

## IRANIAN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS OCCUPIED IRAQ, 2003-05

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“For us, Iraq is the most important country in the world.”<sup>1</sup>  
Hojjatoleslam Ali Yunesi  
Minister of Intelligence and Security

Since its independence in 1932, Iraq has been a major foreign-policy concern for Iran for many reasons. The first and most obvious, of course, is that the two countries share long common borders that extend for 1300 kilometers, almost the entire western border of Iran. Geographical proximity has fostered close ties and has also meant that social, political and economic developments in Iraq have easily spilled across the border, influencing the security of Iran. Shared resources — oil, gas, water — spanning border areas have also had a role in making Iraq important.

Contiguity has inevitably produced other links, such as the existence of ethnic minorities — Kurds and Arabs — that straddle the common frontiers. The tribal, linguistic and kinship ties among these ethnic groups transcend the national borders. Hence, the Iranian government has had to monitor political developments in Iraq for their possible impact on its security. The rise of Kurdish and Arab nationalism in the twentieth century and the

consequent emergence of secessionist movements among these ethnic minorities have only served to elevate the importance of Iraq to Iran.

Oil is another factor placing Iraq in the limelight of Iranian foreign policy. Both countries are among the founding fathers of OPEC. Iraq’s possession of the world’s second-largest oil reserves after Saudi Arabia means that it is potentially in a position to influence world oil prices, particularly at a time when oil supplies are tight. If the new regime in Iraq were to leave OPEC, it would be in a position to pump out as much oil as possible, exercising an important downward pressure on world petroleum prices with devastating consequences for Iran and other oil-exporting countries. On the other hand, if Iraq decided to stay in OPEC and cooperate with Iran and other hawks in the organization, prices are much more likely to remain high and benefit both countries.

Iraq has also been important to Iran for political reasons. Since 1958, when a republican regime came to power in

Baghdad, bilateral ties have been characterized by competition for supremacy in the Persian Gulf. Tehran has always seen Baghdad as a competitor and the main obstacle to dominating the Persian Gulf. That is why Iran has always taken a keen interest in political developments in Iraq.

Since 1979, when the Islamic Revolution succeeded, Iran has sought to export its radical brand of Islam to the rest of the Muslim world. Iranian leaders have assigned top priority to the Levant and the Arabian Peninsula. Iraq and its neighbors to the west and southwest represent the heartland of Islam, where the faith was born, Prophet Muhammad lived, and his message took root and then spread to the rest of the world. If Iran's radical version of Islam can penetrate this heartland, Iran can count on success in the rest of the Muslim world as well. Conversely, if Iran fails here, the prospects for success elsewhere are at best remote. Long land borders make Iraq the ideal entry point into this domain. By way of Iraq, Iran can have direct access to Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, through which it can penetrate even deeper to the west and south. Further, the regime in Tehran has always been keen on playing a role in the Arab-Israeli conflict. In the past, Iran created and nurtured Hizbollah and developed links with other Islamic groups fighting Israel, such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad, but these links have always been at the mercy of the Baath regime in Syria. Iran much preferred to have direct links that were neither at the mercy of the Asad regime nor constrained by Syrian interests.

The most important forces placing Iraq at the center of Iranian attention are religious and sectarian ties. As in Iran, the majority of the population of Iraq is Mus-

lim. The religious bonds between the two peoples are reinforced by that fact that, as in Iran, most Muslims in Iraq follow the Shiite sect of Islam. Iraq also stands out among countries with a Shiite majority because it houses the tombs of Imam Ali (in Najaf) and Imam Hussein (in Karbala), sites revered by Shiites the world over. In past decades, tens of thousands of Iranian Shiites took up permanent residence in those two cities, intermingling with the local Arab population. Further, around the shrines of these saints have been established the Shiite world's most prestigious religious seminaries, where many Iranian clerics have studied. Some have returned to Iran, others stay on permanently. The networks of friendship and marriage that have developed between Iranian and Iraqi clerics in these periods have done much to increase the significance of Iraq in the eyes of the Iranian political elite.

Moreover, the presence of Iranian clerics, including some ayatollahs with many followers in Iran, has had important political ramifications for all governments in Tehran. At times, Iranian clerics residing in Iraq have used their influence to shape the course of events in Iran. The late Ayatollah Khomeini directed the struggle of the people of Iran against the shah from his residence in Najaf. Similarly, the presence of Iranian clerics like Ayatollah Sistani and the late Ayatollah Khoi, who had a wide following in Iraq, has further enhanced the significance of Iraq for Iran as the Iranian government has sought to harness their influence in the service of its goals.

This exercise of influence has not been one-sided. Iraqi Shiite clerics have also played a significant role in Iranian politics; two examples are Ayatollah Mohammad Araghi (known as Shahrudi in Iran),

currently the head of the Iranian judiciary, and Ayatollah Mohammad Ali Taskhiri, for many years the head of the Organization for Culture and Islamic Communications. They, among others, have exercised an important influence on domestic politics in Iran and, through their close links with the supreme leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, have pressed the Iranian government to take a more active interest and play a more prominent role in shaping events in Iraq. Last, but not least, in the last 25 years, a number of Iraqi Islamic opposition groups have been given shelter in Iran. They have used their close ties with Iran's intelligence and military apparatus<sup>2</sup> to lobby the Iranian government to keep Iraq at the top of Iran's foreign-policy agenda. These groups are part of a larger community of Iraqi émigrés that numbers into several hundred thousand.<sup>3</sup>

Nowhere else have the effects of the U.S. invasion of Iraq been more acutely felt than in Iran. This paper examines Iranian foreign policy towards the new Iraq, discussing Iranian perceptions of the U.S. invasion, the policies that stem from those perceptions, and how those perceptions and policies have changed in response to developments in Iraq. It argues that the invasion and the ensuing U.S. control of Iraq have converted Iranian-Iraqi relations to an extension of Iran-U.S. relations. Given the hostility between Iran and the United States, the Islamic regime pursued two goals in Iraq: to ensure that the U.S. invasion would not be followed by an attack on Iran, and to help Iraqi Shiites assume a share of power commensurate with their majority status in Iraq. Hence, Iran adopted a cautious policy that was geared to restoring order and stability to Iraq while mobilizing the Shiite community

to secure its fair share of power. This paper also contends that Iran has been largely successful in its pursuit of these goals due to U.S. policy mistakes, the increasing resistance to the occupation, and Iran's close relationship with Iraqi Shiite opposition groups.

### **IRANIAN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS IRAQ**

Traditionally, Iranian policy towards Iraq has been shaped by a combination of elements, some international, some regional and others domestic. However, the U.S. invasion of Iraq in April 2003 and its ensuing control of Iraqi affairs have completely changed that situation. With the United States now practically running Iraq, the international factor has assumed overwhelming importance, suppressing the regional and domestic influences. While in the past, Iranian relations with the United States were only one of the factors that shaped its ties with Iraq, now Tehran-Baghdad ties are almost solely dominated by Iranian-U.S. relations. In his discussion of security relationships between states, Barry Buzan calls this situation an *overlay*:

It occurs when the direct presence of outside powers in a region is strong enough to suppress the normal operations of security dynamics among the local states.... It normally involves extensive stationing of armed forces in the overlain area by the great power(s), and is quite distinct from the normal process of intervention by great powers into the affairs of local security complexes. Intervention usually reinforces the local security dynamics: overlay subordinates them to the larger pattern of major power rivalries, and may even obliterate them.<sup>4</sup>

While Buzan discusses the impact of overlay in the context of rivalry between major powers, his conclusions are equally applicable to the relationship between major powers and their opponents in the Third World.

Needless to say, when overlay ends, normal local security dynamics reemerge, along with regional and domestic factors. In the case of Iranian-Iraqi relations, it should be possible to see a return to normalcy in bilateral relations as the government in Baghdad assumes more independence from the United States.

### INTERNATIONAL FACTORS

The influence of the global distribution of power on Iranian policies towards Iraq has always been considerable. Under bipolarity and while the shah was still in power, Iran had closely allied with the United States and conservative regimes in the Middle East against the Soviet Union. Republican Iraq, on the other hand, had close relations with the USSR and the pro-Soviet radical Arab regimes. Hence the shah saw Iraq as a tool of the Soviet Union and a source of instability in the region. As a result, Tehran-Baghdad ties were very tense for most of this period, and the two countries were at times on the verge of war.<sup>5</sup>

The success of the Islamic Revolution in February 1979 and the coming of a fundamentalist clerical regime to power in that year led to a drastic reorientation of Iranian foreign policy. The former alliance with the West against the USSR gave way to intense hostility to the United States, which was branded the Great Satan. The clerical regime then embarked on an anti-American crusade by attempting to export its radical version of Islam, assisting

Islamic groups and liberation movements, and trying to subvert pro-American regimes in the Middle East. This sharp redirection in Iran's global and regional alliances drove the United States and Iraq into a tacit alignment against the Islamic regime, which was seen as a common enemy. Hence, in September 1980, with the support of the United States and its Arab allies in an effort to topple the new government, Iraq invaded Iran. As Tehran saw it, the invasion was masterminded by the Americans and carried out by their stooge, Saddam Hussein. The extensive support that the United States and her regional allies lent Iraq during the course of the war further reinforced the perception that America was fighting Iran by proxy.<sup>6</sup>

Although the Iran-Iraq War ended in August 1988, Iran's relations with the United States remained hostile. Iran maintained that the United States was working for regime change in Iran. As evidence, Iran pointed to the wide array of economic sanctions that the United States had imposed on it: American pressure on Russia, China and other countries not to sell arms and transfer military technology; intense pressure on third parties not to provide nuclear technology; and U.S. support for the opponents of the Tehran government stationed in the United States, Europe and elsewhere. The United States, for its part, accused Iran of developing weapons of mass destruction (WMD); attempting to derail the Arab-Israeli peace process; supporting terrorist groups in the Middle East so as to subvert pro-American Arab regimes there; and violating the human rights of its citizens.<sup>7</sup>

The persistence of hostility between Iran and the United States after the end of the Iran-Iraq War (1980-88) continued to

influence the pattern of relations between Tehran and Baghdad. While, in 1990, Iran condemned Iraqi aggression against Kuwait, it also denounced the use of force by the United States and its coalition partners to dislodge Iraqi troops from Kuwait. Iran's stance against the United States was motivated by the fear that the American use of force against one regional country might set a precedent paving the way for a U.S. attack against the clerical regime. The same reason explained why Iran condemned American air and missile attacks on Iraq between 1991 and 2002 to force Iraq to comply with UN-imposed sanctions. Even so, hostility towards the United States did not drive Iran to embrace Iraq, chiefly because the deep psychological wounds left by the war had not yet healed.<sup>8</sup>

### **IRAN AND THE U.S. DECISION TO INVADE IRAQ**

For a variety of reasons, Iran firmly opposed the U.S. decision to invade Iraq. To avert the invasion, it opted for diplomacy. In parallel, Iran took steps to consolidate its influence in Iraq. It also put on a show of military might to demonstrate its ability to repel a possible U.S. attack.

When, in 2002, the first signs of U.S. mobilization for war emerged, Iran lost no time in opposing the use of force to unseat the Baath regime. From Tehran's perspective, the invasion of Iraq was the prelude to an offensive against Iran. As Mohammad Abtahi, vice president for parliamentary affairs, said, the United States, after ousting Saddam Hussein, would turn its attention towards other Middle Eastern states, that is, Iran and Syria.<sup>9</sup> These attacks, they believed, were part of a scheme to eliminate all challenges to U.S.

hegemony in the Middle East. However, in public, the regime downplayed the real reasons for its opposition to the invasion; instead, a host of other justifications for Iran's stance was advanced. For instance, Tehran contended that the United States had acted against Iraq without obtaining a UN resolution mandating the use of force. Therefore, the invasion was unlawful and hence unacceptable. However, complaints about the lack of a UN mandate rang hollow: Iran had opposed the U.S. use of force against Iraq in the first Gulf War (although Washington had UN approval). Further, the clerical regime argued that even if U.S. allegations against Iraq were right, the American approach to the problem was certainly wrong. Instead of mobilizing the international community to find a solution, the United States had acted by itself in total disregard of world opinion. The invasion, they maintained, was yet another example of U.S. unilateralism, which posed a serious threat to international peace and stability because it marginalized the United Nations and undermined such important principles of international law as respect for the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of states.<sup>10</sup>

Although the Iranian government cited the lack of UN approval as the main reason for its opposition to the war, other arguments were put forth as well. Tehran cast doubt on U.S. justifications for the invasion: Iraq's possession of WMD and links with al-Qaeda. Tehran argued that, despite years of searching, UN inspectors had not unearthed any evidence that Iraq had revived its WMD program. Further, Iran questioned the sincerity of American concerns about WMD proliferation, arguing that it was Washington and its

allies themselves that had supplied Iraq with these weapons during the war with Iran.<sup>11</sup> As further evidence of U.S. insincerity, they pointed to America's silence towards Israel's vast nuclear arsenal, which they charged the United States had helped Israel put together.<sup>12</sup> Nor did Iranian leaders see as credible U.S. allegations that Saddam's regime had ties to al-Qaeda and, therefore, its removal was vital to the fight against terrorism. They alleged that in the 1980s and 1990s, Bin Laden and the Taliban were allies of the United States, and it was the Americans who had organized al-Qaeda.<sup>13</sup> Further, the Iranian government claimed it had received credible reports that the United States had begun coordinating with the Mujahedine Khalq Organization (MKO) — an Iraq-based Iranian opposition group on the State Department's list of terrorist groups — to work together to topple the Islamic regime in Iran.<sup>14</sup>

Although the clerical regime's fears about being attacked were the chief factor behind its stance towards the invasion, it is clear from the Iranian government's pronouncements that, even if the United States did not follow up the invasion of Iraq with an attack on Iran, it would still be opposed to the invasion. Iran feared that the United States would take advantage of its control of Iraq to install a client regime in Baghdad, just as it had done a year earlier in Afghanistan. A client regime would pose several threats. It would constitute part of the wall of containment that the United States was putting up around Iran. In the long term, at the behest of the United States, it could launch an invasion of Iran, as its Baathist predecessor had done. As Hashemi Rafsanjani, the powerful head of the Expediency Council,

pointed out, Iraq could also pull out of OPEC and utilize its huge oil reserves to influence global oil prices in a manner consistent with U.S. interests. He further argued that by allying with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) against Tehran, a pro-American regime in Iraq would tilt the regional balance of power against Iran.<sup>15</sup>

A pro-American government would also weaken the anti-Israeli front in the Middle East, tilting the overall regional balance of power in favor of Tel Aviv.<sup>16</sup> Hence, it would place Iran's Arab allies, Syria and Lebanon, in a weaker position in any future peace negotiations with the Jewish state. It would also isolate and undermine the anti-American and anti-Israeli regimes in power in Iran and Syria. Iran was also fearful that the invasion and post-Saddam developments might lead to the unraveling of Iraq, which would have major security ramifications for Iran and other regional countries, as it could lead to ethnic fragmentation and a fight over pieces of Iraq between her neighbors.<sup>17</sup> The Iranian government was also concerned that the invasion might send a flood of refugees across the border, as was the case during the 1990-91 Gulf War, when, according to Ministry of Interior officials, 202,000 Iraqis sought refuge in Iran.<sup>18</sup> To sum up, Iranian leaders clearly preferred a weak Saddam Hussein to a pro-American government in Baghdad. As Rafsanjani said, "We consider the United States to be more dangerous than Saddam Hussein and the Baath party."<sup>19</sup>

Given these perceptions, Iran made every effort to head off war before hostilities began. It called on Iraq to comply with UN resolutions so as to deprive Washington of any pretext for the use of force.<sup>20</sup> It also began a diplomatic cam-

paign to rally Russia, China and EU members as well as regional countries against the war.<sup>21</sup> As expected, these efforts ultimately proved to be in vain.<sup>22</sup>

In parallel with diplomacy, Iran began an all-out effort to strengthen its position in Iraq to be ready when the real jostling for power began after the invasion. In the 1980s and 1990s, Iran had invested considerably in Iraqi opposition groups, particularly the Islamic movement, which it had harbored, organized, trained and armed. The chief Iraqi Islamic group active in Iran was the Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), which had a military arm known as the Badr Corps. By the time the United States invaded Iraq, the Badr Corps had about 16,000 men under arms. They had served throughout the Iran-Iraq War and were a battle-tested force. Other Islamic groups using Iran as a base, such as the Islamic Dawa party (IDP), had similar but smaller forces. In the 1980s and 1990s, well before the U.S. invasion, they had set up a secret network of resistance cells inside Iraq that carried out military operations.<sup>23</sup> As invasion neared, Iran began to systematically insert the military forces attached to Iraqi Islamic groups back into their homeland. These forces were not to engage in battle with the U.S. military. They were to stay ready for any post-invasion eventuality. After the invasion, the political leadership of these groups joined up with their forces in Iraq.

At the same time, Iran began a show of military might to demonstrate that, if need be, it was ready to fight. It deployed troops on its borders with Iraq and put its armed forces on alert.<sup>24</sup> It began to hold a series of military exercises. For instance, the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) and mobilization forces (Basij) held

military maneuvers in the cities of Mahshahr, Bandar Imam and Hendijan, all located in Iran's southwestern Province of Khuzistan near the border with Iraq, to improve their skills in urban warfare.<sup>25</sup> This display of military might gained speed after the overthrow of Saddam Hussein, when Iran test fired an enhanced version of its Shahab-3 ballistic missile with its range extended from 1300 km to 2000 km.<sup>26</sup> Iran also boasted that it had developed and deployed what it described as a "strategic" ballistic missile. The term presumably indicated that the missile was equipped with a chemical or biological warhead.

#### **IRAN'S STANCE TOWARDS THE WAR**

When, in late March 2003, hostilities commenced, Iran adopted a policy of "active neutrality," which Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei described as a refusal to side with either belligerent during the course of the hostilities.<sup>27</sup> However, the pronouncements of the regime's leadership and the way news of the war was reported on state radio and television showed clearly Iran's preference for the survival of Saddam's regime and an ignominious defeat for the coalition forces. State-controlled media depicted the war as one between Islam and infidels, referring to the coalition forces as the occupation army, while praising the bravery of the Muslim people of Iraq in the battle against the new "crusaders." Regime leadership regularly denounced the coalition for allegedly bombarding Iraqi cities and killing innocent Iraqi civilians by the thousands.<sup>28</sup> This, the regime argued, was the kind of liberty and democracy that the coalition had in store for Iraqi people. Iran's stance was not

surprising; in the minds of regime leaders, the fates of Iran and Iraq were tied inextricably together.

Before the war began, Iran's military commanders foresaw a long and bloody campaign in which the United States would sustain heavy loss of life before capturing Baghdad.<sup>29</sup> When, in April 2003, after only three weeks of war, the Iraqi army, and with it the regime, swiftly crumbled, Tehran was gripped by shock and fear. The regime mourned the fall of Saddam, not out of any love for his regime, but, as one member of parliament put it, because Iraq was Iran's last external line of defense. With Iraq in coalition hands, enemy troops were

standing on Iran's doorstep. A few days later, in a speech given on the occasion of Army Day, Ayatollah Khamenei vented his anger on the Iraqi military by saying that, through surrendering to the infidels, it had brought eternal disgrace upon

itself.<sup>30</sup> The day Baghdad fell was probably the darkest in the history of the Islamic Republic.

The invasion compounded Iranian fears of the United States as the regime came to see itself as besieged. In the south, the United States was already well entrenched in the Arab states of the lower Gulf. In the north, Turkey was a long-time U.S. ally in NATO, and Azerbaijan strove for a similar position. With tandem invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq in 2002 and

2003, the United States appeared to be firmly entrenched on both Iran's eastern and western borders. The invasion of Iraq was viewed with greater apprehension than that of Afghanistan. Iraq, like Iran, was a member of the axis of evil; the accusations Washington had leveled at Baghdad concerning development of weapons of mass destruction and support for terrorism echoed its accusations against Iran. To Tehran, U.S. invasion seemed imminent.

### IRANIAN POLICY TOWARDS OCCUPIED IRAQ

The Islamic regime in Tehran has

consistently pursued two goals. The first of these is to prevent the United States from establishing a client state in Iraq — as it had done in Afghanistan earlier — by facilitating the holding of elections, which it believed would produce a government dominated by

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the Shiite majority. As Ayatollah Rafsanjani explained, as far as Iran was concerned, the dissolution of the Baath regime *per se* was neither good nor bad; it all depended on the kind of regime that replaced it. If the United States succeeded in establishing a client state in Iraq, that would be extremely detrimental to Iran's national security. On the other hand, if elections were held and an independent government emerged, that would be in Iran's interests because it was bound to be dominated by a



Shiite majority. Such a government, Iranian leaders believed, would inevitably align itself with Iran.<sup>31</sup>

From Tehran's perspective, such an alliance presents myriad benefits. To start with, it would restore security to Iran's western borders, allowing Tehran to concentrate its military resources in the south, where a U.S. invasion is likely to be launched. Further, it would deal a serious blow to the U.S. strategy of containing Iran. It would also place Iran in a stronger bargaining position with the United States and the EU over a wide variety of issues, including Iran's nuclear program. Similarly, it would tilt the balance of power in the Persian Gulf in favor of Iran, as it would unite the Gulf's two strongest powers against Saudi Arabia and its partners in the GCC. Iranian leaders are also of the view that a friendly Iraq could join Iran, Syria and Lebanon in an alliance against Israel, enhancing the overall position of Iran's Arab partners. It would also help improve the position of Shiites in other Sunni-dominated Arab countries such as Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, allowing them to press more effectively for their political rights. As in Iraq, any rise in the power of the Shiite community in other Persian Gulf states would translate into greater power and influence for Iran. Moreover, a friendly Iraq would allow Iran to have a direct land link with Syria, its major regional ally; sea and air links are more susceptible to disruption in times of crisis. At the same time, Iraq would also provide Iran with an excellent entry point from which it could penetrate the Arab world. Iran has so far relied on Syria and Lebanon for influencing Arab politics, but these links have always been at the mercy of the Baath regime in Syria. Iran very much prefers to have

direct links that are neither at the mercy of the Asad regime nor constrained by Syrian interests. The Iranian government was also keen on participating in Iraqi reconstruction, which could bring in millions of dollars in revenues. Further, Iran expected developing ties in the areas of trade, tourism, transport and energy to produce substantial benefits for the Iranian economy.

Iran's first goal consisted of two distinct but interrelated parts: preventing the United States from establishing a client state and facilitating the rise of a government dominated by the Shiites. To defeat perceived U.S. efforts to establish a client state in Iraq, the Islamic regime took a number of steps. First of all, immediately after the fall of the Baath regime, it called on the United States to transfer power to the UN and withdraw its forces from Iraq. It was then the United Nations' responsibility to hold general elections at the earliest possible date, which were expected to produce a government capable of restoring peace and security to the country.<sup>32</sup> Iranian leaders believed that this arrangement would minimize the ability of the United States and Britain to influence the future course of Iraqi politics. Second, Iran opposed any move by the United States to set up a body composed of Americans to rule Iraq. As Tehran saw it, any such endeavor would be the first step on the road to installing a puppet regime. Hence, when news arrived after the invasion that Washington had appointed General Jay Garner as the interim administrator of Iraq, Iran lost no time in denouncing this decision and describing Garner as the U.S. proconsul, whose task it was to turn Iraq into a U.S. colony. After the appointment of Garner, Ayatollah Rafsanjani warned that Iran would not stand by while the United

States installed a puppet government in Iraq.<sup>33</sup> The clerical regime was also against the dispatch of troops from countries allied to the United States. From Tehran's point of view, their presence would only consolidate the U.S. hold on Iraq, increasing Washington's ability to control the regime in Baghdad.<sup>34</sup> Similarly, Iran opposed the postponement of elections to the General Assembly, which were planned for January 30, 2005. From the Iranian leaders' point of view, any such delay was dangerous because it would give the United States more time to consolidate its influence in Iraq.<sup>35</sup>

Iranian leaders also took steps to facilitate the rise of a government dominated by the Shiites through the holding of elections in Iraq. Contending that the restoration of peace and stability to Iraq was an essential precondition for the holding of elections, Iran used its influence to ensure that the Shiite-inhabited areas of southern and central Iraq remained calm. In that context, it urged the more radical leaders of the Iraqi Shiite community to exercise restraint in their dealings with the coalition. To that end, in early June 2003, the Iranian government invited the clerical firebrand Moqtada Sadr to visit the country, ostensibly to take part in ceremonies commemorating the fourteenth anniversary of the death of Ayatollah Khomeini. This was Sadr's first visit to Iran. Despite his youth and junior rank, he belonged to a prominent clerical family with a history of struggle against Saddam's regime. His father, the late Ayatollah Sadegh Sadr, was murdered by the Baath regime in early 1999. His father-in-law, Ayatollah Mohammad Bagher Sadr, known as the Khomeini of Iraq, was executed in 1980. Sadr also served as the representative of

Ayatollah Seyyed Kazem Hairi, who resided in Iran but had many followers in Iraq.<sup>36</sup>

Sadr classified the religious leaders of the Iraqi Shiite community into two groups: activists and pacifists. The former group, which he considered himself to represent, believed that religious leaders should be actively involved in politics. The latter, however, were of the view that the religious establishment should generally stay out of politics except when the welfare of the Muslim community came under serious threat. He was opposed to the presence of coalition forces in Iraq and advocated the use of violence to expel them. He regarded the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) headed by L. Paul Bremer as illegitimate and banned his followers from having anything to do with the CPA. From his point of view, it was an instrument of occupation. While generally supporting Ayatollah Sistani, he was critical of him and others like him for their willingness to tolerate temporary foreign occupation.<sup>37</sup> Despite his profession that on political issues he followed the line taken by Ayatollah Hairi, his stance towards the coalition stood in contrast to that of the ayatollah, who advocated a peaceful relationship with the coalition.<sup>38</sup>

While in Iran, Sadr met with prominent Iranian leaders, including Ayatollah Rafsanjani, who stressed the importance of unity among Iraqi Shiites and asked him to set aside past differences with various Iraqi ulema for the sake of a better future for Iraq. Ayatollah Rafsanjani, for instance, reminded Sadr of the importance of cooperation with other Islamic groups in Iraq, particularly the SCIRI. He also advised Sadr to refrain from taking up arms against the coalition, as it would only

provide them with a pretext to extend their presence in Iraq.<sup>39</sup>

Iran went beyond mere advice to ensure peaceful relations between the coalition and the Iraqi Shiite community. Whenever the situation got out of control and clashes between Shiites and the coalition erupted, it immediately moved in to calm the situation. The time this happened was in April 2004, when the first armed clashes broke out between the Mahdi Army, a militia loyal to Moqtada Sadr, and the American forces in Najaf, Baghdad and elsewhere in the Shiite-populated south. The cause of these clashes apparently was the arrest of Mr. Sadr's deputy by coalition forces and the closure of his newspaper, *al-Hawza*, for allegedly inciting violence. Regardless of the causes, Iran viewed the escalation of the conflict between the two sides with great concern. As Iran saw it, any confrontation between the Mahdi Army and the coalition forces was a setback for the Shiite cause. Iran's leaders believed that the only parties that would benefit would be elements of the former regime and the Sunni Islamist extremists. Finally, there was the fear that the clashes would violate the sanctity of the holy cities of Najaf and Karbala, where the fighting was concentrated.<sup>40</sup>

In response, Iran joined the leaders of the Iraqi Shiite community to convince Sadr to desist from challenging the occupation by force. In an attempt to bring the fighting to an end, on April 14, the Iranian government dispatched a delegation to Iraq, where it held talks with Shiite leaders and members of the Governing Council. Iranian mediation, however, did not succeed. Kamal Kharrazi, the Iranian foreign minister, put the blame squarely on misguided U.S. policies without specifying the

exact reasons.<sup>41</sup> The United States made it clear that it was against Iranian mediation. With respect to Sadr's role in the crisis, Tehran maintained silence, implying that he was innocent.

In August, when the second round of fighting between Moqtada Sadr's Mahdi Army and the coalition forces broke out, Iran adopted a tougher stance against Sadr. While Tehran criticized the United States for provoking Sadr and not respecting the sanctity of the holy shrines in Karbala and Najaf,<sup>42</sup> it also denounced Moqtada Sadr for launching attacks from the shrines and prompting the coalition response that damaged them. Further, Ayatollah Hariri announced that Moqtada Sadr was no longer his representative in Iraq. In explaining his decision, he blamed Sadr for raising an army and fighting the coalition without his approval. The ayatollah's removal of Sadr was clearly done with the consent and support of the Iranian leaders, signifying their disapproval of the course he had followed.<sup>43</sup>

Iran's second goal was to avert a U.S. attack. Ever since the American defeat of Iraq in the 1990-91 Gulf War and particularly following the end of the Cold War, a chief goal of Iranian foreign policy has been to stave off a U.S. invasion. Given the Iranian government's perception that Iran was next on the U.S. list of countries where regime change was necessary, it was especially important to conduct Iranian policy in such a way as to deprive the United States of any pretext for launching an invasion. The need to thwart a U.S. invasion had become particularly important in the 1990s and the early 2000's, when popular support for the regime had substantially diminished. After the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, Abdullah

Ramazandeh, the spokesman for the Iranian government, emphasized the same point when he stated that, in a unipolar world, Iran had to adopt a policy that would prevent war with the United States.<sup>44</sup> For Iranian policy towards Iraq, this meant that Iran would try to play a constructive role in Iraq, just as it had been doing in Afghanistan. The phrase “constructive role” here means that Iran would respect the Iraqi people’s right to self-determination. That is, it would not try to impose an Iranian-style Islamic republic on Iraq. It would also not use its influence in the Shiite community to stir them up against the coalition, nor would it provide assistance to Islamic extremists and elements of the former Baath regime that were fighting the occupation. It would also not seek to destabilize Iraq in any other way.<sup>45</sup>

With respect to Iran’s second goal, the Tehran leadership has tried to show the world that Iran is playing a constructive role in Iraq, as it has been doing in Afghanistan. As a first step, Iran urged the various Shiite political organizations and parties to join the U.S.-sponsored political process. A good illustration of that was the participation of the deputy head of SCIRI, Abdul Aziz Hakim, in the Governing Council along with Ibrahim al-Jafari, the head of the Islamic Dawa party (IDP), another close ally of Tehran. The fact that the armed wings of SCIRI and IDP refrained from engaging coalition forces was a further sign of their respective organizations’ genuine desire to work with the coalition.<sup>46</sup> In addition to demonstrating its goodwill towards Iraq, Iran expected its support for the Governing Council to expedite the transfer of power to an elected Iraqi government. As President Khatami put it, working with the Governing

Council would assist the restoration of sovereignty to Iraq and expedite the departure of occupying forces and the formation of a government elected by the people of Iraq.<sup>47</sup>

Similarly, when, in June 2004, the CPA gave way to an Iraqi Interim Government (IIG) headed by Prime Minister Ayad Allawi, the Iranian government endorsed the transfer of power and expressed its readiness to work with the new government.<sup>48</sup> Iranian authorities interpreted the formation of the IIG as another step towards ending the occupation and called on Allawi to work for the complete restoration of Iraqi sovereignty, the departure of foreign forces from Iraq, and the holding of free and fair elections at the designated date.<sup>49</sup> Once again several members of SCIRI and IDP joined the interim government both as cabinet members and as vice-president.

Iran also took practical measures to help the new Iraqi government. In early August 2004, a conference on “Opportunities for Iran and Iraq Economic Cooperation” was held in Tehran, where the government announced the setting up of an organization called the Office for Iraq’s Reconstruction. At the same conference, Safdar Hosseini, Iran’s minister of economy, announced that Iran had allocated \$300 million for the purpose of the postwar rebuilding of Iraq. Adel Abd al-Mahdi, the minister of finance, who headed a delegation of several deputy ministers and 300 businessmen, represented the Iraqi government at this conference.<sup>50</sup> In the same year, Iran signed an agreement with Iraq whereby Tehran agreed to supply 100 megawatts of electricity a year to its neighbor to make up part of the shortfall in Iraq’s own production.<sup>51</sup>

However, despite Iran's support for the Interim Government, Allawi's government took a hostile attitude towards Iran. According to Asghar Khaji, the head of the Office for Iraq's Reconstruction, the Allawi government severely restricted all ties with Iran. It even closed down the Iraqi office of the Iranian travel agencies that brought pilgrims to Iraq. When Allawi left office in February 2005, the only presence Iran had in Iraq was its embassy.<sup>52</sup> At the same time, his government launched a barrage of attacks on Iran, accusing it of being the main force behind the insurgency. The Iraqi minister of defense, Hazim Shaalan, went so far as to describe Iran as the number-one enemy of Iraq. This hostility seems to have been the result of Allawi's close links with the United States as well as the fact that he saw the Iranian-backed SCIRI and IDP as his chief rivals in the upcoming elections for the General Assembly. Hence, it was in his interest to portray Iran and its Shiite allies as a threat to Iraq.

Iranian policy notwithstanding, the United States repeatedly accused Iran of meddling in Iraqi affairs and attempting to destabilize Iraq. Iran rejected these claims and responded by charging that the United States was looking for a scapegoat to explain its inability to quash the insurgency in Iraq, which it described as the Iraqi people's legitimate struggle against occupation. Tehran argued that the insurgency was essentially home grown and had nothing to do with Iran. From Iran's perspective, these accusations were also part of a U.S. propaganda war that was meant to ostracize the Islamic Republic and pave the way for forcible regime change.<sup>53</sup> Similar accusations were leveled at Iran by some Interim Government

members, including President Ghazi al-Yawar and Defense Minister Hazim Shaalan, who criticized Iran for allegedly supporting the insurgency in Iraq, providing financial assistance to Iraqi Shiite groups, and allowing terrorists passage through its territory into Iraq. Iran strongly denied any interference in Iraqi affairs. At first, Tehran attributed these criticisms to the Iraqi statesmen's inexperience.<sup>54</sup> Later, it charged them with giving in to pressure from the United States.

The question remains, however, as to whether there was any substance to the charges of interference made against Iran. The answer depends on how interference is defined. The Iranian government acknowledged its moral and financial support for the Shiite community in Iraq. But, as President Khatami said, this did not constitute an act of interference. As a Shiite country, he argued, it was Iran's right to assist its coreligionists elsewhere; Iraq was no exception. However, he rejected the charges that Iran was spying in Iraq or providing military assistance to Shiites.<sup>55</sup> As far as the insurgency in Iraq is concerned, as argued above, Iran had as much to fear as the Iraqi government and the United States. Therefore, Iranian rebuttals of U.S. claims to that effect appear credible. Having said that, it is important to note that there are elements within the clerical establishment that believe in the necessity of expelling the American presence from Iraq by force. A good example is Hojjatoleslam Ali Akbar Mohtashemipour, who called on the Iranian government to allow Iranians wishing to fight the United States to join the insurgency in Iraq. Other elements within Iran's clerical establishment went beyond that and started registering volunteers for

suicide missions against coalition forces. The Iranian government, however, rejected these requests, making it clear that the use of violence against the coalition was not in Iran's interest.<sup>56</sup> Nevertheless, given that the Iran-Iraq border is porous, it is quite possible that the hardliners have been able to smuggle people across to fight against coalition troops.

### **IMPACT OF INTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS IN IRAQ**

In June 2003, barely two months after the invasion, the first signs emerged that Iran was gradually reassessing the situation in Iraq. There were several reasons for this reassessment: increasing resistance to the occupation in the so-called Sunni Triangle in central Iraq, the inability of the U.S. government to quash the insurgency, and the rising toll on American forces there. While the coalition forces' swift defeat of the Iraqi army had created genuine concern in Tehran about the security of the country, the increasing strength of the insurgency, and the U.S. inability to restore security to Iraq led the Iranian government to conclude that Iraq, much like Vietnam, was in the process of becoming a moral and military quagmire for coalition forces. Thus, the original fears about the possibility of a U.S. invasion of Iran subsided. As the Iranian government saw it, inept U.S. policies had transformed Iraq into a trap. With its military already overstretched in Afghanistan and Iraq, and with U.S. allies unwilling to commit large numbers of troops to Iraq, Washington was seen as being in no position to open a new front against Iran.<sup>57</sup> Further, the significant problems that the U.S. regime-change policy had run into in Iraq meant that it was unlikely that either the Congress or the

people of the United States would be willing to support President Bush's plan to invade Iran. As Hojjatoleslam Yunesi, Iran's minister of intelligence, put it, the Iraqi people had exacted such a heavy price from the United States that it would not consider regime change a viable policy for another 30 to 40 years.<sup>58</sup> This should not be taken to mean that all Iranian fears were put to rest. There was still residual fear that despite all the setbacks that America had encountered, an invasion of Iran might still be in the cards.

This perception of an embattled United States unable to extricate itself from Iraq led to a drastic reassessment of the ramifications of the U.S. invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq for the national security of Iran. Needless to say, this was much more positive and hopeful. According to Hojjatoleslam Yunesi, the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq had placed Iran in an exceptional position that presented many benefits while posing few dangers. He described the Taliban's control of Afghanistan as a disaster. Iran, he said, had lost many men in the fight against the Taliban, and future prospects in Afghanistan were very bleak. The U.S. offensive had resulted in the defeat of the Taliban, the monarchy had not been restored in Afghanistan, and Iran no longer felt threatened from that quarter. As for the U.S. presence on Iran's eastern borders, it was bound to be temporary. With respect to Iraq, he argued that Iran was the country that had most benefited from the joint U.S.-British invasion and the resultant collapse of the Baath regime. Further, he contended that there was no need for Iran to be worried about the U.S. presence, because the United States, for domestic reasons, was eager to withdraw its troops. Further, after the

General Assembly elections, a democratic government would come to power that would not tolerate a foreign military presence and influence in Iraq. He added that only a few years before, Iran could only have dreamt of such a favorable turn of events in the region.<sup>59</sup> Ayatollah Rafsanjani's evaluation of the consequences of the U.S. invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq for Iran was even more optimistic. Referring to the U.S. presence in those two countries, he said, "Although the United States has established a physical presence in the countries on our periphery, the fact of the matter is that it is the United States that is besieged by Iran." This was a veiled reference to Iran's ability to use its influence in Afghanistan and Iraq to put pressure on the United States. In his assessment, the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq had resulted in many positive changes; Iran's enemies — the Taliban, the Baath regime and the MKO — had been wiped out or at least neutralized.<sup>60</sup>

This more optimistic assessment of the situation in Iraq alleviated Iranian fears of an impending U.S. attack. In fact, the regime came to view the situation in Iraq not as a threat but as an opportunity. By mobilizing the Shiites against the coalition, it believed that it was now in a position to put pressure on the United States. That was reflected in Iranian-U.S. relations. Iran responded to threats by the United States to attack Iran's nuclear facilities, by reminding Washington that, if its nuclear installations were hit, it would make life hell for the United States in Iraq. Another consequence of this reassessment was that Iran cut the number of troops it had stationed along its borders with Iraq to six brigades.<sup>61</sup>

## **IRANIAN POLICY TOWARDS THE FIRST ELECTED IRAQI GOVERNMENT**

The January 2005 elections marked a turning point in Iranian-Iraqi relations for several reasons. First of all, unlike the Governing Council and the Iraqi Interim Government, the Iraqi Transitional Government (ITG) was not picked by the Americans but elected by the people of Iraq themselves. Consequently, it reflected Iraqi political aspirations much more than the Governing Council and the Iraqi Interim Government. It also enjoyed a large measure of freedom from U.S. influence, allowing it much greater leeway in the conduct of foreign policy. Second, the election witnessed the victory of the Shiite groups with close links to Iran, namely the SCIRI and the Islamic Dawa party, opening the way for the emergence of very close ties between Tehran and Baghdad. Although the ITG has a short life span of about a year, Iran expects the Shiite majority to be able to repeat its victory in the following elections.

Henceforth, consolidating the Shiite-dominated government of Ibrahim al-Jafari became Iran's chief goal. If pro-Iranian Shiite groups could be kept in power, Tehran could then rightly claim to have won Iraq over without firing a shot or sustaining a single casualty. In fact, it would appear as though Americans had defeated Saddam and stabilized Iraq, all at great expense in men and materiel, and then handed it over to the Iranians.

To develop ties and consult with the new government about how best Iran could help it in early June 2005, Iran's foreign minister visited Baghdad. The two sides agreed to set up a joint commission to

expand bilateral relations.<sup>62</sup> They also reached an agreement on the reopening of their respective consulates, which had been closed down following the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq War.<sup>63</sup> The Iraqi government also agreed to facilitate the issuance of visas to Iranian businessmen.<sup>64</sup> On July 6, Iraqi Defense Minister Sadun al-Dulaymi visited Iran, where he conferred with the president as well as the foreign and defense ministers. He also visited an Iranian military helicopter-production facility and was shown a display of Iranian-made weapons, indicating that Iran was willing to supply Iraq with arms.<sup>65</sup> He also signed a memorandum of understanding on security cooperation with his Iranian counterpart. This move called for the establishment of a joint commission to guarantee border security to prevent terrorists from entering Iraq from Iranian territory, to cooperate in locating the remains of the victims of the Iran-Iraq War, and to establish a joint commission to exchange maps and information on minefields planted on both sides of the border.<sup>66</sup> Iran was eager to provide further military aid to Iraq such as the training of Iraqi forces, but U.S. pressure on the Iraqi government prevented that. Ten days later, Prime Minister Jafari, at the head of a delegation consisting of ten cabinet members, visited Tehran. During their three-day stay they signed a set of wide-ranging and unprecedented agreements with their Iranian counterparts covering security, energy, transport and tourism. With respect to security cooperation, the two countries set up a committee to coordinate efforts against terrorism. In the area of energy, Iran agreed to help Iraq cope with a shortage of oil products. They agreed to construct two pipelines between the Basra

oil port in southeast Iraq and the Abadan refinery in southwest Iran. One of these would pump 300,000 barrels a day of crude oil to the refinery in Abadan, after which refined oil products would be sent to Iraq via the second pipeline. Iran also agreed to help Iraq with its electricity shortage by increasing exports to 220 megawatts from nine borderline terminals and then raising that to 560 megawatts in six months. They also signed a memorandum to expand rail, road, air and sea transport between the two countries. As a first step, it was agreed to link their rail networks in the southwest in the vicinity of the Iranian port city of Khorramshahr. In the area of tourism, Iraq agreed to make the necessary arrangements for Iranian pilgrims to visit the holy shrines in Iraq. In the first stage, pilgrims would visit Najaf and Karbala; as soon as the security situation permitted, they would be allowed to visit Kazemain and Samara.<sup>67</sup> The Iranian government also announced that it would provide a \$1 billion loan to Iraq for the purchase of goods and services from Iran.

Iran took advantage of the presence of the Iraqi delegation to raise important issues that were chiefly related to Saddam's invasion of Iran. Given that after the end of the Iran-Iraq War (1980-88) no peace agreement was signed between the two countries, Tehran was very eager to hear the views of the new Iraqi government regarding such issues as the reinstatement of the Algiers Agreement, the payment of reparations to Iran for damages caused by the Baath regime's aggression, and the question of the presence of Iranian opposition groups in Iraq, chiefly the Mujahedin Khalq Organization. With respect to the 1975 Algiers agreement and the payment of reparations, the Iraqi side argued that the



ITG, being a temporary institution, was not qualified to discuss the issue and that any discussion would have to wait until after the constitution was put to a referendum and a new government was formed with a mandate to make decisions on this and other significant external issues. Further, the Iraqi side argued that, since this was an election year, it was not a good time for the ITG to enter into negotiations about the Algiers Agreement or the payment of reparations as it would play into the hands of their rivals, undermining their position in the upcoming elections. Moreover, with regard to reparations, the Iraqi side's position has always been that, just as European governments had canceled Iraq's debts, Iran should forgo its demand for reparations. Tehran has been sympathetic towards Iraq and is willing to wait until a new government comes to power before raising these issues again. However, it would be very unlikely to give up its demand for reparations without some kind of quid pro quo.<sup>68</sup> Likewise, with respect to the presence of opposition groups on Iraqi soil, the Iraqi delegation made it clear that they wanted to expel these groups but could not do so because of U.S. pressure. Iran agreed to tolerate their presence in Iraq on condition that they not engage in anti-Iranian activities.<sup>69</sup>

## CONCLUSION

For the first two years after the U.S. invasion of Iraq, Iranian policy towards its neighbor was driven by fear of U.S. intentions, not only toward Iraq but also toward Iran. It was this fear that drove Iran to condemn the U.S. invasion and the ensuing occupation. It was also one of the chief causes of poor relations between Iran

and the U.S.-imposed administrations that ran Iraq until March 2004. The same fears drove Iran to adopt a cautious policy towards Iraq. However, caution did not mean that Iran adopted a hands-off policy. Rather, Iran systematically worked with Iraqi Shiite groups and the religious leaders of the Iraqi Shiite community to thwart U.S. attempts to build a client state in Iraq and to force the United States to hold elections in Iraq, which it believed would propel the Shiite majority to power and would convert Iraq into a reliable ally. The emergence of intense Sunni resistance to the occupation greatly helped Iran achieve these goals.

The rise of Shiites to power in the wake of the National Assembly elections in January 2005 caused a sea change in Iranian policy towards Iraq. For the first time after the invasion, Iran found itself dealing not with a U.S.-appointed government but with one elected by the people of Iraq. Thereafter, the ideological affinity between the two regimes opened the way for the rapid expansion of relations. Barring any unforeseen events, and if developments in bilateral relations since the coming of the Jafari government to power are anything to go by, Iran and Iraq are headed for a very close relationship. This is bound to have major ramifications, not only for the two neighbors but for the entire Middle East. If the new order in Iraq survives, which seems quite likely, Iran will be the country to benefit the most from the U.S. invasion. It is ironic that this military adventure, one of the goals of which was to open the way for the overthrow of the clerical regime in Iran, has ended up consolidating it at home and expanding its influence abroad.

<sup>1</sup> This comment regarding the importance of Iraq was recently made by Hojjatoleslam Ali Yunesi, the minister of intelligence and security. He went on to explain that this was so because the security of Iran was so closely linked with the security of Iraq. *Shargh*, September 1, 2004, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> The responsibility for formulating Iran's policy vis-à-vis Iraq rests chiefly with the Office of the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei. The task of implementing the policy was entrusted to the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC). It does so through its Qods Force, sometimes referred to as Qods Headquarters. It is important to note that the IRGC is made up of five branches: the ground forces, the navy, the air force, the mobilization forces (Basij) and the Qods Force. The Qods Force is responsible for all military matters that involve foreign countries or groups. Qods Force handled Iraqi affairs through one of its affiliates called Nasr Headquarters. After 2000 it was decided to involve the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) in Iraqi affairs too. In that year a body was set up in SNSC called the Special Committee for Policy Making in Iraqi Affairs. This committee is headed by the Secretary of the SNSC, Mr. Ali Larijani. The ministers of defense, foreign affairs and interior are amongst its members. It appears that the committee was formed not so much to undertake policy making, which still rests chiefly with the Office of the Supreme Leader, but to ensure that the government would have a voice in policy making towards Iraq. Anyhow, the IRGC's critical role in Iraqi affairs means that Iraqi opposition groups, Shiite or Kurdish, have always had close ties to it.

<sup>3</sup> According to information provided by the Ministry of Interior, by the year 2000 there were 595,000 Iraqi refugees and migrants living in Iran. This figure includes children born to Iraqi families during their stay in Iran. For more information on Iraqi refugees in Iran, see Ali Babakhan, "The Deportation of Shi'is during the Iran-Iraq War: Causes and Consequences," in Faleh Abdul-Jabar, ed., *Ayatollah's, Sufis, and Ideologues: State, Religion and Social Movements in Iraq* (London: Saqi Books, 2002), chapter 14.

<sup>4</sup> Barry Buzan, *People, States, and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), p. 198.

<sup>5</sup> For a good discussion of Iranian-Iraqi relations under the shah, see Graham E. Fuller, *The Center of the Universe: The Geopolitics of Iran* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991) chapters 2, 3 and 4; Shahram Chubin and Sepehr Zabih, *The Foreign Relations of Iran; A Developing State in a Zone of Great Power Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974) chapters 4, 5, and 6; and R. K. Ramazani, *Iran's Foreign Policy, 1941-1978: A Study of Foreign Policy in Modernizing Nations* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1975), chapter 16.

<sup>6</sup> For the Iranian leadership's views of the Iraqi aggression against Iran, see Imam Khomeini, *In Search of the Way from Imam's Words: War and Jihad*, 2nd ed. (Tehran: Amir Kabir Publications, 1984), p. 20.

<sup>7</sup> On the U.S. policy towards Iran in this era, see Martin Indyk, "Watershed in the Middle East," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 7, no. 1 (Spring 1992), pp. 70-93; Anthony Lake, "Confronting Backlash States," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 72, no. 3 (March/April 1994), pp. 45-55; Garry Sick, "Rethinking Dual Containment," *Survival*, vol. 40, no. 1, (Spring 1998), pp. 5-32; Zbigniew Brzezinski and Richard Murphy, "Differentiated Containment," *Foreign Policy*, no. 107 (May/June 1997), pp. 20-41; Zalmay Khalilzad, "The United States and the Persian Gulf: Preventing Regional Hegemony," *Survival*, vol. 37, no. 2 (Summer 1995), pp. 95-120; and Sami G. Hajjar, "Framing a Rogue: U.S.-Iran Relations in the Gulf," *Strategic Review*: vol. 25, no. 4 (Fall 1997), pp. 19-28.

<sup>8</sup> For a discussion of Iran-Iraq relations after the war, see Dilip Hiro, *Neighbors not Friends: Iran and Iraq after the Gulf Wars* (New York: Routledge, 2001).

<sup>9</sup> *Ettelaat*, April 10, 2003, p. 3.

<sup>10</sup> President Khatami as quoted by *Kayhan*, January 25, 2003, p. 2. Also see comments by President Khatami in his meeting with the former French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dominique de Villepin, in *Ettelaat* April 26, 2003, p. 2. Ayatollah Khamenei made the same point in one of his speeches; see *Ettelaat* April 13, 2003, p. 7. Also see comments made by Mohsen Armin, a prominent member of the Majlis's Foreign Relations Committee in *Kayhan*, April 8, 2003, p. 3. Similar comments were also made by Brigadier General Salimi, Commander in Chief of the armed forces; see *Kayhan*, April 8, 2003, p. 3.

<sup>11</sup> See the Friday prayer sermons by Ayatollah Khamenei, the leader of the Islamic Revolution, *Ettelaat* April 13, 2003, p. 7.

<sup>12</sup> See comments made by Rear-Admiral Shamkhani, Iran's minister of defense, in *Kayhan*, January 13, 2003, p. 2.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Hashemi Rafsanjani's interview for *Rahbord Journal* as reprinted in *Ettelaat*, April 14, 2003, p. 12.

<sup>16</sup> See Dr. Kharrazi's comments in his meeting with the Algerian deputy foreign minister in Tehran. *Kayhan*, January 5, 2003, p. 2.

<sup>17</sup> See comments made by Dr. Kharrazi in his meeting with the Kuwaiti crown prince who was visiting Iran some two months prior to the invasion. *Kayhan*, January 12, 2003, p. 2.

<sup>18</sup> These figures were provided by Mr. Ahmad Hosseini Head of the Office for Aliens, Ministry of Interior. *Ettelaat* August 12, 2003, p. 3.

<sup>19</sup> *Kayhan*, April 4, 2003, p. 3.

<sup>20</sup> See the comments made by Kamal Kharrazi, Iran's foreign minister, to that effect in *Kayhan*, January 4, 2003, p. 3. Also see his comments in meeting with the Portuguese prime minister in Tehran. *Kayhan*, January 7, 2003, p. 3.

<sup>21</sup> *Kayhan*, January 12, 2003, p. 2.

<sup>22</sup> See remarks by President Khatami about Iranian efforts to prevent war in *Ettelaat*, April 17, 2004, p. 4.

<sup>23</sup> Mohammad Mohammadi Qarasui, "Main Political Developments in and the Challenges Facing the Iraqi Shiite Opposition Groups Two Decades after the Victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, 1979-1999" (M.A. Thesis, Islamic Azad University, 2003), p. 200.

<sup>24</sup> From the regular military the following units were stationed along the border: The 92nd Armored Division stationed in the southwest, the 81st Division stationed in the central section of the border, the 28th Division stationed in Iranian Kurdistan, and the 21st Hamzeh Division stationed in Iranian Azerbaijan in the north-western section of the border with Iraq. These units were reinforced by a number of the IRGC ground forces divisions. These forces were given orders to engage the coalition troops should they open fire on them or cross the Iran-Iraq border without waiting for authorization from Tehran.

<sup>25</sup> *Kayhan*, March 10, 2003, p. 3.

<sup>26</sup> See remarks by Rear-Admiral Ali Shamkhani at [http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/mpapps/pagetools/print/news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/3](http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/mpapps/pagetools/print/news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/3) accessed on December 9, 2004.

<sup>27</sup> *Ettelaat*, April 12, 2003, p. 7.

<sup>28</sup> See the transcript of President Khatami's speech made on the Island of Kish in *Ettelaat*, April 4, 2003, p. 2.

<sup>29</sup> *Kayhan*, March 10, 2003, p. 3.

<sup>30</sup> *Ettelaat*, April 16, 2003, p. 2.

<sup>31</sup> Hashemi Rafsanjani's interview for *Rahbord Journal* as reprinted in *Ettelaat*, April 14, 2003, p. 12.

<sup>32</sup> *Ettelaat*, April 30, 2003, p. 3.

<sup>33</sup> See Ayatollah Rafsanjani's Friday prayer sermons in *Ettelaat*, May 9, 2003, p. 2.

<sup>34</sup> That is why Iran welcomed the decision by the Spanish government to withdraw its forces from Iraq. *Ettelaat*, April 22, 2004, p. 4. Also see comments by the Iranian foreign minister regarding the undesirability of the presence of NATO troops in Iraq. *Ettelaat*, June 22, 2003, p. 16.

<sup>35</sup> *Ettelaat*, November 22, 2004, p. 2.

<sup>36</sup> *Ettelaat* June 9, 2003, p. 2. Ayatollah Haeri was one of a number of clerics who were expelled to Iran by the Baath government in 1971 because they had Iranian birth certificates. After expulsion he took up residence in the city of Qom.

<sup>37</sup> *Jomhuri Eslami*, June 1, 2004, p. 6.

<sup>38</sup> *Jomhuri Eslami*, June 5, 2004, p. 16.

<sup>39</sup> *Ettelaat*, June 9, 2003, p. 2.

<sup>40</sup> See President Khatami's comments concerning the clashes between Sadr's forces and those of the coalition in *Ettelaat*, April 12, 2004, p. 2.

<sup>41</sup> Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, *RFE/RL, Iran Report* [online] Vol. 7, No. 15, April 19, 2004, available from: <http://www.rferl.org/iran-report> (henceforth cited as REF/RFL, *Iran Report*)

<sup>42</sup> See President Khatami's comments concerning the issue in *Ettelaat*, August 23, 2004, p. 1. Similar comments were made by Ayatollah Rafsanjani; see *Ettelaat*, August 28, 2004, p. 2.

<sup>43</sup> *RFE/RL, Iran Report* [online] Vol. 7, No. 53, September 27, 2004, available from: <http://www.rferl.org/iran-report>

<sup>44</sup> *Ettelaat*, May 21, 2004, p. 16.

<sup>45</sup> Iranian leaders on many occasions declared that Iran was not working for the creation of an Islamic republic

in Iraq. Nor was Iran working for the creation of a Shiite state. See *Ettelaat*, September 20, 2003, p. 2, and *Ettelaat* April 22, 2004, p. 4.

<sup>46</sup> *Ettelaat*, August 16, 2003, p. 16.

<sup>47</sup> *Ettelaat*, October 18, 2003, p. 2.

<sup>48</sup> See comments by Dr. Kharrazi in *Ettelaat*, July 1, 2004, p. 16. Similar comments were made by Hossein Kazemi Ghomi, Iran's chargé d'affaires in Baghdad. *Ettelaat*, July 2, 2004, p. 16.

<sup>49</sup> See comments by the Speaker of the Iranian government in *Ettelaat*, May 21, 2004, p. 16.

<sup>50</sup> *Ettelaat*, August 2, 2004, p. 4.

<sup>51</sup> For more information on the supply of electricity to Iraq visit the website of the Iranian Ministry of Energy at [www.moe.org.ir](http://www.moe.org.ir). For political reasons the Iraqi side asked Iran to provide electricity to central Iraq which includes Baghdad.

<sup>52</sup> *Donyay-e Eghtesad*, June 28, 2005, p. 5.

<sup>53</sup> See comments by President Khatami in *Ettelaat*, August 17, 2003, p. 2. Similar comments were made by Ayatollah Rafsanjani; see *Ettelaat*, September 1, 2003, p. 16.

<sup>54</sup> *Iran*, August 2, 2004, p. 3.

<sup>55</sup> See comments by President Khatami in *Ettelaat*, July 19, 2003, p. 2.

<sup>56</sup> *Shargh*, August 17, 2004, p. 2; and *Hayat-e Now*, August 12, 2004, p.1.

<sup>57</sup> For example, see comments by Sirus Naseri, a senior Iranian diplomat, as cited in Louis Charbonneau, "US too stretched to attack Iran, says Iran envoy," at <http://www.reuters.com/printerFriendlyPopup.jhtml?type=worldNews&storyID=7716859> accessed on January 25, 2005.

<sup>58</sup> *Ettelaat*, October 30, 2004, p. 2.

<sup>59</sup> For Mr. Yunesi's comments see *Ettelaat*, October 2, 2003, p. 4. Similar upbeat assessments were advanced by Ayatollah Khamenei in his New Year address to the Iranian people.

<sup>60</sup> *Ettelaat*, September 11, 2003, p. 2.

<sup>61</sup> *Ettelaat*, July 4, 2004, p. 16. These figures are provided by Ayatollah Hassan Rouhani, the secretary general of the Supreme Council for National Security.

<sup>62</sup> This commission consists of five committees, one of which deals with economic issues.

<sup>63</sup> Iran had consulates in Karbala and Basra, and Iraq in Khorramshahr and Kermanshah.

<sup>64</sup> *Donyay-e Eghtesad*, June 28, 2005, p.5.

<sup>65</sup> RFE/RFL *Iran Report* vol. 8, no. 27, July 13, 2005.

<sup>66</sup> RFE/RFL *Iran Report* vol. 8, no. 28, July 19, 2005.

<sup>67</sup> RFE/RFL *Iran Report* vol. 8, no. 29, July 26, 2005.

<sup>68</sup> For the Iraqi position on the question of reparations, see *Kayhan*, November 8, 2004, p. 14.

<sup>69</sup> Interview with Mr. Asghar Khaji, head of the Office for the Reconstruction of Iraq, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.