

Storm—the disasters at Beirut and Desert One; the breakdown of cost-is-no-object weapons programs of the early eighties; the attempt during the Air Force's Red Flag exercises and similar undertakings to make military training realistic; the 1986 Joint Chiefs of Staff reform that shortened command lines and imposed accountability.

These, Kitfield shows, forged what was by the time of the Persian Gulf conflict a senior Pentagon staff more attuned to the real-world aspects of war than any U.S. military leadership since the World War II Pentagon (post-Coral Sea).

Kitfield is right about this, and right to emphasize it. Because popular attention has focused so tightly on minor aspects of the Gulf War such as Schwarzkopf's personality, how constructive self-criticism within the U.S. military helped prepare that institution for success both in battle and in the moral behavior of troops remains the most important story of that conflict—and one that is still nearly unknown to the American public.

My first quibble with Kitfield is that he dismisses the constructive efforts in this regard of the military reform movement, one of whose voices was this magazine. For instance, he says that the fiasco of the ineffective Divad anti-aircraft gun was discovered by "congressional investigators." As someone intimately involved in that case, I can attest that congressional investigators arrived on the scene only after the groundwork had been done by journalists and an internal Pentagon analysis bureau. It's true that internally generated pressure within the officer corps was the most important factor in the eighties' military reform, but the public pressure generated by the highly visible civilian aspect of the reform movement helped spur the Pentagon brass and Congress (which enacted the JCS reform) into gear. I don't think it is exaggerating to say that in the eighties criticisms leveled by military reformers saved some U.S. lives in the Gulf. My second quibble is that Kitfield recounts many scenes in the

novelized "you are there" format that leaves readers totally in the dark about his sources. Interviews? Other books? Was he there? Even the book's notes section leaves the source authority unclear, which is worrisome, regardless of whether the scenes ring true. (They do.)

Near the end of Kitfield's book is a poignant paragraph on Sean McCaffrey: "In Sean's few years in the Army, his division had parachuted into combat in Panama and gone to war in Desert Storm, and the boy had been stationed as part of a peacekeeping force in the Sinai. Somalia and Bosnia and Korea beckoned. The chances that Sean would be asked to put himself into harm's way were increasing. Truly, [General McCaffrey's] son was now the prodigal soldier." American soldiers, scorned by American intellectuals and rejected by popular culture in much of the post-Vietnam era, continue to be asked to surrender their lives

in enterprises both wise and foolhardy. It's time we knew this group of people better.

*Gregg Easterbrook is a contributing editor of The Washington Monthly, Newsweek, and The Atlantic Monthly.*

#### **With Friends Like These**

*Bruce W. Jentleson*

*Norton, \$23*

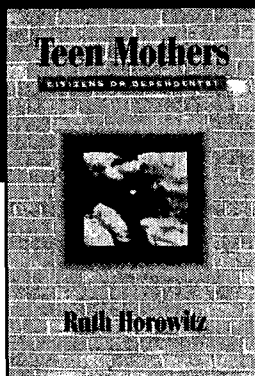
#### **By Charles William Maynes**

During the 1992 presidential campaign the conventional wisdom had George Bush, war hero and statesman, enjoying a decisive foreign policy advantage over foreign policy neophyte Bill Clinton. But it was Bush who nursed an Achilles heel: his policy toward Iraq.

Under Bush's leadership, the United States embarked on a concerted campaign to convert Iraq from a "terrorist" state into a cooperative partner. The campaign involved the sale of "dual-use" technology, which the Iraqis used

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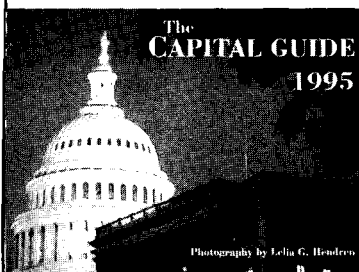
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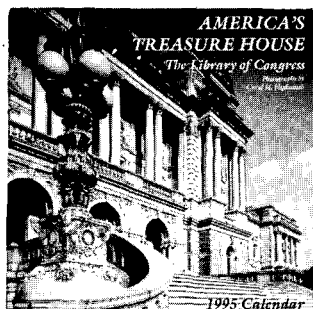
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to build up their military machine; massive credits to subsidize American food exports to Iraq; and quiet support for the decision of others, especially America's European allies, to sell Iraq not only huge amounts of conventional weapons but materials that Iraq used to build atomic, biological, and chemical weapons as well.

The Gulf War exposed this policy of attempted co-optation as a spectacular failure, and Bruce W. Jentleson, then an academic from the University of California at Davis, helped Democratic Vice Presidential candidate Al Gore develop a savage attack on the Bush record in a major campaign speech on September 29, 1992. That speech sullied the Bush record in foreign policy and planted doubt in the minds of voters that Bush was the master of foreign policy he claimed to be. So U.S. policy failures toward Iraq may not only have helped bring on a war but also elect a new president.

Now Jentleson has expanded his earlier research into a major study of U.S. policy toward Iraq in the period 1982-90. *With Friends Like These* offers a solid account of numerous blunders made by both the Reagan and Bush administrations regarding Iraq. But Jentleson wants to provide more than a good historical account. He argues that Reagan and Bush should have recognized from the beginning that their policy toward Iraq was going to fail; in explaining this, Jentleson believes he has arrived at a set of guidelines for dealing with so-called "rogue states" like Iraq or Iran—reciprocity, proportionality, and deterrent credibility—that could be as important as containment was for dealing with the former Soviet Union. Jentleson is right about the policy disaster, but it is less clear that his vision for the future is workable.

First, some history. As former Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger has sardonically commented, it is always hard to defend a policy that has failed. Certainly the Reagan and Bush administrations took a risk in dealing with Iraq the way they did, but

do the roots of the failure lie solely in the inability of the Bush administration to spot evidence of Iraqi perfidy—the surreptitious effort to acquire nuclear arms, the continued support for terrorist groups, or even the speeches of key Iraqi leaders—or were there deeper causes at work?

In his 1984 presidential campaign, Gary Hart pointed out that unless the United States had a credible national energy program, the country would remain dependent on oil from the Persian Gulf, a highly unstable part of the world. It was much cheaper, Hart suggested, to develop such a program than to bear the military costs of becoming the *gendarme* of the Persian Gulf. One way to view the story of U.S. policy toward Iraq under Reagan and Bush is that it represents yet another American attempt to deny the logic of Hart's case by looking for a local surrogate through whom the U.S. could attain oil stability on the cheap.

The first candidate to fulfill this American wish was Iran under the Shah. In May 1972, Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger opened America's arsenals to the Shah for all but nuclear weapons. They also agreed to the Shah's request for covert aid to help the Kurds revolt against the Iraqi government. The rise of the Ayatollah in the late seventies, of course, brought to an end the illusion of Iran as the defender of America's Persian Gulf interests.

With Iran out of the picture, the next candidate for the surrogate role was Iraq. A friendly Iraq would lower the costs of maintaining stability in the Gulf area and, just as important, would contribute to the peace process because a friendlier Iraq would help end Egypt's isolation in the Arab world. In all likelihood, this was the real logic behind the U.S. strategy, not simply a naive belief in Saddam's intentions.

That the U.S. needs such a surrogate is shown by current U.S. efforts, thus far unsuccessful, to persuade Saudi Arabia to allow the U.S. to base enough tanks and planes on Saudi soil to sup-

port a brigade of troops. Obviously, such an arrangement is much less desirable than a surrogate able to assume a larger military role for itself; but unless the U.S. has a clear base of support in the area, its commitment to the Gulf will remain vulnerable. The otherwise crazy twists and turns of U.S. policy in the Gulf under several administrations can be understood in this light.

Why didn't the policy toward Iraq work? Jentleson believes that the sole reason was Saddam's duplicity, which he documents in detail. But there may be other reasons as well.

One could have been that the United States did not sufficiently understand the position Iraq was in after its eight-year stalemate with Iran. Almost in passing, Jentleson points out the astonishing fact that in 1988 Iraqi oil revenues were only \$11 billion—roughly half their pre-war level, without taking inflation into account; at that point, Iraq was not earning enough to service the war debt it had incurred, yet it faced massive social and economic costs in rebuilding a society ravaged by the war with Iran. One important reason for its plight, of course, was that Kuwait was producing more than twice its OPEC quota.

Jentleson believes that Iraq could have solved its problem by demobilizing. Certainly, it is hard to argue that Iraq needed all the military power it had mustered, but with Iran and Syria on its borders, it is also hard to believe that any Iraqi government could have demobilized enough to resolve the very difficult financial situation in which the country found itself. The way to have prevented the war that began with Saddam's invasion of Kuwait, in other words, may have been a major debt-relief package, together with some demobilization.

Another reason for the U.S. failure may have been a set of U.S. policies that made it almost impossible for Washington to succeed in its effort to lure Iraq into a pro-American stance. Perhaps the Iraqi leadership was irredeemable from the start, but Americans should not forget that

over the years their government took a number of steps that would have made any foreign government suspicious, particularly one as paranoid as that of Saddam Hussein. These measures range from possible encouragement of Iraq to invade Iran (according to the top National Security Council official dealing with Gulf matters at the time) to the authorization of Israel to sell billions of dollars of arms to Iran when Iraq's back was against the wall. These sales may have denied Iraq victory.

What about Jentleson's larger effort to develop a containment policy for so-called "rogue states"? Unfortunately, it is hard to argue that Jentleson has found the Rosetta Stone. His first principle, reciprocity, is in the eyes of the beholder. U.S. officials undoubtedly believed that Baghdad was making concessions of considerable importance, and they were not alone. Such diligent observers of the Middle East as the editors of *The New Republic* pub-

lished, in the mid-eighties, an article praising Iraq as "the de facto protector of the regional status quo." Laurie Mylroie, an academic who now regularly publishes opinion pieces urging harsh measures against Iraq, argued in 1988 that Saddam was "a popular leader . . . young, energetic, alert to the needs of his people." Such observers were not entirely wrong in their assessments. Saddam *did* deliver on several issues of critical importance to U.S. policymakers: In particular, he re-established diplomatic relations with Egypt and provided key sponsorship for getting Egypt invited in May 1989 to its first Arab League summit since Camp David, an absolutely critical step if the peace process were to continue.

Jentleson's second principle, proportionality—that one country should, for every concession it makes, receive something equal in return—is also open to different interpretations. Whether one sort of concession is worth another will be forever open to dispute.



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Jentleson's final guideline—credible deterrence—is perhaps the most useful of the three he advances. Few will argue that the U.S. would not have been better off warning Saddam before he moved into Kuwait that the United States was prepared to go to war if he took such a step. But here, too, the scope of Jentleson's conceptual contribution is limited. America's problem with most rogue states is not that they are aggressive; it is that they exist at all. Cuba is not threatening its neighbors with military attack. One can argue that it never did. Libya and the Sudan are not threatening Egypt militarily. Nor is Iran threatening an invasion of its neighbors. America's problems with these states is that they offer an example of radical defiance and, by their very existence, encourage and sometimes help groups and individuals we do not like. Jentleson has no answer for that problem.

It may be that there is no answer other than controlled isolation. Like a

child in the middle of a temper tantrum, Iran or North Korea must calm down before others can develop a normal relationship with them. Helping to calm them down would be a policy to leave them alone. Like a child that comes out of her room voluntarily after others cease pleading with her to unlock the door, these states are more likely to be contained by studied indifference than by hostile encouragement. *Charles William Maynes is the editor of Foreign Policy magazine.*

### **Understanding Health Care Reform**

*Theodore R. Marmor*

*Yale University Press, \$35 (cloth); \$14 (paper)*

**By John B. Judis**

Theodore R. Marmor's book of essays was completed before the Clinton administration's health reform proposal met its doom in Congress, but Marmor has nonetheless written its epitaph. Reflecting on the possibility of "sys-

temic reform," Marmor writes, "The likelihood is that our politics will leave Americans with confused choices, escalating inflation, and considerable despair." Marmor's recent essays, collected under the title *Understanding Health Care Reform*, could have been more accurately titled *Understanding the Failure of Health Care Reform*.

Marmor, a professor at Yale's School of Organization and Management and an expert on health care policy, has been a leading proponent of a Canadian-style single-payer health insurance system, but like many health reform advocates, he tried to make the best of the Clinton effort. These essays, many of which were written during 1992-1993, record Marmor's attempt to explain what the choice of reforms entailed and why it would be difficult for any fundamental reform to be adopted. The essays range from outstanding to dispensable, and there is considerable repetition among them. But several themes emerge



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