom substitution as consequence. (February 20, 1998). IBPP, 4(7); Comments on Iraq, the United Nations (UN), and the Inspection Crisis: What Iraqi error in judgment? (November 14, 1997). IBPP, 3(16); Iraq: Higher Oil Sales. (October 5, 1999). The New York Times, p. A8; Libya, Iraq, and sanctions-busting through common decency. (September 26, 1997). IBPP, 3(9); Meanwhile in Iraq: Just say no becomes not accepting yes. (March 26, 1999). IBPP, 6(12); Mylroie, L. (October 18, 1999). Nuclear presence. The New Republic, p. 4.) (Keywords: Bombings, Iraq, Political Credibility, UNSCOM.)