

## Caught between Iraq and a hard place

America and Middle East better off with Saddam in power, not fighting losing battle

United States should take decisive action and oust Saddam Hussein before it is too late



MARK PASSWATERS

A primary topic of conversation in Washington over the past several weeks has been how to deal with Saddam Hussein. For those who have been out of the loop for the past decade, Saddam is a dictator of Iraq and a very bad guy. Many Americans, both inside and outside of the Beltway, want to see Saddam disposed of immediately, whether the United States is forced to act unilaterally or not. A dissenting point of view, though less popular, believes that Saddam Hussein could not be removed by the United States. The following are a few of the reasons why:

**America's Reputation in the Region:** While Saddam is hated in Cairo, Kuwait City, Riyadh and Amman, an American-led attempt to depose him would go over like a lead balloon. Arab nations frown on outside interference, especially from the West. Recent actions by the Clinton administration have shown a perfect mixture of ignorance and stupidity by ignoring this fact.

The United States has decided to support seven different opposition groups against Saddam; by doing this, they have guaranteed one of these groups will eventually gain power in Baghdad. If there is anything that the Iraqi people dislike more than Saddam Hussein, it would be a government they see as a stooge of the United States.

A thousand years of western meddling in the Arab World, going back to the Crusades, has worn on the collective mindset of the region. It has gotten to the point that many Arabs believe that any Muslim that stands up to "Judeo-Christian Agression" is a hero. This is what Saddam was counting on in 1991, but was left with egg on his face and bombs on his palace because his Islamic brethren were less than thrilled with his attack on an Arab neighbor.

If the United States decided to unilaterally oust Saddam, the situation would be totally different. The United States would run the risk of not only changing Saddam from villain to hero, but ruling America's status in the region. The populations of many Arab nations might turn against America and could cause a diplomatic disaster. With the patience of nations such as Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia already worn in by the continued presence of U.S. forces in the region, this is not very far-fetched.

**Killing This Guy is no Walk in the Park:** First of all, it has been against U.S. law for the United States to order the death of any foreign head of state for three decades. Saddam, while nobody's favorite, is the acknowledged leader of Iraq. During Operation Desert Storm, an excuse of "knocking out the enemy's center of gravity" could have been made for killing him. An operation solely to kill this man would be against federal law.

More importantly, people seem to forget that getting to this guy would require the use of American ground forces. Lots of them. The Iraqi military did not fight hard in 1991, not just because they were having the hell hammered out of them, but because they were not really fighting for their homeland.

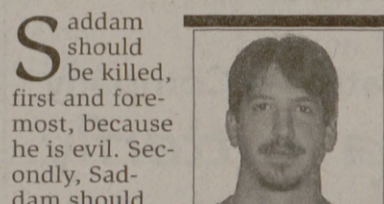
While Saddam and his stooges may have considered Kuwait part of Iraq, the average Iraqi could not care less about a mythical "Nineteenth Province" — especially when being attacked by B-52's. Going to Baghdad to get Saddam would not be like knocking on the door and having him come out. The United States would have to kick down the door, and the Iraqi people certainly would not sit still and allow a prolonged military operation on their territory. It would be a long conflict — Vietnam, anyone?

**Better the Enemy You Know:** If Iraq did not fragment with Saddam's ouster (it is not one homogeneous nation), another possibility is the next leader of Iraq would be a lot like him. One ugly scenario would have Saddam's son, Uday, replacing him. Uday is not a nice boy.

According to many published reports (including the Wall Street Journal and Newsweek), he has killed several people just for fun and lacks dear-old Dad's tact. Whatever may be said about Saddam, he is calculating (he may calculate wrong, but he tries). Uday is more headstrong and aggressive. In other words, Uday

could be goaded into a huge conflict which would engulf the entire region, including Israel and its nuclear arsenal. Only the Concerned Christians would consider this a good thing.

Whether or not the next Iraqi leader is Uday Hussein, it is likely the international community will cut him some slack. This would be a critical error. We know Saddam Hussein is not that far from having a nuclear weapon, because we watch him



RICHARD PADDACK

Saddam should be killed, first and foremost, because he is evil. Secondly, Saddam should be killed because the Iraqi people want his head. Some have tried to assassinate Saddam and his psy-

chotic son, Uday. After a failed coup against Saddam in 1996, relatives of the plotters got the bodies of their loved ones back, covered in bites. They had been eaten alive by savage dogs, which further illustrates just how evil he is.

Saddam should be killed, third, because he is dangerous. With one rocket and one poison gas bomb, he could start a war with Israel, a country capable of retaliating with nuclear power.

More importantly, the Clinton Administration should decisively reject Saddam's brazen attempts to undermine the United Nations' inspection regime. It should convince the U.N. to penalize Saddam even further for violating the terms of the ceasefire ending the 1991 Gulf War. But the United States' highest priority obviously should be to create conditions that lead to the toppling of Saddam's regime. As long as this vengeful dictator rules Baghdad, he will remain a major threat to U.S. interests and American allies in the Middle East.

Aside from the media and a small portion of the American public's opinion, the December air strikes were not a 100-percent failure. Had the Allies hit a bunker, killing dozens of children, then the United States would have seen and heard all about it.

Because the missiles hit the headquarters of several key players in Saddam's regime and several other strategically crippling buildings, CNN was not shown certain areas of damage. And, yes, it is right and humanitarian to bomb torturers and killers, if there is no better way of bringing them to justice.

The Administration should move quickly to translate these gains into stronger Security Council actions against Iraq while retaining the option to use military force, the only language Saddam seems to understand. The reasons why America should remove Saddam from this world are obvious and innumerable, there are several ways the United States could expedite Hussein's departure. Specifically, the United States should:

**Rule out compromise on UNSCOM (United Nations Security Committee) harassment:** Washington should block any U.N. move to dilute UNSCOM's powers or to make concessions that would give Saddam a face-saving way to back down. It should forge a Security Council consensus that Iraq must either comply

with Security Council resolutions or suffer the consequences.

**Push for tougher U.N. sanctions against Iraq:** Washington should press for the strongest possible sanctions to penalize Iraq's continued failure to abide by its UNSCOM inspection obligations. These sanctions should include rescinding Resolution 986, which allows Iraq to export limited amounts of oil to pay for food and medicine; suspending Iraq from the General Assembly and all other U.N. forums; prohibiting Iraqis from serving as U.N. agency officials and requiring all U.N. member states to restrict the size of Iraqi embassies.

**Maintain a military option to punish Saddam:** The United States should maintain a strong military presence. It is believed by many that a strong and determined military action would further weaken Saddam's dwindling base of support, encourage defections and coup attempts and demonstrate to the Iraqi people that Saddam's wicked aversion to compliance threatens their national interests.

**Develop a comprehensive strategy to overthrow Saddam:** The ultimate goal of U.S. policy should be to oust Saddam, not just contain him. Washington should deny Saddam Hussein a diplomatic victory over UNSCOM by injecting a spirit of resolve into the U.N. Security Council. It should also make sure any military response is designed to punish Saddam, not just slap his wrist.

Saddam's grip on power is vicious and cruel, but it is not secure. The Iraqi National Congress — Saddam's most dangerous opposition — believes he could be overthrown in 10 days if the "no-fly" zone became a "no-drive" zone, specifically for tanks. The ground troops would be supplied by the Iraqi army, who hate the regime as much as the rest of Iraq. The Iraqi people would do the rest.

The problem with Western policy concerning Saddam is its lack of clarity. To wound, to cage, but not to kill the tyrant is a dangerous mistake.

Life will only get better for ordinary Iraqis once the West finally stops hesitating and commits to a clear, unambiguous policy of snuffing out Saddam. And when he falls, the people of Iraq will ask, "What kept you? Why did it take you so long?"

Richard Paddock is senior journalism major



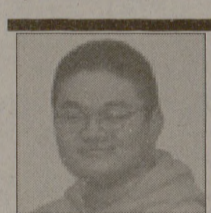
like a hawk. The next guy may not be so well watched, which could have dire consequences.

In 1918, the German Kaiser Wilhelm was forced to abdicate his throne after the defeat of the Central Powers in World War I. Europe relaxed, thinking that the primary cause of the war was gone. Then they reasoned peace would flourish on the continent. Fifteen years later, the Germans had themselves a new, democratically elected Chancellor. His name was Adolf Hitler. Funny how history tends to repeat itself ...

Mark Passwaters is a graduate electrical engineering student

## Admissions criteria need revision

From heckling drunks at Northgate to ritual scraping of old droppings off of e's windshield at Lot, Aggies are filling back into their old routines and immersing themselves in the w semester. However, before the traditional cursing of classes begins, students could take a moment to pat each other on the back for being able to return to Texas A&M this semester.



DAVID LEE

Regrettably, many students were forced to withdraw from school at the end of last semester due to their poor grades. It is understandable, at a school of this caliber, that a certain percentage of students fail out at one point or another.

However, it is saddening to see the diversity not take all the steps necessary to encourage as high a retention rate as possible. The missing step lies within the current admissions criteria for incoming freshmen, specifically the absence of a method for screening out students who are weak in the fundamentals necessary for certain majors.

Currently, the admissions process at A&M is relatively straightforward; once applicant is accepted, he or she has their pick of any academic major available at A&M. Unlike other leading universities in the state, such as Rice, Texas

Tech and the University of Texas, there are no additional requirements for students entering more subject intensive majors such as math or the sciences.

The science and engineering departments at those universities require higher math SAT scores and/or a more extensive background in advanced math, in addition to the admissions criteria for the university as a whole. These additional criteria prevent underqualified students from getting into a major in which their chances of success are slim.

The effects of this policy at those universities are apparent. Because freshmen who are unable to get into their major of choice enter as an undeclared major — the equivalent of A&M's general studies — they take basic level classes in order to strengthen the areas they are weak in.

After obtaining credit in these classes, the department of their choice will be more inclined to admit them because their potential for success has improved.

In contrast, A&M gives freshmen free reign when selecting a major. A freshman who selects chemical engineering, but barely passed high school algebra, faces the probability of disappointment and frustration in his first semester because heavy doses of calculus and science are part of the core curriculum. If the College of Engineering placed additional criteria — along the lines of the corresponding departments at these other universities — this student would be placed in general studies and would take additional courses to strengthen his

foundation in mathematics, preparing him for such a math-intensive major.

However, without these restrictions in place, students find out "the hard way" that they are not prepared for their academic major, which is reflected in poor grades during the first semester. This leads to a waste of valuable time and money — time and money that could have been invested in general studies to prepare and strengthen their academic background.

It also puts them at a huge disadvantage in regards to grade point ratio and those ever-precious Q-drops. If a student wishes to switch to economics after his attempt at engineering has failed, there could be a problem. His grade point ratio might not meet the transfer criteria. These students will be digging themselves out of a huge hole for the rest of their college careers.

Granted, during the years the current admissions criteria have been in place, the student body at A&M has grown and prospered. However, it would be prudent to have an admissions process that reflects such high standards.

If university administrators are really committed to the idea of A&M becoming a "world class" university, a reevaluation of the current admissions criteria for many of its colleges is needed.

David Lee is a sophomore general studies major

## MAIL CALL

### Aggies defend A&M traditions

In response to H. Green's Jan. 21 Mail Call

On behalf of this campus in which I am proud of, on behalf of a student body that works to preserve tradition and honor and on behalf of all of the brave, courageous Aggies that the "architectural hodgepodge called the Memorial Student Center" represents: Please go back to La Porte, Texas and learn one thing, a word many Aggies know quite well. It is called respect.

Rob Ferguson  
Class of '01

The grass surrounding the MSC is respected by all Aggies past, present and future. There are signs posted to not walk on the grass around it in respect to those Aggies who died in war.

To H. Green, I apologize if you were yelled at rudely. I can understand someone asking you to get off the grass and explaining the situation to you, but I do

not know any Aggies who would have "ordered" you.

If the individual did so, they were frustrated because you were walking on sacred grass.

You traipsing through the grass is equivalent to me walking on your close relative's grave.

I hope you will visit again and learn more about our traditions so you will understand why this occurrence had to take place.

I leave with this, "From the outside looking in, you can't understand it and from the inside looking out, you can't explain it."

Kimberly Rasco  
Class of '02

### Ceremony for women's clinic

First I wanted to thank The Battalion for printing the article about the Chamber of Commerce's decision to revoke Planned Parenthood's membership in a fair and accurate way.

Indeed, Planned Parenthood has decided not to have a ribbon cutting ceremony. However, members of

the community have decided to have a ribbon cutting ceremony for them.

If there are any students, faculty or staff interested in signing a small piece of red ribbon to commemorate Planned Parenthood's long tradition of service in the Bryan-College Station area, they can contact either the Women's Studies office or the Gender Issues Educations Services office.

Community activists will present all of the signed ribbons to the Chamber sometime in February.

Alexandra Hamilton  
Class of '00

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor. Letters must be 300 words or less and include the author's name, class and phone number.

The opinion editor reserves the right to edit letters for length, style, and accuracy. Letters may be submitted in person at 013 Reed McDonald with a valid student ID. Letters may also be mailed to:

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