

where prices are higher. In Iraq, with the second-largest oil reserves in the world, ordinary citizens are forced to wait in lines up to 24 hours to fill up their gas tanks.

## FOREIGN POLICY &amp; DEFENSE

## Not-So-Great Guns

**THE SOURCE:** "Coming Full Circle: Replacing the 9mm with the .45 Caliber Pistol" by Maj. Craig R. Wonson, in *Marine Corps Gazette*, July 2006.

IN 1985, WHEN THE U.S. MILITARY changed its standard sidearm from the Colt .45 pistol to the Beretta M9 9mm, the decision seemed sound. The .45 had been in service since 1911, and though it was effective in battle, it was also much criticized: Its strong recoil made it difficult for inexperienced shooters to manage, it was too large for small hands, it was tricky to clean, and its single-action firing mechanism was a safety hazard. Not only was the M9 easier and safer to use, it also held twice as many rounds, and its 9mm ammunition

was the same size as the standard NATO cartridge, as well as cheaper and lighter.

But according to Maj. Craig R. Wonson, future operations planner with the First Marine Expeditionary Force in Iraq, one crucial factor was overlooked in the selection of the 9mm pistol: the weapon's effectiveness—or lack thereof—in "stopping" an enemy combatant. Now, with close-quarter combat becoming "the norm" for American troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, Wonson says, the 9mm pistol has been seeing a lot of use, and it is not getting rave reviews. "Recent reports of the M9's subpar performance . . . have left Marines with little confidence in the weapon," he writes.

The shortcomings of the 9mm will not come as news to federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies. Many of them once used the 9mm but switched to larger-caliber sidearms, including the .45, after incidents such as a disastrous 1986 FBI shootout in Miami in which suspects suffered multiple gunshot wounds but were still able to kill two agents.

The problem is "stopping power"—the gun's ability to take an opponent out of a fight immediately. Advocates of the 9mm argue that although it does not do as much damage as the .45, other factors—such as the "neurological effect" of a bullet entering the body, the pain of a gunshot wound, and skillful shot placement—should be sufficient to stop an enemy. Not so, says Wonson, especially if the enemy has taken drugs such as methamphetamines, as is reportedly the case sometimes in Iraq. And accurate shot placement is a risky thing to depend on in the less-than-ideal conditions of an actual fight.

Wonson advocates a return to a .45. Newer models by other manufacturers are easier to use than the old Colts, and just as effective. Indeed, the military had to learn this lesson once before: The switch to the .45 in 1911 came after smaller-caliber pistols failed to do the job in battle.

## FOREIGN POLICY &amp; DEFENSE

## Saving Sanctions

**THE SOURCE:** "Making Sanctions Humane and Effective" by Uli Cremer, in *Internationale Politik*, Summer 2006.

TODAY'S LIBERALS EXPRESS far less confidence in the efficacy of international sanctions than did Woodrow Wilson, who said in 1919 that "a nation boycotted is a nation in sight of surrender." Sanctions are only as effective as the political will to implement them, writes Uli Cremer, the former foreign policy spokesman for Germany's Green Party, and many existing and aspiring trading partners of sanctioned countries are weak reeds indeed.



The safer, cheaper, and lighter Beretta pistol, chosen 20 years ago over the clunky Colt .45 for military use, often fails to stop enemies in close-quarter-combat conditions such as those in Iraq.