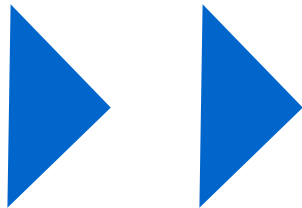




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The Travel Risk Management Company

## iJET Special Report: *Preparing for War with Iraq* February 14, 2003



### CONFIDENTIAL

This Special Report was created by our Middle East Regional Team to provide iJET's clients with the most comprehensive and up to date information on the on-going situation in the Middle East available. This special report serves as a follow up to the November issue of our Monthly Intelligence Review and an enhancement to our Worldcue intelligence and Risk Management services. Additional Special Reports will be published as the situation warrants. Contact iJET Client Services for details on iJET's Special Reports. iJET and Travel Intelligence are registered trademarks of iJET Travel Intelligence, Inc. Any reproduction or distribution of this report without the expressed written consent of iJET Travel Intelligence is prohibited.

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## iJET Special Report: Preparing for War with Iraq

If there was any doubt as to the resolve of the U.S. in deposing Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, it ended with U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell's Feb. 5 address to the U.N. Powell made it clear that U.S. patience for the U.N. process is nearly exhausted. "Leaving Saddam Hussein in possession of weapons of mass destruction for a few more months or years," he said, "is not an option - not in a post-September 11 world." He seemed even more impatient Feb. 14 as U.N. arms inspectors addressed the U.N Security Council. Last minute concessions on the part of Iraq to permit U-2 reconnaissance flights, or the handing over of additional documentation regarding the country's weapons of mass destruction (WMD) are not likely to forestall military action. At this late date, the U.S. would view these concessions as a stall tactic. Proposals crafted as a result of emergency meetings by the Arab League will likely be tendered, but it's unlikely that an 11<sup>th</sup>-hour plan would preclude a conflict that is reaching a point of inevitability. Barring a coup d'etat by a faction willing to deal with the U.S., or an arrangement that would send Saddam into exile, the U.S. is set to forcibly remove Saddam from power - with or without the consent of the U.N.

Conservatively, the U.S. and U.K have at least 170,000 troops in the region, with tens of thousands more en route or slated to deploy in the next coming weeks. Aircraft, aircraft carriers, tanks and ships continue to pour into the Persian Gulf. Between now and the first week of March, preparations for a full-scale invasion will be complete.

Important dates:

- **Jan. 24:** The U.S. Department of State directed its embassies and consulates to inform U.S. citizens overseas to be prepared for the possibility of evacuation, though the department downplayed any direct connection with a possible conflict with Iraq.
- **Jan. 30:** The U.S. issued travel warnings for Kuwait and Saudi Arabia authorizing voluntary departure of embassy non-emergency embassy personnel and family members from Kuwait, and family members from Saudi Arabia.
- **Feb. 7:** The U.S. authorized voluntary departure of non-emergency embassy and consulate personnel and families from Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.
- **Feb. 10:** The Conclusion of the Hajj. It's estimated more than 2 million Muslims made the annual pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia this year. The majority of pilgrims should return to their homes around the world by Feb. 18.
- **Feb. 11-13:** Eid Al-Adha (Feast of Sacrifice), major Muslim holiday,
- **Feb. 12:** The U.S. issued travel warnings for Bahrain, Qatar and Saudi Arabia. It authorized the voluntary departure of families and non-emergency embassy personnel from Bahrain and Qatar. Saudi Arabia added non-emergency embassy and consulate personnel to the Jan. 30 travel warning.
- **Feb. 14:** Chief U.N. Weapons Inspector Hans Blix and International Atomic Energy Agency Chief El Baradei briefed the U.N. Security Council on the status of the inspections and Iraq's compliance with U.N Resolution 1441. Diplomatic lines are drawn, with the U.S. increasing the pressure for timely, decisive action.

- **Feb. 15:** Kuwait's planned date for closing vast areas of the northern and western region near Iraq off-limits; this amounts to about 60% of the country.
- **Feb. 15-16:** Emergency meeting of Arab League foreign ministers in Cairo, Egypt. Arab League Summit originally scheduled for March 24 in Manama, Bahrain expected to be moved up to the week of Feb. 22, and will be hosted in Cairo.
- **March 3:** There will be a new moon, as there was Jan. 16, 1991, when U.S.-led coalition forces conducted the first wave of attacks by air.
- **April 9:** First day in 2002 when temperatures reached the 100 degree Fahrenheit mark in the Kuwaiti desert. High temperatures would be an impediment for troops engaged in protracted ground operations who may have to operate in full chemical protective gear in response to anticipated or suspected chemical attacks. Coalition forces would want to wrap up the main military operations as early as possible.

The U.S., U.K., Canada, Spain, Germany, and other nations have been busy preparing contingency plans for their citizens abroad. Expatriates have been advised to have all vital documents in order and to ensure that passports and visas are current. They were similarly advised to have adequate supplies of food, water and medications on hand as well as a complete inventory of household effects.

## Terrorism against Western Interests

There are several examples of fatal terrorist acts targeting Western citizens around the Middle East and North Africa during the past year:

- **April 11** bombing of a synagogue in Djerba, Tunisia which killed 21, including 14 German tourists
- **Oct. 6** U.S.S. Cole-style bombing of the French-flagged oil tanker Limberg off the coast of Yemen
- **Oct. 8** shooting of U.S. Marine in Kuwait-second victim survived
- **Oct. 28** assassination of a USAID diplomat in Amman, Jordan
- **Nov. 21** shooting of a U.S. missionary nurse in Sidon, Lebanon
- **Dec. 30** shooting of three U.S. missionaries at a hospital in Jibla, Yemen
- **Jan. 21** shooting of a U.S. Department of Defense contractor in Kuwait-second victim survived

A main concern is that the outbreak of hostilities with Iraq may serve as a trigger for coordinated or even simultaneous attacks on U.S. and other Western interests worldwide.

Numerous other non-lethal attacks targeting Western-franchised businesses such as McDonalds, Kentucky Fried Chicken and Pizza Hut have been targeted in Lebanon and Saudi Arabia. Lebanon has since posted armed soldiers outside many of these restaurants.

Outside the Middle East and North Africa, 2002 saw the bombings in Mombasa, Kenya and Bali, Indonesia, as well as several attacks in Pakistan and attacks on U.S. soldiers in the Philippines.

A main concern is that the outbreak of hostilities with Iraq may serve as a trigger for coordinated or even simultaneous attacks on U.S. and other Western interests worldwide. The Philippine terrorist organization Abu Sayyaf announced that if the U.S. attacks Iraq, it would mobilize its forces against U.S. targets in Mindanao and Manila. A serious threat of terrorism continues in

Indonesia and Pakistan. Terrorist cells have been disrupted across Europe and many countries, especially the UK, have ratcheted security up significantly.

In his taped address aired Feb. 11 on Al-Jazeera, an individual believed to be Osama bin Laden said that it is "permissible to spill the blood and take the property of those who supported the U.S..."; and included among those, rulers of Arab countries who have provided military bases, administrative assistance or even vocal support in favor of action against Iraq, calling them "apostates outside the community of Muslims." Osama bin Laden called on Muslims to liberate themselves from the unjust and reengage ruling regimes enslaved by the U.S., specifically naming Jordan, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Yemen as being "the most qualified regions for liberation."

## The Threat in Middle East and North Africa

There are obvious threats posed by an Iraqi military response in nations in the Persian Gulf region and Israel. Conventionally armed SCUD missiles were Iraq's weapon of choice during the 1991 Gulf War. There is looming concern that a desperate Iraq might resort to arming the remaining SCUD missiles with chemical or biological warheads and targeting Bahrain, Israel, Kuwait or even Saudi Arabia. Another concern is the possibility that Iraq would use unmanned aerial vehicles (drones) to deliver a chemical attack on invading troops or against targets in neighboring countries.

### SECURITY RATINGS KEY:

- 1 = Minimal
- 2 = Low
- 3 = Moderate
- 4 = High
- 5 = Very High
- NR = Not Rated

In the Middle East and North Africa, anti-Western demonstrations are occurring with increasing frequency and size. To date, most have been orderly and peaceful, but the potential for violence increases proportionately to the inevitability of military action against Iraq. The Palestinian-Israeli issue remains at the core of strained U.S.-Arab relations, and is an exacerbating factor in the loud, region-wide opposition to military action against Iraq. Arab countries are quick to cite a double standard in the U.S. Middle East policy: the U.S. call for the immediate, full and unconditional compliance of Iraq with U.N. resolutions, while years-old resolutions regarding the Palestinian sovereignty and human rights have taken a back seat to the War on Terrorism and Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. The deteriorating state of affairs between Israel and the Palestinians serves to intensify anti-U.S. sentiment throughout the region. Looking at countries in the Middle East region, we can forecast the likely impact:

**Bahrain** (Security Rating: 3) historically has had good relations with the U.S. and is the homeport for the U.S. Fifth Fleet, which gives the U.S. a formidable naval presence in the Persian Gulf. Anti-U.S. sentiment in Bahrain is rising, as demonstrated by street protests over the U.S.'s continued support of Israel. A violent demonstration occurred in early April and another large anti-U.S. demonstration in late May. In the event of military action in Iraq, resentment toward U.S. policies will likely grow, potentially increasing the threat to U.S. interests.

In its Jan 30 travel warning, the U.S. Department of State urged citizens already in Bahrain to rigorously evaluate their security situation and consider departing.

**Egypt** (Security Rating: 3) is opposed to military action against Iraq. But the government depends on the sizeable aid it receives from the U.S. Anti-U.S. demonstrations are likely to increase. The Egyptian government has handled terrorism with an iron fist, but attacks cannot be ruled out.

**Iran** (Security Rating: 3) maintains a neutral position on the war, despite official rhetoric suggesting growing opposition to U.S. military action against Iraq (with which Iran fought a bloody war of attrition from 1980-1988). As a charter member of Bush's "Axis of Evil," Iran is paying close attention to the buildup of U.S. forces in the Persian Gulf. With ongoing U.S. military operations in Afghanistan to its east and possible action in Iraq to its west, Iran has vowed to remain neutral. U.S. and Iranian officials have met over the past month to ensure Iran will not interfere.

Economically, Iran knows the hardship of caring for refugees, a prospect it likely would face again if the U.S. strikes Iraq. An estimated 500,000 Iraqis crossed the border to Iran during the 1991 Gulf War.

**Israel** (Security Rating: 3) has taken extraordinary measures to protect its citizens against a possible attack by Iraq. The memory of the 1991 SCUD attacks launched against their country is fresh in the minds of Israelis. The government has deployed Patriot and Arrow anti-missile batteries around major cities and vital strategic centers. Gas masks have been distributed and emergency services have conducted numerous disaster preparedness exercises. With fewer missiles at his disposal, Saddam would likely be forced to launch an attack during the initial days of a war. This would deny U.S. or other coalition forces an opportunity to locate and destroy the missiles before they could be used.

At the outbreak of war, Israel may temporarily close its air space. In the event of a prolonged conflict, Israel might re-route flights to Eilat.

Israel would likely implement a full closure of the West Bank and Gaza Strip at the beginning of a war in order to prevent terrorist attacks. Another security concern for Israel is possible cross-border attacks by Palestinian militants and Hizballah fighters from Lebanon - though recently Lebanon, Syria and Hizballah have intimated that the border would be quiet so as not to provoke Israel. Security along all the borders would be dramatically increased during a war, and some border crossings may be closed completely.

**Jordan** (Security Rating: 4) is at increasing risk of terrorism. To date, anti-war demonstrations have drawn from 100 to 2,000 people and have been peaceful. However, as the likelihood of war increases, the demonstrations are likely to increase in size and frequency. Violent demonstrations are possible in many parts of the country, including Amman, Palestinian refugee camps and southern cities. Some groups may attempt to use the war to undermine the regime. The Nov. 10 uprising by Islamic extremists in the Ma'an area demonstrated the potential for challenges to the government. Terrorist attacks targeting Westerners are also possible.

The estimated 2.5 million resident Palestinians are growing increasingly frustrated with the lack of a long-term peace plan, the delayed establishment of an autonomous Palestinian state and the escalating cycle of violence in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. This also poses a significant risk which could threaten Westerners in Jordan.

Jordan is also at risk of being overwhelmed with Iraqi refugees flowing in from their eastern border in the event of war. Estimates place 1991 Iraqi refugees at 1 million, and an estimated 300,000 still live in Jordan. It was revealed Feb. 13 that Jordan would set up two refugee camps on the border to be under tight control by Jordanian Security forces.

Economically critical would be the loss of oil from Iraq; it could cost Jordan an estimated USD 2 million per day to replace on the open market.

**Kuwait** (Security Rating: 4) is a prime target for an attack by Iraq as well as terrorism. In a Jan. 30 travel warning, the U.S. urged citizens already in Kuwait to rigorously evaluate their security situation and consider departing. The U.S. has an extremely large number of troops and huge stockpiles of equipment in Kuwait, and it will be a primary staging area for any U.S.-led operations against Iraq. Kuwait has declared the northern and western region near Iraq - more than half of the country - off limits to all but military personnel.

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member nations are sending troops and equipment to Kuwait shortly after Feb. 15 under the council's joint defense agreement as a defensive measure to protect it against any Iraqi attack.

There have been a series of terrorist attacks against U.S. personnel in Kuwait - including the Oct. 8 shooting death of a U.S. Marine and the Jan. 21 murder of a U.S. Department of Defense contractor by Muslim extremists. On Feb. 3, the two largest U.S. schools in Kuwait announced their decision to suspend classes Feb. 10-March 22 due to security concerns.

In the event of hostilities, commercial air transport in and out of Kuwait could be suspended. As a contingency, Kuwait Airways has made plans to divert flights to Sharjah International Airport in the United Arab Emirates. Other airlines may follow suit.

**Lebanon** (Security Rating: 4) has seen numerous anti-war and anti-U.S. rallies. On Jan. 27 and 28, Lebanese Internal Security Forces and riot police cordoned off a wide area around the U.S. Embassy in the Beirut suburb of Awkar after more than 200 Palestinian and Lebanese protesters attempted to make their way to the embassy compound. Many attempted to break through police barricades, but were unsuccessful. Future violent protests are possible.

Lebanon has expressed concern that Israel might stage an incursion into Lebanon in an attempt to rout elements of the Hizballah terrorist group while the U.S. is in Iraq. With 20,000 Syrian troops in Lebanon, any significant Israeli operation in Lebanon could spark a broader regional conflict. The Lebanese Army has deployed additional units to the south to exercise more control of Hizballah activities in the region and to keep a watchful eye on its border with Israel.

**Morocco** (Security Rating: 3) Anti-war demonstrations notwithstanding, Morocco has been calm overall. Ten terror suspects were arrested in May, accused of planning to carry out attacks on U.S. ships in the Straits of Gibraltar and tourist spots catering to Westerners. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office announced Feb. 13 that British authorities believe the threat from international terrorism in Morocco had increased. No reason was given for issuing a new advisory, but it may be linked to Osama bin Laden's singling out Morocco for regime change.

**Oman** (Security Rating: 2) has remained quiet to date. However, the presence of U.S. troops increases the possibility of terrorism.

**Qatar** (Security Rating: 2) has very close military ties with the U.S. The U.S. recently completed a USD 1 billion upgrade of the Al-Udeid Air Base, where it has pre-staged numerous military aircraft. The U.S. Central Command has also deployed personnel to man their recently deployed mobile command center at the As-Sayliyah base in Qatar. This will be the command and control hub for any military action in the region. No public dissent or anti-U.S. sentiment has been noted. Even so, the threat of terrorism cannot be ruled out.

**Saudi Arabia** (Security Rating: 3) Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal has maintained Saudi Arabia will not allow the U.S. to use Saudi territory to launch an attack on Iraq; however, will most likely continue to allow support missions such as AWACS flights, reconnaissance and

refueling missions. Al-Qaeda and other extremists seeking to topple the Saudi ruling family threaten Saudi Arabia's internal security. The renewed call by bin Laden for the "liberation" of Saudi Arabia further increases the risk of terrorism, or even an attempt to overthrow the government. The Saudi leadership is under tremendous internal pressure to insist on the departure of U.S. troops from the country.

Economically, Saudi Arabia is heavily dependent on oil sales to the West. If the U.S. forces the desired regime change in Iraq, a dramatic increase in oil production from Iraq would greatly reduce U.S. reliance on Saudi oil. Foreseeing such a scenario, Saudi Arabia is already looking to expand sales to India and China to replace anticipated loss of sales to the West.

**Syria** (Security Rating: 3) continues to be firmly in the anti-U.S. camp. Its continued backing of Hizballah and close relations with Hamas and the Islamic Jihad remain sore points with the U.S. administration. Action against Iraq would likely result in an upsurge in anti-U.S. demonstrations. Past demonstrations have turned violent. The December 1998 U.S.-led military strikes against Iraq sparked violent protests at the U.S. Embassy in Damascus, where protesters inflicted significant property damage to the chancery, the public diplomacy offices, the Damascus community school and the ambassador's residence.

Refugees from Iraq could become a burden in Syria, but the government would likely take measures to minimize the flow of refugees across the border. Syria also has a sizable indigenous Kurdish population, but doesn't view the Kurds as a threat to their internal security at this time. As with Jordan, Syria has a large Palestinian population which could become agitated over a U.S.-led war against Iraq and the continued backing of Israel

**Turkey**: (Security Rating: 3) As a predominantly Muslim, yet secular government, Turkey is at risk of external terrorism, especially since it permits U.S. military forces to stage from its bases. Turkey's primary concern is that if Saddam Hussein is deposed, Kurds in the region may attempt to establish an independent Kurdish state in northern Iraq. There are an estimated 4 million Kurds in northern Iraq alone and a significant number in Turkey, Syria and Iran. The Turkish government has made it very clear that it would consider the creation of an independent Kurdish state a grave threat and would take military action to prevent the establishment of one. Turkey will also take steps to prevent an influx of refugees across the border.

Turkey also faces a decrease in tourism revenue, a major piece of their economy. They have visibly increased security in popular tourist areas to allay fears of potentially wary travelers. The U.S. has pledged economic assistance to many countries that suffer losses due to military action in Iraq, and as a loyal NATO ally, Turkey will likely be rewarded. The Turkish government has agreed to continue to allow U.S. military aircraft to conduct operations against Iraq as it has since 1991, and on Feb. 18, the Turkish Parliament will vote on whether to allow the U.S. to station as many as 38,000 additional troops in Turkey. A recent poll showed that 87% of Turks oppose any U.S. military intervention in Iraq, and 94% of the Turkish population opposes the use of Turkish bases and troops to attack Iraq. If war breaks out, large and violent demonstrations are possible in cities throughout Turkey.

**United Arab Emirates** (Security Rating: 2) may experience anti-U.S. and anti-war demonstrations; however, to date, they have been small and orderly.

**Yemen** (Security Rating: 5) remains a high-risk destination despite the central government's efforts to eradicate Al-Qaeda from the country. In its November travel warning, the U.S. cited credible reports that terrorist groups have planned attacks against U.S. interests in Yemen, advising citizens to defer travel. Public demonstrations are likely to increase in frequency and size

in the coming days and weeks. The largest demonstrations can be expected in Sana'a, where political parties quickly mobilize crowds for spontaneous demonstrations. A Jan. 27 demonstration saw at least 250,000 participants. Such demonstrations hold the potential to turn violent. Widespread attacks against Western nationals and facilities are possible, and the government may be unable to effectively control the cycle of violence.

Anti-war protests are occurring worldwide, and anti-U.S. sentiment continues to grow abroad in anticipation of a U.S.-led attack on Iraq. Large internationally coordinated anti-war rallies are planned for Feb. 15 in various countries including the U.S. (see specific country alerts in Worldcue for demonstration details). More protests are expected.

### In order to mitigate your risk:

Register with your embassy or consulate when traveling abroad. This is especially important in potential hotspots. Many embassies have on-line sign-up or permit you to download and print the registration form to fax it prior to traveling. Registering with the embassy enables the staff to contact you in the event of an emergency. Diplomatic missions abroad could dramatically reduce staffing or suspend services with little or no warning in the event of hostilities with Iraq, therefore it's important that they have good contact information.

Ensure return travel arrangements are made in advance and reconfirm airline reservations 24 hours before traveling. Again, this is especially important in countries such as Bahrain, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia that employ millions of expatriate laborers, who in the event of hostilities, may attempt to depart en masse.

Avoid all demonstrations and large public gatherings and maintain as low a profile as possible. Remember that U.S and other Western embassies and consulates as well as U.N. facilities may be targeted for protests. Other likely rallying points are town squares and city centers.

Do not wear clothing or carry items that identify your nationality. Try not to "stand out" in the crowd.

Adhere to local cultural peculiarities and avoid sensitive topics of discussion, including religious or political issues.



### About iJET Travel Intelligence

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