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Amnesty and Regime Change

"We can do this the easy way, or we can do it the hard way"

Concept

- Regime change does not necessarily equal war – there are other ways to change the regime.
- Aside from a coup or internal collapse of the regime, it might be possible to induce Saddam and his inner circle to give up.
- Even if it is a long shot, it may be worthwhile trying. In any case, it shows that we are trying to avoid military conflict.

Proposal

- We announce that our overriding goal is to rid Iraq of a regime that
  - threatens us,
  - threatens Iraq's neighbors, and
  - oppresses its people.
- Toward this end, we announce that general amnesty of all officials, military and civilian, of the regime, under the following conditions:
- Saddam and a small number of his inner circle (perhaps 12 people in all) will be amnestied if they surrender power and leave Iraq within \_\_\_\_ days.
  - We will help them find a place of exile.
- All other regime members will be amnestied if they:
  - Do not commit any war crimes or atrocities after the date of the announcement.
  - Do not resist efforts by the U.S. or the Iraqi people to get rid of the Ba'athist regime and replace it by a broad-based, representative government.

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- Cooperate fully with any South Africa-style "Truth and Reconciliation" commission, or similar body, that may be established by the new Iraqi government.
- We would have to decide how to broach this proposal to the opposition, and whether we would give them a veto over it.

Assessment:

- Unlikely that Saddam and his closest cronies would accept such an offer:
  - More interested in power than money and comfort.
  - Wouldn't believe that they could be safe outside Iraq and out of power.
- Pros and cons, below, assume that offer will not be accepted by Saddam.
  - Some lower-level officials might abide by conditions.

Pro:

- Demonstrate our desire to avoid conflict.
- Make clear that our motive is not hatred of Saddam.
- Sow distrust among regime officials, if some show an interest in obtaining amnesty.
  - Encourage lower-level officials to find creative ways to sit out the war.

Con:

- Could demoralize members of the opposition.
  - Would antagonize them if they disagreed with it, and we proceeded to make the offer anyway.
- Going to such lengths to avoid conflict could sow doubts about our resolve and ultimate willingness to use force.
- Might not be able to deliver, if the opposition or Iraqi populace were determined to exact revenge on Ba'athist officials.

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