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# Cultural Sensitivity as Malign Attribution: The United Nations and Planning for Arms Inspections in Iraq

Editor

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Abstract. This article describes a subtext of United Nations (UN) planning for arms inspections in Iraq.

Planning for the United Nations Monitoring, Verification, and Inspection Commission is focusing on what actions need to be carried out and how these actions should be carried out. In his blueprint for the Commission, Dr. Blix has proposed four types of actions: planning and operations, analysis and assessment, information (archiving) and technical support and training. Dr. Blix also has proposed that inspectors and monitors will receive cultural training stressing the importance of understanding national sensitivities and the proper handling of adversarial situations.

Unfortunately, one might read the plan as completely devoid of the politics of the situation--a politics that significantly affects the what and how of actions. Because of this, the consequences of UN efforts will be problematic regardless of the precision with which the four types of action will be carried out. For example, the politics of the situation describe a very recalcitrant, formidable, and deceptive target--viz., the Saddam Hussein regime. Delineating the what of action only facilitates resistance to action through providing the opportunity for a priori planning on the part of the Iraqi government. Carefully wrought intention begets a carefully wrought counterintention.

Moreover, the notion of cultural training is counterproductive in that it suggests that past problems with monitoring, verification, and inspection are largely due to UN cultural insensitivities as opposed to bald-faced deceptive practices on the part of the Iraqi government. The notion also suggests that inappropriate behavior on the part of the Iraqi government was inappropriately elicited by the UN as opposed to the Iraqi government. Finally, the notion sets up the new UN inspection effort for exactly the same diplomatic attacks by Iraq. It should not be surprising that the Iraqi government will claim that cultural training not cultural enough, that the cultural sensitivities of the Iraqi people are not being respected, and that the inspectors are still no more than hegemonic stalking horses. Furthermore, it may well be argued by the Iraqi regime that even the height of cultural sensitivity is no more than a ruse for advancing various initiatives seeking to destroy Iraqi sovereignty and the will of the "people" in Iraq and throughout the Arab world and the Mideast.

That the UN persists in the telegraphing of intention and apologizing for behavior that needs no apology underlines one of two options. Either the UN is as corrupt and deceptive as the Hussein regime or it, indeed, is not sensitive to Iraqi culture--especially political culture. With the development, deployment, and employment of weapons of mass destruction at Issue, the UN seems to be acting in a manner contrary to a culture of peace. Is the UN insensitive to this as well? (See Cawson, P. (1997). Who will guard the guards? Some questions about the models of inspection for residential settings with relevance to the protection of children from abuse by staff. *Early Child Development & Care*, 133, 57-71; Chen, J-M, Chang, M-L., & Cheng, T-H. (1997). Cross-cultural study of social dilemma: A comparison between Taiwan and American students. *Chinese Journal of Psychology*, 39, 21-35; Crossette, B. (April 7, 2000). U.N. gets a new proposal for Iraq arms inspections. *The New York Times*, p. A8; Millett, A., & Johnson, D.

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