The United States government’s work is not nearly complete regarding the war on terror. More states that sponsor terrorism in its many forms still exist. Not only providing a safe haven, these countries also supply terrorist groups with logistical support (such as funding, training, and equipment) to carry out horrible acts against innocent civilians. The Taliban of Afghanistan was one regime guilty of these crimes; Saddam Hussein’s Iraq is another.

Analyzing President George W. Bush’s recent trip to the United States, I noticed his particular emphasis on the development of weapons of mass destruction. Iraq has flaunted its objective of manufacturing nuclear and chemical missiles and bombs. In Bush’s own words, Iraq has “piloted to develop anthrax and nerve gas and nuclear weapons for over a decade.” Saddam Hussein has tested some of these weapons on his very own people.

One agreed condition of the Gulf War treaty was the Iraqi surrender and destruction of all its weapons of mass destruction. This was to be enforced by inspectors sponsored by the United Nations. After several years of haggling and hilarity, the UN inspectors eventually left Iraq in 1999. The regime was successful in preventing any genuine intruders being made into his weapons program. In addition, Saddam Hussein’s exiled brother was subsequently murdered upon his return to his homeland due to his knowledge of Iraqi tactical capabilities. Iraq has continued to develop biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons since then.

Moreover, Iraq has constantly played with its limitations regarding the established no-fly zones to the north and south of the country. These restrictions were instituted after the Gulf War to protect the Kurdish and Shite ethnic groups from bombing and attacks by the Iraqi military. Air-tyranny has continually harassed patrols of American and British fighter jets—sometimes even managing a direct hit on Allied aircraft. This is representative of blatant Iraqi disrespect of the international system of law. America has retaliated quite harshly at times. President Bush launched one campaign early into his term; so have former Presidents Clinton and Bush senior.

Nothing, in fact, appears to discourage the Iraqi government’s ignorance of the rules they live under. Iraq has been connected suspiciously to the attacks of Sept. 11 as well. For example, there was the much-publicized meeting in Prague in early 2001 between an Iraqi senior intelligence official and the alleged leader of the hijackers, Mohammad Atta. Further, the Economist recently reported the strange coincidence of the Iraqi Embassy purchasing a large insurance plan for a building nearby the Pentagon just before the attacks. More concrete evidence has been discovered of Iraq involvement with terrorism, and not only of the Sept. 11 atrocities in particular. American spy satellites have photographed an abandoned Boeing airliner in Iraq—the ideal training area for terrorists. This is representative of blatant Iraqi disrespect of the international system of law. America has retaliated quite harshly at times. President Bush launched one campaign early into his term; so have former Presidents Clinton and Bush senior.

Though victory would be more difficult to achieve in Iraq, it is still very possible. Again (as in Afghanistan), clear objectives must be established at the outset of the war. Saddam Hussein, along with his lieutenants, must be removed from power. Certain allies, especially Great Britain, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia, should provide diplomatic and logistical support (such as a staging area and use of national air space). Of course, a comprehensive bombing campaign must be put in place. A ground war will be fought with more than just Special Operations Forces. The Iraqi Republican Guard is a much more formidable enemy than any faced in Afghanistan. Overall, to win a war against the present Iraq would not be as easy as it was in the past Gulf War. However, the job was never done in that war. Nevertheless, it must be finished now.

Accompanying President Bush’s State of the Union address, any and all threats to American security must be eliminated. Adhering to these guidelines, Saddam Hussein’s regime must be destroyed. Its authority has been a curse on its people—starving and even massacring them at will. Hussein’s government has been guilty of producing weapons of mass destruction to terrorize and intimidate its neighbors. Strangely, Iraq has been connected with Sept. 11 and other acts of terrorism through unvarnished circumstance.

If there was any evidence of Iraq’s malicious intent, it was that it was the only nation not to submit to us then and there is no reason another war would force him to concede now. There is no Iraqi indigenous resistance like the Northern Alliance, making things considerably harder for the U.S., and the mere thought of installing yet another government which may bite us later in the proverbial backside is frightening. Any de-stabilization of Hussein is in itself very problematic because of what could become the worst U.S. foreign policy nightmare since the Cuban Missile Crisis - Pan-Islam. In fact, stability is most likely the only reason he’s still around. Imposing sanctions on Iraq will only hurt the Iraqi people, not Hussein or any of his generals. Besides, were the U.S. to go in and forcibly disrupt Saddam, he is reportedly guilty of countless human rights violations and we would have to put him on trial. To hand Hussein over to the Constitutions- drumping Attorney General Ashcroft is to risk terrible terrorist retaliation.

So if going into Iraq isn’t the solution, what is? Simply put, we must go against standard policy and … negotiate with terrorists. Why? Because it is virtually impossible to defend ourselves against their mode of warfare. The U.S. has long known that the main threat to our national security is terrorism. We should establish relations with al-Qaeda and convince them to hand over mullah Omar, Osama bin Laden and anyone else connected with Sept. 11. If Omar and Osama bin Laden are not the mythical figures they have been made out to be, we may have a chance to make all of these countries learn to play by our rules.

Having already attempted and failed one military operation in the last six months, the United States government is, characteristically, looking to try again. The objective of Afghanistan was simple: drive Osama bin Laden out of whatever hole he is hiding in and bring him to “Infinite Justice.” The mission failed, with enormous costs. Furthermore, the combined Iraq/Afghanistan situation brings to light glaring problematic trends in U.S. foreign policy. Why, now, would we go into Iraq?

In attempting to find bin Laden, we leveled a country that already had no infrastructure and now are responsible for rebuilding it. The Taliban met us with such minimal resistance that the only reason America invaded Afghanistan was to come from friendly fire and accidents. The Northern Alliance bore the brunt of the ground combat, following a unique American tradition: we maintain a prohibitively expensive professional army but refuse to utilize it. Instead, we train foreign factions – at places like the unacceptable School of the Americas – that will fight and die in place of our troops. Vietnam proved that the nation will not tolerate American casualties. Our continued interference in the domestic affairs of our sovereign nations is enabled by our use of other peoples as instruments of our paranoid and micromanagement foreign policy. Haven’t we learned not to install in/digenous “opposition” governments that will supposedly act as our puppets? Do the names Hussein, Pincoy, and Batista, all oppressors sanctioned by the United States with disastrous consequences, remind us not to make another horrible mistake? Of course not! The United States is already slipping back into that good old Cold War mentality that was so much fun when the USSR was around. In calling Iran and Iraq the “axis of evil”, George W. epitomizes the neo-Cold War mentality that is threatening to turn our foreign policy into another inane battle between “good” (us) and “evil” (them).

The new mission into Iraq is doomed to failure. First of all, we’ve been there before, but made the decision to stop a few miles outside Baghdad. The Gulf War did not make Saddam Hussein submit to us then and there is no reason another war would force him to concede now. There is no Iraqi indigenous resistance like the Northern Alliance, making things considerably harder for the U.S., and the mere thought of installing yet another government which may bite us later in the proverbial backside is frightening. Any de-stabilization of Hussein is in itself very problematic because of what could become the worst U.S. foreign policy nightmare since the Cuban Missile Crisis - Pan-Islam. In fact, stability is most likely the only reason he’s still around. Imposing sanctions on Iraq will only hurt the Iraqi people, not Hussein or any of his generals. Besides, were the U.S. to go in and forcibly disrupt Saddam, he is reportedly guilty of countless human rights violations and we would have to put him on trial. To hand Hussein over to the Constitutions-drumping Attorney General Ashcroft is to risk terrible terrorist retaliation.

So if going into Iraq isn’t the solution, what is? Simply put, we must go against standard policy and … negotiate with terrorists. Why? Because it is virtually impossible to defend ourselves against their mode of warfare. The U.S. has long known that the main threat to our national security is terrorism. We should establish relations with al-Qaeda and convince them to hand over mullah Omar, Osama bin Laden and anyone else connected with Sept. 11. If Omar and Osama bin Laden are not the mythical figures they have been made out to be, we may have a chance to make all of these countries learn to play by our rules.

The surest way to protect our innocent civilians and our freedoms is to fight for conflict resolution. Punitive, violent responses like going into Iraq and short-term solutions like instating a puppet government have not worked in the past. In the wake of September 11th, the nation cried for vengeance. We had a chance to strike hard, they won’t remember years of bombs and bloodshed. Great Britain finally has begun negotiating with the IRA. The argument against these tactics is a viable one, that negotiations would only encourage other evil regimes to pursue their goals of taking advantage of us. If we go in, we will become the terrorist, not them. It is a two-sided struggle, not merely Arab terrorists encroaching upon Israeli settlers, as most of our policy would have you believe. So, if possible, why not establish relations with Hamas and Hezbollah too? Why not try and neutralize through negotiation? Nothing else has worked thus far. Bin Laden and associates cannot be killed, and yet we have a chance to potentially neutralize them. We have a chance to potentially neutralize the real reason why we lack freedom. If we can, then why not look at the hope that might be gained from negotiating with the terrorists? It is a viable option, not a viable horror show to the new generation. Bush must not only cut off the funding to these movements, he must also stop the support of the Arab states that give these people a home.

In the year 2003, when again the U.S. begins another war, we have a choice. We can choose to risk causing another September 11th by perpetuating this cycle of violence and retaliation. Or, we can give the victims the honor they really deserve by pursuing a lasting peace.