

C-Span.

I am a C-Span watcher for years. If not for C-Span, CNN and some sports at nite, it would be Books and the Raido all the time.

I suggest that two good guests on the morning program would be Mr Royko, and the Professor, or perhaps just the Professor.

He has to be one sharp person. He knew more than the President and the CIA?.

At my VFW Post we had thousands in body bags. We thought the Army of Saddam was greater than the German Army at the Battle of the Bulge. BUT WITH GAS.

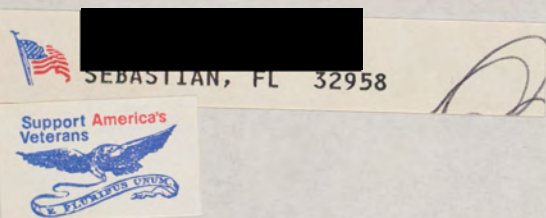
Most of us at the Post that day wanted to give Saddam more time to give up the ship, guess we were wrong, or were we?.

In any event we should get another side of that War. How much did they know about Suddam's Army, was this a big P. R. put on, wonder.

Keep up the good work.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]



cc: S. Trahern ✓

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Chicago professor knew Saddam's army was a pushover

"In a few days, we've destroyed what one expert after another had told us was the fourth most powerful fighting force in the world. Expert after expert told us we would win a ground war, but it could take weeks, maybe months of warfare, and at a great cost in American lives.

Maybe I missed it, but of all the retired generals and military analysts on the tube, did even one of them say that in four days the world's fourth most powerful fighting force would be acting like haggard recruits? And the loss of American lives would be fewer than we suffered in a routine World War II skirmish?

Someone did predict it. No, not me. I believed the retired generals who said it was going to be long, hard and bloody. But on Jan. 15, an article appeared on our op-ed page. It was written by Professor John J. Mearsheimer, chair of the political science department at the University of Chicago, and a military scholar. I thought: "I hope he's right, but..."

Here are portions of the professor's remarkably prophetic article:

"Many Americans fear that throwing Saddam Hussein's army out of Kuwait would be a very tough job for the American military, with U.S. casualties ranging into the tens of thousands... This pessimistic view is incorrect. In fact, the U.S. military is poised to clobber Hussein's forces and score a stunning victory in Kuwait... The campaign should be over in a week or less and probably fewer than 1,000 Americans will die in combat, a very low number for a large army fighting in a major armored war."

Mearsheimer pointed out that our forces



MIKE ROYKO

are better equipped, better trained in armored warfare and that we controlled the skies.

In contrast: "The Iraqi army ... is a Third World military that is incapable of fighting mobile armored battles. This crucial Iraqi shortcoming in tank warfare was demonstrated often in the recent Iran-Iraq war, a conflict in which the manifest deficiencies of the Iraqi military were laid bare.

"In fact, even by Third World standards, the Iraqi army is a below-average fighting force. It is certainly not in the same league as the North Vietnamese army, and it does not even measure up well to the Egyptian and Syrian armies. If the Israelis can consistently score impressive victories over the Egyptians and Syrians, even after being completely surprised in 1973, why should we not expect the U.S. military to rout the Iraqis?"

And he concluded: "... Saddam Hussein should understand that the American military is going to inflict a devastating defeat on his

military forces in Kuwait. He will be left in much the same position that Gamal Abdel Nasser was in after Israel destroyed his army in the Six-Day War. The American public, on the other hand, should recognize that although there is certainly cause to be concerned about casualties, the United States is not about to become involved in a war of attrition with high casualty levels.

"In fact, American forces may suffer as few as 500 fatalities, roughly the same number of troops the Israelis lost against Egypt and Syria in the Six-Day War."

The professor called it, and that's impressive. But it also raises some questions. If a University of Chicago professor knew with confidence that the ferocious Iraqi army was "even by Third World standards ... a below-average fighting force," didn't our intelligence establishment know it?

And if they knew it, why were we told repeatedly that Iraq was not merely a menace to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, but the entire Arab region? It would be understandable if Americans thought Saddam would storm the beaches of Florida.

If the Iraqi army was as overrated as the past few days have proved, what might have happened if our ambassador to Iraq hadn't told Saddam that we weren't interested in Arab border disputes. What would his reaction have been if he had been told: "Don't mess with Kuwait, or you'll be up to your ears in American bombs."

Maybe when the euphoria has passed, some historians will pore over the decisions and events that led to the war. Until then, I'm glad we won and that the price in our blood wasn't steep. But I'm going to wait a while before being convinced that the entire adventure couldn't have been avoided.