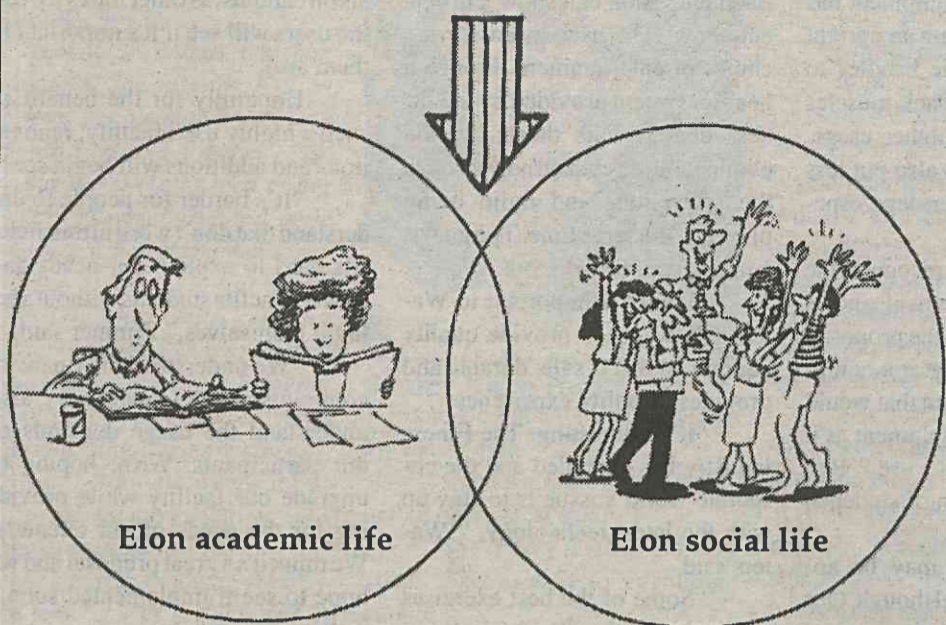


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In response to recommendations from the 1998 Academic Summit, the Academic Affairs office has allocated funding for student/faculty projects to increase overlap in social/academic activities. Funding is designed to pay for direct expenses for activities.

Deadline for submitting Spring semester proposals are December 1 and February 15.

Experts examine the best way to handle Hussein

John Donnelly
Knight-Ridder

WASHINGTON - Should Saddam Hussein be killed?

As the United States and Iraq inch closer to yet another showdown, U.S. congressmen and Iraqi experts criticized America's policy as too shortsighted and too limited, with some suggesting the target should be Hussein himself.

But when it comes to Iraq, the United States has consistently avoided the jugular — it is illegal under U.S. law to assassinate foreign leaders — and the Clinton administration reiterated Thursday that toppling Hussein is not its explicit mission.

"Any use of force, if it were chosen, would be ... to degrade his capacity to develop and deliver weapons of mass destruction, as well as Iraq's ability to threaten its neighbors," State Department spokesman James Rubin said.

But Sen. Richard Lugar, R-Ind., one of the most respected voices in Congress on international issues, encouraged the White House to embark on a long-term plan to oust the Iraqi leader, especially if he continues to defy the world community and block U.N. weapons inspectors. Lugar said that would likely involve many more military resources and ground troops, a politically unpopular decision in the United States.

Lugar said the U.S. goal should be removing Hussein from "effective leadership," and if that failed, "I suspect then he will have to be killed."

Even if that was the American aim, success would be extraordinarily difficult.

The ever-elusive Hussein, 60, has survived two wars and numerous uprisings. Few believe that a sustained U.S. air attack would lead to a successful insurrection because of Hussein's long track record of crushing opposition movements and executing all suspected of having ties with them.

But several experts said a steady diet of bomb attacks on selective targets could significantly undermine him and make him an easier target in the future.

The line of attack, those experts say, is bombing first and cultivating an opposition force later.

Amatzia Baram, an Israeli expert on Iraq now teaching at Georgetown University in Washington, believes Hussein is now "very vulnerable" to an air attack. Baram advocated a "preliminary attack" that would last for several days and then pause for a few weeks to give Saddam the opportunity to allow the U.N. weapons teams access to sites. If he doesn't back down, the United States along with Britain could strike several strategic targets.

Among them, he said, were "symbolic" sites, such as eight presidential palaces in Baghdad, Tikrit and Basra, and "important strongholds" such as about a dozen barracks

and a dozen more command control sites operated by Hussein's Special Security Organization, or SSO, and sites controlled by the 6,000-member Special Republican Guards.

The SSO, estimated at about 2,000 elite troops who are mostly from Hussein's hometown of Tikrit, performs the dual task of protecting Hussein and hiding Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, Baram said. One key SSO job, according to Scott Ritter, the U.N. weapons inspector who resigned earlier this year and issued stinging criticism of U.S. policy toward Iraq, was to outfox the U.N. weapons inspection teams. On several occasions, according to Ritter, SSO guards moved weapons out the back door as the U.N. inspectors walked in the front.

The SSO headquarters are no secret. About six five-story barracks are along the west side of the Tigris River on Palestine Street in downtown Baghdad; another five or six are near or on Haifa Street southwest of the river. They are in a mixed residential and commercial district.

"The United States knows exactly where they are," Baram said. "But they may go for a cleaner job and not touch civilians by targeting the command control sites and Saddam's (2,500) tanks. The U.N. still has the U2 (spy) plane flying every day, so they know everything."

But even with a masterful air bombing campaign, Baram estimated only a 20 to 25 percent chance that "someone will rise against him."

With such low odds, he and others argued for developing an opposition force. On October 31, President Clinton signed a \$97 million "Iraq Liberation Act" that calls for training and equipping an Iraqi opposition force. But the administration, which must choose who will get the money by the end of January, believes that none of the existing opposition leaders can do the job of setting up a liberation force either in the Kurdish part of northern Iraq or along the southern flank in Kuwait.

Another key question is Hussein's answer to a military attack. Several analysts said they doubted he would launch Scud missile attacks as he did during the Gulf War. For one thing, they said, he might have only two missile launchers remaining.

The Iraqi leader would almost certainly revive his efforts to develop nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, the officials warned, and in the meantime he might try to use some of the chemical and biological weapons he is believed to be hiding as terror weapons.

The officials said Iraq has extensive links to terrorist groups based in the Sudan, where terrorist leader Osama bin Laden, now wanted in the bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, was once based. Iraqi intelligence and military officials regularly travel to and from the Sudan, one official said.