order. Indeed, regime change has been the official policy of the United States under two presidents, Bill Clinton and George Bush, since 1998.

What is the urgency of the current threat from Saddam Hussein? Despite some uncertainties, a great deal is known about Iraqi military capabilities, particularly its conventional forces.

Despite the loss of some 40 percent of its army and air force as a result of the Gulf War, Iraq remains a major military power by regional standards. Iraq still has armed forces with around 425,000 men, with some 2,200 main battle tanks, 3,700 other armored vehicles, and 2,400 major artillery pieces. It also has 300 combat aircraft with potential operational status.

By all accounts, sanctions and the impact of the Gulf War have had a substantial negative impact. The regime's inability to recapitalize and modernize its armed forces means that much of its nominally large military capacity is either obsolescent or obsolete, with doubtful combat readiness, and will be difficult to sustain in combat.

Much more ominous are Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. By way of background, UN Security Resolution 687, passed in April 1991, established the formal cease-fire between Coalition forces and Iraq. Key among the terms was the prohibition against Iraq retaining, acquiring, or developing WMD and long range missiles. In addition, there was a demand that Iraq unconditionally accept the destruction, removal or rendering harmless its WMD under international supervision. However, from the start of United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) in 1991 through their termination in 1999 Iraq engaged in the techniques of deception and denial in order to conceal the full extent of its WMD programs. Although there were some successes in defeating Iraq's concealment efforts, many other failed.

In December 1999, one year after UNSCOM left, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1284, reaffirming all previous UN Security Council resolutions, disbanding UNSCOM, and establishing the UN Monitoring, Verification, and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC). Until September 16, Iraq had rejected resolution 1284 on the grounds that it does not set a clear timetable or criteria for lifting sanctions. Although the Iraqi position may well be a ruse, Baghdad now claims with semantic waffling to be willing to allow the return of weapons inspectors without conditions.

As is well known, on the eve of the Gulf War, and in violation of its commitments under the NPT, Iraq was on the verge of producing significant amounts of heavily enriched uranium that would have allowed it within two or three years to produce a nuclear weapon. Fortunately, the Gulf War heavily damaged Iraq's nuclear facilities. By the end of UN inspections in 1998, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was confident that Iraq's indigenous nuclear weapons program had not produced more than a few grams of weapons useable material. However, Iraq's nuclear potential was not completely eliminated. The scientific and technical expertise of Iraq's nuclear program survived, and Baghdad has tried to keep its core nuclear teams in place working on various civilian projects.

Publicily available consensus analysis produced by the London Institute of International Strategic Studies and others suggests that: Iraq does not possess facilities to produce fissile material in sufficient amounts for nuclear weapons, that it would require several years and extensive foreign assistance to build such fissile material production facilities, but that it could assemble nuclear weapons within several months to perhaps one or two years if it could obtain relevant fissile material.

Prior to the Gulf War, Iraq produced Biological Weapons (BW) agents in volume. Subsequent to it invasion of Kuwait, Baghdad accelerated large scale BW agent production and assembled rudimentary BW munitions. These weapons were distributed to military units, who were delegated to use them if allied forces advanced on Baghdad or used nuclear weapons. Most of the regime's key BW facilities, which had been hidden from Western intelligence agencies, escaped attack during the Persian Gulf conflict. But in violation of the BWC that Iraq ratified as a condition of the 1991 Gulf War cease-fire agreement, Saddam continued to conceal his BW program until 1995. Since December 1998 when UN inspectors left the country, there has been virtually no verifiable information about the status of Iraq's BW program.

Credible, public reports suggest Iraq can produce new stocks of bulk BW agent, including botulinum toxin and anthrax. BW agent could be delivered by short range munitions including artillery shells. Delivery by ballistic missile is more problematic. Refurbished L–29 trainer aircraft could operate as weapons-carrying unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) with a range of over 600km. Such UAVs might be considerably more effective than ballistic missiles in delivering CBW. Commando and terrorist attack is also possible.

The best estimates of the current situation suggest that: (1) Iraq has retained substantial growth media and BW agent (perhaps thousands of liters of anthrax) from pre 1991 stocks, and the regime is capable of resuming BW agent production on short notice at existing civilian facilities and in new mobile laboratories; (2) it could have produced thousands of liters of anthrax, botulinum toxin and other agents since 1998, but actual stocks are unknown.

As is well known, Iraq used chemical weapons extensively against Iranian troops from 1982–1988. In the years immediately prior to the Gulf War, Iraq made further progress in developing binary chemical munitions, producing and weaponizing the advanced nerve agent, VX. The Gulf War however devastated Iraq's primary CW production facilities and a large portion of its stockpile of CW munitions.

Through 1998, UNSCOM was able to dispose of large quantities of CW munitions, bulk agent, precursors and production equipment that were not destroyed in combat. In addition, unless Iraq has managed to modernize its 1990-era special warheads, its ability to disseminate effectively CW agent on ballistic missiles is questionable, since so much agent would be destroyed on impact. Iraq's known ability to marry chemical warheads to its rocket and artillery pieces (with ranges up to about 18.5 miles) could complicate operations for opposing forces, who would be required to wear protective gear.

The best publicly available assessment of the current situation is that: (1) Iraq has probably retained a few hundred tons of mustard and precursors for a few hundred tons of sarin/cyclosarin and perhaps similar amounts of VX from pre-1991 stocks; (2) it is capable of resuming CW production on short notice (months) from existing civilian facilities; and (3) it could have produced hundreds of tons of agent (mustard and nerve agents) since 1998. Actual stocks, however, are not known.

Iraq of course prohibited by UN Resolutions from possessing ballistic missiles with a range greater than 150km. In the 1970s Iraq began to import Scud B missiles with a range of 300km from the Soviet Union and acquired roughly 820. In the 1980s Iraq worked to modify the Scud missiles in order to double their range. The new missile, called the al Hussein, with a range of 650km, was used during the war against Iran. In the wake of the Gulf War, much of Iraq's missile infrastructure lay in ruins. Moreover, the U. S. and U. K., during Operation Desert Fox in December 1998, attacked a number of missile related facilities.

During the inspections period Iraq continued to conduct small scale covert research and development on proscribed missiles. In addition, Iraq continued missile related procurement efforts. UNSCOM attempted to account for all imported missiles and for indigenously produced missiles, but that accounting was incomplete. It is prudent to assume that Iraq has been able to retain some of its proscribed missiles. Also, it is likely that Iraqi engineers will have been able to increase the range in its short-range al Samoud missiles to 200km with a few hundred kilograms payload suitable for CBW delivery.

The publicly available estimates of Iraq's missile capabilities suggest that: (1) Iraq has probably retained a small force of about a dozen 650km range al-Hussein missiles, which could be armed with CBW warheads, capable of striking Israel, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Iran and Kuwait; (2) the Iraqi regime does not possess facilities to produce long range missiles and it would require several years and extensive foreign assistance to construct such facilities; (3) it may have a small number of al Samoud missiles with ranges of up to 200km able to strike Kuwait but only if deployed within the southern no fly zone; (4) Iraq is capable of manufacturing rudimentary CBW warheads, while its development of more advanced designs is unknown; and (5) Iraq has been developing very small unmanned aircraft suitable for CBW delivery.

According to the Department of State, Iraq is also a state sponsor of terrorism. Saddam Hussein's brutal regime has provided headquarters, operating bases, training camps, and other support to terrorist groups fighting the governments of neighboring Turkey and Iran, as well as to hard-line Palestinian groups. During the 1991 Gulf War, Saddam also commissioned several failed terrorist attacks on U.S. facilities. After the war, Saddam attempted to assassinate former President Bush. More recently, the question of Iraq's link to terrorism has become more urgent with Saddam's determination to develop weapons of mass destruction, which could be shared with terrorists.

At the present time, there is no hard evidence linking Saddam to the 9/11 attacks, and Iraq denies any involvement. However, his government expressed sympathy for those who attacked us and some Iraq watchers suspect Saddam was at least indirectly involved. In this regard, Czech officials reported last