

Stein: One would expect, following Shireen's analysis, that one would have seen almost no action with respect to the Kurds – given the anticipated American desire to end the war neatly in a military context and ignore the wider political ramifications. One would have expected that it would play into domestic American public opinion which has always emphasized, "bring the boys back home."

What happened, in fact, is that the administration was overwhelmed by public opinion in the United States, responding to visual images of Kurds, pushing the administration into a position that the administration had no intention of taking. I don't care what we call it, or whether it comes from England or from the US, when you talk about safe havens or enclaves or whatever the euphemisms are, it does, in fact, involve intervention in Iraq's internal affairs.

Bryans: What is going to be the role of arms sales in the near and medium-term future, and what do you make of the argument that it is people's insecurity and the fact that they want to fight wars that makes them buy weapons?

Heller: I might be wrong, but I don't know of a single case in which somebody was forced to buy weapons he did not want to buy, where the supplier said you take these guns or I will shoot you. The basic point is true that the arms trade is essentially demand-driven. However, that is not to say that certain suppliers, most suppliers I guess, have not played into the demand or made it easier to satisfy than it would otherwise have been, for purposes related to their own strategic or commercial interests. I think the strategic interests in the post-Cold War era may be diminishing. There may be a few diehards in the Stavka of the Red Army or in the KGB or somewhere in the State Department, but by and large, it is a long time since anyone seriously believed he could buy enduring political influence by transferring weapons.

If anything, the commercial interests in recent years have intensified and may intensify even more, if and when the CFE agreements [conventional force agreements in Europe] ever get implemented. Therefore, there will be strong commercial pressures in most of the arms exporting countries to respond to the demands generated by regional conflicts, and particularly to the effective demand generated by the money available. Of course, the effective demand is still greatest in the Middle East, although there are some resource constraints tied to the price of oil in the last couple of years. But even that is not likely to prove an insuperable obstacle if they get some creative financing packages together. Therefore, to think that you can achieve any kind of effective

results by waiting for change in the demand side is absolutely utopian. The only way to have any effect at all is from the supply side.

Stein: Mark put it all far too politely for purposes of this discussion. The demand side is huge and enduring, and it is on two levels. One is the security threats that each government perceives from another, and that will endure for the foreseeable future. But that is not the only purpose for arms transfer. It relates to all the other issues that we talked about, it is the state versus society too, which is the hidden agenda in a lot of this.

Now on the supply side, what do we see? If we assume that the transition in the Soviet Union works under optimistic assumptions, and the fragmentation is limited rather than extensive, the major source of hard currency for the Soviet Union in the foreseeable future will be CFE-related products that are no longer useful. And the major place to send them will be to regions like the Middle East where there is an enduring demand. The Soviet Union has diamonds, oil and used tanks.

There is an autonomous independent benefit for the Western world to sell to the Middle East. Saddam Hussein was not a Soviet creation, despite a great deal of the myth making that went on in Western capitals. Much of what he got,

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and much of what was most lethal, was supplied by Germany, and France, and paid for by Saudi Arabia. Those dynamics are going to continue.

In terms of delivering political outcomes in the Middle East, the capacity of the US is no greater than it ever has been – despite a lot of the rhetoric that we are hearing. To the extent that the US continues to stay involved, a primary instrument of that involvement will be military sales. It is therefore going to be impossible to get an effective suppliers' agreement, when you build in all these factors. The future is frightening.

Korany: I don't believe the whole idea, floated at the end of the Gulf War, about arms control in the region. Events now confirm this. You have lots of stocks that are now not used at the end of the Cold War and you have to sell them somewhere. Second, there are economic needs.

France and Great Britain, their economies are based on arms sales to the Middle East – the Middle East takes about sixty percent of all arms imported to the Third World. They are demand-driven in the following sense: arms races are not the cause of wars, they are symptoms of conflicts. As long as the bases for arms purchases are not treated, people will go through the black market. They will use all means to violate agreements for arms control even when these agreements can be reached.

Hunter: A footnote about the nature of governments in the Middle East. Most Middle Eastern countries are, in one form or another, military regimes. And the military is self-perpetuating. So we cannot say it is only conflict and that it has nothing to do with the development of huge military establishments. When you strip them, both Turkey and Egypt are basically military governments; the military determines what goes on. Syria has a military-run government.

The US and other governments' influence is basically with the military, and they have to keep their clients happy. Turkey wants to have an indigenous military industrial complex, and they are defining their relationship, and the health of the relationship, in terms of the willingness of US to give them the kind of sophisticated arms they want. Egypt wants more arms. And obviously if they get them then there is a dynamic interaction, other countries are also going to get them. The militarization of many regimes in the Third World is a spur to the arms race.

Bryans: Switching the subject once again, I am personally interested in this because we published an article by one of the people around the table two issues ago, which dealt with the run-up to the Gulf War, and Ambassador April Glaspie, and her contradictory testimony. I am wondering what the state of the art of revisionist history is about the run-up, and who did what to whom?

Heller: Diplomats' accounts to their own foreign offices of what they said do not always and necessarily reflect what they said. It is an ex post facto reconstruction of a conversation. The original analysis [of Glaspie's pre-war conversation with Hussein] is consistent with the whole tone of the American appeasement of Saddam Hussein for several years before.

I think it is a non-argument, but at the more general level I think what we are seeing is the acceleration of history writing. Because normally we get a conventional wisdom and then four, five, six years down the line we get the rise of the revisionist school and then another four or five years down the line after that, we get the dialectical synthesis. This has all happened within six weeks. □